

THE IMPERFECT - PRETERITE OPPOSITION IN
ROMANCE LANGUAGES

Ana Maria Todea
Christ Church
University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity 2014

Părinților mei și lui Mihai

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my DPhil supervisors: Professor Martin Maiden, for his continuous support and faith in me, and Dr Ian Watson, who has been my teacher, adviser, and role model ever since I first came to Oxford as an undergraduate. I could not have asked for more helpful and more supportive supervisors.

Many thanks to all the members of Christ Church, who have made the college a second home to me, and to the members of the Governing Body, for agreeing to fund my DPhil and for giving me the opportunity of being a Stipendiary Lecturer at Christ Church.

I would also like to thank the Modern Languages tutors at Christ Church, who have made me feel welcome as a member of their team: Dr Jennifer Yee, Dr Dominic Moran, Dr Nigel Griffin, Dr Belinda Jack, Miss Charlotte Arnautou, Dr Emanuela Tandello, Dr Jon Bradbury, and Dr Roy Norton.

I am very grateful to the French, Spanish, and Romanian speakers who participated in my research: the students from IFMEM Bordeaux, from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and from Colegiul Național Unirea in Târgu-Mureș. Many thanks go to Florence and Jean Hastoy, Marina Poisson, Oana Presecan, Olivia Cockburn, Ricardo Alcantarilla, Rosario López Gregoris, Dora Șoldea and Manuela Mărginean for their help in finding research participants, and to Davide Vampa, for his help with statistics.

I am very fortunate to have had the support of my friends during my DPhil. Thank you, Camille and Joseph, for always being there for me; Kiterie, for our lunch breaks and for staying in touch; Emily and Kunal, for your loveliness; Quan, for the great dances and barbecues; Ruxandra, Alexandra, and Alex, for our dining tradition; Mati, for sharing my love of Cadbury's; Johannes, for the lovely evenings at The Punter; Anna, Claudia, Edo, and David, for being my first friends in the Christ Church SCR; and Helen, for being such a fun linguist and neighbour.

Finally, I am most grateful to my family, for always supporting me and believing in me, and to Benoît, for providing my best recording and everything that followed.

THE IMPERFECT - PRETERITE OPPOSITION IN ROMANCE LANGUAGES

INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 1: THE TENSE FUNCTIONS OF THE IMPERFECT AND THE PRETERITE	13
1.1 The Representation of Tense	15
1.1.A Two Approaches to Tense: Quantification and Reference	15
1.1.A.i The Quantificational View of Tense	16
1.1.A.ii The Referential View of Tense	17
1.1.B Tense, Interval Semantics, and Discourse Representation Theory	19
1.1.B.i Interval Semantics and Quantification	20
1.1.B.ii A Referential View of Tense within Discourse Representation Theory	22
1.2 Models of Tense in Romance Languages	24
1.2.A Reichenbach's Model of Tense	25
1.2.B Bull's System of Tenses	29
1.2.B.i The Imperfect and the Preterite within Bull's System	31
1.2.B.ii General Assessment of Bull's Model	33
1.2.C Neo-Reichenbachian Approaches: Hornstein (1990) and Verkuyl et al (2004)	36
1.2.C.i Hornstein (1990)	36
1.2.C.ii Verkuyl et al (2004)	38
1.3 Beyond Tense	46
CHAPTER 2: THE IMPERFECT, THE PRETERITE, AND ASPECT	48
2.1 Aspectual Classes	54
2.1.A Vendler's 'Verbs and Times'	55
2.1.B What do 'Aspectual Classes' Classify?	57
2.1.C The Grammatical Status of Aspectual Classes	59
2.1.D Classifications of Aspectual Types	62
2.1.E Analysing Aspectual Types	64
2.1.E.i One Predicate, More than One Aspectual Type	64
2.1.E.ii Analyses of Aspectual Types	67
2.1.E.ii.a Dowty's Aspect Calculus	68
2.1.E.ii.b Phasal Analyses	70
2.1.E.ii.c Two-Dimensional Phasal Representations	73
2.2 The Imperfective Paradox	80
2.2.A The Superinterval Condition	81
2.2.B Imperfectivity and Modality	83
2.2.C Non-Modal Accounts and the Partitive Puzzle	84

2.3 The Aspectual Contribution of the Imperfect and the Preterite	86
2.3.A The Imperfect and the Preterite as Viewpoint Operators	88
2.3.A.i Situation Aspect	88
2.3.A.ii Viewpoint Aspect	90
2.3.A.iii Implementation of the Model: Discourse Representation Theory	93
2.3.A.iii.a The Basic Semantic Level	94
2.3.A.iii.b The ‘Interpreted’ Level	97
2.3.A.iv Assessment of the Model	99
2.3.B Aspectually-Sensitive Tenses	103
2.3.B.i Type Coercion	104
2.3.B.ii Aspectual Type Coercion	106
2.3.B.iii Assessment of the Model	112
2.4 Language-Specific Models	116
2.4.A A Potential Reconciliation of Views: Caudal’s (2005) Model	116
2.4.A.i Stage Structure	117
2.4.A.ii Implementation of the Model	121
2.4.A.iii Evaluation of the Model	125
2.4.B Spanish: the Imperfect and the Preterite in a Possible World Semantics based on Situations	126
2.4.B.i Observed Meanings and Truth Conditions of the Imperfect and the Preterite	127
2.4.B.ii Evaluation of the Model	133
2.4.C Models of Romanian Tenses and the Question of States	138
2.4.C.i Haase’s (1995) Aktionsarten and the Interpretation of Romanian Data	138
2.4.C.ii Bende-Farkas (1999): Stative Verbs, the Imperfect and the Preterite	141
CHAPTER 3: THE PERIPHRASTIC PAST FORM AND THE PERFECT	144
3.1 The Perfect Functions: Tense or Aspect? Semantics or Pragmatics?	146
3.1.A An Illustration of Perfect Functions and Behaviours	146
3.1.B The Semantics and Pragmatics of the Perfect	148
3.1.B.i The Semantics of the Perfect: Tense or Aspect?	151
3.1.B.i.a Temporal Accounts of the Perfect: Portner (2003)	152
3.1.B.i.b Aspectual Accounts of the Perfect	154
3.1.B.ii The Pragmatics of the Perfect: Modality or Neo-Gricean Pragmatics?	158
3.1.B.ii.a Portner’s (2003) Modal Pragmatics	158
3.1.B.ii.b Nishiyama and Koenig’s (2010) New-Gricean Pragmatics	160
3.1.B.iii The Perfect State Reevaluated	163
3.2 The Romance Periphrastic Form and the ‘Aoristic Drift’	166
3.2.A Harris’ Taxonomy and its Diachronic Limitations	167
3.2.B Harris’ Taxonomy and its Synchronic Limitations	169
3.2.B.i The Spanish Pretérito Perfecto	171
3.2.B.ii The French and Romanian Analytic Past	177
3.2.B.ii.a The <i>Passé Simple</i> / <i>Passé Composé</i> Opposition	177
3.2.B.ii.b The <i>Perfect Compus</i> / <i>Perfect Simplu</i> Opposition	181

CHAPTER 4: CORPUS STUDIES OF THE IMPERFECT – PRETERITE OPPOSITION	188
4.1. Hypothesis 1: the Imperfect and the Preterite Have Aspectual Content	191
4.1.A Theoretical Considerations	191
4.1.A.i Motivation	191
4.1.A.ii The Imperfective Paradox	192
4.1.B Psycholinguistics and Aspect	195
4.1.B.i Points of Discord and Consensus	195
4.1.B.ii Existing Psycholinguistic Experiments	199
4.1.B.ii.a Complement Coercion	201
4.1.B.ii.b Aspectual Coercion	202
4.1.B.ii.c Psycholinguistics Studies and the Romance Imperfect and Preterite	205
4.2 Methodology	209
4.2.A The ‘Questionnaires’ Corpus	209
4.2.B The ‘Novels in Translation’ Corpus	211
4.3 Hypothesis 2: No Semantic End-Point Requirement for the Preterite	213
4.4 Hypothesis 3: A Finer-Grained Notion of Lexical Aspect Involving Stage Structure is Necessary	219
4.4.A Achievements in the Imperfect	220
4.4.B ‘In x time’, and Different Verb Constructions in the Preterite	222
4.4.C States in the Preterite	225
4.5 Hypothesis 4: There Are Cross-Linguistic Differences in the Functions of the French, Spanish, and Romanian Imperfect and Preterite	231
4.5.A The ‘Perfect’ Functions of the Preterite	232
4.5.A.i The Passé Composé and the Perfect Compus	232
4.5.A.ii The Pretérito Perfecto and the Perfect Compus	233
4.5.B States and the Imperfect / Preterite Opposition	236
4.6 Results and Discussion	240
4.6.A The End-Point Requirement	240
4.6.B Stage Structure	250
4.6.B.i Preparatory Stages and Achievements in the Imperfect	250
4.6.B.ii Eventualities, ‘in x time’ and the Preterite: Stage Structure	253
4.6.B.iii Types of States	257
4.6.C Cross-linguistic Differences	259
4.6.C.i States in the Preterite	260
4.6.C.ii The Perfect Compus and the Passé Composé in the ‘Novels in Translation’ Corpus	268
4.6.C.iii The Continuative Function of the Perfect Compus and of the Pretérito Perfecto	271

CHAPTER 5: A REPRESENTATION OF THE IMPERFECT - PRETERITE OPPOSITION IN FRENCH, SPANISH, AND ROMANIAN	276
5.1 Stage Structure and Aspectual Classes	277
5.1.A States	278
5.1.B Activities	288
5.1.C Achievements	292
5.1.D Accomplishments	295
5.1.E Semelfactives	299
5.1.F Construal and the Data in Chapter 4	302
5.2 Stage Saliency	308
5.2.A The Core Stage	309
5.2.B The Inherent End Point Stage and the Arbitrary End Point Stage	312
5.2.C The Inception Stage and the Rest Stage	314
5.2.D The Preparatory Stage	315
5.2.E The Perfect State Stage and the Ensuing Event Stage	316
5.3 The Imperfect and the Preterite: Aspectual Operators and Viewpoints	320
5.3.A States	322
5.3.B Activities	327
5.3.C Accomplishments	328
5.3.D Achievements	330
5.4 The Role of Adverbials	334
5.4.A 'For x time'	334
5.4.B 'In x time'	337
5.4.C 'Point' Adverbials	340
5.5 Cross-Linguistic Differences	346
5.5.A The Perfect	346
5.5.B The Preterite and States	347
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	352
6.1 The Imperfect and the Preterite Have an Inherent Aspectual Content	353
6.2 The End-Point Requirement of the Preterite : A Pragmatic Inference	356
6.3 A Representation of the Imperfect and the Preterite Opposition Based on Stage Structure, Stage Saliency, and Aspectual Operators	357
6.4 Cross-Linguistic Differences	359
REFERENCES	363

INTRODUCTION

An aspect of the Romance languages that challenges non-native learners and defies neat linguistic analysis is tense usage. In particular, teachers of the Romance languages as well as grammarians have found it difficult to provide a coherent and consistent explanation for the imperfect - preterite opposition.

Early grammars described the opposition between the imperfect and the preterite in terms of how they located events in time (i.e. in terms of tense):

quando aquella cosa de que se trata se considera como presente respecto de otra ya pasada, se llama pretérito imperfecto: v. gr. llegó mi hermano al mismo tiempo que yo le escribía (Real Academia Española 1771:64).

The imperfect was thus seen as relating an action that occurred concomitantly with another past action described by the preterite.

It was only in the twentieth century that the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance started to be generally¹ described in terms of aspect. Aspectual distinctions said to describe the functions of the imperfect and the preterite initially took the form of binary oppositions, of which the most frequently quoted is terminative – non-terminative:

¹ *Gramatica limbii române* included aspect even later, in its 2005 edition (Guțu Romalo 2005).

Como tiempo absoluto, indudablemente *cantaba* significa lo mismo que *canté*, una acción pasada, pero esta acción no se considera como momentánea que entra y se concluye, sino como una acción que no llegó a un fin determinado, a ser perfecta (Lenz 1920:455).

Other binary aspectual oppositions said to describe the imperfect - preterite opposition are: perfective vs. imperfective (Comrie 1976, Bryant 1984), restrictive vs. non-restrictive (Grobe 1967), inceptive vs. non-inceptive (Cox 1982), durative vs. punctual (Price 1971, Kamp 1979). Regardless of the kind of binary opposition argued to represent the distinction between the imperfect and the preterite, none could account for all uses of these forms, because of the existence of exceptions to each rule. The imperfect in (1) below, for example, could not be argued to express an action that has not reached its terminus, since the event occurred in 1853. It would be equally difficult to interpret it as not including the boundaries of the event (non-restrictive), since the date of the event is given. Concurrently, the use of the preterite in (2) signals that the sea was calm while the family was on holiday, not that the sea is no longer calm; therefore, the preterite does not necessarily lead to terminative meaning.

(1) Sp. *Nacía* (imperfecto) *Vincent Van Gogh, hijo de un pastor protestante, el 30 de marzo de 1853 en Zunder* (Rojo 1974:136). ‘Vincent Van Gogh, the son of a protestant pastor, was born on the 30th March 1853 in Zunder.’

(2) Ro. *Marea a fost* (perfect compus) *calmă cât timp familia a fost în vacanță*. ‘The sea was calm while the family was on holiday.’

On the other hand, it would be difficult to argue that the difference between (3) and (4) is exclusively that of inceptivity or lack thereof; at least in part, the opposition reflects whether or not the person actually drowned (whether the action of drowning reached its terminus):

(3) Fr. *Il s'est noyé* (passé composé). 'He drowned.'

(4) Fr. *Il se noyait* (imparfait). 'He was drowning.'

The durative - punctual account of the imperfect - preterite opposition is invalidated by examples like (5) and (6), in which a preterite is used with a durative action and an imperfect is used with a punctual one:

(5) Fr. *La guerre de Cent ans* dura (passé simple) *en réalité cent seize ans*. 'In reality, the Hundred Years War lasted for 116 years.'

(6) Fr. *J'ai entendu un bruit, dehors... Cela a fait pschouittt. ... Je me suis demandé pourquoi Maurice cessait (imparfait) de parler au beau milieu d'une phrase* (Cox 1982:230). 'I heard a noise outside. It went sshhhht... I wondered why Maurice stopped talking in the very middle of a sentence.'

An analysis of the accounts of the imperfect and the preterite based on binary oppositions will reveal the two major causes of their failure. The first cause lies in the

confusion between the meaning provided by the semantics of the predicate (lexical aspect) and the meaning provided by the tense forms (as seen with the punctual - durative account). The second, related, cause is the lack of acknowledgement of the role of lexical aspect in determining the overall meaning of a sentence (as an example, consider the different meanings of ‘to be calm’ in (2) and ‘to drown’ in (3)-(4) above: ‘to be calm’ is a state, which I argue can continue up to the present moment, despite the use of the preterite; this is not, however, the case with ‘to drown’, which denotes a telic event).

From the situation described above, where the imperfect - preterite distinction was described as a binary aspectual opposition contributed by the forms irrespective of the semantics of the predicates, more recent literature (e.g. de Swart 1998, 2011, 2012) has seen a shift to a situation in which the aspectual role of the verbal paradigms themselves has been questioned, and explanations solely in terms of lexical aspect have been preferred. In parallel, approaches relating the contribution of the imperfect and the preterite solely to tense have been revived and refined, linking the imperfect to anaphoricity and seeing the preterite as a deictic tense (Brucart 2003, Verkuyl et al 2004). Both types of approach (lexical aspectual and temporal) will be critically assessed in this thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to provide a description and analysis of the imperfect - preterite opposition in Romance languages that also offer a solution to ongoing debates in the literature such as those mentioned above. In order to provide a wide-ranging analysis of the issue, I investigate data both from western Romance (standard French and standard Spanish) and from eastern Romance (standard Romanian). While the

literature abounds in discussions of the relevant forms in French and Spanish, hardly any work has been done on the interpretation of Romanian data. Alongside the descriptive interest of including Romanian in this study, the comparative data from French, Spanish and Romanian will provide insights into an area which has received little attention in Romance: the cross-linguistic differences in the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite.

The modal functions of the imperfect will not be discussed here, since in such usages the imperfect stands in opposition to the subjunctive, conditional, present etc., not the preterite, whereas this thesis is concerned with the imperfect - preterite opposition. While there is a strong formal resemblance with regard to the imperfect in French, Spanish, and Romanian because of its formal continuity with the Latin imperfect, the form of the preterite differs across Romance languages. By preterite is meant here a label for that counterpart of the imperfect which has one-step-past-reference. Thus, in this work the label 'preterite' will incorporate the French *passé simple* (*je fis*, principally in the written language) as well as the *passé composé* (*j'ai fait*, in spoken and some types of the written language). In Romanian it will include predominantly the *perfect compus* (*am făcut*, since it has, with few regional exceptions, replaced the *perfect simplu* in modern Romanian, and it is frequently used nowadays even in the literary language). The counterpart of the imperfect in Spanish has traditionally been considered the *pretérito indefinido* (*hice*), but recent research (to be discussed in Chapter 3) reveals some form and function variability with the *pretérito perfecto* (*he hecho*). The table below illustrates the indicative past-tense morphology of French, Spanish and Romanian, with the conventional labels used for the forms in each

language, and the ‘imperfect’ and the ‘preterite’ as used in this thesis in blue and red font, respectively:

(7)

	FRENCH	SPANISH	ROMANIAN
One-step-past-referring forms	<i>Imparfait:</i> Je faisais	<i>Imperfecto:</i> Hacía	<i>Imperfect:</i> Făceam
	<i>Passé simple:</i> Je fis	<i>Pretérito indefinido:</i> Hice	<i>Perfect simplu:</i> Făcui
	<i>Passé composé:</i> J’ai fait	<i>Pretérito perfecto:</i> He hecho	<i>Perfect compus:</i> Am făcut
Two-steps-past-referring forms	<i>Plus-que-parfait</i> J’avais fait	<i>Pluscuamperfecto</i> Había hecho	<i>Mai mult ca perfect</i> Făcusem

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 consists of a critical investigation of ways proposed in the literature to represent the tense functions of the imperfect and the preterite; that is, the way in which they locate events in time. This allows me to show that, regardless of the model of tense, and despite the revival of tense theories which link the imperfect to anaphoricity and the preterite to deixis, tense is not sufficient to describe the functions of the imperfect and the preterite; reference must also be made to aspect.

In Chapter 2 I present the different approaches to describing the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite. The main points of contention in the literature concern two interrelated issues: (i) the structure, analysis, and role of lexical

aspectual information in determining the overall meaning of a sentence (investigated in Sections 1 and 2) and (ii) the question of whether the imperfect and the preterite have an inherent aspectual content or are merely tenses sensitive to lexical aspectual information (Section 3). Against the background of these issues, in Section 4 I assess the theoretical choices made in recent language-specific (French, Spanish, and Romanian) models seeking to account for the imperfect - preterite opposition. The questions raised in Chapter 2 concerning the role and structure of lexical aspectual information and the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite form the basis for my investigation involving a corpus of questionnaires, whose results I analyse in Chapter 4.

Since this thesis investigates how form distinctions correspond to function distinctions between the imperfect and the preterite, and given that the preterite forms used in spoken French and Romanian (the *passé composé* and the *perfect compus*) also have perfect functions (see 8-10 below), in Chapter 3 I assess possible ways of representing these functions. Furthermore, I outline possible areas of divergence between the perfect functions of the French, Spanish, and Romanian forms, which will be investigated in subsequent chapters.

(8) Ro. *Uite-l, a ajuns* (perfect compus). ‘Look, he has arrived.’ (Resultative perfect).

(9) Fr. *Il n’a jamais pris* (passé composé) *le métro*. ‘He has never taken the tube.’ (Experiential perfect).

(10) Ro. *A trăit* (perfect compus)² *singur de la divorț*. ‘He has lived alone ever since the divorce.’ (Continuative perfect).

² Note that in French, the present needs to be used in continuative situations: Fr. *Il vit* (présent) *seul depuis le divorce*.

The critical investigation of the literature in Chapters 1-3 allows me to formulate my hypotheses, which are presented and tested in Chapter 4. I hypothesize that the imperfect and the preterite do have an inherent aspectual meaning. However, departing from previous accounts, I show, with the aid of a corpus of questionnaires, that this meaning does not reflect the frequently cited opposition ‘terminative - non-terminative’. I argue that representations of lexical aspect need to include finer distinctions based on stage structure to account for the imperfect - preterite opposition. These finer lexical aspectual distinctions allow the identification of areas of divergence in the use of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian: notably, that states are expressed in the preterite significantly more often in Romanian than in French and Spanish. These results are supported by data from a corpus consisting of samples from three novels translated from American English into French, Spanish, and Romanian. This secondary corpus also reveals the wider use of the Romanian periphrastic past as opposed to the simple past when compared to tense usage in French literary narratives.

On the basis of evidence from Chapter 4, I propose in Chapter 5 a representation of the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite based on the notions of stage structure, stage salience, aspectual operators and viewpoints. I argue that the main difference between the imperfect and the preterite involves the absence or presence of focus on the initial stage of the eventuality. I then provide a detailed representation of the meanings that result from the interaction of the imperfect and the preterite with predicates of different lexical aspect and adverbials.

I conclude by showing how my study calls for further research on the opposition between the imperfect and the preterite, in the domains of psycholinguistics, first-language acquisition, and historical linguistics.

CHAPTER 1: THE TENSE FUNCTIONS OF THE IMPERFECT AND THE PRETERITE

While for Plato a ‘verb’ was a word that indicated action, for Aristotle it was mainly an indicator of time (Binnick 1991:3). These two different types of definitions, coupled with the lack of appreciation of the distinction between a marker and the concept that is marked, led to the use of the word ‘tense’ or ‘time’ (Sp. *tiempo*, Ro. *timp*, Fr. *temps*) for the different forms of the verbal paradigm for more than two thousand years (Hewson 2012:507). Analyses of verb forms were further complicated by a terminological confusion of grammatical categories such as Aktionsart / lexical aspect (linked to Plato’s definition), aspect and tense (to which Aristotle’s definition roughly refers). Even in the twentieth century, linguists frequently referred to the future, the present, and the past as ‘tenses’ (when what they meant was ‘times’), or spoke of the six ‘tenses’ of Latin (instead of ‘verbal paradigms’ or ‘tense forms’).

The first to define contrastively the linguistic categories of tense and aspect and their relation to time was Gustave Guillaume (1933) (Hewson 2012:511), who saw aspect as ‘temps impliqué’ (involving time internal to the event) and tense as ‘temps expliqué’ (involving time external to the event) (Guillaume 1964:48). The most widespread and commonly cited definitions, however, belong to Comrie, who described aspect as ‘different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation’ (Comrie 1976:3), and tense as ‘the grammaticalized expression of location in time’ (Comrie 1985:9). A situation is located in time with respect to an evaluation time (normally the time of speech ‘now’); this is referred to as the deictic function of tense. Furthermore, since speakers do not express themselves in isolated sentences, a situation can also be

located in time with respect to other situations previously described in discourse; this is called the anaphoric function of tense³ (Dickey 2001:2).

Since this thesis is concerned with the form-function relationship in the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages, in this chapter I review ways to account for the tense functions of these paradigms. In Section 1.1 I focus on representations of the past tense in general, since both the imperfect and the preterite locate events in the past. In Section 1.2 I examine the description of the French, Spanish and Romanian imperfect and preterite within models of tense. I conclude in Section 1.3 by showing that reference to tense is not sufficient to describe the functions of the two paradigms and that reference must be made to aspect, which will be examined in Chapter 2.

³ Although there is no unanimous agreement on the anaphoric function of tense (e.g. Lascarides and Asher 1993 claim that it is discourse factors only that govern this function), most scholars agree that there is an element associated with tense that is responsible for temporal links between sentences (Dickey 2001:7). Dickey (2001) provides psycholinguistic evidence for the anaphoric function of tense.

1.1 The Representation of Tense

Since one of the functions of the imperfect and of the preterite is to locate events in the past, in Section 1.1 I consider the role of tenses in situating events in time and how they can be represented formally, with special reference to the past tense.

1.1.A Two Approaches to Tense: Quantification and Reference

Two main different approaches have been proposed in order to account for the functions of tense. In both cases, I concentrate on their accounts of the past tense.

Consider the examples below:

- (1) Jane Austen wrote 'Pride and Prejudice'.
- (2) Yesterday, Jane wrote a letter to Peter.

In (1), tense is seen as indeterminate or indefinite, in the sense that it does not refer to a specific time at which Jane Austen wrote 'Pride and Prejudice', but simply to the fact that at some point in the past, she did. Indeed, this sentence is entirely acceptable even if the speaker does not know when 'Pride and Prejudice' was written.⁴ By contrast, in (2), the same verb in the same tense form does involve a specific time at which Jane wrote a letter to Peter: 'yesterday'. The two main views on tense that can account for these sentences are outlined in the following two subsections.

⁴ Note that a common name for the Spanish preterite, and indeed, the name used in this thesis, is *pretérito indefinido*, which refers precisely to this function.

1.1.A.i The Quantificational View of Tense

Following Prior (1957, 1967), in classical tense logics sentences like (1), repeated in (3), were accounted for by existential quantification over intervals of time, as in (4):

(3) Jane Austen wrote ‘Pride and Prejudice’.

(4) $P(\phi)$ is true iff $\exists t': t' < t$ and ϕ is true at t'

Informally, $P(\phi)$ is true if there is some past time at which ϕ is true. Within this approach, the past tense, the present tense, and the future tense all involve sentential operators that quantify existentially over times.

A strong counter-argument to this theory of tense was proposed by Partee (1973), whose example (5) illustrates that tenses must also make reference to specific points in time:

(5) I didn't turn off the stove.

This sentence means neither that there is no past time at which I turned off the stove, ($\neg P(\text{I-turn-off-the-stove})$), which is too strong, nor that there is some past time at which I did not turn off the stove ($P\neg(\text{I-turn-off-the-stove})$), which is too weak (Song, 2005:7f.). The tense indicates that the speaker refers to a specific point in the past at which she did not turn off the stove.

This problem leads to the second main view of tense, which claims that tense is determinate or definite, and which accounts for examples like (2), mentioned in the previous section, and repeated below in (6):

(6) Yesterday, Jane wrote a letter to Peter.

A sentence is judged true or false with respect to the particular time of speech, time of the event and, additionally, to the reference time appropriate for it (Kuhn and Portner 2002). Such a view of tense is called ‘referential’ and is the topic of the next subsection.

1.1.A.ii The Referential View of Tense

‘Referential’ theories of tense developed from Reichenbach’s (1947) observations that the choice of tense forms in discourse is partly governed by the times discussed in that particular context (Dickey 2001:19). Reichenbach thus uses a reference time R (an interval of time determined contextually) to distinguish between the simple past and the pluperfect in English. In (7), the past tense locates the event at the same time as the reference time ‘yesterday’, whereas in (8), the pluperfect locates the event before the reference time ‘yesterday’.

(7) Yesterday, Jane wrote a letter to Peter.

(8) By yesterday, Jane had written a letter to Peter.

Evidence for the presence of R also comes from temporal anaphora phenomena. The difference between (9) and (10) below, adapted from Dickey (2001:18), is

explained by different relationships between the reference time and the event time: in both examples, the first sentence provides the reference time for the second, but in (9) the time of leaving follows the time of reference, whereas in (10) it precedes it.

(9) Julia came in. Michael left.

(10) Julia came in. Michael had left.

As pointed out by Hornstein (1990:90), the presence of R also explains why there are a maximum of two temporal adverbs per sentence: these adverbs can modify E or R, but nothing else. In (11), the time of the event is ‘a year ago’, while the reference point is ‘tomorrow’.

(11) Tomorrow, Michael will have left a year ago.

Kratzer (1998) brings cross-linguistic evidence in support of the referential view of tense: in varieties of German and Dutch, the simple past requires an overt antecedent (provided, under such a view of tense, by a contextually-determined reference time); if no such antecedent is present, the *perfekt* must be used:

(12) Dutch: John stond op. Max groette hem (preterit). ‘John stood up. Max greeted him.’

(13) Dutch: John kwam binnen. Mary zat te lezen (preterit). ‘John came in. Mary was reading.’

(Dickey 2001:25)

(14) Dutch: Wie heeft deze kerk gebouwd (perfekt)? ‘Who built this church?’

(Dickey 2001:18)

The evidence presented above points towards the need to include a reference time in representations of the past tense. However, we cannot dismiss examples that do not refer to a definite time (e.g. ‘Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.’ Section 1.1.A.i), and which were satisfactorily explained by approaches treating tenses as operators. In the following section, I will present two possible ways of tackling this problem, both principally encountered in recent work on the semantics of tense. My aim will not be to choose between them, but rather to establish a common ground, which will point to the need to include the notion of reference point in representations of tense.

1.1.B Tense, Interval Semantics, and Discourse Representation Theory

Two frameworks dominate work on the semantics of tense: Interval Semantics and Discourse Representation Theory.

Interval Semantics builds on Possible-World Semantics, a framework within which the world is conceived as many possible worlds; propositions, properties etc. can be analysed as ‘set-theoretical entities over a logical space consisting of couples of the form $\langle W, T \rangle$, where W is a possible world and T a time’ (Tichý 1985:263). Interval semanticists maintain that this definition is too narrow, and that the logical space consists of entities of the type $\langle W, I \rangle$, where I is an uninterrupted interval (in the sense of a stretch of time without pause, rather than the mathematical sense of a set of points; Humberstone 1979:171). The available intervals between which there can be overlap or

precedence relationships are: an evaluation interval (or an event time), an utterance time, and potentially a reference interval. Within this approach, tenses are generally treated as quantificational operators (Kuhn and Portner 2002).

Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) is a representation technique through which sentences are linked to discourse representation structures (DRSs). A discourse representation structure is composed of a finite number of discourse referents and a finite number of conditions (Jayez 1998). Tenses are represented as conditions on discourse referents, which represent events or times. DRT is a dynamic framework in the sense that it focuses on ways in which information can be passed from one sentence to another within the interpretation of multi-sentence texts or speeches (Kuhn and Portner 2002). Thus, the anaphoric function of tense is one of the main concerns of DRT, which maintains that tense is referential and that quantificational effects are derived.

Since the ‘indefinite’ readings of the past tense in Section 1.1.A were described within a quantification approach, while the ‘determinate’ readings were accounted for within a referential approach on tense, in the following two subsections I assess ways to represent both types of examples within the two frameworks outlined above.

1.1.B.i Interval Semantics and Quantification

One way of accounting for both the definite and indefinite readings of tensed sentences is to claim that they all involve quantification over times, but that for the definite readings the domain of quantification is restricted to a set of possible reference

times (Kuhn 1979, cf. Bennett and Partee 1972, Ogiwara 1994). If no such set of reference times is available from context, then the set will contain all possible past times, and the past will be indefinite, as in (2), repeated below as (15):

(15) Jane Austen wrote ‘Pride and Prejudice’.

The condition on the domain of quantification means that Partee’s example, repeated below in (16), will be true if the stove was left on at one of the possible past times to which the speaker may be referring:

(16) I didn’t turn the stove off.

The approach also provides context sensitivity in cases of temporal anaphora (Dickey 2001:21) (repeated in 17), where the domain of quantification for the past tense in the second sentence will be restricted to the time frame provided by the first sentence.

(17) Julia came in. Michael left.

This operator-based approach thus maintains the quantificational reading of tensed sentences such as ‘Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*’, while being able to

account for examples like Partee's and for cases of temporal anaphora by restricting the quantification domain to a salient reference interval.

1.1.B.ii A Referential View of Tense within Discourse Representation Theory

Within Discourse Representation Theory tenses are seen as conditions on discourse referents which represent times or events. For instance, in 'Julia came in. Michael left.' (17 above), Julia's coming in is the first event, represented by the discourse referent e_1 , and occurs at time r_1 . Michael's leaving is represented by e_2 , and occurs at the time r_2 . If s is the time of speech, then the conditions for the past tense will be: $r_1 < s$, $r_2 < s$, $r_1 < r_2$, $e_1 \circ r_1$, and $e_2 \circ r_2$ (where \circ represents temporal overlap).

In order to account for sentences with quantificational force (18 below) different options have been put forward.

(18) Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.

A temporal variable introduced by tense can be bound by an element such as an adverb of quantification, as in (19), taken from Kuhn and Portner (2002):

(19) When it rained, it always poured.

In the absence of such an adverbial (e.g. 20), the free variable introduced by tense is subject to a rule that turns it into a quantified formula (21). This formula is called 'existential closure' by Heim (1982).

(20) Angelika sneezed.

(21) $\exists t$ [PAST(t) & AT(t, sneeze(Angelika))]

Therefore, DRT takes a referential view of tense, while accounting for cases with quantificational force by quantificational rules or quantification adverbials.

*

In the previous sections I have presented arguments for the past tense having quantificational force as well as being referential. Different solutions have been proposed for accounting for both definite and indefinite readings. Within Interval Semantics, tense was treated as an operator quantifying over a restricted salient reference interval. In Discourse Representation Theory, tense was seen as referential, but the free variable introduced by tense was able to be bound by an existential quantifier such as an adverbial or was subject to a rule that turned it into a quantified formula.

Regardless of the choice of framework (see Kuhn and Portner 2002 for a critical assessment of the two), I have shown that the notion of ‘reference’ has proved essential. Within DRT, the reference time was always introduced as a variable, and its relationship (overlap or precedence) with other points in time described the tense function. Within Interval Semantics, operators quantified over a reference interval; if no interval was salient, the set was formed of all possible past times. However, salient or not, this means that Interval Semantics also used the notion of reference interval in the

description of the past tense, since all the possible past times can be considered a reference.

This section therefore demonstrates that the concept of reference point is necessary to describe the tense functions of verbal paradigms, and of the past tense in particular, regardless of the choice of framework. In the next section I assess ways in which the notion of reference is used when accounting for the tense functions of the imperfect and of the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian. The assessment of the description of the two paradigms will then allow me to evaluate whether the opposition between the imperfect and the preterite can be described solely in terms of tense.

1.2 Models of Tense in Romance Languages

In this section I investigate ways in which the imperfect and the preterite are represented within models of tense for French, Spanish, and Romanian. I initially examine the description of their tense functions within each model and then analyse the overall workings of the models of tense within which they are included, since a model of tense needs to be coherent across the representation of all its forms. As established in Section 1.1, the notion of reference point is crucial to the representation of tense. I therefore start by presenting Reichenbach's model of tense, and then go on to examine alternatives to it.

1.2.A Reichenbach's Model of Tense

As well as introducing the notion of a reference point (R), a major contribution made by Reichenbach (1947) was to include R in the representation of all tenses, not just the complex tenses in which its interpretive reflexes are evident (e.g. the pluperfect and the future perfect). As pointed out by Hornstein (1990), this means that R is not introduced merely to facilitate the interpretation of complex tenses, but is a constant part of the syntax of tense structures, including the imperfect and the preterite. Tenses are described as complexes of three temporally ordered (anterior, posterior '-', or synchronous ',') points: the point of the event (E), the point of speech (S), and reference point (R).

As an illustration, the English tenses are represented in the following matrix, adapted from Reichenbach (1947):

(22)⁵

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
ANTERIOR	1) E-R-S 'had eaten'	2) E-R,S 'has eaten'	3) E-S-R E,S-R S-E-R 'will have eaten'
SYNCHRONOUS	4) E,R-S 'ate'	5) E,R,S 'eats'	6) S-E,R 'will eat'
POSTERIOR	7) R-E-S R-S-E R-S,E 'would eat'	8) S,R-E 'will eat'	9) S-R-E 'will eat'

The 'anterior', 'synchronous' and 'posterior' labels refer to the relationship between the event point E and the reference point R. The 'past', 'present', and 'future' labels refer to

⁵ The progressive forms (e.g. 'had / has / will have been eating', 'was / is / will be / would be eating') have been excluded from this table, since they denote aspect.

the relationship between the reference point R and the speech point S: synchronous for the ‘present’, ‘R’ anterior to ‘S’ for the past, and ‘R’ posterior to ‘S’ for the future.

When adapted to Spanish (23), the only additions when compared to the English tenses are the periphrastic posterior forms. The forms that express progressive aspect have been excluded from the table, as in English above.

(23) Spanish

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
ANTERIOR	1) E-R-S ‘había comido’	2) E-R,S ‘ha comido’	3) E-S-R E,S-R S-E-R ‘habrá comido’
SYNCHRONOUS	4) E,R-S ‘comía’ ‘comió’	5) E,R,S ‘come’	6) S-E,R ‘comerá’
POSTERIOR	7) R-E-S R-S-E R-S,E ‘comería’ ‘iba a comer’	8) S,R-E ‘comerá’ ‘va a comer’	9) S-R-E ‘comerá’ ?’irá a comer’

Verkuyl et al (2004) describe a similar Reichenbachian model for French (24). However, since the *passé simple* has been replaced by the *passé composé* in speech, and in some types of written French, I will also include the *passé composé* in their cell 4, as it can have the function of synchronous past:

(24) French

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
ANTERIOR	1) E-R-S 'avait mangé'	2) E-R,S 'a mangé'	3) E-S-R E,S-R S-E-R 'aura mangé'
SYNCHRONOUS	4) E,R-S 'a mangé' 'mangea' 'mangeait'	5) E,R,S 'mange'	6) S-E,R 'mangera'
POSTERIOR	7) R-E-S R-S-E R-S,E 'mangerait' 'allait manger'	8) S,R-E 'mangera' 'va manger'	9) S-R-E 'mangera'

In Romanian, (25), the analytic form 'a mâncat' (*perfect compus*) has, with a few regional exceptions, entirely replaced the synthetic form 'mâncă' (*perfect simplu*). In some of the regions where the *perfect simplu* survives, it corresponds not to the synchronous past, but to the anterior present (cell 2). In the prose texts in which the form can still be found, however, it corresponds to the synchronous past, and occasionally alternates with the *perfect compus*.

(25) Romanian:

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
ANTERIOR	1) E-R-S 'mâncase'	2) E-R,S 'a mâncat' (Reg. 'mâncă')	3) E-S-R E,S-R S-E-R 'va fi mâncat'
SYNCHRONOUS	4) E,R-S 'a mâncat' 'mânca' (Lit. mâncă)	5) E,R,S 'mănmâncă'	6) S-E,R 'va mânca'
POSTERIOR	7) R-E-S R-S-E R-S,E 'va mânca'	8) S,R-E 'va mânca'	9) S-R-E 'va mânca'

The Reichenbachian model has been criticized both for over- and for under-specification of tenses. One of the criticisms of the model has been that in fact, there is no form corresponding to the posterior future (Verkuyl et al 2004:251). On the one hand, ‘mangera’, ‘comerá’ and ‘va mânca’ do not express posteriority in the future. On the other hand, a theoretically possible tense form, continuing the pattern of ‘allait manger’ / ‘iba a comer’, ‘va manger’ / ‘va a comer’, which would combine the simple and periphrastic forms of the future in French and Spanish *‘ira manger’, *‘irá a comer’, does not exist in these languages.

Furthermore, French and Spanish have a tense form which indicates the past of the anterior future, which has no cell in Reichenbach’s system⁶:

(26) Fr. Jean dit qu’il sera parti à 8 heures. ‘Jean said he will have left at 8 o’clock’.

(27) Fr. Jean avait dit qu’il serait parti à 8 heures. ‘Jean had said that he would have left at 8 o’clock.’

(28) Sp. Juan dijo que se habrá ido a las 8. ‘Juan said that he will have left at 8 o’clock’.

(29) Sp. Juan había dicho que se habría ido a las 8. ‘Juan had said that he would have left at 8 o’clock.’

(Adapted from Verkuyl et al 2004:251)

Finally, two forms, the anterior future and the posterior past, are associated with three configurations each (cells 3 and 7) in the model in general (Verkuyl et al 2004:250), and in French, Spanish, and Romanian in particular. However, no language

⁶ In Romanian the simple future is used in this context.

has been found to have a form corresponding to each of these formulae, which means that there is no evidence for a three-way ambiguous anterior future and posterior past.

Concerning the functions of the imperfect and the preterite, in a Reichenbachian model they are both synchronous pasts (E,R-S). This means that such a model is not able to account for the opposition between the imperfect and the preterite; in other words, the difference in function between the two forms is not related to tense.

In Section 1.2.B I present and evaluate an alternative to Reichenbach's system, which offers solutions to some of the problems discussed above, albeit at the cost of considerable complexity and arguably some incoherence.

1.2.B Bull's System of Tenses

An alternative and influential proposal for systematizing tenses was provided by Bull (1960). Instead of reference points, Bull introduces the roughly equivalent notion of an 'axis of orientation'. An axis of orientation reflects the perception of events, which may be immediate (present), recalled (past), or anticipated (future). Any act of observation becomes an axis of orientation. There can be four axes of orientation: two prime event axes, PP (point present) and RP (retrospective to PP, recalled at PP), and two projected axes, AP (anticipated at PP, projected from PP) and RAP (retrospective anticipated, projected from RP).

The theory is based on the relationship between events, time, and the observer, and the 'axes of orientation' are related to 'directions of observation' for each 'event'. Direction of observation is represented by the symbol V for vector. The observer may focus upon a simultaneous event (zero direction), upon an event anterior to P (minus direction), or upon an event posterior to P (plus direction). All possible directions of

observation from P may then be expressed by the formulae P0V, P-V, P+V. When combined, the ordered relations between all possible events and four axes of orientation give twelve possible ‘tenses’.

The fact that there are four so-called perfect ‘tenses’ which correspond to and validate the four axes of orientation leads Bull to the conclusion that aspect plays a significant role in the construction of actual tense forms and that it should be included in tense systems. He then proceeds to redefining and renaming his tenses by assigning to them perfective or imperfective aspect. In the following table I represent the French, Spanish, and Romanian forms that correspond to Bull’s tense system:

(30)

	-V	0V	+V
PP	(1) <i>present perfect</i> Fr. ‘a mangé’ Sp. ‘ha comido’ Ro. ‘a mâncat’ (Reg.) ‘mâncă’	(2) <i>present imperfect</i> Fr. ‘mange’ Sp. ‘come’ Ro. ‘mănâncă’	(3) <i>future</i> Fr. ‘mangera’ Sp. ‘comerá’ Ro. ‘va mânca’
RP	(4) <i>retro-pluperfect</i> Fr. ‘avait mangé’ Sp. ‘había comido’ Ro. ‘mâncase’	(5) <i>retro-perfect and retro-imperfect</i> Fr. ‘mangea’ ‘a mangé’ ‘mangeait’ Sp. ‘comió’ ‘comía’ Ro. ‘a mâncat’ (Lit.) ‘mâncă’ ‘mânca’	(6) <i>retro-future</i> Fr. ‘mangerait’ Sp. ‘comería’ Ro. ‘va mânca’
AP	(7) <i>future perfect</i> Fr. ‘aura mangé’ Sp. ‘habrá comido’ Ro. ‘va fi mâncat’	(8) -	(9) -
RAP	(10) <i>retro-future perfect</i> Fr. ‘aurait mangé’ Sp. ‘habría comido’ Ro. ‘va mânca’	(11) -	(12) -

The following sections will present Bull's account of the imperfect and the preterite, followed by a general assessment of the model in order to decide whether the notion of an axis of orientation is preferable to that of a reference point and which of the systems examined is more appropriate for a representation of tense.

1.2.B.i The Imperfect and the Preterite within Bull's System

Bull (1960) assigns the same place to the imperfect and the preterite in his model: RP0V. The difference in function is described in terms of aspect:

Since every event has a beginning, a middle and an end, there are three possible order relations between RP and an event: the event may be initiated at RP, imperfect at RP or terminated at RP. The retro-imperfect describes the middle, the retro-perfect the two ends of the events (Bull 1960:67).

Furthermore, Bull recognizes that the preterite and the imperfect can perform more than one function and splits functions in two categories: systemic and nonsystemic:

A function is systemic when it exemplifies the unique exchange value used to organize the set. It is nonsystemic whenever it exemplifies a concept of order or aspect which is in conflict with the exchange value assigned the form in organizing the set (Bull 1960:70).

The systemic function of the preterite is to describe events which are either initiative or terminative at RP: E(RP0V). The systemic functions of the imperfect are considered to be the following: that of portraying an event recalled at PP, but imperfect at RP (since the event is being recalled, the axis needs to be RP) (31); that of recalling at

PP that a preliminary phase of an event was imperfect at RP (32); and a special category which is necessary owing to the fact that the speaker does not conform to the pattern of *veni, vidi, vici* in recalling a sequence of events⁷ (33).

(31) Sp. *En la calle de Virtudes 39, en esta ciudad de La Habana, vivía (imperfecto) hacia 1865, un matrimonio joven y animoso.* ‘On 39 Virtudes street, in this city of La Habana, lived around 1865, a young and cheerful married couple.’ (Bull 1960:98)

(32) Fr. *Elle gagnait (imparfait) la course, mais il a commencé à pleuvoir et elle a dû s’arrêter.* ‘She was winning the race, but it started raining and she had to stop.’

(33) Ro. Râdea (imperfect), plângea (imperfect), *nu mai ştia (imperfect) ce să facă.* ‘She was laughing, she was crying, she no longer knew what to do.’

The nonsystemic function of the preterite is E(PP-V): a function for events recalled at PP but not oriented to RP (34):

(34) Fr. *Il est parti (passé composé) il y a six ans.* ‘He left six years ago.’

The nonsystemic functions of the imperfect are the following: that of a single event or a series of events recalled at PP but not oriented to RP (35); a hypothetical event recalled at PP and anticipated at RP (36); an event, recalled at PP, and anterior to RP (37); a hypothetical event anticipated at PP; a hypothetical event presumed to be imperfect at PP (38):

⁷ ‘The speaker alternates between recollection without orientation to RP and recollections in which some events are oriented to RP. He organizes reality in terms of a series of retrospective axes rather than as a sequence of events and he can, as a result, choose arbitrarily which aspect to use in recalling an event.’ (Bull 1963:100)

(35) Sp. *Ha dicho que pensaba* (imperfecto) *en mí*. ‘He said he was thinking of me.’

(36) Sp. *Eran ellos los responsables de los delincuentes y si se fugaban* (imperfecto) *les exigirían cuentas*. ‘They were the ones responsible for the delinquents and if they were to escape, they were going to answer for it.’

(37) Sp. *No se conocía hasta ese momento la intensidad de la violencia con que pensaba* (imperfecto) *actuar la dictadura*. ‘Until that point they were unaware of the intensity of the violence with which the dictatorship was planning to act.’

(38) Sp. *Si yo pudiera, mocito, este trato se cerraba* (imperfecto). ‘If it were in my power, lad, the deal would be closed.’ (Bull 1960:102).

Bull’s model thus has the advantage of considering and of finding ways to account for different functions of the imperfect and the preterite. This, however, is not achieved solely by reference to tense. Furthermore, a system of tenses needs to withstand criticism across the representation of all of its forms. The following section will therefore offer an overall assessment of Bull’s model.

1.2.B.ii General Assessment of Bull’s Model

Where Reichenbach’s model of tense was based on ordered relationships between event time, speech time, and reference time, Bull bases his theory on ‘axes of orientation’ and ‘directions of observation’ for each ‘event’. The description of Bull’s tenses is repeated below for convenience, with examples from the three languages under consideration:

(39)

	-V	OV	+V
PP	(1) <i>present perfect</i> Fr. 'a mangé' Sp. 'ha comido' Ro. 'a mâncat' (Reg.) 'mâncă'	(2) <i>present imperfect</i> Fr. 'mange' Sp. 'come' Ro. 'mănâncă'	(3) <i>future</i> Fr. 'mangera' Sp. 'comerá' Ro. 'va mânca'
RP	(4) <i>retro-pluperfect</i> Fr. 'avait mangé' Sp. 'había comido' Ro. 'mâncase'	(5) <i>retro-perfect and retro-imperfect</i> Fr. 'mangea' 'a mangé' 'mangeait' Sp. 'comió' 'comía' Ro. 'a mâncat' (Lit.) 'mâncă'	(6) <i>retro-future</i> Fr. 'mangerait' Sp. 'comería' Ro. 'va mânca'
AP	(7) <i>future perfect</i> Fr. 'aura mangé' Sp. 'habrá comido' Ro. 'va fi mâncat'	(8) -	(9) -
RAP	(10) <i>retro-future perfect</i> Fr. 'aurait mangé' Sp. 'habría comido' Ro. 'va mânca'	(11) -	(12) -

The three problems encountered in Reichenbach's model of tenses (1.2.A) are solved in Bull's model: there is no missing cell, since E(RAP-V) accounts for the past of the anterior future, here called 'retro-future perfect'; the problem of allotopy (three formulae for the same form) is reduced to the Romanian *perfect compus* and to the French *passé composé* in cells 1 and 5; there is no 'posterior future' form.

However, Bull's system is one of maximum potential and he is unable to find any language that has equivalents for all the hypothetical forms. Indeed, two of the axes, AP and RAP, are empty in two of their slots (cells 8, 9, 11, 12), including their prime points (8, 11). In this sense, the system can be called overly rich.

Binnick (1991) suggests that this problem is partially solvable, because a form ‘will eat’ could also be placed in AP0V (cell 8 above), and ‘would eat’ could also be in RAP0V (cell 11).⁸ Nevertheless, Binnick points out that there is no reason, other than the need to accommodate in a single scheme the forms in question, to have exactly four axes. Indeed, McCoard (1978) maintains that there is no reason not to have an additional axis defined as ARP, ‘a point that will be looked back on (viewed retrospectively) at some time in the future’, which would account for the future perfect in (40):

(40) He will have bought a new suit on Saturday, so he will probably want to go out for dinner on Sunday.

Similarly, McCoard claims that an axis RPP could be posited for a point viewed retrospectively from RP, which would account for the pluperfect form in (41):

(41) I was told that she had graduated the Friday before.

McCoard’s criticisms suggest that Bull’s system is in a sense not sufficiently rich, if the claim is that any act of observation can become an axis of observation, and some of the acts of observation are not represented by Bull’s axes. Moreover, the system lacks coherence: if ‘has eaten’ is on the same axis as ‘eats’, and ‘had eaten’ is on the same axis as ‘ate’, why is ‘will have eaten’ not on the same axis as ‘will eat’, and ‘would have eaten’ not on the same axis as ‘would eat’?

⁸ Note, however, that this would recreate a problem of allotopy.

From a general theoretical point of view, Bull's model has been shown to have significant drawbacks. On the one hand it seems too rich (a system of maximum potential with four empty slots, no mention of which ones could be filled, which ones are never filled in languages of the world, and why this should be the case). On the other hand it has been suggested that the model is not rich enough (with other potential axes which can be acts of observation not represented). Furthermore, the representation of the tense forms on the axes has been shown to lack coherence at times.

1.2.C Neo-Reichenbachian Approaches: Hornstein (1990) and Verkuyl et al (2004)

Of the two alternatives presented in 1.2.A and 1.2.B, it is Reichenbach's model that has been more influential, despite its problems of the missing cell, of allotopy, and of the empty cell. These problems have been addressed and, to an extent, solved in subsequent models of tense which took Reichenbach's theory as a starting point. In this section I present two models which I label neo-Reichenbachian, in the sense that both adopt and adapt the notion of a reference point.

1.2.C.i Hornstein (1990)

Hornstein (1990) addresses Reichenbach's problem of allotopy by arguing that the posterior past and the anterior future are not ambiguous between three meanings (as suggested by the three formulae associated with them), and that the relation between S and E is in fact irrelevant: the only meaning of the posterior past is that R is anterior both to S and to E, and the only meaning for the anterior future is that R is posterior both to S and to E. The model thus becomes:

(42)

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
<u>ANTERIOR</u>	1) <u>(E-R)(R-S)</u> Fr. 'avait mangé' Sp. 'había comido' Ro. 'mâncase'	2) <u>(E-R)(R,S)</u> Fr. 'a mangé' Sp. 'ha comido' Ro. 'a mâncat' (Reg. 'mâncă')	3) <u>(E-R)(S-R)</u> Fr. 'aura mangé' Sp. 'habrá comido' Ro. 'va fi mâncat'
<u>SYNCHRONOUS</u>	4) <u>(E,R)(R-S)</u> Fr. 'mangea' 'a mangé' 'mangeait' Sp. 'comió' 'comía' Ro. 'a mâncat' 'mânca' (Lit. mâncă)	5) <u>(E,R)(R,S)</u> Fr. 'mange' Sp. 'come' Ro. 'mănâncă'	6) <u>(E,R)(S-R)</u> Fr. 'mangera' Sp. 'comerá' Ro. 'va mânca'
<u>POSTERIOR</u>	7) <u>(R-E)(R-S)</u> Fr. 'mangerait' 'allait manger' Sp. 'comería' 'iba a comer' Ro. 'va mânca'	8) <u>(R-E)(R,S)</u> Fr. 'mangera' 'va manger' Sp. 'comerá' 'va a comer' Ro. 'va mânca'	9) <u>(R-E)(S-R)</u>

Thus adapted by Hornstein (1990), the model is more transparent. The relationship between speech point and event point is irrelevant and not included in the system. As observed in Reichebach's representation of tenses, the underlining above shows that anteriority, synchronicity and posteriority are concerned with the relation between event point and reference point (E-R; E,R; R-E respectively), while past, present, and future are concerned with the relation between speech point and reference point (R-S; R,S; S-R respectively).

However, reducing the system to two binary relations rather than three binary ones only makes it coherent to an extent. In Romanian, the form 'va mânca' is still present in three of the nine cells: (S-R)(E,R), (R-E)(E-S), (S,R)(R-E). In French and

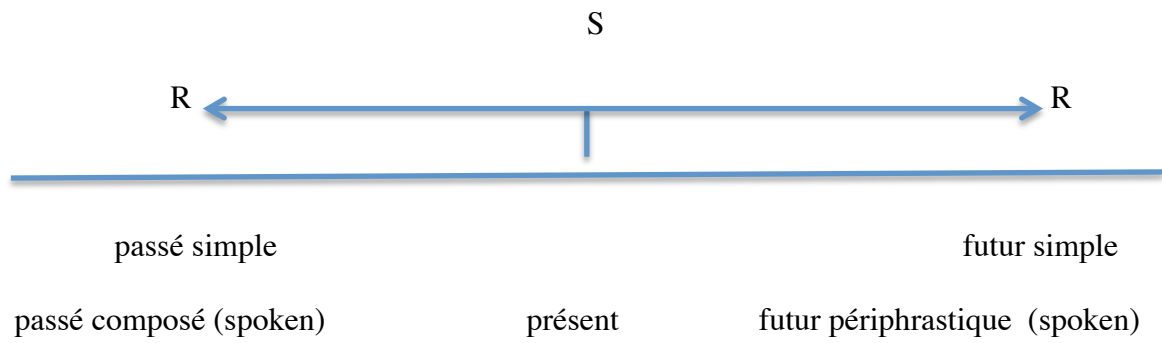
Spanish, the simple and periphrastic futures and futures in the past, ‘va / allait manger’ and ‘mangera / mangerait’, ‘va a comer / iba a comer’ and ‘comerá / comería’ are often used interchangeably, so they could also be placed in two cells each. In spoken Romanian and spoken French, the *perfect compus* and the *passé composé* function both as synchronous pasts and as anterior presents.

The imperfect and the preterite share the formula (E,R)(R-S), which means that the difference in function between the two is not related to tense in this model.

1.2.C.ii Verkuyl et al (2004)

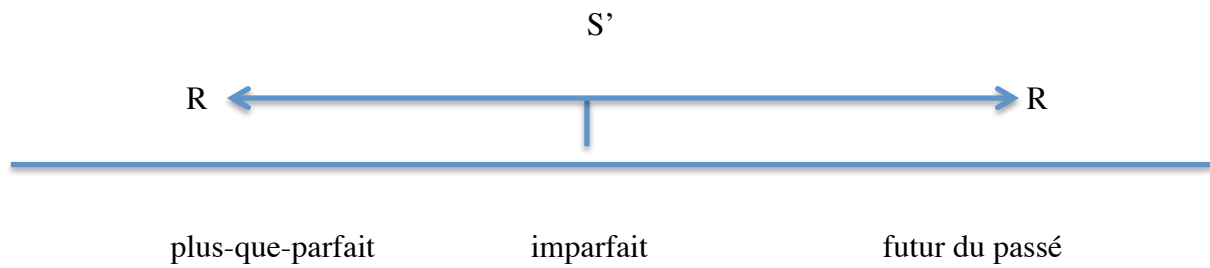
Verkuyl et al (2004) argue against a 3x3 arrangement as presented by Reichenbach. Following Martin (1971) and Vet (1980), they lean towards a representation of French tenses on two axes, one having the main perspective point simultaneous with the speech point (S), and the other having its perspective point before S (S’). Temporal relations of anteriority, simultaneity and posteriority give rise to a system of six tenses (Verkuyl et al 2004:255). The other forms below, represented in italics, mark aspect.

(43)



passé antérieur passé composé futur périphrastique futur antérieur
passé surcomposé (spoken)

(44)



plus-que-parfait surcomposé (spoken) *futur périphrastique du passé*
plus-que parfait *futur antérieur du passé*

This is the first tense system presented so far in which the imperfect and the preterite are seen to differ as tenses⁹: the imperfect is seen as simultaneous with a point anterior to the speech point (S'), while the preterite is seen as anterior to the speech point (S). The point anterior to the speech point in the representation of the imperfect can coincide with the reference point of the preterite, which is why we can have (45), as well as (46):

(45) Fr. À huit heures du matin il *a* beaucoup *plu* (passé composé). 'At eight in the morning it rained heavily.'

(46) Fr. À huit heures du matin il *pleuvait* (imparfait) beaucoup. 'At eight in the morning it was raining heavily.'

In other words, the imperfect and the preterite still have in common the fact that both represent events that took place before the speech point, and synchronically with a reference point. In addition to this, however, the model claims that the imperfect is dependent on a point located in the past and previously mentioned in discourse, and that the preterite is not. This idea relates to the claim made by Kamp and Rohrer (1983) that the preterite always introduces a new reference point in speech, whereas the imperfect keeps the same reference point.

This representation has the apparent advantage of distinguishing the two functions of tense¹⁰: deixis (because the first subsystem establishes relations to the speech point), and anaphoricity (because the perspective point S' is dependent on

⁹ Recall that they had different representations in Bull's system, but the difference was described as aspectual.

¹⁰ See the introduction to Section 1.

another point previously described in discourse). Their model for French tense forms is presented below, and aspect is represented in the shaded cells:

(47)

	Past: R-S	Present: R,S	Future: S-R
E,R	Passé Composé: E,R-S 'a mangé' Passé Simple: E,R-S (written French) 'mangea'	Présent: E,R,S 'mange'	Futur Simple: S-R,E 'mangera' Futur Périphrastique: S-R,E 'va manger'
		Futur Périphrastique: S,R-E 'va manger'	
E-R	Passé Surcomposé: E-R-S (spoken French) 'a eu mangé' Passé Antérieur: E-R-S (written French) 'eut mangé'	Passé Composé: E-R,S 'a mangé'	Futur Antérieur: S-E-R 'aura mangé'
	Past in the past: R-S'	Present in the past: R,S'	Future in the past: S'-R
E,R	Plus-que-Parfait: E,R-S' 'avait mangé'	Imparfait: E,R,S' 'mangeait'	Futur du passé: S'-E,R 'mangerait'
		Futur Périphrastique du Passé: S',R-E 'allait manger'	
E-R	Plus-que-Parfait Surcomposé: E-R-S' 'avait eu mangé'	Plus-que-Parfait: E-R,S' 'avait mangé'	Futur Antérieur du Passé: S'-E-R 'aurait mangé'

It is surprising that despite their own criticism of a 3x3 Reichenbachian arrangement, Verkuyl et al opted for a three-way relationship between E, R, and S/S', when binary relationships as proposed by Hornstein (see 1.2.C.i) would solve the

problems raised by a 3x3 system (see 1.2.A). Furthermore, the ‘futur périphrastique’ and the ‘futur périphrastique du passé’ are represented as a halfway house between E,R and E-R (note the grey shading), despite their formulae being S,R-E and S’,R-E. I propose that this problem can be solved by accepting that there is also a relationship R-E (as opposed to just E,R and E-R). In addition to this, if the ‘futur périphrastique’ is accepted as a tense alternative to the ‘futur simple’ (they are frequently used interchangeably in speech), it is inconsistent to treat the ‘futur du passé’ and the ‘futur périphrastique du passé’ in a different manner.

Adapted to Hornstein’s binary relationships, and including a relationship (R-E), and the ‘futur périphrastique du passé’ as an alternative to the ‘futur du passé’, the model is represented in (48). It remains, however, unclear why, having acknowledged that the relationship between E and R can be interpreted as aspectual (Verkuyl et al 2004:257), certain forms are interpreted only as tenses (e.g. the *imparfait*, the *passé simple*), some as both tenses and aspects (e.g. the *plus-que-parfait*), and some only as aspects (e.g. the *futur antérieur*, the *passé antérieur*).

(48)

	Past: R-S	Present: R,S	Future: S-R
E,R	Passé Composé: (E,R)(R-S) 'a mangé' Passé Simple: (E,R)(R-S) (written French) 'mangea'	Présent: E,R,S 'mange'	Futur Simple: (E,R)(S-R) 'mangera' Futur Périphrastique: (E,R)(S-R) 'va manger'
R-E		Futur Périphrastique: (R-E)(R,S) 'va manger'	
E-R	Passé Surcomposé: (E-R)(R-S) (spoken French) 'a eu mangé' Passé Antérieur: (E-R)(R-S) (written French) 'eut mangé'	Passé Composé: (E-R)(R,S) 'a mangé'	Futur Antérieur: (E-R)(S-R) 'aura mangé'
	Past in the past: R-S'	Present in the past: R,S'	Future in the past: S'-R
E,R	Plus-que-Parfait: (E,R)(R-S') 'avait mangé'	Imparfait: (E,R)(R,S') 'mangeait'	Futur du passé: (E,R)(S'-R) 'mangerait' Futur Périphrastique du Passé: (R-E)(R,S') 'allait manger'
R-E		Futur Périphrastique du Passé: (R-E)(R,S') 'allait manger'	
E-R	Plus-que-Parfait Surcomposé: (E-R)(R-S') 'avait eu mangé'	Plus-que-Parfait: (E-R)(R,S') 'avait mangé'	Futur Antérieur du Passé: (E-R)(S'-R) 'aurait mangé'

Leaving aside the problematic definitions of tense and aspect within this model, the main difference between Verkuyl et al's formulae and Hornstein's is the introduction of the S' point. Its presence in the system is questionable, since S' is situated before S, so the imperfect formula E,R,S' is actually equivalent to (E,R)(R-S).

Furthermore, a crucial argument against such a representation is that the imperfect does not always need a point previously described in discourse (see the so-called narrative imperfect example in 49). Similarly, the preterite does not always introduce a new reference point, and can refer to a point previously mentioned in discourse, equivalent to S' (50).

(49) Fr. *Pour la première fois de sa vie, il ne s'ennuya pas au théâtre et il passa la nuit avec des filles. Six mois plus tard il se remariait* (imparfait) (Maupassant). 'For the first time of his life, he was not bored in the theatre, and he spent the night with girls. Six months later, he remarried.' (Molendijk et al. 2004:284)

(50) Fr. *Le singe s'échappa. Nous ne le retrouvâmes plus, car il disparut* (passé simple) *dans la forêt épaisse*. 'The monkey escaped. We never found it again, for it vanished into the thick forest.' (Molendijk et al. 2004:276)

It is true that there is psycholinguistic evidence on the processing of tense (Dickey 2001) showing that anaphoricity is linked to tense; the S' point could be seen as an indicator of this function, because it refers back to a point previously described in discourse. However, the definition of anaphora in Dickey's study is not equivalent to having an *unchanging* reference point (like the S'). When providing evidence for the anaphoric function of tense, psycholinguistic studies show that the tense form is partly responsible (together with sentence-level factors such as adverbials and discourse factors) for establishing whether or not the reference point changes. This suggests that

anaphoricity is represented within a model of tense by the mere presence of a reference point, which can relate in different ways to event points and to other reference points.

The introduction of a point S' is therefore not necessary for the representation of the anaphoric function of tense, and the representation of the imperfect as always involving the presence of a point previously mentioned in discourse, and of the preterite as never involving it, is inaccurate.

*

In this section I have assessed different models of tense for French, Spanish, and Romanian, and the place of the imperfect and the preterite within these models. Since Bull's model relying on axes of orientation was shown to have significant drawbacks, neo-Reichenbachian models that made use of the notion of reference point (as well as of a speech point and of an event point) were preferred. The inclusion of an additional point S' which represents a point of time previously mentioned in discourse (Verkuyl et al 2004) in tense models was dismissed, since such a description is neither necessary from a theoretical standpoint, nor does it accurately account for the functions of the imperfect and the preterite. Hornstein's formulae involving two binary relationships (one between S and R, and one between E and R) were therefore deemed the most adequate in accounting for the different ways in which events are located in time. In section 3 below I turn to the implications of this discussion for the description of the imperfect - preterite opposition.

1.3 Beyond Tense

In the previous sections I evaluated ways in which the functions of the imperfect and of the preterite have been accounted for within systems of tense. The goal of this section is to assess whether tense distinctions as described above are sufficient in accounting for the opposition in function between the two forms.

Firstly, it must be noted that none of the models evaluated above refers solely to tense; all found it necessary to make reference to aspect. This was explicit in Bull's model, and it can be argued to be implicit in Reichenbach's, Hornstein's, and Verkuyl et al's models, since the location of an event in the time (that is, tense) arguably depends on the relationship between speech point and reference point (in Reichenbach's and Hornstein's models this relationship characterized precisely 'past', 'present' and 'future' tenses); Verkuyl et al (2004:257) point out that the relationship between reference point and event point can be interpreted as relating to aspect, rather than tense, since it involves viewing an event from a synchronic, anterior or posterior perspective. Secondly, even if these are considered 'tense' systems, with the exception of Bull (1960) and Verkuyl et al (2004), all the models described the imperfect and the preterite as occupying the same position within the 'tense' system. This means that the difference between them was deemed aspectual. Bull did provide the two forms with different descriptions, but this was precisely because his account also included aspect: 'The retro-imperfect describes the middle, the retro-perfect the two ends of the events', but they occupy the same position on the axis (Bull 1960:67).

Contrary to all other models described, Verkuyl et al (2004), following Martin (1971) and Vet (1980), claimed that the difference between the imperfect and the

preterite was temporal rather than aspectual. This difference was explained in terms of ‘anaphoricity’¹¹: the imperfect was seen as anaphorical, because an event was simultaneous to a point in the past which had already been mentioned in speech, while the preterite was seen as deictic, because it located an event before the speech point. There are three reasons to question this account. Firstly, the imperfect can also be considered deictic, since it locates an event before the speech point (i.e. in the past). Secondly, with a wider definition of ‘anaphoricity’ in mind, all tenses can be seen as anaphorical, because they are partly responsible for establishing relationships between events whose temporality is described by tense. It is therefore an oversimplification to state that only the imperfect is anaphorical, only the preterite is deictic, and to describe the difference in function between the two paradigms in such a way. Thirdly, even without referring to the labels ‘deictic’ and ‘anaphoric’, the description of the opposition is inaccurate: the imperfect does not always concern simultaneity to a previously described point in speech and the preterite does not always involve a change of reference point.

To summarize, models of tense generally show that the difference in function between the imperfect and the preterite is not one of location of the events in time (i.e. tense), and the attempts where the opposition is described as purely temporal are inaccurate. In the following chapter I will therefore investigate the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite.

¹¹ A similar claim is made for the Spanish tense forms by Brucart (2003).

CHAPTER 2: THE IMPERFECT, THE PRETERITE, AND ASPECT

Aspect differs from tense with respect to the way in which it relates to time: while tense ‘relates the time of the situation referred to to some other time, usually the moment of speaking’ and is thus a deictic category, aspect deals with ‘ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation’ and is non-deictic (Comrie 1976:1-3). In accordance with Reichenbach’s (1947), Bull’s (1960), and Hornstein’s (1990) models assessed in the previous chapter, in which the imperfect and the preterite were shown not to differ in terms of location of the situation in time (tense), it has been frequently argued that the distinction between them must be one of aspect. The aspectual approach has been defended among others in French by Brunot (1922), Guillaume (1933), Grobe (1967), Price (1971), Cox (1982), and in Spanish by Lenz (1920), Alarcos (1970), Comrie (1976), De Mello (1989). There have been many debates in recent years on the necessity of an aspectual category in Romanian, with the result of the first inclusion of aspect in the 2005 edition of the *Gramatica Limbii Române*.

However, the application of the grammatical category of aspect to Romance languages has been far from straightforward. The main reason for this is that the notion of aspect was initially applied to the Slavonic verb system, where each verb is marked explicitly for perfectivity (describing an action ‘gone by’) and imperfectivity (describing an action ‘in progress’) (Pinkster 1990:220). The search for a similar binary opposition in Romance verb systems, which lack such regular sets of morphological oppositions, led to a lack of agreement on the definition of aspect in general, and on the nature of the imperfect - preterite distinction in particular. The oppositions most frequently argued to represent the difference between the imperfect and the preterite

are: perfective / imperfective, terminative / non-terminative, inceptive / non-inceptive, and punctual / durative.

The different uses and definitions of the terms ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’ illustrate the proliferation of approaches and the terminological confusion surrounding aspect. These terms are used to distinguish between verbs (e.g. Imbs 1960: Fr. *battre* ‘to beat’, imperfective, vs. Fr. *abattre* ‘to knock down’, perfective), to explain the use of certain periphrases (e.g. Fr. *être en train de* ‘to be in the process of’, as a marker of imperfectivity) and tense forms (e.g. Fr. *je l’ai eu fait*, the *passé surcomposé*, as a marker of perfectivity) (Ayres-Bennett and Carruthers 2001), or to distinguish between the preterite and the imperfect (e.g. Martin 1971). Even in this last sense, the definitions of perfectivity and imperfectivity differ from one approach to another: while for Comrie (1976) a ‘perfective’ action is one viewed as a whole, with its beginning, middle and end rolled into one, Bryant (1984) sees a ‘perfective’ action as one that has reached its terminus. Thus, in (1) below, the phone ringing is viewed as a whole / terminative (i.e. perfective), while the action of sleeping is viewed internally, with no information on its end point (i.e. imperfective).

(1) Fr. *Le téléphone a sonné (passé composé) pendant que Marie dormait (imparfait).*

‘The phone rang while Marie was sleeping.’

However, whichever definition of perfectivity and imperfectivity one adheres to, this opposition is unable to account for all the functions of the two forms. Consider the examples below:

(2) Sp. *Nacía* (imperfecto) *Vincent Van Gogh, hijo de un pastor protestante, el 30 de marzo de 1853 en Zunder* (Rojo 1974:136). ‘Vincent Van Gogh, the son of a protestant pastor, was born on the 30th March 1853 in Zunder.’

(3) Ro. *Marea a fost* (perfect compus) *calmă cât timp familia a fost în vacanță*. ‘The sea was calm while the family was on holiday.’

On the one hand, it would be difficult to argue that the action of being born in (2), expressed in the imperfect, is not viewed as a whole (i.e. not perfective), considering the reference to its date. Similarly, if following the terminative definition of perfectivity, there can be no doubt that the event of being born has reached its terminus, and is therefore perfective.¹² On the other hand, in (3), the preterite expresses the fact that the sea was calm while the family was on holiday, not necessarily that it is no longer calm; I will argue that the preterite does not necessarily express terminativity.

Examples such as (2) and (3) have led to the proposal that the imperfect - preterite opposition might be related to the notion of inceptivity, rather than terminativity. Cox (1982) argues that in (4) below, when the preterite is used, there is focus on the beginning of the action, and that this is not the case when the imperfect is used:

(4) Sp. *María estaba* (imperfecto) *en la habitación cuando Juan entró* (pretérito indefinido). ‘María was in the room when Juan came in.’

¹² (3) and (4) are not isolated cases: since the nineteenth-century, the use of a perfective imperfect instead of a preterite has become a common stylistic device; this use is referred to as the ‘narrative imperfect’ or ‘imparfait pittoresque’ in the literature.

However, describing the imperfect - preterite opposition in terms of inceptivity is less convincing in (5) and (6) below:

(5) Fr. *Il s'est noyé* (passé composé). 'He drowned.'

(6) Fr. *Il se noyait* (imparfait). 'He was drowning.'

Cox maintains that the crucial distinction between (5) and (6) is the exclusion of the beginning of the action from the speaker's focus when the imperfect is used. However, whether this be French, Spanish or Romanian, native-speaker intuitions are that in (5) the person actually drowned, while in (6) the result of the action is uncertain. Therefore, in this case, the imperfect - preterite opposition must involve terminativity.

Another frequently cited opposition with respect to the functions of the imperfect and the preterite is durative vs. punctual (e.g. Imbs 1960, Price 1971, Solé 1990). In (7) below, Russell's realization is a momentary event, expressed in the preterite, in contrast with the riding of the bike, which is a durative event, expressed in the imperfect:

(7) Sp. *Mientras montaba* (imperfecto) *en bicicleta, Russell descubrió* (pretérito indefinido) *que ya no amaba a su esposa* (Salas González 1998). 'While riding his bike, Russell realized that he no longer loved his wife'.

However, there are numerous examples both of verbs that express duration used in the preterite, and of verbs which express punctuality used in the imperfect:

(8) Fr. *La guerre de Cent ans* dura (passé simple) *en réalité cent seize ans* (Tesnière 1959). ‘In reality, the Hundred Years War lasted for 116 years.’

(9) Fr. *J’ai entendu un bruit, dehors... Cela a fait pschouittt. ... Je me suis demandé pourquoi Maurice cessait (imparfait) de parler au beau milieu d’une phrase* (Cox 1982:230). ‘I heard a noise outside. It went sshhhht... I wondered why Maurice stopped talking in the very middle of a sentence.’

In (9), Maurice was shot, which is why he stopped talking in the middle of a sentence. The verb of interest is Fr. *cessait* ‘stopped’, which must describe a momentary event, and could certainly have lasted no longer than Fr. *je me suis demandé* ‘I asked myself’, which, however, is expressed in the preterite. Therefore, the difference between the imperfect and the preterite cannot be one of duration, since two actions which took the same amount of time are expressed in (9) by the two different tense forms. This claim is supported by Comrie (1976), who points out that adverbs with durative meanings can co-exist with both forms:

(10) Sp. *Reinó* (pretérito indefinido) / *reinaba* (imperfecto) *por cuarenta años*. ‘He reigned for forty years.’

(11) Sp. *Caminó* (pretérito indefinido) / *caminaba* (imperfecto) *toda la tarde*. ‘He walked all afternoon.’

The above evaluation of approaches based on binary aspectual oppositions indicates that their failure to provide a consistent description of the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite stems from two major causes. The first

cause is the confusion between aspectual differences provided by the imperfect and the preterite (grammatical aspect) and aspectual differences provided by the semantics of the predicate (lexical aspect); this confusion is evident both from the analysis of the imperfective - preterite opposition and from that of the punctual - durative opposition. The second cause is the absence of a systematic way of including lexical aspectual information in an analysis of its interaction with the imperfect and the preterite.

Evidence for the need to include lexical aspectual information when accounting for the functions of the imperfect and the preterite comes from examples like (12) and (13) below, dubbed ‘the imperfective paradox’ in the literature (e.g. Bennett and Partee 1972, Dowty 1979, Parsons 1990, Portner 1998, Ferreira 2005). The first sentence in each set includes a verb in the imperfect, and yet the inferences one can draw are different: while ‘Maria was pushing a trolley’ entails ‘Maria pushed a trolley’, ‘Maria was baking a cake’ does not entail ‘Maria baked a cake’. Since both the tense forms and the syntactical structure of the two sets of sentences are identical,¹³ it must be the case that the semantics of the predicate (lexical aspectual information) affects the meaning provided by the imperfect or the preterite and has a role in determining the overall aspectual meaning of a sentence.

(12) Ro. *Maria* împingea (imperfect) *un cărucior*. -> *Maria* a împins (perfect compus) *un cărucior*. ‘Maria was pushing a trolley.’ -> ‘Maria pushed a trolley.’

(13) Ro. *Maria* făcea (imperfect) *o prăjitură*. > *Maria* a făcut (perfect compus) *o prăjitură*. ‘Maria was baking a cake.’ > ‘Maria baked a cake.’

¹³ The sentences are SVO. However, there have been syntactical approaches to aspect in which it is argued that the syntactical tree structure of the two sentences is different (e.g. Borer 2005 a and b, Arsenijević 2006).

The ‘imperfective paradox’ examples and the shortcomings of approaches based on binary aspectual oppositions show that the analysis of the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite must begin with an evaluation of the role of lexical aspect. To this end, I will examine which lexical properties are relevant to aspect and how they could and should be patterned together in order to provide explanatory generalizations (Section 2.1). This discussion will provide the tools for investigating attempts at solving the imperfective paradox above (Section 2.2), and for assessing the respective roles of the imperfect and the preterite, on the one hand, and of lexical aspect, on the other, in providing the aspectual meaning of the sentence (Section 2.3). Against the background of this discussion, in Section 2.4 I will illustrate and critically assess the theoretical choices taken to describe the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

2.1 Aspectual Classes

In the introduction to this chapter it was shown that two sentences with an identical syntactic structure (subject + verb + object) had different entailments in the imperfect (in the case of English, in the progressive): while, for example, ‘Mary was pushing a trolley’ entails ‘Mary pushed a trolley’, ‘Mary was baking a cake’ does not entail ‘Mary baked a cake’. Such differences led to the conclusion that the lexical properties of predicates have an impact on aspect. These aspectually-relevant properties expressed by predicates are encompassed under the semantic category of ‘lexical aspect’.

Since this thesis is concerned with the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite and since the inferences that can be drawn from the use of tense forms have been shown to depend on lexical aspectual properties, this section will be concerned with descriptions and analyses of lexical aspect. I begin with an illustration of Vendler's (1957) classification of verbs into lexical aspectual classes (2.1.A). In section 2.1.B I will examine 'what aspectual classes classify': I show that aspectual classes or types are not determined according to the lexical properties of verbs, but according to the lexical properties of the verb as well as its arguments. The grammatical status of aspectual classes will be evaluated in Section 2.1.C: are they, in fact, necessary or can we simply refer to aspectually-relevant lexical properties? In Section 2.1.D I assess alternative classifications of lexical aspect, while in Section 2.1.E I discuss possible analyses of aspectual classes.

2.1.A Vendler's 'Verbs and Times'

Ryle (1949), Kenny (1963) and Vendler (1957) were the first to attempt classifications of verbs, inspired by Aristotle's distinction between KINĒSIS ('motion', 'change') and ENERGEIA ('actuality', 'actualization', 'activity'). The former describes eventualities that always move towards an inherent end, while the latter denote eventualities 'actualized' as soon as they begin (Filip 2011:721-22). This distinction is known in contemporary linguistics as 'telic' vs. 'atelic', following Garey (1957), who coined the term based on the Greek 'télōs', for 'goal' or 'purpose'.

Telicity lies at the heart of most classifications of lexical aspect. In addition to it, Vendler refers to two other properties when classifying verbs: dynamicity (whether or not the eventualities involve change) and duration (which refers to the temporal extent

of the eventuality). Most contemporary studies of aspect still follow Vendler's four-way classification into states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements. Vendler claims that these aspectual classes capture 'the most common time schemata implied by the use of English verbs'¹⁴ (Vendler 1957:144) and he gives examples of such verbs:

(14)

States: love, want, desire;

Activities: run, walk, push a cart;

Achievements: recognize, find, die;

Accomplishments: run a mile, paint a picture, grow up.

According to Vendler, states and achievements are similar in that they only require instants of time, with the difference that achievements 'occur' at such an instant, whereas states 'hold' at *any* instant during the interval at which they are true. Activities and accomplishments, on the other hand, involve periods as opposed to instants of time, with the difference that only accomplishments 'proceed toward a terminus which is logically necessary to their being part of what they are', whereas activities 'go on in time in a homogeneous way; any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole'¹⁵ (Vendler 1957:146).

¹⁴ Note that Vendler does not exclude the possibility of there being more than four lexical aspectual classes. More possibilities of classification will be explored in the following sections.

¹⁵ This is also known as the subinterval property, to which I will refer in subsequent sections. Note also that Vendler refers to the semantic property of 'homogeneity' and to the concept of 'parts', which inspired subsequent mereological theories of lexical aspect (e.g. Mourelatos 1978, Bach 1986, Krifka 1992, 1998).

To summarize, Vendler's goal was to classify verbs according to the internal temporal properties of the verb. These properties are dynamicity, duration and telicity, whose relation to the Vendlerian classes I represent here on a feature matrix:

(15)

States: [-dynamic], [-telic], [+durative]

Activities: [+dynamic], [-telic], [+durative]

Accomplishments: [+dynamic], [+telic], [+durative]

Achievements: [+dynamic], [+telic], [-durative]

Since lexical aspectual properties were shown to have an impact on the overall aspectual meaning of sentences in the imperfect and the preterite (e.g. the imperfective paradox examples), we must establish exactly the domain of application of these properties (Section 2.1.B). This will then allow an assessment of the grammatical status of classifications of lexical aspectual properties into aspectual classes (Section 2.1.C).

2.1.B What do 'Aspectual Classes' Classify?

Vendler (1957) maintained that dynamicity, telicity, and duration were properties of verbs. This may be the case (e.g. 'she was arriving', 'she was walking'), but it is not necessarily so. If these were properties of the verb, then 'to write poems' and 'to write a poem' would belong to the same aspectual class, and yet only the latter proceeds towards a terminus (denotes an accomplishment). Therefore, telicity is a property of the verb phrase. Furthermore, both telicity and dynamicity can depend not only on the verb

phrase, but also on external arguments of the verb: while (16) denotes an accomplishment, (17) denotes a state, owing to the nature of the subjects involved.

(16) Anna ran across the field.

(17) The river ran across the field.

The same can be said of duration: (18) reflects a durative eventuality (an activity), while (19) reflects a punctual eventuality (an achievement).

(18) Turtles crossed the finish line.

(19) The turtle crossed the finish line.

(Examples from Filip 2011:725)

Some linguists (e.g. Filip 2011) distinguish between lexical properties of the verb (which they comprise under the term ‘lexical aspect’) and lexical properties of the verb phrase and sentence (to which they refer as aspectual types, classes, or Aktionsarten), while others (e.g. Van Hout 2003) use lexical aspect and aspectual classes interchangeably. Since any verb is part of a verb phrase and of a sentence in general, I will follow Van Hout (2003) and not distinguish between these terms. To summarize, aspectual classes are determined according to the lexical properties of the verb phrase and sentence; the latter can be subsumed under the terms ‘verb construction’, or ‘constellation’ (Smith 1997).

2.1.C The Grammatical Status of Aspectual Classes

Having described aspectually-relevant properties which can lead to the classification of a verb construction into a particular aspectual class, it is necessary to investigate whether these categories actually constitute generalizations of classes of predicates that ought to be seen as a part of the grammar of natural languages (Filip 2011).

A first argument in favour of this claim comes from Dowty (1979): aspectual classes have grammatical status because of the consistent way in which they interact with the morphological and syntactic structure in natural languages. In order to show that these patterns are not solely confined to Dowty's examples from English, I will give examples of these consistent interactions from French, Spanish, and Romanian.

Predicates denoting states are generally incompatible with progressive constructions (20), adverbs of manner (21, e.g. *soigneusement*, *cuidadosamente*, *cu grijă* 'carefully'; *exprès*, *a propósito*, *intenționat*, 'deliberately'), and cannot occur as complements of *forcer*, *forzar* and *a forța* 'to force' or *persuader*, *persuadir*, *a convinge* 'to persuade' (22):

(20) Sp. **Estoy sabiendo la respuesta*. *'I am knowing the answer.'

(21) Ro. **A știut răspunsul cu grijă / intenționat*. *'She carefully / deliberately knew the answer.'

(22) Fr. **Marie l'a forcé à / persuadé de savoir la réponse*. *'Marie forced / convinced him to know the answer.'

Predicates denoting dynamic eventualities (activities, accomplishments and achievements) interact differently (though consistently within their class) with temporal adverbials: only accomplishments are compatible with an ‘in x time’ construction measuring duration, whereas a ‘for x time’ construction can only measure the duration of an eventuality denoted by an activity predicate (with an accomplishment predicate it does not measure the *entire* duration of the situation denoted by the predicate). The duration of an eventuality denoted by an achievement predicate cannot be measured, (since it is construed as punctual), but an ‘in x time’ construction measures the time before such a situation occurs:

(23) Accomplishments:

(a) Sp. *Escribió una poesía en veinte minutos.* ‘She wrote a poem in twenty minutes.’

(b) Sp. #¹⁶*Escribió una poesía durante veinte minutos.* ‘She wrote a poem for twenty minutes.’

(24) Activities:

(a) Ro. *A umblat timp de două ore.* ‘She walked for two hours.’

(b) Ro. **A umblat în două ore.* *‘She walked in two hours.’

(25) Achievements:

(a) Fr. #¹⁷*Elle est arrivée en trois heures.* ‘She arrived in three hours.’

¹⁶ The ‘#’ is used to indicate that the ‘for x time’ adverbial does not measure the whole duration of the eventuality.

¹⁷ Though acceptable to some speakers, the ‘in x time’ adverbial does not measure the duration of the change of state denoted by the achievement, but the time which passed before the punctual change of state.

(b) Fr. **Elle est arrivée pendant trois heures.* *‘She arrived for three hours.’

The second argument in favour of the grammatical status of aspectual classes is that ‘when a given verb, a given phrase or a sentence changes its aspectual class in dependence on context, this change follows systematic patterns’ (Filip 2011). For instance, virtually any activity verb can achieve an accomplishment reading in a certain linguistic context:

(26)

(a) Ro. *Ai terminat de mâncat?* ‘Have you finished eating?’

(b) Sp. *Comí en una hora.* ‘I ate in an hour.’

Similarly, in the presence of time-point adverbials, epistemic verbs that denote states have an achievement reading:

(27) Fr. *Tout d’un coup j’ai compris la question.* ‘I suddenly understood (grasped) the question.’

These arguments favour the use of aspectual classes as generalizations over classes of predicates of natural languages, and starting with the advent of ‘event semantics’ (e.g. Bach 1981, Parsons 1990), they were considered primitives in models of semantics. This having been established, the debate shifted to how many and what kind of aspectual classes should be distinguished. Such alternatives will be explored in the following section.

2.1.D Classifications of Aspectual Types

Though the grammatical status of aspectual classes is no longer challenged, there are still disagreements about the properties that determine such a categorization, which leads to a lack of consensus regarding the number and kinds of aspectual classes that should be hypothesized, as well as regarding their possible analyses. Since most of the literature on aspectual classes refers to English, so will the theoretical investigation of aspectual classes and analyses in sections 2.1.D and 2.1.E. Following this discussion, in Sections 3 and 4 of this chapter I examine which theoretical choices have been taken in order to describe the imperfect / preterite opposition in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

In addition to Vendler's classes or in order to modify them, other aspectual types have been proposed, as a result of taking into consideration additional lexical aspectual distinctions. Croft (2012:37-45) provides an overview of the literature on aspectual classes, while pointing out that the resultant classification is neither systematic, nor necessarily exhaustive.

The distinction between object-level and stage-level eventualities (Carlson 1979: an object-level predicate describes an eventuality that is permanent for the object, e.g. 'to be of French origin'; a stage-level predicate describes a transitory eventuality, e.g. 'to be sad', 'to walk') is applied by Croft (2012) to states, which are classified as permanent and transitory, and differentiated by frequency adverbials:

(28) *She is often of French origin (permanent state).

(29) She is often sad (transitory state).

A further distinction is made between acquired permanent states ('to be broken') and inherent permanent states ('to be of French origin'), since something can become broken, but someone cannot start being of French origin. Mittwoch (1988) proposes an additional type of state: point states, like 'to be 5 o'clock', 'to be exactly one hour since she left', which are punctual, but not dynamic.

Achievements have been classified into two types, according to whether or not they are reversible: 'the door opened' denotes a reversible achievement, while 'the pig died' represents an irreversible one (Croft 2012, cf. Talmy 1985). Croft adds a third type of achievement, called a 'cyclic achievement': these eventualities, which denote actions like 'tap', 'snap', 'blink', are said to be punctual, but not to lead to a different resulting state. Smith (1997) sees these eventualities as punctual and atelic and considers them a fifth type of eventuality (on the same level as states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements) called 'semelfactives'.

There can also be an argument for subtypes of accomplishment: one type which involves an incremental, measurable change over time ('to read half way through the newspaper'), and one which does not ('repairing a computer' does not usually involve a gradual improvement, but 'fiddling around with it and trying various things until you hit on the cause of the problem and thus its solution' – Rothstein 2004:98, in Croft 2012:41).

Concerning activities, Hay, Kennedy, and Levin (1999) argue for another type that is incremental and directed ('to age', 'to sink', 'to cool'),¹⁸ as opposed to the 'Vendlerian' activity, which is undirected ('to walk', 'to sing').

¹⁸ Dowty (1979) classifies these verbs as 'degree achievements', Talmy (1985) describes them as gradient verbs, while Bertinetto and Squartini (1995) call them 'gradual completion verbs'.

In this section I have considered possible modifications and developments of Vendler's classification of predicates into aspectual classes. The possible aspectual types and subtypes identified from a survey of literature on aspect were: states (transitory, permanent - acquired and inherent -, point), activities (directed, undirected), accomplishments (incremental and nonincremental), achievements (reversible and irreversible) and potentially semelfactives (though these were sometimes classified under achievements). In the following section I evaluate different approaches to analysing aspectual types.

2.1.E Analysing Aspectual Types

Analyses of aspectual types run into two types of problems: i) how to account for cases where more than one aspectual type correspond to one predicate, and ii) the fact that Vendler's three binary features \pm dynamic, \pm telic, \pm durative cannot account for the wide variety of aspectual types identified in the previous section. Proposed solutions to these two types of problems will be assessed in this section.

2.1.E.i One Predicate, More than One Aspectual Type

In addition to classifying predicates into states, activities, achievements, and accomplishments, Vendler (1957) noted that some verbs could have two 'senses': 'to know' and 'to see' can be states, but in the presence of punctual adverbials (e.g. 'suddenly'), they act as achievements (compare 30, 31 to 32, 33):

(30) I know the answer to this question (state).

(31) I see Jane (state).

(32) I suddenly knew the answer (achievement).

(33) Suddenly, I saw Jane (achievement).

Similarly, Dowty (1979) observed that ‘to be polite’ can act as both a state (34), and as an activity (35):

(34) John is polite (state).

(35) John is being polite (activity).

Three major types of solutions have been generally presented in order to resolve the linguistic situation described above. The first is polysemy: as mentioned above, Vendler sees these predicates as having more than one meaning; according to this analysis, all alternative meanings of a predicate are conventionalized (Croft 2012:84). This proposal has not been developed in detail for aspect, but has attracted criticism in other areas of linguistics for introducing redundancies (Croft 2012:87).

The second possibility, frequently cited and used beyond the area of aspect, is derivation. One element is considered as basic, and a second element is viewed as derived: e.g. the basic type for ‘rat’ is a count noun; in the invented sentence ‘There’s rat all over the road’ (Traugott 2007:528), the use of ‘rat’ as a mass noun is derived from its use as a count noun. A particularly prominent variant of this analysis is ‘coercion’: when referring to aspect, ‘a particular basic aspectual type is coerced into another aspectual type as a consequence of the grammatical or constructional context in

which it occurs' (Croft 2012:84). Thus, in (32) and (33), owing to the use of the adverb 'suddenly', the aspectual type of 'see' and 'know' (state) is coerced into an achievement, while owing to the use of the progressive in (35), the state 'to be polite' is coerced into an activity. The 'coercion' theory is at origin of one of the most influential analyses of the imperfect - preterite opposition, which will be analysed in Section 2.3.B.

The third possibility is vagueness: a predicate such as 'be polite' in (34) and (35) is neither a state, nor an activity, but has 'vague' lexical aspect; its aspectual type will be determined according to grammatical context. For instance, in (35), the semantics of the progressive indicates that 'to be polite' is to be considered an activity. Though vagueness analyses are strongly favoured in areas such as argument structure, they have not been pursued in the domain of aspect (Croft 2012:87).

Croft (2012) finds the three solutions outlined above extreme, and proposes an alternative. Building on Dahl's (1985) observations that a predicate does not belong to a single aspectual type and has the potential to be conceptualized in several aspectual types, Croft sees aspectual types as aspectual construals of predicates (Croft 2012:37). Thus, English perception and cognition predicates (e.g. 'to see', 'to know') can be construed as either states or achievements, disposition predicates (e.g. 'to be polite') can be construed as either states or activities, etc. The aspectual construal of a predicate depends on semantic and grammatical context (Croft 2012:38). Following Bybee (1985, 2007), Croft proposes a usage-based model of predicates and their aspectual types, whereby the mental representations of linguistic structures depend on their usage patterns and frequency. As a result of a high frequency of use, some meanings can be conventionalized (such as 'to be polite' in its state and activity sense), and some meanings can become 'default', or at least preferred, if there are asymmetries in the

frequency of use of one construal over another (e.g. the use of ‘rat’ as a count noun as opposed to a mass noun; ‘There’s a rat on the road’ is much more frequent than ‘There’s rat all over the road.’)

A usage-based model thus accounts for a predicate corresponding to more than one aspectual type by allowing different conventionalizations of aspectual construals of predicates based on the usage patterns of a particular language, as opposed to a priori assumptions (Croft 2012:92).

2.1.E.ii Analyses of Aspectual Types

Considering the revisions and further classifications of Vendler’s aspectual classes illustrated in section 2.1.D, it is clear that the three binary properties proposed by Vendler (\pm dynamic, \pm telic, \pm durative) are no longer sufficient for descriptions of models of lexical aspect. In order to capture the interrelationships between different aspectual types and subtypes, decompositional analyses of lexical aspect have been proposed, in which aspectual types / classes are analysed as combinations of lexical aspectual primitives. In this section I will examine three types of analyses: aspect calculus (Dowty 1979), phasal analyses (Parsons 1990, Breu 1994, Bickel 1997, Klein 1992, 1994), and two-dimensional phasal representations (Croft 2012). This section will provide the analytical tools for the examination of accounts of the imperfect paradox in Section 2.2. It will also provide the background against which I will evaluate the approaches to and analyses of aspectual classes when accounting for the imperfect - preterite opposition in Romance languages (Sections 2.3 and 2.4).

2.1.E.ii.a Dowty's Aspect Calculus

Dowty (1979) developed the first major proposal for a decompositional analysis of aspectual types. He formally defines his aspectual classes by means of formulae of aspect calculus that combine state predicates and three abstract predicates: DO, BECOME, and CAUSE.

Dowty classifies predicates according to whether or not they entail a change of state, whether or not this change is definite, and whether or not they hold at a moment or at an interval. His aspectual classes are states, activities, and changes of state (single or complex), whose properties I represent in the feature matrix below:

States: [-change], [-interval] e.g. 'to know', 'to be a hero', habituals

or

[-change], [+interval] e.g. 'to sit', 'to stand', 'to lie'¹⁹

Activities: [+change], [-definite], [+interval] e.g. 'to move', 'to dance'

Changes of state: [+change], [+definite], [+interval] e.g. 'to notice', 'to kill', 'to melt'
(single change of state), 'to write a novel', 'to break the window'
(complex change of state)

Within each class, he further distinguishes between agentive and non-agentive predicates, the former involving the aspectual operator DO. Since he places both

¹⁹ Dowty distinguishes between the two kinds of states owing to their different behaviour in conjunction with the progressive in English: e.g. *'I am knowing', but 'I am sitting'.

agentive and non-agentive predicates in each class, the aspectual operator DO is not relevant in terms of the aspectual classification.

BECOME \emptyset points to the ‘definite change of state’ (Dowty’s ‘telicity’) entailment, and is true at a minimal time interval t at whose initial bound $\neg\emptyset$ holds, and at whose final bound \emptyset holds, where \emptyset is a state or an activity predicate (Dowty 1079:140). For instance,

‘to arrive’ = [not to be here] BECOME [to be here].

CAUSE is a bisentential operator [\emptyset CAUSE ψ] which accounts for causation. Complex changes of state (Dowty’s ‘accomplishments’) consist of a causing subevent and a resultant change of state:

‘to write a novel’: [to write] CAUSE [[there is not a novel] BECOME [there is a novel]].

Since Dowty sees states as primitives, his analysis is unable to distinguish between different types of states. Furthermore, punctual versus durative eventualities are not accounted for. Even when distinctions are made (e.g. ‘single’ versus ‘complex’ changes of state), Dowty’s aspectual classes do not behave uniformly, despite having the same formula of aspect calculus: both ‘to break a window’ and ‘to write a novel’ are complex changes of state, and yet note the differences in (36) and (37).

(36)

(a) *I broke a window for an hour.

(b) *I broke a window in an hour.

(37)

(a) #I wrote a novel for an hour.

(b) I wrote a novel in an hour.

In addition to these problems, Parsons (1990) and Chierchia (2004) have pointed to theoretical issues concerning the logical status of Dowty's operators. A preferable alternative to analyses that rely on the primitives like DO, BECOME, and CAUSE (c.f. Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1998, Van Valin 2005), is to consider phases or stages of eventualities as primitives.

2.1.E.ii.b Phasal Analyses

More recent proposals of analysis of lexical aspect refer to the decomposition of eventualities into phases or stages. Two main types of phasal analysis (also called stage structure) can be distinguished in the literature on lexical aspect: those that model phases and those that model boundaries of phases (Croft 2012:48). These will be described and assessed briefly in the following two subsections.

Analyses Based on Number of Phases

Klein (1992, 1994) distinguishes between three aspectual types according to the succession of 'states' (Klein's phases) they involve. '0-state' predicates (e.g. 'Paris is in France') correspond to Croft's inherent states. '1-state' predicates denote a static or

dynamic phase which can be preceded by a ‘pretime’ and by a ‘posttime’ during which the phase does not hold (e.g. ‘to be happy’, ‘to eat cake’). ‘2-state’ predicates have at least two phases, a source one and a target one (e.g. ‘to arrive at home’, ‘to go home’; source phase: not to be at home; target phase: to be at home).

The difference between achievement and accomplishment predicates depends in Klein’s model on whether the transition between the source phase and the target phase is punctual (e.g. in the case of ‘to arrive’) or durative (e.g. for ‘to go home’). Klein, however, argues that the description of this transition (or boundary between phases) depends on pragmatics, rather than semantics, and does not describe boundaries in his model. Croft (2012:52) points out that this could indeed be the case for example with verbs such as ‘to find’ (‘Clive found a proof of Fermat’s Last Theorem’ could be construed as punctual or durative), but that ‘to write a novel’, for example, could not be construed as punctual.

Klein’s account of semelfactives / cyclic achievements (e.g. ‘to blink’, ‘to tap’) is also problematic. They are formalized as ‘2-state lexical contents one of whose states is branching’ (Klein 1994:86). This, however, seems contrived and does not fit well in the 0/1/2-state system.

Furthermore, the system does not account for the static / dynamic distinction: both transitory states and activities are described in Klein’s model as having ‘1-state’ lexical content, despite their different syntactic and aspectual behaviours (see 2.1.C).

Finally, there is no place in the system for predicates such as ‘to be a war veteran’ (acquired permanent states), so Klein must amend his ‘0/1/2-state’ model for eventualities which include a pretime, but not also a posttime (Croft 2012:51-52).

Boundary-Based Phasal Analyses

Boundary-based phasal analyses differ with respect to which boundaries they consider as part of the structure of eventualities. Parsons (1990) makes use of culmination phases (i.e. boundaries at the end of events) and holding phases: states have a holding phase, accomplishments and achievements have a culmination phase (preceded by a development phase for accomplishments), while activities are analysed as iterations of events which consist of culmination phases.

By contrast, Breu (1994), Sasse (1991), Bickel (1997) make use of boundaries at the beginning of eventualities, as well as at their end. Thus, Breu (1994) is able to distinguish between the following aspectual types: inherent states, which have no boundary; states with an initial, but not a final boundary (e.g. ‘to know’); activities, which he sees as having both an initial, and a final boundary; accomplishments, which are seen to have a final boundary which involves the ‘exhaustion of an inherent “quantity”’ (Breu 1994:26); achievements, which have beginning and ending boundaries that coincide.

These approaches have the benefit of providing decompositional analyses of the Vendlerian aspectual classes, and even of going beyond them (e.g. Breu 1994, who introduces a different type of state). However, they are far from accounting for all the lexical distinctions which were shown to lead to the possible lexical aspectual classifications in 2.1.D. Furthermore, the phasal structures argued for are often problematic: a repeated punctual event can be construed as an activity, but activities do not always consist of iterated culminations (against Parsons 1990); if activities, achievements, and accomplishments all have final boundaries, the difference between the boundary of activities on the one hand, and achievements and accomplishments on

the other should be formalized (against Breu 1994). Finally, I consider the main weakness of phasal analyses in general to stem from the lack of a clear definition of a ‘phase’ and of evidence for the postulation of certain phases and not of others.

2.1.E.ii.c Two-Dimensional Phasal Representations

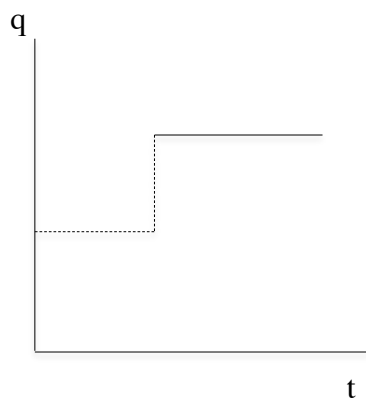
Croft (2012) defines lexical aspect as involving the way in which eventualities are construed as unfolding over time (Croft 2012:53). This leads him to argue that it is not only temporal properties that are significant in analysing lexical aspect, but also the way in which the eventuality unfolds. Thus, Croft’s analysis of aspectual types involves a two-dimensional phasal representation: a ‘t axis’, which represents the extent in time of the eventuality, and a ‘q axis’, which represents ‘the sequence of qualitative states that characterize a particular event type’ (Croft 2012:53). The phases described on these two axes can be ‘profiled’ or not; the profiled phase is ‘the phase asserted to hold in the world at a particular point in time, namely the time reference denoted by the tense of the construction’ (Croft 2012:55; see 38-41 for illustrations and examples: profiled stages are represented with a continuous line, while unprofiled stages are represented with a dotted line). The representations of aspectual contours of eventualities on two axes allow Croft to distinguish not only between aspectual types, but also between different subtypes of the same aspectual type.

Transitory states (e.g. ‘the door is open’), acquired permanent states (e.g. ‘the glass is shattered’), and point states (e.g. ‘the sun is at its zenith’), as opposed to inherent permanent states (‘she is of French origin’), have a rest phase before the transition into the profiled phase; this is because the door could have been closed before it was open, the glass was unbroken before it was shattered, the sun was at a different point before being at its zenith, but the origin of a person is determined as soon as the

person comes into existence. Permanent states (e.g. ‘the glass is shattered’), as opposed to transitory (e.g. ‘the door is open’) and point states (e.g. ‘the sun is at its zenith’), are shown to last for the whole ‘t axis’ (as indicated by the arrow sign), which refers to the lifetime of the entity; this is because the door can go back to being closed, and the sun will move from its zenith point, but once the glass is shattered it cannot go back to being intact (not shattered). Point states (e.g. ‘the sun is at its zenith’) differ from transitory states (e.g. ‘the door is open’) in that the profiled stage only lasts for a point on the ‘t axis’, after which they revert to their initial state. These differences between types of states are reflected in (38) below, where profiled phases (represented with a continuous line) reveal the part of the eventuality that holds according to the expression of each sentence:

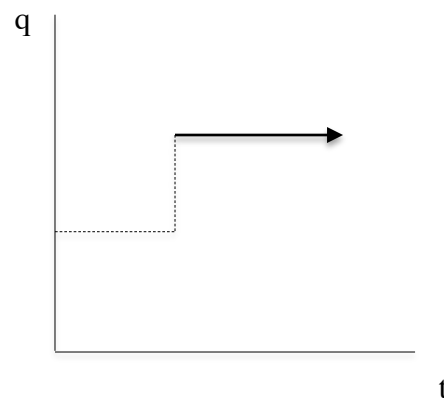
(38) States

(a) Transitory



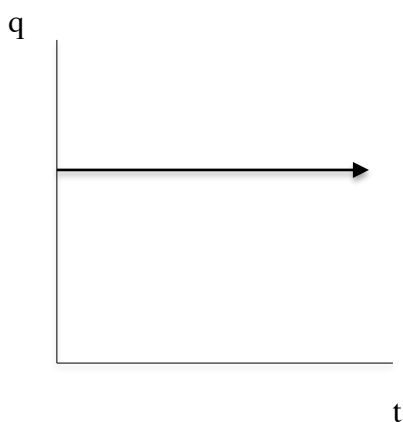
‘The door is open.’

(b) Acquired Permanent



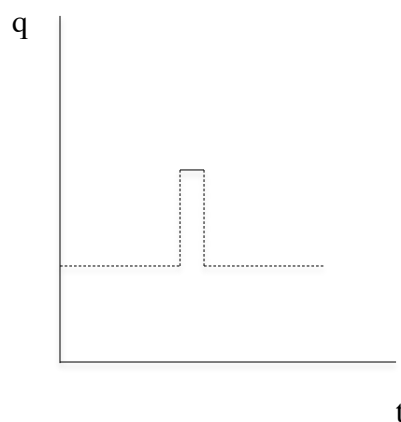
‘The glass is shattered.’

(c) Inherent Permanent



‘She is French.’

(d) Point States



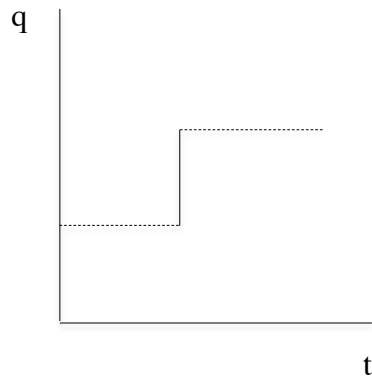
‘The sun is at its zenith.’

To each type of state that has a transition in its aspectual contour (a, b, d above) corresponds an achievement. The achievements will have the same phase structure as states a, b, d above, but the profiled stage will be the transition. Thus, the structure of each achievement (see 39 below) also contains a rest phase, which describes the situation before the transition (e.g. when the door has not yet opened, the glass has not yet shattered, and the mouse has not yet squeaked), and a state that will follow the transition (transitory in ‘the door has opened’ and ‘the mouse has squeaked’, and permanent in ‘the glass has shattered’). When the state that is present in the structure of an achievement is permanent (indicated by the arrow sign in 39b), the achievement is irreversible; when the state is transitory (indicated by the lack of the arrow sign in 39a), the achievement is reversible (e.g. the door can go back to being closed once it was open, but the glass cannot go back to being unbroken once it was shattered). The structure of cyclic achievements consists of a punctual state phase, followed by a

transition out of this state: the mouse squeaked for a moment, after which the situation reverts to one in which the mouse does not squeak - that is, to its rest phase.

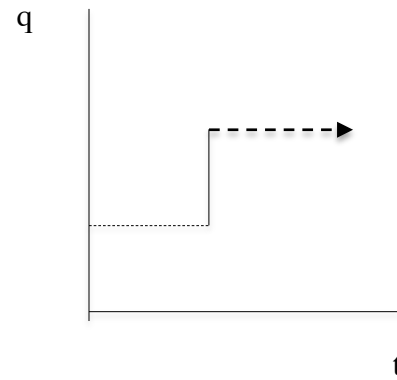
(39) Achievements

(a) Reversible (cf. 38a)



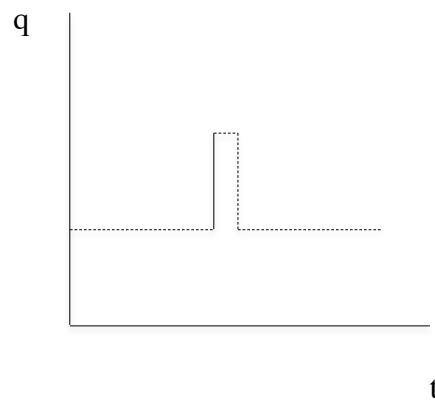
‘The door opened.’

(b) Irreversible (cf. 38b)



‘The glass shattered.’

(c) Cyclic (cf. 38d)

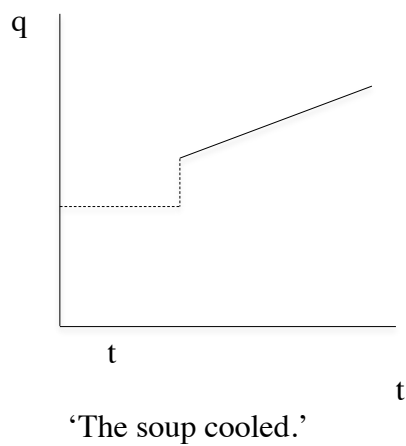


‘The mouse squeaked.’

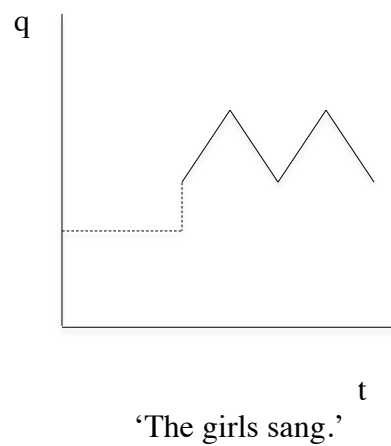
The difference between Croft's directed and undirected activities is represented by their aspectual contour on the q axis, which reflects Croft's view that singing, for example, does not involve a directional change, while cooling does. The structure of activities also includes unprofiled rest phases and transition phases:

(40) Activities

(a) Directed



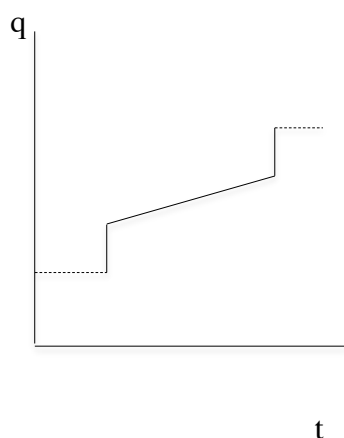
(b) Undirected



The same difference in aspectual contour on the ‘q axis’ distinguishes incremental and nonincremental accomplishments, since eating a cake involves progressively consuming it, whereas repairing the computer does not necessarily involve a gradual improvement. Accomplishments, however, differ from activities in that they also have ‘the inception and completion phases’ profiled (Croft 2012:62), because accomplishments are temporally bounded:

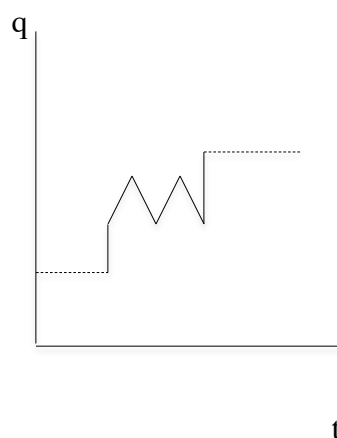
(41) Accomplishments

(a) Incremental



‘She ate a cake.’

(b) Nonincremental



‘She repaired the computer.’

Though the inclusion and profiling of a completion phase for an accomplishment, but not for an activity, is justifiable (only accomplishments are telic), it is unclear why Croft claims that the inception / transition phase should only be profiled for an accomplishment; in other words, why ‘she ate a cake’ is considered to include the inception point of the action, but ‘she sang’ is considered to exclude this point. Since both eventualities are preceded by a rest phase (profiled in e.g. ‘she will sing’ and in ‘she will eat a cake’), I argue that accomplishments and activities should be

represented as having an identical structure in terms of transition / inception.²⁰ Furthermore, while it is clear that accomplishments should have a transitory state phase after their completion (profiled in, e.g. ‘She has eaten a cake. She is full.’), it is not at all clear why activities should not (this stage is profiled in, e.g. ‘She has sung a lot. She has a sore throat.’).

Despite these inconsistencies, Croft’s two-dimensional phasal representation of aspectual types is by far the most complete of those surveyed so far, since he is able to account formally for differences between the aspectual types and subtypes identified in the literature on aspect (2.1.D). This representation allows Croft to show which phases become profiled in different grammatical contexts in English, in other words how the resultant meaning of a sentence is linked to the phasal / stage structure of the eventuality described by predicate. However, although Croft describes which stage becomes profiled in a particular grammatical context of English, and this is a task that should also be undertaken in Romance for the context provided by the imperfect and the preterite, Croft does not explain how this occurs: why should one stage of the aspectual contour of an eventuality become profiled and not another? Furthermore, it must be noted that Croft referred to his classification of aspectual types as not systematic and not necessarily exhaustive. It is therefore questionable whether the aspectual subtypes illustrated in this section are relevant to an account of the imperfect and the preterite opposition in Romance, and whether a simpler representation of lexical aspect is not possible.

²⁰ Note, incidentally, that Croft seems to equate ‘transition’ and ‘inception’; however, inception surely follows transition.

2.2 The Imperfective Paradox

The examination of lexical aspectual properties, classifications, and analyses in Section 2.1 originated from two problems encountered when discussing the imperfect - preterite distinction in Romance: (i) the failure of binary aspectual oppositions to account for the imperfect - preterite distinction, owing to the exclusion of lexical aspectual information; (ii) the evidence provided by the imperfective paradox (42 below) that lexical aspectual information does play a role in determining the functions of the imperfect and the preterite. Having assessed different approaches to lexical aspect, in this section I show how these approaches can provide a solution to the imperfective paradox.

(42)

(a) Mary was pushing a cart \Rightarrow Mary pushed a cart.

(b) Mary was baking a cake \nRightarrow Mary baked a cake.

The imperfective paradox refers to the different entailments of the (42a) and (42b), despite the use of the same tense forms: while from ‘Mary was pushing a cart’ we can entail that ‘Mary pushed a cart’, we cannot entail that ‘Mary baked a cake’ from ‘Mary was baking a cake’. The progressive reading at issue here is not the only one available for the Romance imperfect, but this value will be the topic of the present section, while further aspectual values of the imperfect will be described in Sections 3 and 4. Since the progressive reading of the Romance imperfect is shared with the English progressive, and most of the main steps in the literature on the imperfective

paradox were achieved when attempting to account for the semantics of tense and aspect in English, the examples in this section will be in English, but the discussion will be taken to be applicable to French, Spanish, and Romanian.

In the following subsections I will outline the main steps that have been taken in accounting for the imperfective paradox. One such step is Bennett and Partee's (1972) formulation of a semantics for the progressive involving a superinterval condition (Section 2.2.A). The second is Dowty's (1979) reference to modality when accounting for the imperfective paradox (Section 2.2.B). I will then discuss a problem which occurs with accomplishments in the progressive: if 'Mary was baking a cake', but then got interrupted and the cake was never finished, can we still refer to it as 'a cake' in our formulation of the semantics of the progressive? This is referred to as the 'partitive puzzle' and will be discussed in Section 2.2.C.

2.2.A The Superinterval Condition

Bennett and Partee's (1972) proposal for the truth conditions of the progressive is represented in (43):

(43)

[Prog \emptyset] is true at an interval I iff:

- i) there exists an interval I' such that $I \subset I'$,
- ii) I is not a final subinterval of I', and
- iii) \emptyset is true at I',

where a superinterval is an interval which includes another interval ($I \subset I'$, so I' is a superinterval), and a subinterval is an interval which is included in another interval (I is a subinterval); a final subinterval is one which shares its final boundary with that of the interval of which it is a part.

Bennett and Partee (1972) demonstrate that 'Mary was pushing a cart' entails 'Mary pushed a cart' because: i) provided 'Mary was pushing a cart' is true, then according to the definition above, there is a superinterval I' which contains I , at which 'Mary push a cart' is true; ii) since 'Mary push a cart' describes an activity, it is also true at subintervals (because activities are actualized as soon as they begin), so 'Mary push a cart' is also true at I ; iii) if I is a past interval at which 'Mary push a cart' is true, then 'Mary pushed a cart' is true. They are also able to demonstrate that 'Mary was baking a cake' does not entail 'Mary baked a cake': provided 'Mary was baking a cake' is true, then there is a superinterval I' in which a past interval I is contained, but not final (because if we say 'Mary was baking a cake at 10am' it cannot be the case that 'Mary baked a cake at 10am'); according to i) 'Mary bake a cake' is true at I' ; however, because 'Mary bake a cake' describes an accomplishment, and accomplishments are not true at a subinterval (they are only actualized when the telos is reached), we cannot derive that 'Mary baked a cake' is true at I . Thus, by claiming that the progressive requires a superinterval analysis and by referring to the subinterval property of aspectual classes, Bennett and Partee (1972) are able to find an explanation for the imperfective paradox.

A significant problem with this account concerns interruptions (Bhatt and Pancheva 2005). If at an interval I , while she was pushing a cart or baking a cake Mary was interrupted and could not continue, we would intuitively still consider 'Mary was

pushing a cart' and 'Mary was baking a cake' to be true. However, according to Bennett and Partee's (1972) analysis, this cannot be true, because there is no superinterval I' at which it holds, so condition i) of their definition of the progressive is not fulfilled.

2.2.B Imperfectivity and Modality

Dowty (1979)'s solution to the problem of interruptions is to claim that the superinterval does not need to be a part of the real world, but only of what he calls 'inertia worlds'. These describe worlds 'in which the future course of events (...) develops in ways most compatible with the past course of events' (Dowty 1979:148), and of which interruptions are not a part. Thus,

[Prog \emptyset] is true at $\langle I, w \rangle$ iff for some interval I' so that $I \subset I'$ and I is not a final subinterval for I' , and for all w' such that $w' \in \text{Inr}(I, w)$, \emptyset is true at $\langle I', w' \rangle$,

where $\text{Inr}(I, w)$ is the set of inertia worlds for w and interval I (Dowty 1979:148).

One problem with inertia worlds is that in certain situations there is not a single 'most compatible [way] with the past course of events'. For instance, when flipping a coin, it coming up heads is just as 'compatible [...] with the past course of events' as it coming up tails (Bhatt and Pancheva 2005). Another problem was pointed out by Vlach (1981), who maintains that interruptions might be a part of an inertia world. For instance, we might be tempted to think that if someone tried to kidnap Mary while she was baking a cake, this is not part of an inertia world; however, if there were five

kidnappers hired to kidnap her, each trying to do this in case the other one failed, the attempts at kidnapping could be a part of the inertia world. Furthermore, Wulf (2009) imagines a situation in which Mary was baking a pumpkin pie, but someone had already used the last can of pumpkin. Wulf argues that (44) is felicitous, despite the fact that she was out of pumpkin from the beginning. A modal analysis would not allow (44), because the inertia world of Mary completing the pumpkin pie is not a possible world.

(44) Mary was baking a pumpkin pie, but someone had already used the last can of pumpkin.

The acceptability of (44) depends on whether or not it is possible to refer to the end product of an accomplishment described by a verb of creation even though its telos is not reached. This issue will be discussed in the next subsection, within a non-modal account of the imperfective paradox.

2.2.C Non-Modal Accounts and the Partitive Puzzle

Parsons' (1990) solution to Dowty's problematic 'inertia worlds' is to avoid modality altogether by adopting a decompositional phasal analysis of aspectual classes (see 2.1.E.ii.b). Activities consist of a 'hold' phase, while accomplishments consist of a 'hold' and of a 'culminate' phase. The progressive is analysed as profiling only the 'hold' phase:

(45)

Mary was baking a cake.

$$\exists e \exists i \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge \text{bake}(e) \wedge \text{agent}(e) = \text{Mary} \wedge \text{theme}(e) = \text{a-cake} \wedge \text{Hold}(e, t)]$$

Mary was pushing a cart.

$$\exists e \exists i \exists t [I < \text{now} \wedge \text{push}(e) \wedge \text{agent}(e) = \text{Mary} \wedge \text{theme}(e) = \text{a-cart} \wedge \text{Hold}(e, t)]$$

A potential objection to Parsons' account is that though it is relatively clear what the 'hold' phase of 'baking a cake' involves, the 'hold' phase of accomplishments such as 'John is making me a millionaire' is more difficult to define. Parsons argues that the problem is not, however, one of analysis of lexical aspect and progressive, but of the vague semantics of the event predicate.

A more difficult issue is that Parsons refers to $\text{theme}(e) = \text{a-cake}$ in the 'hold' phase, despite the fact that 'a cake' actually denotes the culmination of the event, which will not necessarily be attained. This problem is referred to in the literature as the 'partitive puzzle'. Parsons argues that this is not a problem relevant to an account of the progressive, since one can also say 'Mary put (simple past) the cake in the oven' despite the fact that the cake is not finished at that point. He claims that this is ordinary language usage and that 'people do refer to unfinished houses as houses, and even - though more reluctantly - to unfinished circles as circles' (Parsons 1990:178). He argues that just as noun phrases can be employed to represent unfinished objects of the relevant category, so can verb phrases be used to represent unfinished events of the relevant category (Croft 2012:79). Parsons' argument will be relevant to my own

representation of lexical aspect, in which I will refer to the end point of telics even if the telos is not attained (Chapter 5).

The different inferences that could be drawn from the use of an imperfect / progressive in a sentence, referred to as ‘the imperfective paradox’ in the literature, were shown to depend on the lexical aspectual properties of the verb constructions involved. Therefore, in Section 2.1 I provided an assessment of classifications and analyses of lexical aspect. I was then able to show in Section 2.2 how lexical aspectual information was used in order to account for the imperfective paradox. So far, most examples and analyses were provided in and for English, owing to the nature of the existing literature on aspect. In the following sections I will make use of the concepts and analyses discussed so far in order to evaluate approaches to the imperfect / preterite opposition in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

2.3 The Aspectual Contribution of the Imperfect and the Preterite

Since lexical aspect has a role in describing the imperfect - preterite opposition (note, however, that this has so far only been discussed with respect to the imperfective paradox), it has been argued that the imperfect - preterite opposition depends *entirely* on lexical aspect. Thus, from a situation where the aspectual meaning of the sentence was said to be provided solely by the imperfect and the preterite (the binary aspectual oppositions described in the introduction to this chapter), a more recent trend (e.g. de Swart 1998, 2011, 2012) is to argue that the imperfect and the preterite have no inherent aspectual meaning. This section seeks to ascertain the accuracy of this view and assess the respective roles of

lexical aspect on the one hand, and tense forms on the other, in determining the overall aspectual value of a sentence.

Two main lines of thought are apparent in the literature with respect to whether the imperfect and the preterite have an aspectual contribution. The first approach (e.g. Smith 1997) follows Comrie's definition (1976:3) of aspect as 'different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation' and assigns an aspectual value to the two tense forms: they are *viewpoints* which render all or a part of a situation visible. They add a different kind of information to that provided by lexical aspect. I shall assess this approach in Section 2.3.A.

According to the other main approach (e.g. de Swart 1998), the imperfect and the preterite do not have aspectual content themselves, but are *aspectually-sensitive tenses*. Lexical aspectual information determines the meaning of the sentence. The information on lexical aspect acts on two levels: the level of the eventuality, and the level at which the tenses operate. Tenses are seen to have input requirements of a particular aspectual kind. When there is a mismatch between the lexical aspectual information available and the one required by the tense, *coercion* (see section 2.1.E.i) occurs: the characteristics of the eventuality description are adapted to the requirements of the tenses. This approach will be explained in detail and assessed in Section 2.3.B.

2.3.A The Imperfect and the Preterite as Viewpoint Operators

In the literature on aspect in Romance, the proponents of the view that the imperfect and the preterite are operators of viewpoint (e.g. Smith 1997, Depraetere 1995, Bertinetto & Delfitto 2000, Delfitto 2004) see aspect on the one hand, and Aktionsart / lexical aspect / aspectual classes on the other, as two separate notions which involve different analytical tools and whose interaction will lead to the aspectual meaning of a sentence.

Smith (1997) proposes a Universal Grammar account for aspect couched in Discourse Representation Theory, which, among other languages, she applies to French. Her model consists of two components: ‘situation types’, determined with reference to lexical aspectual information, and ‘viewpoint types’, which determine the ‘closed’ or ‘internal’ focus on a situation, depending on the tense form used. She also distinguishes between two levels of interpretation: a basic, semantic level and a pragmatic, interpreted level. Before illustrating the implementation of her model into these levels of interpretation, I will describe the structure and role ascribed to lexical aspect (2.3.A.i), on the one hand, and the contribution of imperfect and the preterite (2.3.A.ii), on the other.

2.3.A.i Situation Aspect

Smith’s lexical aspect component consists of situation types that largely correspond to the Vendlerian classes (see Section 2.1.A), which are determined according to the temporal features of dynamism, duration and telicity, but to which she makes some amendments. One of these amendments is the introduction of a fifth situation type: semelfactives (see 2.1.D.b). According to Smith, these eventualities have the features [+dynamic], [-durative] and [-telic]. They are single-occurrence events that do not involve a change of state (hence the [-telic] feature): e.g. ‘knock’, ‘tap’, ‘blink’.

Smith provides a decompositional phasal analysis for her situation types (in the tradition of e.g. Parsons 1990, see 2.1.E.ii.b). As represented below in (46), states do not have an internal structure, since they have no dynamics and require external agency for change; the initial and final endpoints are represented in brackets because they are not part of the state - they are seen as constituting changes of state. The difference between activities and accomplishments is represented in their different endpoints: since they are atelic, the temporal bound of activities is arbitrary (F_{Arb}), in contrast with the natural endpoint (F_{Nat}) of accomplishments, which is also followed by the result (R) of the change of state. The temporal schema for achievements shows that Smith considers preliminary and resultant stages (represented by the dotted line) to be part of the structure of an achievement. E indicates a single-stage event, which is why it is present in the temporal schema of both achievements and semelfactives. The latter, however, do not involve a result, preliminary or resultant stages.

(46)

States (e.g. ‘to be happy’):	(I)_____ (F)
Activities (e.g. ‘to walk’):	I..... F_{Arb}
Accomplishments (e.g. ‘to write a book’):	I..... F_{Nat} R
Achievements (e.g. ‘to arrive’): E_{R}
Semelfactives (e.g. ‘to knock’):	E

(Smith 1997:22-32)

Another amendment to Vendler’s model is Smith’s introduction of ‘derived situations’, which have undergone a shift in situation type, and are processed at the

interpreted, pragmatic level. They exist in four types: super-lexical morphemes, multiple-event activities, habitual statives, and marked-focus sentences. Super-lexical morphemes can have telic ('begin', 'end') or atelic ('try', 'continue') properties and they shift the linguistic properties of the sentences to their own properties (e.g. 'to begin to walk' will be interpreted as a derived achievement, while 'to continue to eat a cake', as a derived activity). Multiple-event activities include events that consist of repetitions of events (of any type) with an arbitrary endpoint (e.g. Jimmy knocked at the door). Habitual statives are derived from any situation type as well; they present patterns of situations (e.g. Peter ate cake on Sundays). Marked-focus sentences are similar to super-lexical morphemes, in that they present a situation from an unusual perspective (e.g. I am in the process of eating a cake) (Smith 1997: 48-52). As well as explicit situation type shifts, Smith notes that shifts can also arise by interpretation, owing to a conflict between the verb-argument structure (what she calls the 'verb constellation', which establishes the initial situation type) and another form (adverbials or aspectual viewpoints); she calls these cases 'interpreted situation type shifts'.

Having described Smith's 'situation aspect' component, in the next section I will turn to the 'viewpoint aspect' component, which illustrates the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite.

2.3.A.ii Viewpoint Aspect

Smith compares her notion of viewpoints to a camera lens: viewpoints render a situation visible in the same way in which a camera makes objects visible to the viewer; and just as a camera is necessary to make the objects available for a picture, so are viewpoints necessary to make visible the situation described in a sentence (Smith 1997:61). Viewpoints

span all or part of a situation, but the information they present depends on, and is limited by, the structure of the situation talked about (as defined by her temporal schemata for situation types in 46 above). On this view, the French *imparfait* and *passé simple / passé composé* are such viewpoint operators, which illustrate *imperfective* and *perfective* viewpoints.

The perfective viewpoint presents all situation types as closed by endpoints, and all that varies across situation types is the type of final endpoint: arbitrary with activities, natural with accomplishments, while achievements and semelfactives are single-stage events. As for states, though the endpoints are not part of their temporal schema (because Smith sees endpoints as representing changes of state), they are still presented as closed, which means that for Smith the span of the perfective viewpoint is greater than the temporal schema of the situation type.

Smith acknowledges that the perfective may occur in sentences with a seemingly inceptive reading, which would lead to a ‘non-closed’ reading, but maintains that these are ‘derived situation types’. The sentences below are therefore seen as denoting derived achievements (therefore closed situations), rather than inchoative states (which would have an open interpretation). According to Smith, the shifted reading presents the initial point of the situation with no information as to its continuation (Smith 1997:195). These readings are reached within the ‘interpretive’, pragmatic level.

(47) Fr. *Marie a été (passé composé) heureuse à la vue de son fils.* ‘Marie was/became happy at the sight of her son.’

(48) Fr. *À ce moment il a su (passé composé) la vérité.* ‘At that moment he knew/found out the truth.’

The *imparfait* is an imperfective viewpoint operator and it can apply to all situation types (49-52 below) with the exception of semelfactives, which, if expressed in the imperfect (53), are interpreted as derived activities:

(49) Fr. *Il était* (imparfait) *content*. ‘He was happy.’ (State.)

(50) Fr. *Il se promenait* (imparfait). ‘He was walking.’ (Activity).

(51) Fr. *Il gagnait* (imparfait) *la course*. ‘He was winning the race.’ (Achievement.)

(52) Fr. *Il mangeait* (imparfait) *un gâteau*. ‘He was eating a cake.’ (Accomplishment.)

(53) Fr. *Il tapait* (imparfait) *à la porte*. ‘He was knocking at the door.’ (Derived activity.)

The imperfect focuses either on the internal interval of a durative situation (e.g. 49, 50, 52, 53) or on the preliminary interval of an achievement (e.g. 51), as reflected in the schema below, where F refers to the final point of a durative situation and E refers to the single point of an achievement:

(54)

The *imparfait*:

.....F/E (situation type; this excludes semelfactives)

/// (viewpoint type provided by the imperfect)

As represented above, the aspectual meaning of a sentence is a composite of the situation type schema and the viewpoint schema. In the following section I will discuss the way in which this resultant aspectual meaning can be accounted for formally.

2.3.A.iii Implementation of the Model: Discourse Representation Theory

Smith's model is couched in Discourse Representation Theory, a representation technique through which sentences are associated to discourse representation structures (DRSs). A DRS is composed of a finite number of discourse referents and a finite number of conditions (Jayez 1998). In Smith's model, the discourse referents are situation²¹ entities [e], temporal location expressions (speech time [t₁], reference time [t₂], situation time [t₃]), and an interval [I] whose characterization will provide information on viewpoint. The conditions will refer either to situation entities or to temporal relations. Each situation entity will be subject to a condition that characterizes it as a state, an activity, an achievement, an accomplishment, or a semelfactive. In this way the situation entity will have the temporal features of its situation type. The viewpoint morpheme will trigger the introduction of an interval [I] as a referent. The information made visible by the viewpoint will appear in the DRS as a characterization of the interval [I], given in terms of the endpoints and / or internal stages of [e] (Smith 1997:144-145). In what follows, I will show the discourse representation structures for situation types in the perfective and imperfective viewpoint, first at basic, semantic level, and then at interpreted, pragmatic level.

²¹ Smith uses the term 'situation' for all lexical aspectual categories, where others use 'eventuality' (e.g. Bach 1986) or 'event' (Croft 2012).

2.3.A.iii.a The Basic Semantic Level

In Figure 1 I show the temporal and aspectual DRS for Fr. *Marie écrivit* (passé simple) *une lettre*. ‘Mary wrote a letter.’ Conditions 1-2 refer to the situation type: ‘Mary wrote a letter’ is an accomplishment. Conditions 3-6 refer to the viewpoint: since this viewpoint is perfective (condition 3), it includes the endpoints of situations (condition 4); they are indicated by $I(e)$ ²² (initial endpoint) and $F(e)$ (final endpoint). The interval $[I]$ consists of instants; $[t_i]$ is the first of these instants, and $[t_j]$ the last (condition 6). The instant $[t_i]$ occurs at $I(e)$, while the instant $[t_j]$ occurs at $F(e)$ (condition 5). Conditions 7-9 refer to temporal location information, corresponding to Hornstein’s $(E,R)(R-S)$ formula (see 1.2C.i): the situation time (t_3) is simultaneous with the reference time (t_2), and the reference time (t_2) precedes the speech time (t_1):

Figure 1. DRS: Fr. *Marie écrivit* (passé simple) *une lettre*. ‘Marie wrote a letter.’

t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y t_i t_j
1. $e = [\text{Marie écrire une lettre}] \text{ écrivit } (x, y)$
2. $e \in \{\text{Accomplishment}\}$
3. $\{\text{Viewpoint } (I, e) = \text{Perfective}\}$
4. $t_i, t_j \in I$
5. $t_i = I(e), t_j = F(e)$
6. $t \in I, t \geq t_i, t \leq t_j$
7. I at t_3
8. $t_3 = t_2$
9. $t_2 < t_1$
10. $x = \text{Marie}$
11. $y = \text{une lettre}$

²² Italics are used to distinguish between the interval I and the initial endpoint I .

For activities and states, the DRS will look the same in terms of viewpoint and temporal location conditions, and will differ only in situation type conditions ($e \in \{\text{Activity}\}, e \in \{\text{State}\}$). This is because, significantly, ‘viewpoint’ is a component which is independent from lexical aspectual information and which provides its own aspectual content.

The DRS will be slightly different for achievements (Figure 2), since they are instantaneous: the interval on which the viewpoint focuses does not consist of an initial and a final endpoint like for durative eventualities, but of a single point in time (compare conditions 4-6 in Figure 1 and 4-5 in Figure 2); the perfective viewpoint will focus on this single point (condition 6):

Figure 2. DRS: Fr. *Marie* atteint (passé simple) *le sommet*. ‘Marie reached the summit.’

$t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y t_i$
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. $e = [\text{Marie atteindre le sommet}] \text{atteindre}(x, y)$ 2. $e \in \{\text{Achievement}\}$ 3. $\{\text{Viewpoint}(I, e) = \text{Perfective}\}$ 4. $I = t_i$ 5. $t_i = I(e)$ 6. $I \text{ at } t_3$ 7. $t_3 = t_2$ 8. $t_2 < t_1$ 9. $x = \text{Marie}$ 10. $y = \text{le sommet}$

The DRS structures for imperfective viewpoints of the same situation types are represented in Figures 3 and 4. Since the imperfective viewpoint focuses an interval of a situation that does not include an endpoint, it is available to the durative stages of states, activities, and accomplishments; it is not available to semelfactives (which consist of a single point) and is only available to the preliminary phase interval of the achievement. The DRS of a sentence denoting an accomplishment will thus be different from that denoting an achievement: while for accomplishments the imperfective viewpoint located at the interval [I] includes times after the initial endpoint of [e] and before the final endpoint of [e] ($t > I(e), t < F(e)$), for achievements the condition is that [I] should only include times before the change of state ($t_i < I(e)$):

Figure 3. DRS: Fr. *Marie écrivait (imparfait) une lettre.* ‘Marie was writing a letter.’

$t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y t_i t_j$
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. $e = [\text{Marie écrire une lettre}] \text{ écrire } (x, y)$ 2. $e \in \{\text{Accomplishment}\}$ 3. $\{\text{Viewpoint } (I, e) = \text{Imperfective}\}$ 4. $t_{ij} \in I$ 5. $t \in I \rightarrow t > I(e), t < F(e)$ 6. I at t_3 7. $t_3 = t_2$ 8. $t_2 < t_1$ 9. $x = \text{Marie}$ 10. $y = \text{une lettre}$

Figure 4. DRS: Fr. *Marie atteignait (imparfait) le sommet*. ‘Marie was reaching the summit.’

$t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y t_1$
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. $e = [\text{Marie atteindre le sommet}] \text{atteindre}(x, y)$ 2. $e \in \{\text{Achievement}\}$ 3. $\{\text{Viewpoint}(I, e) = \text{Imperfective}\}$ 4. $t \in I$ 5. $t \in I \rightarrow t_1 < F(e)$ 6. $I \text{ at } t_3$ 7. $t_3 = t_2$ 8. $t_2 < t_1$ 9. $x = \text{Marie}$ 10. $y = \text{le sommet}$

In addition to the semantic meaning level at which these DRSs are constructed, Smith introduces a pragmatic meaning level. After the basic DRSs are constructed as above, pragmatic and contextual factors may apply and lead to derived aspectual interpretations.

2.3.A.iii.b The ‘Interpreted’ Level

I now turn to Smith’s ‘interpreted’ level, at which pragmatic meanings are introduced, guided by conventions of use which depend either on the patterns of particular languages, or on principles of inference. The former are of particular interest here, since they are cases in which owing to conflicts between situation type information and other components (such as viewpoint markers or adverbials), situation type shifts are said to occur. I will give an example of the DRS for a state derived from an accomplishment (habitual reading) and for an achievement derived from a state (inceptive reading), which are the stages that follow the DRSs that resulted from the level of semantic meaning.

For the supposed habitual reading (I will actually argue that this is iterative, rather than habitual), after the DRS for an accomplishment is created (see Figure 1), a derived state ensues:

Figure 5. Interpreted-level DRS: Fr. *Marie écrivit (passé simple) une lettre tous les jours.*
‘Mary wrote a letter every day.’

$t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y z t_i t_j$		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. $e = [\text{Marie écrivit une lettre}] \text{ écrivit } (x, y)$ 2. $e \in \{\text{State (Accomplishment)}\}$ 3. $\{\text{Viewpoint (I,e) = Perfective}\}$ 4. $t_{i,j} \in I$ 5. $t_i = I(e), t_j = F(e)$ 6. $t \in I \rightarrow t \geq t_i, t \leq t_j$ 7. $\text{jour } (z) \rightarrow$ 		
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>e', I'</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i $e' = [\text{Marie écrivit une lettre}]$ ii $e' = \{\text{Accomplishment}\}$ iii $\{\text{Viewpoint (I',e') = Perfective}\}$ iv $t_{i,j} \in I'$ v $t_i = I(e'), t_j = F(e')$ vi $t \in I' \rightarrow t \geq t_i, t \leq t_j$ </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	e', I'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i $e' = [\text{Marie écrivit une lettre}]$ ii $e' = \{\text{Accomplishment}\}$ iii $\{\text{Viewpoint (I',e') = Perfective}\}$ iv $t_{i,j} \in I'$ v $t_i = I(e'), t_j = F(e')$ vi $t \in I' \rightarrow t \geq t_i, t \leq t_j$
e', I'		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i $e' = [\text{Marie écrivit une lettre}]$ ii $e' = \{\text{Accomplishment}\}$ iii $\{\text{Viewpoint (I',e') = Perfective}\}$ iv $t_{i,j} \in I'$ v $t_i = I(e'), t_j = F(e')$ vi $t \in I' \rightarrow t \geq t_i, t \leq t_j$ 		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. $I \text{ at } t_3$ 9. $t_3 = t_2$ 10. $t_2 < t_1$ 11. $x = \text{Marie}$ 12. $y = \text{une lettre}$ 		

Similarly, after a DRS for the state denoted by *savoir* ‘to know’ is constructed, the DRS for a derived achievement in Figure 6 results:

Figure 6. Interpreted-level DRS: Fr. *Marie* sut (passé simple) *la réponse*. (Inceptive).

‘Marie found out the answer.’²³

t_1 t_2 t_3 I e x y t_i
1. $e = [\text{Marie savoir la réponse}] \text{ savoir } (x,y)$
2. $e \in \{\text{Achievement (State)}\}$
3. $\{\text{Viewpoint (I,e) = Perfective}\}$
4. $\{t_i\} = I$
5. $t_i = I(e)$
6. I at t_3
9. $t_3 = t_2$
10. $t_2 < t_1$
11. $x = \text{Marie}$
12. $y = \text{la réponse}$

Thus, in addition to accounting for aspectual meanings on a basic, semantic level, Smith (1997) introduces situation type shifts, derived from basic situations owing to conflicts between situation types and viewpoint information or adverbials; these are accounted for at a pragmatic, interpreted level.

2.3.A.iv Assessment of the Model

Smith’s ‘situation aspect’ component is problematic when considering the temporal schemata of her situation types.

Firstly, the initial and final endpoints of states are not considered to be a part of their structure, because they are seen as changes into the state. However, the initial point of the state (e.g. the first moment of being happy) follows the transition into the state (the event that made one happy), just as the final point of the state (e.g. the last moment of happiness) precedes the transition out of the state (e.g. the event that caused the happiness to end).

²³ Conditions 4 and 5 state that the situation consists solely of an initial point.

Initial and (arbitrary) endpoints should therefore be present in the structure of some states (i.e., those that are transitory, such as ‘to be happy’). Other states (e.g. ‘to be of French origin’) should, indeed, have no such endpoints present in their structure, while others should only have an initial endpoint (e.g. ‘to be a war veteran’) (see Section 2.1.E.ii.c).

Secondly, the structure of achievements and accomplishments (repeated in 55) is not coherent.

(55)

Achievements: E_R.....

Accomplishments: I.....F_{Nat}R

It is unclear why despite the fact that both achievement and accomplishment situation types involve a change of state from which results can ensue, the resultant stages are only present in the structures of achievements. Such stages can be focused on in both cases, as it is clear from the following examples in the present perfect:

(56) Mary has arrived (therefore she is here).

(57) Mary has eaten the cake (therefore the cake is gone).

Furthermore, not all achievements have preparatory phases: compare, for example, ‘win a race’, which indeed probably involves the preparatory phase of running, to ‘notice a mouse’, which is unlikely to involve a preparatory phase. This has consequences for the aspectual values that result after the application of the imperfective viewpoint, which according to Smith is supposed to focus the preliminary stages of an achievement situation.

However, since such stages may not be present, the desired interpretation may not be available. The sentence below, for instance, would be unacceptable with such a reading:

(58) *Marie was noticing a mouse in the kitchen.

Therefore, if semelfactives are excluded from the situation types to which the imperfective viewpoint can apply, all situation types without preparatory phases should be excluded.

Difficulties also arise when considering Smith's derived situation types and viewpoint component. Out of a wish to have the perfective viewpoint focus closed situations at all times, Smith interprets certain states and activities as derived achievements (therefore closed), rather than as states and activities with focus on the inception point (which would have to be interpreted as open viewpoint). The examples are repeated below:

(59) Fr. *Marie sut (passé simple) la réponse.* 'Marie knew / found out the answer.'

(60) Fr. *Le président a parlé (passé composé) à la télévision hier soir; et ce matin, il parle toujours.* 'The president spoke on television yesterday evening; and this morning, he is still speaking.'

While the interpretation of (59) as a derived achievement is acceptable, it is very difficult to interpret (60) in the same way, as opposed to viewing it as an open activity. If this were a derived achievement, the situation type in (61) below could equally be interpreted as one:

(61) Fr. *Le président a continué (passé composé) à parler à la télévision hier soir; et ce matin, il parle toujours.* ‘The president continued speaking on television yesterday evening; and this morning, he is still speaking.’

However, ‘to continue’ is one of Smith’s examples of super-lexical morphemes which leads to a derived activity situation type (see 2.3.A.i). A contradiction therefore arises: is this situation type a derived achievement so that we can claim a closed viewpoint like in the example above, or is it a derived activity, as initially claimed by Smith?

Moreover, Smith’s model is not sufficiently specific: though she refers to marked pragmatic interpretations other than ‘closed’ for the perfective vs. ‘excluding endpoints’ for the imperfective, she does not give a systematic account of the contexts in which these interpretations arise. For instance, the inceptive interpretation referred to in (59) is also achieved when any situation type combines with ‘point’ adverbials:

(62) Fr. *Nous avons mangé (passé composé) à dix heures.* ‘We ate at 10.’ (Activity.)

(63) Fr. *Le concert est à dix heures.* ‘The concert is at 10.’ (State.)

(64) Fr. *Nous sommes allés (passé composé) la voir à dix heures.* ‘We went to see her at 10.’ (Accomplishment.)

(65) Fr. *Nous sommes arrivés (passé composé) à onze heures.* ‘We arrived at 11.’ (Achievement.)

Significant insights into iterativity (when a perfective viewpoint is used) vs. habituality (in the presence of an imperfective operator) (shown by Lenci and Bertinetto 2000 for Italian and Menéndez-Benito 2002 for Spanish) are also omitted: Smith interprets

(66) below as habitual, when in fact habituality is the resultant meaning when the imperfect is used, as in (67); (66) provides an iterative reading:

(66) Fr. *Marie* écrivit (passé simple) *une lettre tous les jours*. ‘Mary wrote a letter every day.’

(67) Fr. *Marie* écrivait (imparfait) *une lettre tous les jours*. ‘Mary used to write a letter every day.’

To summarize, the main drawback of Smith’s model is its lack of specificity in terms of overall aspectual values; this results partly from the structure of her lexical aspectual (‘situation aspect’) component, and partly from the unsystematic manner with which she determines what are in her view marked, pragmatic interpretations. No reason is given for describing states and activities with inceptive readings as achievements, other than the claim that the preterite introduces a closed viewpoint. Smith’s argument thus becomes circular and her claim that the preterite introduces a closed viewpoint becomes subject to question; it will be tested in this thesis.

2.3.B Aspectually-Sensitive Tenses

I now turn to the other main approach concerning the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite. The idea of the two tense forms as aspect-shift operators is based on Kamp and Rohrer’s (1983) claim that since the French *imparfait* does not advance narrative time, it can be seen as a ‘stativizer’ which maps non-stative event types onto stative ones. This idea, developed by Moens and Steedman (1988) and Kamp & Reyle (1993), reached a developed and refined form with de Swart (1998), who applies the

principles of coercion theory (see 2.1.E.i) to the imperfect and the preterite opposition and sees the imperfect and the preterite as merely aspectually-sensitive tenses, that is with no inherent aspectual value.

2.3.B.i Type Coercion

At the base of de Swart's approach, also couched in DRT, lies the principle of compositionality of meaning. According to this principle, 'the meaning of a complex whole is a function of the meaning of its composing parts and the way these parts are put together' (de Swart 2011:575). In this approach, the main rule for combining linguistic expressions is function application, and so the way meaning is composed will depend on the kinds of functors and on the kinds of arguments to which they apply. When the arguments do not have the syntactic or semantic properties required by the functors, a 'type mismatch' occurs (de Swart 2011:575). In these situations, three solutions have been proposed in the literature to account for cases that do not actually result in ungrammaticality: type raising, type shifting, and type coercion. The last is seen by de Swart (1998) as the solution to aspectual class mismatches and will therefore be the focus of the rest of this section. Type coercion is formally defined, following Pustejovsky (1995), as follows:

If α is of type c , β of type (a,b) , then:

- (i) if type $c = a$, then $\beta(\alpha)$ is of type b .
- (ii) if there is a $\sigma \in \Sigma\alpha$ such that $\sigma(\alpha)$ results in an expression of type a , then $\beta(\sigma(\alpha))$ is of type b .
- (iii) otherwise a type error is produced.

(Pustejovsky 1995:111)

Informally, it is a ‘semantic operation that converts an argument to the type expected by the function, where it would otherwise result in a type error’ (de Swart 2011:577). Since not all type mismatches can be ‘repaired’ by filling in the understood meaning (some combinations are actually ungrammatical), type coercion must be restricted. Pustejovsky (1995) establishes three restrictions on type coercion: i) it does not occur freely (it must be triggered as part of the function application); ii) it affects the argument, not the functor; iii) the interpretation process that ensues is part of a well-defined sum of reinterpretations ($\Sigma\alpha$ above).

Coercion can occur with nouns as well as predicates. When there is a mismatch with the noun’s basic meaning, a semantic derivation is induced to change the type of its argument; this is called nominal coercion. A typical example of nominal coercion is cited by Michaelis (2003):

(68) She had a beer.

This example is interpreted as a misplacement of the mass noun ‘beer’ in an environment where a count noun would be expected, that is, after an indefinite article. Thus, the mass noun ‘beer’ is coerced into a count noun.²⁴

When there is a constructional mismatch with the argument expected by a predicate, complement coercion is said to occur. In (69) below, ‘began’ is said to require an ‘event’

²⁴ Ziegeler (2007) points out that the mechanism at work in this situation need not be that of a change in the type of the noun, but can be that of the extension of the functions of the indefinite article.

type, such as ‘typing’, ‘writing’, or ‘reading’; ‘the memo’, however, is an ‘entity’ type.

Therefore, the entity-denoting noun phrase shifts types to an eventive:

(69) The secretary began the memo.

de Swart’s (1998) application of Pustejovsky’s insights on type coercion to aspect is dubbed ‘aspectual type coercion’ and will be the topic of the following section. Evidence concerning coercion and its application to the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages will be assessed in Chapter 4, when establishing the hypotheses surrounding the aspectual contribution of the two paradigms.

2.3.B.ii Aspectual Type Coercion

de Swart follows the intuition that in Romance languages the perfective past tense predominantly occurs with predicates denoting telics, while the imperfective past tense is mainly found with state and activity predicates;²⁵ she also observes Kamp and Rohrer’s (1983) claim that the *imparfait* acts as a stativizer in discourse. Consequently, she assumes that the French *imparfait* sentences describe atelic eventualities, while sentences in the *passé simple* describe telic eventualities. Furthermore, she follows Moens and Steedman (1998) in their claim that the aspectual class of an eventuality description may be changed by the presence of aspectual operators. The latter provide mapping functions from eventuality descriptions to other eventuality descriptions (Bach 1986). Thus, contrary to Smith (1997), in this approach both ‘lexical aspect’ and ‘(grammatical) aspect’ are defined in terms of the same ontological entities: states, processes (which de Swart uses as

²⁵ This was tested and confirmed for Spanish by de Jonge (2000).

synonyms of activities), and events (she merges Vendlerian achievements and accomplishments). States and processes are further classified together as having homogeneous reference; events, on the contrary, have quantized reference.²⁶ This classification is significant since, if successful, a model that makes use of fewer entities would be preferable, both from the perspective of Occam's Razor and from that of potential ease of acquisition.

Adding to Kamp and Rohrer's (1983) and Moens and Steedman's (1988) insights, de Swart's main contribution is the idea that the *imparfait* and the *passé simple* have identical semantic content (they simply locate eventualities in the past) and no aspectual value themselves; they are, however, sensitive to (lexical) aspectual information, in that they require a particular aspectual class as input. This claim is specific to Romance languages and is attributed by de Swart (2012) solely to the fact that in French, for example, tense and aspect are morphologically fused. Thus, according to her, the verb form *écrivit*, for example, cannot be split into a part that leads to the past tense operator and a part that leads to the perfective operator. Therefore, rather than the first structure below (70a), de

²⁶ de Swart follows mereological approaches to Aktionsart (e.g. Mourelatos 1978, Bach 1981, Krifka 1998) in her classification. Krifka (1998) defines two types of predicates with respect to part structure: cumulative (e.g. apples, water) and quantized (e.g. a book, three apples). Cumulative predicates have homogeneous reference and their description is: 'if x and y fall under *apples*, then the sum of x and y falls under *apples* as well' (Krifka 1998:200). Similarly, if we add 'more water' to 'water', the result is still 'water'. 'A book' or 'three apples' are quantized (non-homogeneous) predicates: if we add 'an apple' to 'three apples', we no longer have 'three apples'. Mereological theories of aspect are based on the analogy between bare nouns and mass plurals on the one hand, and states and activities on the other hand (since both have homogeneous, cumulative reference), and on the analogy between count nouns on the one hand, and accomplishments and achievements on the other (since both have quantized, non-homogeneous reference). As a result, accomplishments and achievements are patterned together, usually under the term 'events'. States and activities usually remain in two distinct aspectual categories, but are at times joined within a 'homogeneous' category (e.g. de Swart 1998).

Swart proposes the second (70b), in which the *passé simple* only introduces a past tense operator, but requires an event from the predicate-argument structure. Conversely, the *imparfait* also only introduces a past tense operator, but it requires an entity with homogeneous reference from the predicate-argument structure.

(70) Fr. *Il écrivit (passé simple) une lettre.* ‘He wrote a letter’.

(a) [PAST [PERF [he write a letter]]]

(b) [PAST [he write a letter]]

(de Swart 1998:348)

When there is a conflict between the aspectual class of the eventuality and the requirements of the two aspectually-sensitive tenses, the two tenses act as aspectual-shift operators and coercion occurs. This means that the characteristics of the eventuality description (the arguments) are adapted to the requirements of the aspectual type-shift operators (the functors) (de Swart 1998, 2011). In (71), for example, coercion will be triggered owing to the incompatibility between the input requirements of the imperfect (eventuality with homogenous reference) and the type of eventuality description (event) and the latter will undergo a type shift. The coercion operator is in this case syntactically and morphologically invisible:

(71) Fr. *Il écrivait (imparfait) une lettre.* ‘He wrote a letter.’

[PAST [C_{eh} [he write a letter]]]

However, coercion operators can also be overt. For example, de Swart (1998) claims that a ‘for x time’ construction requires as an input states or processes, while an ‘in x time’ construction must operate on an event description; if these conditions are not fulfilled, coercion occurs.

Coercion can lead to different possible aspectual transitions ($\Sigma\alpha$ of Pustejovsky’s definition). The coercion of an event into a homogeneous eventuality (C_{ch}) as in (71) above leads to a choice of iterative, habitual, process or progressive mappings: ITER ‘maps any eventuality description onto a state description in such a way that the state describes an unbounded number of eventualities of the type described by the predicate’ (72); HAB ‘maps eventuality descriptions onto state descriptions (...) like an implicit adverb of quantification similar to *always*’ (73); PROC ‘maps event descriptions onto process descriptions in such a way that the outcome describes the process underlying the event predicate without any reference to an inherent culmination point’ (74); PROG ‘maps dynamic eventuality descriptions onto state descriptions in such a way that the state describes the process or event as being in progress’ (75) (de Swart 1998:382).

(72) Fr. *Il tapait (imparfait) à la porte.* ‘He was knocking at the door.’ (ITER).

(73) Fr. *Il écrivait (imparfait) une lettre tous les jours.* ‘He used to write a letter every day.’ (HAB).

(74) Fr. *Il a lu (passé composé) un roman pendant une heure.* ‘He read a novel for an hour.’ (PROC).²⁷

(75) Fr. *Il écrivait (imparfait) une lettre.* ‘He was writing a letter.’ (PROG).

²⁷ Here, it is the adverbial that acts as a coercion operator.

If the eventuality description has homogeneous reference (state or process), and the tense is a *passé simple*, a coercion operator C_{he} will apply to solve the aspectual conflict. The result can be one of four values: ‘inchoative’, ‘bound’, ‘add-preparatory phase’ or ‘add-culmination’: INCHO ‘maps state/process descriptions onto event descriptions in such a way that the event describes the onset of the state or process’ (76); BOUND ‘maps state/process descriptions onto event descriptions in such a way that the event consists of a bounded, quantized portion of the state/process’ (77); ADD-CUL ‘maps process descriptions onto event descriptions by adding a culmination to the process’ (78); ADD-PREP ‘maps state/process descriptions onto event descriptions such that the event consists of the preparatory phase leading up to and including the onset of the state/process as a culminated process’ (79) (de Swart 1998:382).

(76) Fr. *Il sut (passé simple) la réponse.* ‘He found out the answer.’ (INCHO.)

(77) Fr. *Jeanne d’Arc fut (passé simple) une sainte.* ‘Joan of Arc was a saint.’ (BOUND.)

(78) Fr. *Il mangea (passé simple) en deux minutes.* ‘He ate in two minutes.’ (ADD-CUL.)

(79) Fr. *En deux minutes, il chanta (passé simple).* ‘In two minutes, he sang.’ (ADD-PREP.)

In de Swart’s DRT model, the ontological nature of discourse referents is indicated by the use of designated variables s for states, p for processes, e for events, h for the supercategory of eventualities with homogeneous reference (states and processes), d for the supercategory of dynamic eventualities (events and processes). Thus, the sentence *Il écrivait une lettre* ‘He was writing a letter’ will have the semantic representation in DRT format in Figure 7. According to this structure, there is a homogeneous eventuality h

(obtained through coercion from what was initially an event e) of someone writing a letter, which is located at some time t preceding the speech time n ('now'):

Figure 7: Fr. *Marie écrivait (imparfait) une lettre*. 'Marie was writing a letter.'

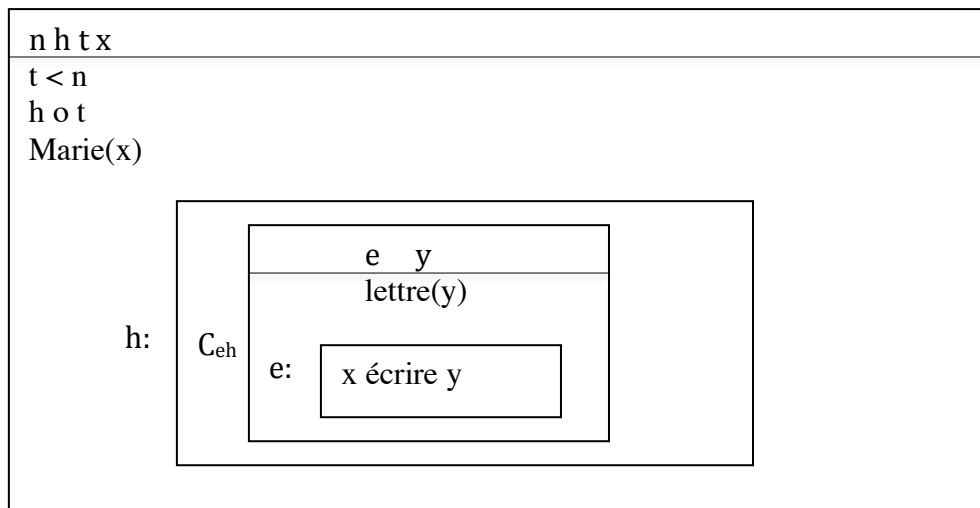
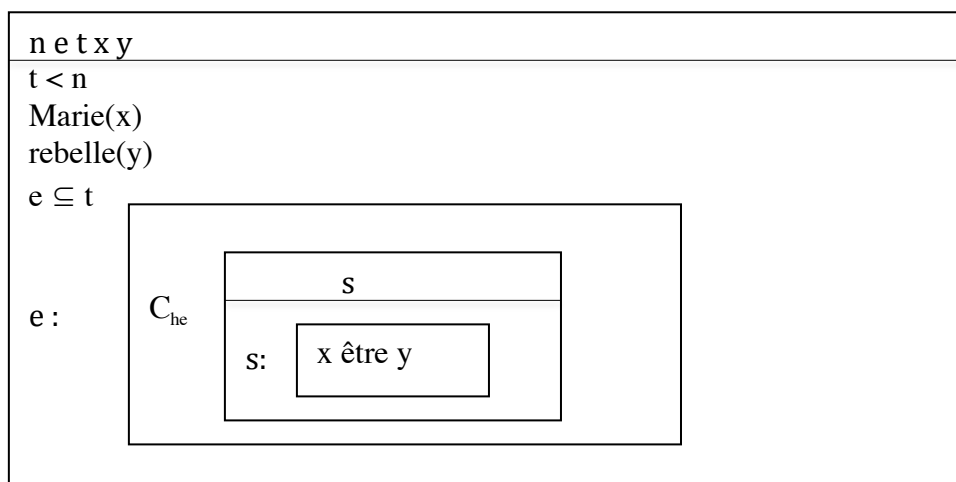


Figure 8 below corresponds to a DRS according to which there is an event (obtained after the application of an invisible coercion operator C_{he} from what initially was a state s) of Marie being a rebel, which is included in some time t before the speech time n (so in the past).

Figure 8. Fr. *Marie fut (passé simple) une rebelle*. 'Marie was/became a rebel.'



The possible value of C_{eh} and C_{he} depends on contextual information, but will be one of the well-defined sum of reinterpretations ($\sum \alpha$, see 2.3.B.i) mentioned above.

To summarize, de Swart's (1998) approach to the imperfect / preterite distinction in terms of coercion maintains Kamp and Rohrer's (1983) insights about the temporal structure of French narrative discourse, to which it adds a compositional analysis of the internal structure of the sentence.

2.3.B.iii Assessment of the Model

An assessment of de Swart's model reveals two classes of problems: the first is that, owing to the structure she assigns to lexical aspectual information, the model is not sufficiently specific; the second is that, since some of the aspectual values she claims to be a result of coercion are not necessarily so, the model can be deemed too restrictive.

de Swart's claim is that the particular coercion values which result owing to incompatibilities between functors (aspectually-sensitive tenses or durational adverbials) and arguments (the eventuality descriptions) are determined by context. However, since the model is not able to show which overall value will result in a particular context (from the interaction of various aspectual operators), it is not sufficiently specific. For instance, (80) below is necessarily inchoative, not bound, despite the fact that both are C_{eh} values:

(80) Fr. *Elle sut (passé simple) la réponse.* 'She found out the answer.'

More importantly, de Swart is unable to explain why sometimes, despite a conflict between the functor and the argument, aspectual coercion is not licensed. It has been known since Vendler's work that achievement predicates are widely incompatible with 'for x time'

constructions. In de Swart's model, 'for x time' constructions are aspectual operators which require as input a homogeneous eventuality; otherwise, coercion occurs. This is the case with the event in (81a), but not with the event in (81b), which is not acceptable:

(81)

(a) Fr. *Il lut (passé simple) le journal pendant deux heures.* 'He read the newspaper for two hours.'

(b) Fr. **Il arriva (passé simple) pendant deux heures.* *'He arrived for two hours.'

Without the accomplishment (81a) - achievement (81b) distinction, this insight is lost, and the model is not able to predict correctly potential aspectual values involving the interaction between the imperfect / preterite and lexical aspectual classes. Furthermore, in (82) below an achievement predicate is in fact compatible with a 'for x time' construction. The resultant aspectual value in (82), however, is not one of de Swart's expected C_{he} ('bound', 'inchoative', 'add culmination phase', 'add preparatory phase'). This means that firstly, there is need for a finer-grained account of lexical aspect, and secondly, that there are more possible overall aspectual values than those described by de Swart.

(82) Fr. *Il partit (passé simple) pendant deux semaines.* 'He left for two weeks.'

A similar problem occurs with telics in the imperfect. Once coercion supposedly takes place, the resultant meaning could be iterative, habitual, process, or progressive. However, Delfitto (2004) shows that for Italian (and the case stands for French) there cannot be an iterative meaning in the imperfect. The meaning of (83) is habitual. In this

case, the model not only lacks specificity, but since the iterative value is impossible to derive from context, the model is inaccurate.

(83) Fr. *Le train arrivait (imparfait) en retard tous les jours.* ‘The train used to arrive late every day.’

Finally, Bonami (2001) points out the fact that not only is the model too general as described above, but in other cases it seems too constrained. de Swart’s ‘iterative’ and ‘habitual’ operators occur even when there is no type clash, and therefore cannot be considered coercion operators (Bonami 2001:35). For instance, the future in French is aspectually neutral (it combines just as well with homogeneous and with non-homogeneous eventuality descriptions):

(84) Fr. *Il gagnera le sommet.* ‘He will reach the summit.’

(85) Fr. *Il dormira.* ‘He will sleep.’

Bonami indicates that if ‘iterative’ and ‘habitual’ were coercion operators we would expect the sentences above to have no iterative and habitual readings, since there can be no type clash (the future is not aspectually sensitive). As we can see below, this is not the case:

(86) Fr. *Il arrosera les plantes.* ‘He will water the plants.’

[FUTURE [he water the plants]]

[FUTURE [HABITUAL / ITERATIVE [he water the plants]]]

(Bonami 2001:36)

Therefore, owing to a model of lexical aspect which is not sufficiently fine-grained, de Swart's account of the functions of the imperfect and the preterite is not sufficiently specific. Furthermore, in other cases it proves to be too constrained: as shown by Bonami (2001), some of de Swart's supposed 'coercion operators' are not necessarily involved in coercion.

The two main stances regarding the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite differ mainly with respect to whether or not the relevant forms have an intrinsic aspectual meaning, and to the place assigned to lexical aspectual information. In Smith's model, lexical aspectual information is restricted to the 'situation type' component, which is separate from the 'viewpoint type' component, at which the imperfect and the preterite operate and determine 'viewpoint aspect'. The imperfect and the preterite are seen as viewpoint operators which lead to a 'internal' vs. 'closed' focus on a situation; different resultant aspectual values are seen as pragmatically marked. In de Swart's model, lexical aspectual information acts at two levels: the level of the eventuality, and the tense level at which the imperfect and the preterite require particular inputs in terms of eventuality type; when there is a clash, the imperfect and the preterite act as aspect-shift operators and the eventualities are coerced into the type required by the two tenses.

In the following section I investigate language-specific models proposed on the basis of these two approaches for Spanish, French, and Romanian.

2.4 Language-Specific Models

Having outlined and evaluated the two main views regarding the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite, I will now investigate to what extent one, both, or neither of these two theoretical approaches to aspect have been chosen to explain the imperfect / preterite distinction within the literature on aspect in French, Spanish, and Romanian. Following the assessment of these models, in the following chapters of the thesis I will investigate which one allows the most felicitous analysis of my data.

2.4.A A Potential Reconciliation of Views: Caudal's (2005) Model

Caudal (2005) argues that a theory of aspect should be concerned not with *either* aspect-shift operators (which coerce a type of eventuality into another type when it does not match the requirements of the tense form – de Swart 1998), *or* aspectual viewpoints (which render all or a part of a situation visible – Smith 1997), but should include both.

Caudal's model is based on the redefinition of the stage / phasal structure of eventualities (see Section 2.1.E.ii on phasal analyses). He assigns to this notion an even more prominent role with the introduction of the notion of 'stage salience' within the lexical aspect component of the model. The imperfect and the preterite are seen as viewpoint operators, which are able to focus on a particular stage of the eventuality, depending on its degree of salience. In addition to lexical aspectual information defined with respect to stage structure and viewpoint operators (i.e. the aspectual content of tenses), aspect calculus also involves the aspectual focus effects of adverbial modifiers and, sometimes, of the requirements of a particular tense; this is where a similar mechanism to that proposed by de Swart (1998) comes into play.

Caudal's model (expanded²⁸ within SDRT²⁹ in Caudal and Roussarie 2005) is designed to be applicable cross-linguistically, though he discusses its application in French and English in particular. I will be analysing its application to French.

2.4.A.i Stage Structure

Caudal adopts a phasal analysis of lexical aspectual information associated with predicative structures (i.e. the verb and its complements). He distinguishes between three canonical types of stage. Inner stages are ascribed to all types of situations and represent their 'core' stages; for a telic situation, the inner stage includes the culmination point³⁰. Result stages are also attributed to all situation types. Preparatory stages are only ascribed to some types of atomic³¹ telic situations. Each type of stage can be selected in different circumstances: for instance, result stages are selected by sentences in the English perfect; inner stages are selected by unmarked uses of the simple past; preparatory stages are selected under prospective readings of the English past progressive (Caudal 2005:240). For example, the stage structure of the predicative structure 'Mary - win the race' is represented below:

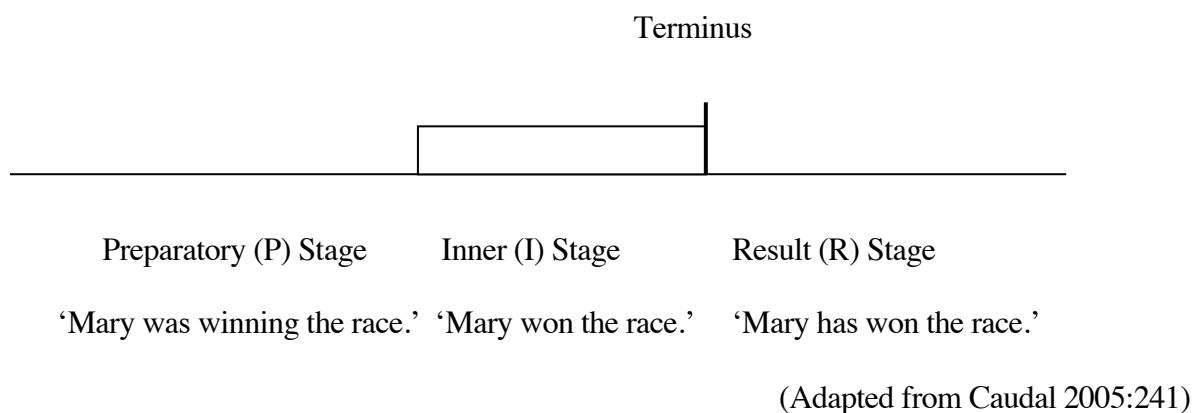
²⁸ Caudal and Roussarie (2005) argue that the *imparfait* and the *passé simple* are 'illocutionary viewpoint functions', in that they contain specific speech act information and can interact with discourse structure. The *passé simple* is regarded as an assertive illocutionary viewpoint, while the *imparfait* an illocutionary viewpoint with an underspecified illocutionary content. As this model is built on Caudal (2005), in this section I will refer to the latter, since it is in this study that the aspectual contribution of the two tense forms is primarily under discussion.

²⁹ Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (cf. Asher 1993) adds a new hierarchical level to DRT by making use of terms called π , to which rhetorical relations are applied.

³⁰ By making this choice, Caudal goes against Moens and Steedman (1988) and Kamp and Reyle (1993), his reasoning being that tenses alone cannot focus solely on culmination points.

³¹ Caudal defines atomicity as 'a property of terminations that cannot be interrupted then resumed'. The diagnostics for atomicity are: lack of compatibility with the perfect progressive in English, with 'completely' and 'finish' (Caudal 2005:240).

Figure 9.



Caudal argues that stage salience must be included in the aspectual content of lexical entries by showing that it helps distinguish between predicates belonging to the same aspectual class. Consider the two sets of sentences below:

(87) Fr. *Jean partit* (passé simple) *pendant deux jours*. ‘Jean left for two days.’

(88) Fr. **Jean arriva* (passé simple) *pendant deux jours*. *‘Jean arrived for two days.’

(Examples adapted from Caudal 2006:12)

(89) Fr. *Jean faillit* (passé simple) *partir*. ‘Jean almost left.’

(90) Fr. *Jean faillit* (passé simple) *arriver*. ‘Jean almost arrived.’

(Examples adapted from Caudal 2005:245)

The differences in the two sets of sentences above could be accounted for neither within de Swart’s model (who only distinguished between states, processes and events at the level of the eventuality description; see 2.3.B.ii, 2.3.B.iii), nor within Smith’s (despite her more fine-grained division into aspectual classes, both ‘leave’ and ‘arrive’ belong to the class of

achievements; see 2.3.A.i and 2.3.A.iv). These differences can, however, be explained by Caudal, and are taken as evidence that information on stage salience should be included in the lexical aspectual information of an entry. The reason why ‘leave’ is compatible with a ‘for x time’ construction and ‘arrive’ is not, is that the former has result stages which are more accessible to focal information than the latter (the result stage of the ‘leave’ class has a higher degree of ‘stage salience’ than the result stage of the ‘arrive’ class). Similarly, the reason why, in the presence of ‘almost’, the preparatory stage of ‘arrive’ is almost finished, while no part of ‘leaving’ took place, is that the preparatory stage of the former has a higher degree of stage salience.

In Caudal’s model degrees of stage salience can be high (they receive the value 2; stages with this value are accessible to every type of focus constraint; e.g. all inner stages), medium (they receive the value 1, and are accessible to focal information expressed, for instance, by adverbial modifiers; e.g. the preparatory stage of ‘to arrive’) and weak (their value is 0 and are only accessible to ‘strong’ focus constraints such as the English perfect, which is seen as a stage-specific viewpoint; e.g. the result stage of ‘to arrive’) (Caudal 2005:245). The combination of available stages and their degree of salience as shown by empirical evidence forms the basis of aspectual classes in this model. Note the difference between this view of stage structure and de Swarts’s, for whom all result and preparatory stages are derived, and only inner stages are present in the lexical entries.

Caudal pays very little attention to the structure of states and activities, but provides a detailed portrayal of telics. He provides the following (non-exhaustive) list of telic aspectual classes: ‘inceptive telic’ (91: compatible with a resultative durative reading with ‘for x time’ adverbials; also compatible with ‘in x time’ adverbials which give rise to an ‘end-point’ reading); ‘median telic’ (92: incompatible with ‘for x time’ with a resultative

reading; compatible with ‘in x time’ adverbials); ‘culminating telic’ (93: incompatible with a resultative reading with ‘for x time’ adverbials; compatible with ‘in x time’, which measures the duration of the preparatory stage); ‘resultative telic’ (94: compatible both with resultative ‘for x time’ adverbials, and with ‘in x time’ adverbials, but the result meaning is available even in the absence of specialized tenses like the perfect, particularly with progressive tenses).

(91)

(a) She left for two hours.

(b) She left in two minutes.

(92)

(a) She threw the ball for two hours. (Incompatible with resultative meaning).

(b) She threw the ball in two minutes.

(93)

(a) *She arrived for two hours.

(b) She arrived in two minutes.

(94)

(a) She emerged for two minutes.

(b) She emerged in two minutes.

(c) She was emerging.

The characteristics of these classes in terms of stage structure are summarized in the table in (95):

(95)

ASPECTUAL CLASS	EXAMPLE	I-STAGE	R-STAGE	P-STAGE
Inceptive telic	'leave'	2	1	n/a
Median telic	'throw'	2	0	n/a
Culminating telic	'arrive'	2	0	1
Resultative telic	'emerge'	2	2	n/a

Having shown Caudal's reasons for including information on stage structure and salience within lexical aspectual information, in the next section I will show how this is encoded formally, and how stage structure is made to interact with verbal modifiers and viewpoint operators. The model will then be evaluated in section 2.4.A.iii.

2.4.A.ii Implementation of the Model

Caudal's model consists of a DRT treatment of stage structure and 'aspectual focus', which results from the action of VP modifiers and viewpoint operators. The main steps in the implementation of this formal treatment of aspect are the following:

(i) the construction of a lexical aspectual DRS K_L ³², on the basis of lexical information about stage structure;

(ii) the construction of an intermediary aspectual focus DRS K_A ³³, which combines aspectual constraints contributed by aspectual modifiers as well as tenses.

³² 'L' stands for 'lexical'.

(iii) the construction of a final aspectual focus DRS K_1 as a result of the application of viewpoint operators, to which temporal operators can subsequently apply.

(Caudal 2005:254)

The lexical aspectual content of a lexical entry which will form the lexical aspectual DRS is formalized as a triplet $\langle S, D, R \rangle$, where S is a set of stages, D is a set of salience property ascriptors (they assign salience degree in $\{0,1,2\}$ to each stage S), and R is a set of relations between stages. Three main such stage relations are defined by Caudal: *Transition*, *Conseq_Telic* and *Conseq_Atelic*. *Transition* refers to a change of state and differentiates between stage relations within telic and atelic entries. *Conseq_Telic* links inner stages to result stages within telic entries and involves a transition between stages, while *Conseq_Atelic* relates inner stages to result stages within atelic entries, but involves no change of state:

$$[Conseq_Telic(K_1, K_2) \wedge P(e_1) \in Cond_{K_1} \wedge Q(e_2) \in Cond_{K_2}] \rightarrow Transition(K_1, K_2) \wedge$$

Cause($e_1 < e_2$)

If *Conseq_Telic*(K_1, K_2) holds, then *Transition*(K_1, K_2) holds; also, if $P(e_1)$ is part of the conditions of DRS K_1 and $Q(e_2)$ is part of the conditions of DRS K_2 , then e_1 precedes and causes e_2 .

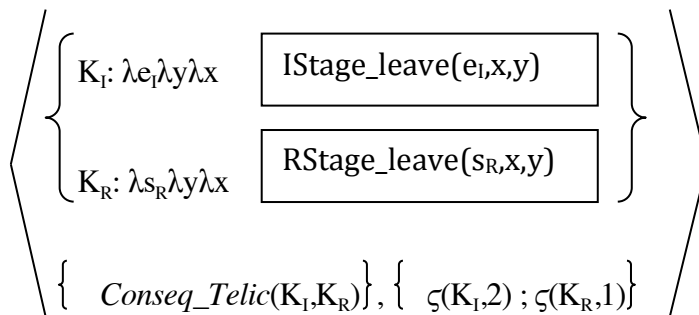
$$[Conseq_Atelic(K_1, K_2) \wedge P(e_1) \in Cond_{K_1} \wedge Q(e_2) \in Cond_{K_2}] \rightarrow e_1 <^\circ e_2$$

If *Conseq_Atelic*(K_1, K_2) holds, $P(e_1)$ is part of the conditions of DRS K_1 , and $Q(e_2)$ is part of the conditions of DRS K_2 , then e_1 left-overlaps e_2 (there is no transition between e_1 and e_2).

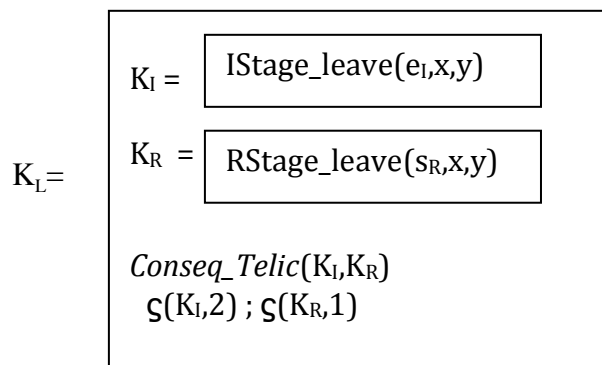
(Caudal 2005:249)

³³ 'A' stands for 'aspectual'.

The lexical aspectual content of ‘leave’ in this model is represented below. As shown in the previous section, ‘leave’ is represented as an inceptive telic verb, with no preparatory stage, an inner stage with the salience degree 2, and a result stage with the salience degree 1; salience degrees are ascribed by property ascriptors ζ :



From this lexical aspectual information, the lexical aspectual DRS K_L is derived:



Having shown how lexical aspectual information is systematized within Caudal’s model, let us now turn to the construction of the intermediary aspectual focus DRS K_A . It is at this point that constraints contributed both by adverbial modifiers (temporal or of manner) and by tenses apply, and the stages which will eventually be focused are selected out of those available from the lexical information on stage structure. For instance, manner adverbials such as *deliberately* require dynamic stages (recall that this was one of the criteria for

distinguishing states from dynamic eventualities; see 2.1.C) and can therefore only select preparatory stages or inner stages, since result stages are stative. ‘For’-adverbials require atelic stages (see 2.3.B.ii), so they can only select inner stages of atelic stage structures or result stages. In addition to these, Caudal argues that some tense forms place strong focus on a particular stage, at the exclusion of others; such an example is the English present perfect, which is argued to focus the result stage of an eventuality, and the French *passé composé*, at least in literary narratives. The functions of this latter tense form will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The axioms that formalize focus constraints state that:

- (i) Temporal adverbials like ‘for x time’ can only apply to focused stages that have at least salience 1, and can only increase their salience;
- (ii) Manner adverbials like ‘deliberately’ single out one stage at the expense of all others; this stage reaches maximal grammatical salience 3 in K_L and will be incorporated into K_A ;
- (iii) Stage-specific tenses force the exclusive insertion of certain stages into the aspectual focus DRS K_A , regardless of the lexical salience ascriptors in K_L .

(Caudal 2005:254-255)

Therefore, stages reaching the salience degree 3 in K_L are incorporated in the aspectual focus DRS K_A ; if no such stage exists, every stage of salience 2 is incorporated in K_A . It is to this aspectual focus DRS K_A , in which only focused stages are present, that the viewpoint operators provided by the imperfect and the preterite will apply and the output will be the final aspectual DRS K_I . The main difference between the two viewpoint operators resides in

whether the final DRS K_I is identical to the intermediary aspectual DRS K_A (in the case of the perfective) or subordinates it (in the case of the imperfective).

In the following section, I will evaluate Caudal's (2005) model, both from a theoretical standpoint, and from the point of view of its application.

2.4.A.iii Evaluation of the Model

Caudal's inclusion of stage structure in his model of lexical aspect leads him to argue for a viewpoint-based approach. By introducing the notion of stage salience and implementing it within the model, he provides the part of the action (represented by the stage with the highest degree of salience) that will be focused by the tense form, which acts as a viewpoint operator.

However, Caudal's model is not without ambiguities, which compromise its strength. The assertions that eventualities have 'at least' three stages (Caudal 2005:239) and that the list of aspectual classes he provides is 'non-exhaustive' (Caudal 2005:246), leaves important questions unanswered. What other stages could compose an eventuality? How are stages determined? Can any component of the structure of an eventuality be a stage? Is a stage only a component that can bear focus; or only a component that can bear focus without help from operators? Caudal suggests that the last option holds when justifying his omission of a telos stage, though he gives no justification for only including the stages which can bear focus without help from operators. Presumably, anything that is included in the structure of an eventuality and is shown empirically to be able to bear focus should be a stage. Furthermore, even if we take Caudal's view on what determines stages, the beginning of an eventuality can bear focus without help from operators (e.g. Fr. *Elle sut (passé simple) la réponse*. 'She found out the answer.'), and yet it is not considered a stage in his model.

Furthermore, while Caudal's model provides a detailed account for the structure of telics, little is said of atelics. It is unclear if this is because they are considered to have a less complex structure (e.g. Inner Stage of salience 2, Result Stage of salience 0) or simply because they have not yet been researched in as much depth.

Finally, regarding the application of the imperfective and perfective viewpoint, it is unclear how the resultant aspectual values of iterativity and habituality are derived from the application of these viewpoints to the stage structure.

To conclude, though it is more fine-grained than Smith's and de Swart's model, Caudal's (2005) approach leaves many unanswered questions both regarding the categorization of eventualities in terms of their stage structure, and in terms of how certain resultant aspectual values are derived from stage structure.

2.4.B Spanish: the Imperfect and the Preterite in a Possible World Semantics based on Situations

While Caudal (2005) combined insights from Smith (1997) and de Swart (1998) in his (S)DRT model, Cipria and Roberts (2000) adopt a different approach to the study of the imperfect and of the preterite, in that they make no reference to events (in the sense of 'event semantics'). They offer an account of the semantics of the Spanish imperfect and the preterite within situation semantics. They are closer to Smith in their approach, in that they see the two forms as having an intrinsic aspectual meaning. I will show the meanings of the two tense forms as illustrated by Cipria and Roberts, and state the truth conditions that supposedly account for these meanings. My evaluation of the model will consist of a discussion of the functions observed by Cipria and Roberts, and of an assessment of the

success of their attempt to explain such meanings solely with reference to situations, and not to events.

2.4.B.i Observed Meanings and Truth Conditions of the Imperfect and the Preterite

Though they do not refer to aspectual types, Cipria and Roberts' (2000) model has elements which link it to both the main approaches to aspect described in the Section 2.3.B. On the one hand, they view 'aspect' and 'Aktionsart' as two different components, in the style of Smith (1997):

Aspect is a grammatical notion, reflected in morphological distinctions such as that between *pretérito* ('perfective') and *imperfecto* ('imperfective'), while Aktionsart is a semantic notion, a classification of the events corresponding to clauses.

(Cipria and Roberts 2000:297)

On the other hand, the model has similarities with de Swart's (1998) in that it sees Aktionsarten as corresponding to clauses. Unlike de Swart's, however, this model does not take into account the various aspectual classes at the verb phrase level, before the imperfect and the preterite come into play.³⁴ Thus, Cipria and Roberts refer to the Aktionsarten which *are entailed* after the use of a certain tense-form. They distinguish between two kinds of Aktionsarten, telic and atelic, and their claim is that the preterite can entail either telic or atelic lexical aspect, whereas the imperfect always results in atelic lexical aspect.

³⁴ Note that de Swart (1998) refers both to 'eventualities' and to potentially 'coerced eventualities' (owing to the aspectual sensitivity of the imperfect and of the preterite). In this sense, Cipria and Roberts refer only to de Swart's potentially 'coerced eventualities'.

Their view is that the preterite always entails an end point, whether this end point is a culmination (96) or not (97):

(96) Sp. Llegó (pretérito indefinido) *el tren*. ‘The train arrived.’

(97) Sp. *Teresa* cantó (pretérito indefinido) *en el teatro*. ‘Teresa sang in the theatre.’

This does not mean that the preterite always entails telic Aktionsart, as shown by the two examples below, which differ according to whether or not they are true at any subinterval of the process described:

(98) Sp. Corrió (pretérito indefinido) *petróleo por las cañerías* (atelic). ‘Oil flowed through the pipes.’

(99) Sp. Corrieron (pretérito indefinido) *3000 litros de petróleo por las cañerías* (telic). ‘3000 litres of oil flowed through the pipes.’

Cipria and Roberts (2000) claim that (99) can also have an atelic reading, and that the fact that we interpret it as telic is pragmatically motivated.³⁵ Their evidence for this statement is the example below, in which the same clause is seen as giving rise to a habitual (and therefore atelic) reading:

³⁵ Since according to Cipria and Roberts the preterite can entail both telic and atelic Aktionsarten, but the imperfect can only entail atelic Aktionsarten, the latter is marked. According to the Gricean Maxim of Quantity, the speaker will use the most informative, marked form if applicable. This, when atelic meanings result, is the imperfect. Therefore, by the maxim of Quantity, there is a tendency to interpret the *pretérito* as telic if the *imperfecto* could have been used instead to unequivocally yield the atelic (Cipria and Roberts 2000:304).

(100) Sp. *Normalmente*, corrían (imperfecto) 1500 litros de petróleo por las cañerías, pero una vez, en 1985, a causa de un desperfecto, corrieron (pretérito indefinido) 3000 litros de petróleo (por las cañerías) hasta que se solucionó el problema. ‘Usually, 1500 liters of oil flowed / were flowing through the pipes. But once, in 1985, due to some malfunction, 3000 liters were flowing (through the pipes) until the problem was solved.’

The interpretations of such examples lead Cipria and Roberts to maintain that the preterite is compatible with both Aktionsarten, and to conclude that the telic readings of the preterite do not result from its truth conditional semantics, but from the application of pragmatic principles. Therefore, the truth conditions for the preterite should not require, but should be able to allow clauses to display the subinterval property. Furthermore, since they believe that any eventuality description in the preterite has an end point, Cipria and Roberts add an ‘end-point requirement’ in the truth conditions of the tense. Thus, in (c) below, even atelic situations (permitted by the past truth in super- or sub- situations) must end at a point in the past:

$\|PRET\phi\|^{s,ST} = 1$ iff $\exists s' \leq w_s [s' <_t^{36} ST \ \& \ \text{exemplify}(s',\phi)^{37} \ \& \ \forall s'' [(s'' \leq s' \vee s'' \leq s') \ \& \ \text{exemplify}(s'',\phi) \rightarrow \forall t'' \in \text{Time}(s'')^{38}, \forall t' \in \text{Time}(s') (t'' <_t t')]]$

PRET ϕ is true in a situation s if and only if there is a situation s' such that:

- (a) s' is prior to the Speech Time.
- (b) s' exemplifies ϕ , entailing that ϕ is true in s' .
- (c) every ϕ -exemplifying situation s'' which is a sub- or super-situation of s' is such that it ends either before or at the same time as s' .

(Cipria and Roberts 2000:328)

While the main observed meaning of the preterite was that of having an end point, regardless of the resultant telic or atelic Aktionsart, the imperfect is seen as having more meanings, all of which will be united by Cipria and Roberts under the atelic Aktionsart. The observed meanings are progressivity (101), habituality (102), intentionality in the past (103), iterativity (104) and inchoativity (105):

(101) Sp. *Íbamos (imperfecto) a la playa (cuando nos encontramos con Miguel)*. ‘We were going to the beach (when we ran into Miguel).’

³⁶ ‘ $<_t$ ’ is ‘a total order on T , the relation of temporal precedence’, where T is the set of times (Cipria and Roberts 2000:313).

³⁷ Cipria and Roberts (2000:313) assume Kratzer’s (1998) notion of an ‘eventuality which *exemplifies* a proposition’: ‘an eventuality that exemplifies a proposition p may have sub-situations which also exemplify p , so that it may be a non-atomic atelic eventuality, but it cannot contain any sub-situations which don’t themselves make p true.’

³⁸ ‘*Time*’ is a function which assigns to each situation an interval, its temporal extension, and which satisfies at least the following condition: for all s, s' , if $s \leq s'$, then $\text{Time}(s) \subseteq_t \text{Time}(s')$ (Cipria and Roberts 2000:313).

(102) Sp. *Íbamos* (imperfecto) *a la playa (los domingos)*. ‘We used to go to the beach (on Sundays).’

(103) Sp. (*Hasta ayer*) *íbamos* (imperfecto) *a la playa (de vacaciones, pero hoy Pepa dijo que no hay dinero para eso.)* ‘Up until yesterday we were going to the beach on vacation, but today Pepa said that there is no money for that.’

(104) Sp. *Esteban* *pateaba* (imperfecto) *la puerta*. ‘Esteban was kicking the door.’

(105) Sp. *Frida* *ensayaba* (imperfecto) *el libreto en una hora*. ‘Frida was rehearsing the libretto in an hour.’³⁹

The clauses classified as ‘progressive’, ‘habitual’ and ‘iterative’ clearly display the subinterval property and are therefore atelic. Contrary to the first two meanings, the ‘iterative’ is not taken to be part of the meaning of the imperfect, but is considered to result from the incompatibility between this tense-form and the lexical aspect of the verb *patear* ‘to kick’; therefore, it is not considered when formulating the truth conditions for the imperfect. Regarding the intentional reading, with Moens and Steedman (1988), Cipria and Roberts (2000) assume that among the stages that compose an event, there is a preparatory stage, to which they add the period during which one intends to perform the action. If the focus is on this particular stage, then the extended event is in progress during this preparatory phase, and the ‘intention-in-the-past’ reading can be considered a subtype of the ‘progressive’. The fact that the Spanish *progresivo* does not give rise to this intentional reading is taken as evidence that this reading is particular to the *imperfecto*, and that the difference between the *progresivo* and the *imperfecto* is that the former can only refer to events once their change of state (rather than also their preparatory phase) is in progress

³⁹ For this example, Cipria and Roberts also provide the habitual and the intentional readings.

(Cipria and Roberts 2000:321-323). As for the inchoative reading, they state that this is a telic reading, ‘where the endpoint of the hour period marks the beginning of the process or state corresponding to the atelic clause’ (Cipria and Roberts 2000:305); thus, in their view, since the adverbial does not measure the duration of the event, but its beginning, the clause is not an exception to the rule that the imperfect entails atelicity.

Therefore, the meanings which need to be accounted for within the semantics of the imperfect are a ‘totally realistic case’ (though the two scholars do not state this explicitly, it is clear from their truth conditions in (a) that this reading corresponds to states and activities⁴⁰ in the imperfect), a progressive reading (corresponding to achievements and accomplishments; also incorporating the intentional reading), and a habitual reading. The truth conditions for the imperfect are as follows:

$\|IMPERF\phi\|^{s,ST} = 1$ iff $\exists s' \leq w_s[s' <_t ST \ \&$

$\forall s''[s'' \leq s' \rightarrow \forall s'''[R(s''',s'') \rightarrow \text{exemplify}(s''',\phi)]]]$, where either:

- (a) Totally realistic case: $R = \{ \langle s, s' \rangle : s = s' \}$
- (b) Progressive case: $R = \{ \langle s, s' \rangle : s \text{ is an inertia-situation for } s' \}$, or
- (c) Habitual case: $R = \{ \langle s, s' \rangle : s \text{ is a characteristic sub-situation of } s' \}$

(Cipria and Roberts 2000:316)

The first part of the definition, ‘ $s' <_t ST$ ’ reflects the past tense requirement. The second part, ‘ $\forall s''[s'' \leq s' \rightarrow \forall s'''[R(s''',s'') \rightarrow \text{exemplify}(s''',\phi)]]$ ’, reflects the subinterval property requirement, since the imperfect is supposed to give rise only to atelic Aktionsarten. R is a

⁴⁰ In de Swart’s model these would be seen as states and activities before potentially being exposed to coercion.

‘modal accessibility relation’, needed owing to the consequences of the imperfective paradox (i.e. that reference may be made to unrealized situations; see Section 2.2.B). Note that the notion of ‘inertia situation’ in (b) is modelled after the concept of ‘inertia worlds’ developed by Dowty and explained in Section 2.2.B. The difference between inertia ‘subsituations’ in (b) and ‘characteristic sub-situations’ in (c) is that the latter are all in the same world: ‘habitual readings are about what someone has actually done on typical occasions, and not, as with the progressive reading, about what would have been the case if things had gone on as they were’ (Cipria and Roberts 2000:318).

Having described the meanings observed by Cipria and Roberts and the truth conditions for the two tense forms set out to account for these meanings, in the next section I will evaluate the model.

2.4.B.ii Evaluation of the Model

My evaluation of Cipria and Roberts’ model will begin with a discussion of some ‘observed meanings’ which are problematic for their approach and continue with an analysis of the extent to which the truth conditions set out in Cipria and Roberts’ account for the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and of the preterite.

With regard to the preterite, Cipria and Roberts claim that the preterite is unmarked for Aktionsart, and that in cases such as (106), it is only for pragmatic reasons that a telic interpretation arises.

(106) Sp. Corrieron (pretérito indefinido) *3000 litros de petróleo por las cañerías*. ‘3000 litres of oil flowed through the pipes.’

They give the example below in support of this claim, in which both the imperfect and the preterite give rise to a ‘habitual, i.e. atelic reading’ (Cipria and Roberts 2000:304):

(107) Sp. *Normalmente, corrían (imperfecto) 1500 litros de petróleo por las cañerías, pero una vez, en 1985, a causa de un desperfecto, corrieron (pretérito indefinido) 3000 litros de petróleo (por las cañerías) hasta que se solucionó el problema.* ‘Usually, 1500 litres of oil flowed / were flowing through the pipes. But once, in 1985, due to some malfunction, 3000 litres were flowing (through the pipes) until the problem was solved.’

However, it is not the case that both the imperfect and the preterite give rise to a habitual meaning. Though it is true that the subinterval property holds in both cases, so we are indeed dealing with ‘atelic Aktionsart’ in both, the two meanings are not equivalent. The preterite in (107) does not give rise to a habitual meaning, as suggested by Cipria and Roberts, but to an iterative meaning. The distinction between habituality and iterativity has been investigated by Bonomi (1997) and Delfitto (2004) for Italian, and by Menéndez Benito (2002) for Spanish, who demonstrated that the imperfect gives rise to a habituality effect,⁴¹ while the preterite gives rise to an iterative reading. This distinction, however, is lost in Cipria and Roberts’ model, and points out a limitation of a system that only refers to a telic / atelic aspectual opposition. Furthermore, it is not only because of discourse effects (Cipria and Roberts 2000:304) that this reading of the preterite arises: the iterative meaning arises whenever an eventuality description in the preterite is combined with an adverbial

⁴¹ The only exception to this are semelfactives (Cipria and Roberts’ ‘iterative imperfects’), but since their model does not include reference to aspectual classes, they are unable to explain this meaning within their model, and they disregard examples in which a certain aspectual value arises as a result of a mismatch between aspectual class and another element in the sentence.

denoting frequency. In the same circumstances, an eventuality description in the imperfect will give rise to a habitual reading.

Furthermore, an objection to the truth conditions set out for the preterite is pointed out by Gennari (2001), who notices the same kind of problem we found with Smith's (1997) account of the preterite (see Section 3.1.D): the idea that it must entail an end point. Since examples such as (108) below are acceptable, they indicate that rather than being an entailment set out in the truth conditions of the preterite, the 'end point' may be a pragmatic inference:

(108) Sp. *Juan estuvo (pretérito indefinido) enfermo el lunes, y todavía está enfermo.* 'Juan was ill on Monday, and he is still ill.'

Note, however, the unacceptability of the example below, which, once again, points out the importance of considering lexical aspectual classes when discussing the meanings of the two tense forms:

(109) Sp. **Juan comió (pretérito indefinido) un pastel el lunes, y todavía lo está comiendo.*
* 'Juan ate a cake on Monday, and he is still eating it.'

As for the observed meanings of the imperfect, the most problematic 'observed meaning' is the so-called 'telic inchoative', which, though it is said to signal a change of state, is not supposed to be taken as a counter example to the claim that the imperfect always entails atelic Aktionsart. Firstly, Cipria and Roberts' explanation for why this would not count as a counterexample is unsatisfactory: they claim that because it is frequently

observed that when a telic adverbial like *en una hora* ‘in an hour’ occurs with an atelic clause there is a shift to an inchoative interpretation, this example should be disregarded. I assume they adopt this position because they disregard all examples in which a certain meaning occurs as a consequence of a supposed mismatch. This is also the reason why they disregard iterative meanings with achievements in the imperfect. Taking this stance, however, means that they do not take into consideration nor account for all the potential aspectual meanings entailed in sentences that contain imperfects and preterites.

Secondly, returning to their so-called telic inchoative example, the sentences below show that it is not necessarily the case that when an imperfect is used with atelic clauses the adverbial measures the duration until the change of state takes place. This is the case when a preterite is used (111). In (110), however, when an imperfect is used, at the end of the one hour period the action may have already started.

(110) Sp. ⁴²*La máquina funcionaba (imperfecto) ya en una hora.* ‘Within an hour, the machine was already working.’

(111) Sp. *La máquina funcionó (pretérito indefinido) en una hora.* ‘The machine started working in an hour.’

To summarize, Cipria and Roberts (2000) represent the semantics of the *imperfecto* and of the *pretérito indefinido* with reference to telicity and atelicity: while the former is said to always entail atelic Aktionsart, the latter is considered compatible with both

⁴² Not all my native speaker informants found my example acceptable. They did, however, accept Sp. *En una hora, la máquina ya funcionaba (imperfecto).* ‘In an hour, the machine was already working.’ This is presumably the case because when they follow the verb, adverbials such as *en una hora* usually measure the entire duration of a situation, which is a difficult interpretation with an atelic eventuality like *funcionar* ‘to function’.

Aktionsarten. A few of their examples, however, receive a questionable interpretation: the so-called ‘habitual perfective’, which is in fact iterative, and a consequence of the interaction between the tense form and certain adverbials, and the ‘telic inchoative imperfect’, which does not actually reflect a change of state. Though, despite Cipria and Roberts’ objections, the latter appears to be a counter example to the claim that the imperfect always entails atelic Aktionsart, I have shown that the resultant meaning is not necessarily one of inchoativity. As for the truth conditions of the preterite, as I have shown for Smith (1997), and as Gennari (2001) shows for Cipria and Roberts (2000), the ‘end-point requirement’ seems to be a *pragmatic inference* rather than an *entailment*. Besides these objections, the success of the model needs to be measured with reference to its own aims. If the goal is to have truth conditions as general as possible which can unite certain observed meanings which are considered inherent to the tense form (but with the changes mentioned above), then the model is relatively successful, even without the introduction of events as primitives. However, it is surely equally important that a model should be able to explain all overall aspectual meanings, even those which result from apparent mismatches (e.g. the iterative imperfect), and for such cases, the model must include aspectual classes. Otherwise, the model will only be able to predict the overall resultant values in certain cases, and even in those cases, it will not correctly predict which of the possible meanings (e.g. progressive phase or progressive preparatory phase) will result if there is a choice. For the purpose of the present investigation, Cipria and Roberts’ model draws attention to an area in need of clarification, namely the supposed end-point requirement, but is otherwise not sufficiently developed for representing the imperfect - preterite opposition, for which its lack of reference to aspectual classes renders it insufficiently specific.

2.4.C Models of Romanian Tenses and the Question of States

In this section I shall evaluate the representations of the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite as described in the literature on Romanian.

Haase's (1995) account of the aspectual contribution of the Romanian imperfect and preterite is much less developed than Cipria and Roberts' (2000) or Caudal's (2005) for Spanish and French respectively. Despite its inexactitudes and lack of terminological precision, it is worth describing on the one hand because it is one of the first attempts to include lexical aspectual information in a discussion of aspect in Romanian, and on the other hand, because it points towards some problematic areas in accounting for the Romanian data. Other scholars (e.g. Crăiniceanu 2000) take de Swart's (1998) approach and see the *imperfect* and the *perfect compus* as aspectually-sensitive tenses; since de Swart's model is simply applied to Romanian and the same conclusions are reached, I will not describe these models, but note that such a stance can be considered to hold for Romanian tenses. Bende-Farkas (1999), however, while only investigating stative verbs and past tenses in Romanian, and also following de Swart's use of aspect-shift operators, finds some differences between Romanian and French tenses, which I will discuss in the second part of this section and which point to the need for certain of the areas of further research in this thesis.

2.4.C.i Haase's (1995) Aktionsarten and the Interpretation of Romanian Data

Haase's (1995) approach is in line with Smith's (1997), in that the imperfect and the preterite are seen as providing viewpoints to events. He proposes 'compound aspectual meanings' which arise as a combination of different Aktionsarten and the two tense forms. However, he gives no reasons for his particular classification of Aktionsarten, no

specification of whether this is a classification of verbs or of verb phrases, and provides only one example for each class (with the exception of activities, into which category he states that ‘most verbs’ fall), with no diagnostics tests to help with this classification. Haase’s Aktionsarten are: totally stative (*a costa* ‘to cost’), inchoative stative (*a cunoaște* ‘to know’), activity (‘most verbs’), gradually terminative (*a muri* ‘to die’), totally terminative (*a exploda* ‘to explode’). The ‘compound aspectual meanings’ which result from the combination of these Aktionsarten with the imperfective and perfective viewpoints, are shown in the table below, reproduced from Haase (1995):

(112)

Aktionsart	Aspect	Compound Aspectual Meaning
Totally stative	Perfective	Impossible
	Imperfective (Imperfect)	State
Inchoative stative	Perfective	Ingressive change of state/situation
	Imperfective (Imperfect)	State
Activity	Perfective	Event, change of state/situation
	Imperfective (Imperfect)	Situation, progress, iterative/habitual
Gradually terminative	Perfective	Event, change of state/situation
	Imperfective (Imperfect)	Preterminal phase, iterative/habitual
Totally terminative	Perfective	Event
	Imperfective (Imperfect)	Iterative/habitual

Such a classification is difficult to evaluate because it is unclear what Haase means by terms such as ‘Aktionsart’ or ‘situation’, what the difference between ‘preterminal phase’ and ‘progress’ is, or that between ‘event’ and ‘change of state/situation’. This lack of clarity is not helped by the fact that Haase does not provide any examples of these compound aspectual meanings. Aside from these problems of evaluation, which in themselves constitute a weakness, there are two more specific objections to Haase’s table. Firstly, it is not true, as the table implies, that a verb (phrase) denoting a ‘totally stative’ Aktionsart is impossible in the preterite, even if we take the one example provided by Haase, *a costa* ‘to cost’:

(113) Ro. *Cât a costat* (perfect compus) *cartea?* ‘How much did the book cost?’

Secondly, following Bonomi (1997) and Delfitto (2004), I have argued that there is a distinction between iterativity and habituality; it is not the case that both meanings can arise from the use of the imperfect (apart from potentially in the case of semelfactives); iterativity results as a consequence of the use of the preterite, and habituality as a consequence of the use of the imperfect:

(114) Ro. *A murit* (perfect compus) *un om în fiecare zi.* ‘A man died every day.’

(115) Ro. *Murea* (imperfect) *un om în fiecare zi.* ‘A man would die every day.’

What we can conclude from Haase’s study of the interaction of Aktionsart and tense forms in Romanian, is that though it has the quality of being one of the first works to consider the impact of lexical aspect in Romanian, it suffers both from lack of clarity and

specificity in terms of theory, and, at times, from inexactitudes in representing Romanian data, in particular when it comes to statives.

2.4.C.ii Bende-Farkas (1999): Stative Verbs, the Imperfect and the Preterite

Bende-Farkas (1999) works within a DRT framework and studies the interactions between stative verbs and the two tense forms while taking de Swart's stance that tenses have input requirements that can cause shifts in aspectual types.

Bende-Farkas' analysis of Romanian tenses differs from de Swart's model in two ways. Firstly, a stative in the *perfect compus* is always seen as receiving a bound interpretation, whereas in de Swart's model, the French *passé simple* could, and did in most cases, lead to an inchoative reading. This is indeed the case:

(116) Fr. *Jean fut (passé simple) général.* 'Jean became a general.'

(117) Ro. *Ion a fost (perfect compus) general.* 'Ion was / *became a general.'

(118) Fr. *Jean sut (passé simple) la réponse.* 'Jean found out the answer the answer.'

(119) Ro. *Ion a știut (perfect compus) răspunsul.* 'Ion knew / *found out the answer.'

Secondly, this 'bound interpretation' is not formalized as occurring as a consequence of coercion. This means that at least in the case of states, the *perfect compus* does not require a change of state as input under this approach.

However, the same question arises as with Cipria and Roberts' model: is it the case that the *perfect compus* always leads to a bound interpretation? Is this an entailment or is it a pragmatic inference? Bende-Farkas finds the sentence below unacceptable:

(120) Ro. *Atunci, Ion a fost (perfect compus) medic rezident ??ca și acum.* ‘John was an intern then, just like now.’

The example and judgment above contrasts with the following sentence, which was acceptable to my native speaker informants:

(121) Ro. *Marea a fost (perfect compus) calmă ieri, ca și azi.* ‘The sea was calm yesterday, and so it is today.’

Bende-Farkas’ (1999) account lacks any discussion of the effect of the imperfect and of the preterite on other aspectual classes (particularly activities, since they also lack telicity). From a theoretical standpoint, it suffers from the same shortcomings as de Swart’s (1998) model, since tenses are viewed as aspect-shift operators. Her account, however, points to a potentially divergent behaviour of states in the preterite in Romanian, when compared to French and Spanish: their ‘inchoative’ reading in the preterite is less available, if at all, for native speakers. Furthermore, the difference between (120) and (121) points to the need for a more detailed investigation of the lexical aspect of states and their interaction with the imperfect and the preterite, in each of the languages under consideration and cross-linguistically.

*

In these sections I have evaluated the main approaches concerning the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and of the preterite in Romance languages in general, and specific models for French, Spanish, and Romanian. The main problems with not assigning

an aspectual value to the two tense forms (de Swart 1998) and with having different aspectual meanings result from coercion were that, on the one hand, coercion does not always apply in the case of a type mismatch; on the other hand, certain supposedly ‘coercion values’ are not always the consequence of ‘coercion’. Smith’s viewpoint approach (1997), according to which the two tense forms do have an intrinsic aspectual value, is, however, not sufficiently fine-grained. Similarly, Cipria and Roberts’ (2000) model for Spanish, which also claims that the resulting aspectual values are a consequence of the semantics of the two tense forms, shows that without reference to events, significant insights concerning potential overall aspectual values are lost. Furthermore, the analyses of Smith’s model for French and Cipria and Roberts’ for Spanish raise the question of whether the preterite does in fact contribute a ‘closed viewpoint’ / ‘semantic end point’. Caudal’s (2005) model has the advantage of being more fine-grained with the inclusion of stage structure within lexical aspectual information and the subsequent classification of telics, but it is incomplete and has theoretical drawbacks owing to the lack of clarity in the definition of a ‘stage’. In addition to the insight gained from Caudal regarding the need for a more fine-grained lexical aspectual classification of telics, the evaluation of the Romanian models signals some potential cross-linguistic differences and the need of a more detailed classification of states. In Chapters 4 and 5 I will investigate to what extent the claims theoretically evaluated above are supported by the data in my corpora, and what cross-linguistic differences there are in the form-function relationship of the imperfect and of the preterite.

CHAPTER 3: THE PERIPHRASTIC PAST FORM AND THE PERFECT

My thesis has so far included an assessment of the tense functions (Chapter 1) and of the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite (Chapter 2). While the three languages under consideration show clear continuity from Latin with regard to the form and functions of the imperfect, the situation is not as straightforward for its counterpart, hence the use of the label ‘preterite’. Traditionally, the tense form that is opposed to the imperfect on the past axis is considered to be the *passé simple* in French, the *pretérito indefinido* in Spanish, and the *perfect simplu* in Romanian. However, in French,⁴³ the *passé composé*, a form that initially denoted perfect functions, has taken over the functions of the *passé simple*, as part of a process described as the ‘aoristic drift’ (Squartini and Bertinetto 2000). In recent literature, it has been argued that the Spanish tense forms are also undergoing such a drift (e.g. Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos 2008), while the Romanian tense forms have been described as being either at the same stage as the French (Harris 1982), or even further along the aoristic drift (Vişan 2006).

Such a linguistic situation has implications for a study of the form-function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite. On the one hand, this means that the temporal and aspectual functions of the preterite discussed in the previous two chapters are, to a greater or lesser degree, spread across two forms – the French *passé simple* and *passé composé*, the Spanish *pretérito indefinido* and *pretérito perfecto*, and the

⁴³ Spoken French, but also much of written French (with the exception of most literary works).

Romanian *perfect simplu* and *perfect compus*.⁴⁴ On the other hand, it means that in addition to these temporal and aspectual functions described in the previous chapters, the periphrastic forms are to some extent perfects.

Since ‘preterite’ is used as a label for the forms which are the counterparts of the imperfect on the past axis (in spoken French and Romanian the *passé composé* and the *perfect compus*, with Spanish potentially developing a similar situation), and the periphrastic past forms are to an extent perfects, the investigation of the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite must include an analysis of perfect functions. In light of the discussion on tense and aspect in the first two chapters, I initially investigate whether the perfect only contributes tense information or also aspectual information; I assess previous accounts of perfect functions, focusing on the one hand on the role given in these accounts to tense as opposed to aspect, and on the other hand on the role given to pragmatics as opposed to semantics (Section 1). I then go on to assess the linguistic situation in the Romance languages: in Section 3.2.A I investigate attempts at describing the place of the French, Spanish, and Romanian periphrastic pasts within the ‘aoristic drift’; in Section 3.2.B I describe more recent attempts at describing the functions of the *passé composé*, *pretérito perfecto* and *perfect compus* in French, Spanish, and Romanian. In light of this analysis, I identify areas in need of clarification concerning potential cross-linguistic differences in the use of the perfect, which will be investigated in Chapter 4.

⁴⁴ This varies from language to language, and from type of language to type of language (e.g. written, spoken, journalistic, third-person narrative etc.).

3.1 The Perfect Functions: Tense or Aspect? Semantics or Pragmatics?

In this section I assess different approaches that have been proposed in order to account for perfect functions. I will begin in Section 3.1.A by providing examples of functions and uses of the perfect, for which the theory will need to account. In Section 3.1.B I assess the major theories which have attempted to provide a unified account for the functions described in 3.2.A. Section 3.1.B.i will consist of a critical assessment of recent attempts at describing the semantics of the perfect, be they temporal (3.1.B.i.a) or aspectual (3.1.B.i.b). Section 3.1.B.ii will be concerned with the role of pragmatics in establishing the functions of the perfect.

3.1.A An Illustration of Perfect Functions and Behaviours

Before establishing the meaning of the perfect in terms of its semantics and pragmatics, an illustration of its functions is necessary. I will provide this illustration for English, following McCawley (1971, 1981) and Comrie (1976), as the situation in Romance is more complex than frequently assumed. An outline of the perfect functions in French, Spanish, and Romanian, as previously described, will be given in Section 3.2, and a more in-depth description will be provided in Chapters 4 and 5, following the analysis of my corpus-based studies.

Consider the following examples, taken from McCawley (1971):

- (1) I can't come to your party tonight. I've caught the flu. (resultative / stative)
- (2) I have read *Principia Mathematica* five times. (existential / experiential)

(3) I've known Max since 1960. (continuative / universal / persistent situation)

(4) Malcom X has just been assassinated. ('hot news')

(1) exemplifies the perfect of result or stative (McCawley 1971) perfect, which indicates that the result or consequence of a past situation still holds at present. (2) is an example of the existential or experiential perfect, and has been described as merely asserting the existence of past events of a certain type (Nishiyama and Koenig 2010:612), or as presenting an event which has occurred at least once in an interval of time holding up to the present (Ritz 2010:3402). Sentence (3) illustrates the universal, continuative, or perfect of persistent situation, where a state holds throughout an interval stretching into the present. (4) exemplifies the 'hot-news' perfect ('perfect of recent past' in Comrie 1976) and is said to be used to provide information which is new to the listener. McCawley (1981) considers it a subtype of the existential perfect, while Ritz (2010) sees it as a subcategory of the perfect of result, following Fenn (1986:131): 'an abstract state at S obtains which consists of "the presence of experience of a past event"'.

To these types of perfects correspond a set of behaviours, such as incompatibility with past adverbials (5) and ungrammaticality in sentences expressing temporal progression (6).

(5) *He has watched the film last week.

(6) * He has watched a film, then he has brushed his teeth, and finally he has gone to bed.

(Ritz 2007:135)

The extent to which French, Spanish, and Romanian perfects display the same behaviour will be discussed in Section 3.2 and in Chapter 4. Despite cross-linguistic differences in these respects, the incompatibility with past adverbials and with temporal progression is considered to result from the semantics of the perfect, and the observed variation is seen as a result of historical change along the ‘aoristic drift’. For this reason, and also since the Spanish present perfect is traditionally described as displaying the behaviours outlined above, in Section 3.1.B I will assess the accounts of the semantics of the perfect with respect to the functions and behaviours described in this section.

3.1.B The Semantics and Pragmatics of the Perfect

Bearing in mind McCawley and Comrie’s classification of perfects, one focus for theoretical enquiry has been the search for a unified account for the perfect. McCoard (1978) classified the theories that emerged into four main types, which differ with respect to the weight they grant to semantics as opposed to pragmatics in explaining the functions and behaviours outlined in the previous section. These four types are: the indefinite past theory, the current relevance theory, the extended-now theory, and the embedded past theory. These theories have in common the principal role assigned to tense in describing the functions of the perfect, with little or no attention paid to aspect.

The indefinite past theory was first proposed by Pickbourn (1968), who sees the perfect as an indefinite tense, by which he means ‘a tense which cannot be used in ascertaining the precise time of an individual action, and, by a definite tense, is meant one that is capable of being applied to that purpose... indefinite with respect to... time only.’ However, firstly, as shown in Chapter 1, the simple past can also refer to an indefinite time (7), which means that indefiniteness is not what distinguishes the

functions of two forms. Secondly, as pointed out by Ritz (2012:887), the present perfect can be compatible with definite adverbials, if these adverbials refer to a period of time that goes up to the speech time (8). As summarized by McCoard (1978:76), ‘definiteness is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the choice of tense form.’

(7) Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.

(8) Jane has read two books this year.

Extended-now theories solve the problem encountered by indefinite past theories by arguing that the perfect refers to an interval that extends from the past to the moment of speech. This is true of the continuative perfect:

(9) I have known Matilda since 2008.

However, though ‘knowing Matilda’ in (9) lasts from 2008 until the present moment, non-stative eventualities expressed by verb phrases in the present perfect do not last throughout the interval (Ritz 2012:897):

(10) Since 2008, Matilda has moved house and Dean has changed jobs.

Such examples posed a significant problem to the ‘extended-now’ theory.

Current relevance theories claim that the meaning of the perfect lies in the continuing relevance of a past situation. McCoard is highly critical of such theories,

emphasizing the vagueness of the concept and citing the various meanings that have been assigned to it: recency, present existence (of a certain state of the subject referent, of a 'posthumous' personage, of a belief in the subject referent or in some kind of validity, of the object referent, of the subject referent etc.), unspecified connection with the present, continuance of a state into the present, iterativity, experientiality, present possibility (McCoard 1978:64). Regardless of the choice of definition from the above, McCoard maintains that the present perfect is not necessarily opposed to the preterite and concludes that current relevance is a notion that represents the 'name of diverse implications that may attach to sentences'; in other words, it is a pragmatic notion, rather than a semantic value, so the meaning of the perfect cannot, according to McCoard, be that of current relevance. While McCoard is correct in pointing out that 'current relevance' has little to do with tense, a possibility he does not consider is that of its being connected to aspect (to be explored further in 3.1.B.i).

Finally, the *embedded past* theory is a syntactic theory in which the perfect is described solely as a past in the scope of another tense. The perfect is not seen as introducing new distinctions of meaning other than those of the tense under which it is embedded (Binnick 1991). Since this theory is only concerned with descriptions of the periphrastic form as a 'present in the past', it is not able to account for the variety of uses and behaviours of the perfect described in the previous section and will not be pursued further.

Of the four theories outlined above, the 'extended-now' theory has been enriched, and the 'current relevance' theory has been refined in recent research. The following section will assess such developments in describing the semantics of the perfect.

3.1.B.i The Semantics of the Perfect: Tense or Aspect?

The main question concerning the semantics of the perfect is whether a purely temporal characterization is sufficient, or whether the perfect also contributes aspectual information. The extent to which the semantics of the perfect is temporal or aspectual will depend partly on one's working definition of tense and aspect, and partly on what is taken to be the meaning of the perfect.

Comrie's (1976) definition of aspect as involving 'different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation' appears, as Comrie himself points out, to exclude the perfect, in that it 'tells us nothing directly about the situation itself, but rather relates some *state* [my italics] to a preceding situation'. He decides, however, that

...given the traditional terminology in which the perfect is listed as an aspect, it seems most convenient to deal with the perfect in a book of aspect, while bearing in mind that it is an aspect in a rather different sense from other aspects treated so far (Comrie 1976:52).

In order to accommodate the perfect, Fleischman (1983) proposes not to restrict the referential domain of aspect to the internal constituency of a situation, and to include the representation of a situation as being in some logical (i.e. not strictly temporal) relation to a reference point (Fleischman 1983:184-185). In other words, aspect is characterized by the relationship between the event point (E) and the reference point (R), and this relation need not be described in terms of anteriority or posteriority. More extreme stances are taken by Huddleston (1988) and McCoard (1978). Huddleston states that the perfect is an aspect where there is 'emphasis (...) on the current or resultant *state* [my italics] (...) resulting from the completion of an earlier situation' (Huddleston 1988:77). McCoard claims that 'completion' or 'result' are not meanings of the perfect, and

therefore maintains that ‘in this book, the perfect is not a marker of aspect’ (McCoard 1978:11).

Aside from divergence in defining tense and aspect, the second main question regarding the aspectual contribution of the perfect is whether its semantics involves the introduction of a state. On the one hand, accounts that develop from the ‘extended-now’ theory argue against such semantics of the perfect; these can be seen as ‘temporal’ accounts and constitute the topic of Section 3.1.B.i.a. On the other hand, the ‘aspectual’ accounts of the perfect develop from ‘current relevance’ theories and argue that its meaning does involve the introduction of a state; such accounts will be described in Section 3.1.B.i.b.

3.1.B.i.a Temporal Accounts of the Perfect: Portner (2003)

Temporal representations of the perfect include developments of the extended-now theory. This theory, which claimed that the perfect referred to an interval which extended from a point in the past up to the speech time, ran into problems when it came to distinguishing between the continuative and non-continuative uses of the perfect. In (11), the action of knowing continues until the present, while in (12) both the action of moving, and that of changing jobs, are completed in the past.

(11) I have known Matilda since 2008.⁴⁵

(12) Since 2008, Matilda has moved house and Dean has changed jobs.

⁴⁵ Note, however, that the form used in this context is not a perfect in most Indo-European languages: e.g. Fr. *Je connais (présent) Matilda depuis 2008.*

The problem is overcome by Portner (2003), who sees the semantic contribution of the perfect as temporal in nature. Portner's definition of the semantics of the perfect is couched in Reichenbachian and event semantics. Following Reichenbach (see Chapter 1.2.A), the perfect is characterized as denoting an eventuality (E), which is dissociated from its reference time (R). However, in order to accommodate the continuative – non-continuative contrast described above, Portner states that if the verb phrase denotes a state, R and E can overlap. For Portner, then, 'pastness' is not encoded in the meaning of the perfect, but follows from differences in aspectual class. His Temporal Sequencing Principle of the perfect states that:

For any tenseless clause Φ , reference time r , and event e ,

- (i) if Φ is not stative: $\|\Phi\|^{r,e}$ implies that e precedes r ; and
- (ii) if Φ is stative: $\|\Phi\|^{r,e}$ implies that e either precedes or overlaps r .

(Portner 2003:484)

Portner defends his position against Michaelis (1998), who claims that the condition '*either precedes or overlaps*' in (ii) above means that difference in aspectual class is not sufficient in explaining the behaviour of the perfect, which should be seen as ambiguous between the existential, resultative, and continuative. Portner shows that a continuative reading in (ii) can only obtain in the presence of an adverbial, and that otherwise an existential obtains (compare (13), (14), (15) below). He thus follows Hitzeman (1997) and provides a syntactic explanation for the condition (ii) of the Temporal Sequencing Principle above and for the differences in the examples below.

(13) John has lived in Paris (experiential).

(14) John has lived in Paris for ten years (potentially continuative).

(15) For ten years, John has lived in Paris (continuative).

Thus, aside from the reference to aspectual classes, Portner does not view the introduction of a state as part of the semantics of the perfect. This differentiates his model from those that develop from the ‘current relevance’ based approach, which will be described in the following section.

3.1.B.i.b Aspectual Accounts of the Perfect

The aspectual accounts of the perfect concur in that they stipulate the existence of a state in the semantics of the perfect. However, they differ in the definition and the representation of this state. Nishiyama and Koenig (2010) identify three main proposals that have been made regarding the semantic nature of this state and its relationship with the main eventuality described by the predicate: the perfect state as a consequent state (Moens and Steedman 1988, Smith 1997), the perfect state as one that starts immediately after the event denoted by the verb phrase (Kamp and Reyle 1993, de Swart 1998), and the perfect state as a permanent state (Galton 1984, Parsons 1990, ter Meulen 1997).

For Moens and Steedman (1988) the perfect is an aspectual operator that maps a culmination (an event viewed as instantaneous; cf. achievement) onto a consequent state. If the eventuality described by the verb phrase is not telic, it is coerced into having a culmination (see Chapter 2.3.B on coercion). Within this approach there is a causal relation between the eventuality described by the verb phrase and the state. Such a view of perfect states, however, cannot account for the continuative use of the perfect. In (16)

below, the state introduced by the perfect cannot be the consequent state of a coerced bounded event of having lived in Paris for ten years, because John may still be living in Paris:

(16) John has lived in Paris for the last ten years.

(Adapted from Nishiyama and Koenig 2010:617)

Furthermore, as shown by Nishiyama and Koenig (2010), a sentence in the perfect is not necessarily a consequence of the eventuality denoted by the verb phrase, but can be its cause:

(17) The fence has fallen three times now. It is fragile.

Influenced by Moens and Steedman's work, Discourse Representation Theory proposals such as Kamp and Reyle's (1993) and de Swart's (1998) (see 2.3.B) adopt the coercion approach, but rather than seeing the perfect state as a consequent state, introduce a referent 's' for the result state and represent it as merely abutting (starting immediately after) the eventuality described by the verb phrase. However, as pointed out by Ritz (2012), such a representation does not exclude a state that starts immediately after an event, but is unrelated to it; such a state would not represent the perfect state of the eventuality described by the verb construction. We can imagine a situation in which when Mark calls, and just as he does, his father switches on the radio in the car. The state of the radio being on abuts the event of Mark calling, but it is not the perfect state for the first sentence in (18):

(18) Mark has called. The radio is on in the car.

Furthermore, Nishiyama and Koenig maintain that some perfect states do not necessarily start when the eventuality described by the verb phrase ends: in (19) below, the state of the key being in the room starts before Mark's seeing it:

(19). The key is in the room. Mark has seen it.

(Adapted from Nishiyama and Koenig 2010:616)

The third main approach to the perfect state is that it represents the state of the eventuality having occurred, which is a permanent state (Galton 1984, Parsons 1990, ter Meulen 1997). For instance, in (20) below, the state is that of John's having put the pen on the table. Parsons (1990) distinguishes this from the 'target state' of the pen being on the table, which is not permanent.

(20) John has put the pen on the table.

However, Nishiyama and Koenig (2010) argue that there are no positive properties that characterize the state, that the space of states is excessively populated by the introduction of states which result from all events which have occurred, and that the theory cannot account for continuatives (21), because in such cases the event has not finished occurring.

(21) Mark has lived in Paris for a long time.

Such difficulties in finding a unified value for the perfect state have led Nishiyama and Koenig to argue that the semantics of the perfect is underspecified, in the sense that all that is specified is that there is a ‘perfect’ state. The value of this state will be established at pragmatic level. Their definition of the perfect does not involve coercion operators and applies to all eventuality types. Thus, the meaning of the perfect includes:

- (i) an eventuality ev , which satisfies the base-eventuality description Φ such that the temporal trace of a subpart ev' of ev (that also satisfies Φ) precedes reference time r
- (ii) a perfect state s , which overlaps reference time r and whose category is a semantically free variable X .

(Nishiyama and Koenig 2010:619)

The relationship between the base eventuality ev and the reference type is described in terms of a subpart ev' in order to avoid different rules according to aspectual class (cf. Portner 2003). Since ev' needs to satisfy Φ , when the eventuality is an event, $ev'=ev$, because events do not have the subinterval property. For continuatives, $ev' < ev$, because ev continues until reference time, and if $ev'=ev$, then the temporal trace would not precede reference time. Moreover, since homogenous eventualities have the subinterval property, ev' will satisfy Φ , even though $ev' < ev$, which explains why continuatives occur with states. Nishiyama and Koenig's (2010) approach to the

semantics of the perfect thus accounts for the continuative – non-continuative contrast and introduces an underspecified state which holds at reference time in the semantics component. However, the value of this state is determined by Gricean-style pragmatics.

*

The debate surrounding the inclusion or exclusion of a state in the semantics of the perfect cannot be resolved without considering the pragmatic contribution of the perfect within the two approaches. This will be the subject of the following section. I will then assess the two approaches overall in order to determine which one is more appropriate in a representation of the perfect functions of the periphrastic tense forms in Romance.

3.1.B.ii The Pragmatics of the Perfect: Modality or Neo-Gricean Pragmatics?

This section will consist of an evaluation at the pragmatic level of the two approaches outlined in Section 3.1.B.i: how is Portner's (2003) temporal semantics complemented by pragmatics, and of how can the pragmatics of Nishiyama and Koenig's (2010) underspecified 'perfect state' theory account for the differences in functions of the perfect?

3.1.B.ii.a Portner's (2003) Modal Pragmatics

In Section 3.1.B.i.a it was shown that for Portner (2003) the semantic truth-conditional contribution of the perfect was temporal in nature: if a sentence is a state, the event (e) precedes or overlaps (r), while if a sentence is not a state, e necessarily precedes r. Thus, only the continuative – non-continuative distinction is considered to

be of a semantic nature. Resultative readings (22), experiential / existential readings (23)⁴⁶, and ‘hot perfects’ (Comrie’s ‘perfects of recent situation’) (24), (25), are seen to result from pragmatics and will be discussed in this section.

(22) Mary has read *Middlemarch*. (She understands Eliot’s style.)

(23) (Is the Earth in danger of being struck by asteroids?) The Earth has been struck by giant asteroids before.

(24) The Orioles have won!

(25) Several terrible things have happened to me this week.

(examples from Portner 2003:499-503)

The contribution of the perfect in terms of pragmatics is formalized as a presupposition stated in terms of the theory of epistemic modality, which allows developments of ‘such informal notions as “current relevance” and “result state”’ (Portner 2003:461). Thus, a sentence S of the form PERFECT (Φ) presupposes:

$$\exists q[\text{ANS}(q) \ \& \ P(p,q)]$$

Above, p is a proposition expressed by Φ , and ANS is a property which is true of any proposition that is an answer to a question that the speaker is trying to answer. P is an operator similar to an epistemic *must*, which determines that the proposition p expressed by Φ in the perfect is an answer to a question that is in the conversational background (Portner 2003:500).

⁴⁶ Portner describes (23) as having a current relevance reading.

In (22) above, the sentence could be an answer to the question ‘Why is Mary able to understand Eliot’s style?’ Portner’s claim is that resultative perfects are always linked to causal relations, because the event referred to provides evidence for a current state (i.e. above, ‘reading’ causes ‘understanding’).

The sentence in (23) is seen as a potential answer to the question: ‘Is the Earth in danger of being struck by giant asteroids?’ Portner claims that such ‘current relevance’ uses come from the interaction between the perfect and the ‘Common Ground’. In the example above, the Common Ground would include assumptions like being able to rely on the past in order to predict things about the future.

‘Hot news’ perfect readings are explained by a close to empty Common Ground. In (24), uttered out of the blue, the assumption is that the interlocutors would be interested in the question ‘How are the Orioles doing?’ In (25), according to Portner, the Common Ground only seems empty, but in fact invokes an implicit question ‘How are you?’

To summarize, Portner’s account therefore only considers temporal readings such as the continuative – non-continuative to be semantic in nature, whereas resultatives, experientials, and ‘hot news’ perfects are seen as resulting from pragmatics in the form of a current relevance presupposition.

3.1.B.ii.b Nishiyama and Koenig’s (2010) New-Gricean Pragmatics

As discussed in section 3.1.B.i.a, in Nishiyama and Koenig’s account of the perfect, a state that holds at reference time is a semantic constraint, but the value of this state is determined by the addressee in accordance with Gricean inference rules. Nishiyama and Koenig model the inferential process by which the value of the state is determined on Levinson’s (2000) principle of informativeness:

(25) I-principle:

- a. A speaker chooses the less informative utterance when the more informative one is available (maxim of minimization).
- b. The addressee enriches the less informative utterance and finds the most specific interpretation he thinks the speaker intended.

(Nishiyama and Koenig 2010:622)

Let us consider an example:

(26) John has eaten the cookie.

In the absence of further information, for what Nishiyama and Koenig call an ‘entailed resultative’ perfect, the value of the state X corresponds to ‘The_cookie_be_eaten_by John.’ For a conversationally implicated resultative perfect the value of X could be ‘John_be_happy_and_full’. A nonresultative, existential reading can obtain if, for example, X is ‘Cookies_be_delicious’; in other words, the state is not a result, but can be a cause of John’s eating the cookie.

In (27), the eventuality is a state:

(27) John has lived in Paris.

If the value of X is of the same category as the eventuality described by the verb phrase, we can arrive at continuative readings (if X is ‘John_live_in_Paris’). If X is ‘John_knows_many_Parisians’, the reading is non-continuative.

Furthermore, Nishiyama and Koenig examined a corpus of 605 present perfect examples in order to test the feasibility of the task of establishing a value for an underspecified perfect state. They found that overwhelmingly, present perfects were used with continuative or entailed resultative readings, which only require trivial inferences: rules that apply unless specific information indicates otherwise (McDermott 1982). The other examples fell into a few inference patterns that used easily accessible commonsense rules or general default rules. In addition, they also tested the role of the perfect in discourse and found that it played a role in establishing discourse relations in speech. Moreover, it was found that the perfect could also be used to establish or shift a topic. Nishiyama and Koenig thus show that the task of establishing a value for a semantically required perfect state is feasible.

*

In the following section I will evaluate Portner’s (2003) model and Nishiyama and Koenig’s (2010) model from a theoretical point of view by investigating whether there is evidence of the stative nature of the perfect, and then I will consider the two accounts in the light of Nishiyama and Koenig’s corpus study. This evaluation will allow a decision on whether or not to include states in the representation of the perfect when accounting for the form – function relationship between the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

3.1.B.iii The Perfect State Reevaluated

The main difference in terms of the semantic claim of the two accounts refers to the inclusion or the omission of a state in the semantics of the perfect. Since both Portner's (2003) and Nishiyama and Koenig's (2010) propositions were able to account for the different readings of the perfect, we may be tempted, according to Occam's Razor, not to include states in the semantics of the perfect and to argue that temporal semantics are sufficient to account for the perfect.

In order to determine whether the perfect introduces a state in speech we can apply tests that investigate the stative nature of eventualities to sentences in which the perfect is used. Katz (2003) uses classical tests from stativity such as non-agentivity and present orientation (Katz 2003:206): firstly, states are not agentive, and are therefore incompatible with adverbials like 'intentionally' or verbs like 'persuade'; secondly, unlike dynamic eventualities, when used in the present tense, states have a present, rather than past time reading.

At first glance, perfects seem to fail the non-agentivity test, since the use of the perfect in (28) is acceptable, unlike the state in (29):

(28) John has kissed Mary intentionally.

(29) *John knows Mary intentionally (state).

Katz claims, however, that in (28) the adverbial modifies only 'kiss Mary' and not 'have kissed Mary'.⁴⁷ He maintains that in (30) below, owing to the change in the place of the adverbial, 'intentionally' does modify 'have kissed Mary' and the sentence is

⁴⁷ This would also be the case in 'John has intentionally kissed Mary.'

unacceptable, as is the case with the state in (29). He then shows that ‘wh’-clefts, which are only compatible with non-statives (see 31-32 below), are not acceptable with perfects (33):

(30)?? John intentionally has kissed Mary.

(31) What John did was kiss Mary (non-stative).

(32)?? What John did was love Mary (stative).

(33)?? What John did was have kissed Mary.

The second piece of evidence for the stativity of perfects comes from ‘tenseless’ languages (Déchaine 1991) like Haitian, where stative sentences typically have present interpretations, while bare eventive sentences have past interpretation. Stowell (1982) notes that this is also evident in the interpretation of ‘Headline English’ sentences in the present: (34) below would be given a past interpretation, while (35) would be given a present reading:

(34) Pipeline explodes (event).

(35) Experts fear shortages (state).

(Examples from Katz 2003:209)

This contrast extends to other contexts, such as the complement clause of attitude verbs.

The contrast in (36)-(37) shows that only statives are felicitous in this context:

(36) Mark believed John to love Mary.

(37)??Mark believed John to kiss Mary.

Significantly, the perfect is also felicitous in this context, even when the base eventuality denotes an event:

(38) Mark believed John to have kissed Mary.

Furthermore, both stative and perfect predicates have an epistemic reading when used as a complement of *must* (39)-(41), as opposed to eventive predicates, which have deontic interpretation (42):

(39) You must love Mary.

(40) You must have loved Mary.

(41) You must have kissed Mary.

(42) You must kiss Mary.

In addition to these theoretical considerations, Nishiyama and Koenig's corpus findings on the discourse functions of the perfect showed that it was often used to start a conversation and to establish a topic:

(43) Have you seen *Dancing with the Wolves*?

In such cases it is not justifiable to presuppose the existence of a shared topic: the perfect is not used because there is a preexisting topic, but in order to attempt to create a

new one. This is strong evidence against Portner's modal pragmatics, which rested on a required presupposed topic.

To conclude, evidence from stativity tests suggests that a perfect state should be included in the semantics of the perfect, while corpus-based findings argue against a modal pragmatics component that relies on a presupposed topic. Therefore, in my representation of the perfect functions of the Romance periphrastic past in Chapter 5, I will follow Nishiyama and Koenig and include a state in the semantic component. In the following section I will consider the place of the Spanish, French, and Romanian past tense forms along the 'aoristic drift', and investigate their functions.

3.2 The Romance Periphrastic Form and the 'Aoristic Drift'

In the previous section the perfect was characterized as referring to a past situation that is currently relevant, with current relevance formalized as the introduction of a perfect state that overlaps with the reference time. Perfectives, on the other hand, report a past event 'for its own sake' (Bybee et al., 1994:54). The process by which a form starts out as a resultative perfect and develops into a perfective was named 'aoristic drift' by Squartini and Bertinetto (2000).

The form that undergoes aoristicization in Romance languages is the analytic one-step-past-referring form: in French the *passé composé*, in Spanish the *pretérito perfecto*, and in Romanian the *perfect compus*. The Latin periphrastic forms (e.g. 'habeo factum', from which these forms originated) had reintroduced a perfect in the verbal paradigm of Post-Classical Latin after the initial Latin perfect form (e.g. *FECI*, the type

which is the ancestor of the Romance simple pasts) had developed into a perfective past as well, already at the stage of Classical Latin (Squartini and Bertinetto 2000).

The questions addressed in the remainder of this chapter are: where within this linguistic space are the French, Spanish, and Romanian forms, and how can their functions be accounted for formally? In Section 3.2.A I will briefly outline and assess an influential attempt at describing the ‘aoristic drift’: Harris’ (1982) taxonomy. In Section 3.2.B I will focus on how the French, Spanish, and Romanian periphrastic forms fit within such a taxonomy according to more recent research and assess previous attempts at accounting for their functions.

3.2.A Harris’ Taxonomy and its Diachronic Limitations

In a widely-known account of the development of Romance forms from perfect to perfective, Harris (1982) claims that there is a diachronic continuum across which four ordered stages can be identified. These stages are also seen to correspond to the current synchronic behaviour of the analytic past forms of the various Romance languages.

The starting point of this continuum (Harris’ Stage I) coincides with the situation which existed in late Latin, and which is said to hold currently in Sicilian and in dialects of far southern Italy: here, the periphrastic form is restricted to describing states which result from past situations (resultative perfects).

At Stage II, which is attested in Galician, Portuguese, and varieties of American Spanish, the analytic past is said to occur ‘only in highly specific circumstances’, for instance in contexts ‘aspectually marked as durative or repetitive’ (i.e. where English would have a perfect progressive form).

At Stage III, which according to Harris obtains in standard Peninsular Spanish and some regional varieties of French and Occitan⁴⁸, the periphrastic form represents ‘the archetypal present perfect value of past action with present relevance’ (as described in 3.1).

The analytic one-step-past-referring forms in standard French, northern Italian and northern Italian dialects, standard Romanian, and Catalan are considered by Harris as the final stage in this development: they have assumed perfective, as well as perfect functions, and the perfect - preterite opposition is no longer encoded formally.

Despite its appeal, Harris’ taxonomy runs into problems from a diachronic perspective. Squartini and Bertinetto (2000) point out several studies of 17th century Portuguese (Paiva Boléo 1936, Irmen 1966, Suter 1984, Harre 1991) which show that the periphrastic past was not actionally or aspectually restricted and exhibited uses characteristic of stage III before settling into being a ‘stage II perfect’, as stated by Harris. This is undoubtedly problematic for a theory that claims that the aspectual or actional restrictions are an intermediate stage in the development from resultative perfect to perfective. What is further problematic is that essentially on the basis of the synchronic situation in Portuguese, this stage II is said to have been a stage in the aoristicization of all Romance compounds with no attested evidence from these languages. Squartini and Bertinetto (2000) argue that rather than an intermediate step, the actional and aspectual restrictions in Portuguese are likely to be an independent development. Moreover, what these observations suggest, as noted by Bertinetto and Squartini (to appear), is that rather than all Romance languages undergoing an aoristic drift, within some (like Portuguese or the Spanish spoken around the River Plate), there

⁴⁸ Central Italian varieties can be added to Harris’ list.

is no sign of aoristicization, and the periphrastic pasts are restricted to a limited set of contexts generally seen as prototypical of ‘well-behaved perfects’ (Laca 2010). It should therefore not be postulated that there is a single evolutionary continuum for Romance languages (Bertinetto and Squartini, to appear).

In the light of this discussion, in the next section I will investigate to what extent French, Spanish, and Romanian can be said to be undergoing an aoristic drift and to what extent they can be seen to correspond to the stages⁴⁹ delimited by Harris (Stage III for Spanish and Stage IV for French and Romanian).

3.2.B Harris’ Taxonomy and its Synchronic Limitations

From a synchronic perspective, Harris’ four stages, which are meant to correspond to the functions of the various Romance compound pasts, cannot cover the wide range of cross-linguistic and cross-dialectal variation across Romance.

The languages listed under Stage III (Peninsular Spanish, regional varieties of French and Occitan), for example, vary in their distribution of the periphrastic past (Squartini & Bertinetto 2000), both cross-linguistically and within the same language. At this stage, the analytic form is said to represent situations that are relevant to the present (owing to the introduction of a state that continues up to the present moment, according to the discussion in 3.1). One could then argue that current relevance is a subjective notion and that speakers of Occitan have a different view of what is currently relevant than speakers of Peninsular Spanish, or that northern speakers of Spanish find different things relevant than southern speakers of Spanish. However, Schwenter (1994)

⁴⁹ In the light of the discussion above, referring to the functions of the analytic past in Romance languages as constituting ‘stages’ is not appropriate. However, I will use this term in order to keep with Harris’ terminology.

argues that these variations can be interpreted in terms of the periphrastic past being at different degrees of grammaticalization as a perfective, rather than as representing a different conceptualization of the notion of relevance. Thus, according to Schwenter, varieties that make more use of the analytic past do not do so because their speakers find more of their speech currently relevant, but because the analytic past is further along the aoristicization process.

The representation of languages under Stage IV also has limitations. Squartini and Betrinetto (2000) point out the need to distinguish between local vernaculars and local varieties of the standard language. They give the example of Northern Italian, where the vernaculars have lost the synthetic past as a morphological possibility, as opposed to the varieties in which the form is still exhibited to a certain extent. Distinctions of style and register are also absent from this account of the aoristic drift: though lost in colloquial French, the *passé simple* can still occasionally be found in some newspaper articles and is frequently present in literary texts. This situation is different in Romanian, which is said to occupy the same place along the aoristic drift as French. However, the *perfect simplu* is entirely missing in newspaper articles in its perfective function.

Having outlined the limitations of such general taxonomies as Harris', I shall move on to more recent studies concerning the functions and the route from perfect to perfective of the analytical one-step-past-referring forms in the Romance languages under consideration. In 3.2.B.i I will consider the case of Spanish, while in 3.2.B.ii I will look into the differences between the French and the Romanian periphrastic pasts.

3.2.B.i The Spanish Pretérito Perfecto

The Spanish perfect is generally considered a prototypical kind of perfect, which exhibits the functions described in Section 3.2.A: the resultative / stative (44), the existential / experiential (45), the continuative / universal / perfect of persistent situation (46), and the ‘hot news perfect’ (47).

(44) Sp. *No puede correr porque se ha roto (pretérito perfecto) una pierna.* ‘He cannot run because he has broken his leg.’

(45) Sp. *Ha ido (pretérito perfecto) dos veces a Buenos Aires.* ‘He has been to Buenos Aires twice.’

(46) Sp. *Ha vivido (pretérito perfecto) solo desde la muerte de su padre.* ‘He has lived alone since his father’s death.’

(47) Sp. *¡Se ha escapado (pretérito perfecto) el perro!* ‘The dog has run away!’

(Examples from Laca 2010:2)

Associated with these functions are the typical behaviours of the perfect: its supposed incompatibility with past time adverbials (48) and its inability to express temporal progression (49):

(48) **Juan ha muerto (pretérito perfecto) ayer.* ‘Juan died yesterday.’

(49) **Juan ha saludado (pretérito perfecto) a María, ha salido (pretérito perfecto) de la casa y se ha ido (pretérito perfecto) al ayuntamiento.* ‘Juan greeted María, got out of the house and went to the town hall.’

For these reasons, Harris placed Peninsular Spanish at the third stage of the route from perfect to perfective, which consists of forms that express current relevance.⁵⁰ However, the presumed prototypical behaviours of the *perfecto* are called into question by more recent corpus data. Schwenter (1994) and Howe (2006), using contemporary corpora, find both examples of the perfect used with past time adverbials (50) and of narrative sequencing (emphasized by the use of *luego* ‘then’ in 51):

(50) Sp. *Hoy me he despertado (pretérito perfecto) a las cuatro de la madrugada.*
‘Today I woke up at 4 o’clock in the morning.’

(51) *Me he levantado (pretérito perfecto) a las...a las nueve de la mañana. He desayunado (pretérito perfecto) en casa. Me (he) hecho (pretérito perfecto) la comida. He ido (pretérito perfecto) a la casa de mis padres a...para hacer unas burocracias, y luego he venido (pretérito perfecto) a la universidad...* ‘I woke up at... at nine in the morning. I had breakfast at home. I prepared my lunch. I went to my parents’ house to... to run some errands, and then I came to the university...’

These examples clearly do not fit into Harris’ neat schema because what his four stages hide is firstly, the complexity of the functions of the perfect, and secondly, the dynamic diachronic process of change involved in the development of these forms (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos 2008:8) and its ongoing nature. The rate of frequency of the *pretérito perfecto* relative to the *pretérito indefinido* has increased from 26% in the 15th century to 35% in the 17th century and to 52% in the 19th century (data from

⁵⁰ It must, however, be emphasized that there are regional exceptions to this: northwestern Spain (Heap & Pato 2006), particularly Galicia, Asturias and León, and to an extent also the Canary Islands (Piñero Piñero 2000, Serrano 1995-1996).

dramatic texts, Copple 2008). Since the change is gradual, the synchronic situation cannot now be as ‘neat’ as Harris’ Stage 3 might have us believe. There must be both synchronic variation in form (the same function, i.e. the perfective, can be shared by two forms, i.e. the *pretérito perfecto* and the *pretérito indefinido*), and variation in function (the *perfecto*, for instance, can exhibit more than its perfect functions, and extend its functional domain in that of the preterite) (Torres Cacoullos 2001:459-463).

Indeed, corpus data have shown that as well as maintaining its perfect functions, the *pretérito perfecto* encroaches on the functional area of the *indefinido* and is therefore further along the aoristic drift than described in Harris’ taxonomy. Schwenter (1994) shows that in Alicante Spanish the *pretérito perfecto* is not only compatible, but more frequently found than the *indefinido* with past time adverbials like ‘two hours ago’, ‘at two p.m. today’ and ‘this morning’⁵¹, thus displaying a perfective function:

(52) Sp. *Hoy me he despertado (pretérito perfecto) a las cuatro de la madrugada.*
 ‘Today I woke up at 4 o’clock in the morning.’

Schwenter (1994) and Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos (2008) demonstrate that in its perfective function, the *pretérito perfecto* respects the hodiernal / prehodiernal distinction. Eighty-six percent of speakers in the 1994 study and 96% in the 2008 data chose the *perfecto* in hodiernal contexts, as opposed to 28% and 16% in a pre-today past. Evidence of the grammaticalization of the *perfecto* as a hodiernal perfective comes from its occurrence without an adverbial in ‘today’ contexts, which indicates that the hodiernal perfective meaning has been integrated into the form (Schwenter 1994:89).

⁵¹ The *pretérito perfecto* is felicitous with ‘this morning’ even if the time of speech is in the afternoon, i.e. even if the speech point is not included in the reference time.

Sociolinguistic evidence supports the claim that the aoristic drift is ongoing: in the Alicante corpus, the younger generations used the analytic past in hodiernal contexts more than the older speakers, who preferred the synthetic. Squartini and Bertinetto (2000) point out that this behaviour had also been noticed by Berschin (1976:76-80) in native speakers from Madrid; this indicates the generality of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, we must note the 28% / 19% of cases in which the *perfecto* was also used in prehodiernal contexts in Schwenter's (1994) and Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos' (2008) data. Such examples were also found by Kuttert (1982: 196-197) in written texts. When found in speech in this context (53), the *perfecto* is also predominantly used by younger speakers, thus emphasizing its increasingly perfective character.

(53) Sp. *Ayer he comprado (pretérito perfecto) un aire acondicionado y me da calor.*
 'Yesterday I bought an air conditioning machine and it is giving me heat.' (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos, 2008:2)

With such adverbials, both the *pretérito perfecto* and the *pretérito indefinido* can be found in Spanish (54):

(54) Sp. *Éstas son prácticamente igual que las que compramos (pretérito indefinido) ayer. La diferencia, mil, mil cuatrocientas pelas.* 'These are practically the same as the ones we bought yesterday. The difference, a thousand, one thousand four hundred pelas [pesetas].' (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos, 2008:2)

One could make the claim that the *pretérito perfecto* is used when the situation is one of current relevance (i.e. in 53, the fact that the air conditioning is producing heat). However, as pointed out by Schwenter and Torres Cacoulos (2008), this is unverifiable. In other words, though it is clear that the function of the *perfecto* in examples such as (54) is perfective, it is difficult to decide whether or not the event described is also currently relevant, since the only criterion for deciding that the *pretérito perfecto* in (53) denotes something that is currently relevant and that the *pretérito indefinido* in (54) does not, are the tense forms themselves. This argument would clearly be circular and the examples are best interpreted as displaying variation in form; this represents further evidence for linguistic change in progress.

The occurrence of the *pretérito perfecto* in prehodiernal contexts has led various linguists to assume that the route from perfect to perfective in Spanish goes from hodiernal, to hesternal, to then increasingly remote past situations (Schwenter 1994, Serrano 1994), as previously claimed by Comrie (1976:61) for Romance:

Gradual relaxation of the degree of recentness required for the use of the Perfect seems to have been a key part of the development of the Perfect in many Romance languages to oust the Simple Past completely.... The development that has taken place [in Romance] can be seen as a gradual reduction of the presentness of the relevant forms, which finally become purely past.

However, Schwenter and Torres Cacoulos' (2008) data do not support this claim, since there is no significant difference in frequency of use of the *pretérito perfecto* in hesternal vs. prehesternal contexts. What their data seem to suggest is that the route from perfect to perfective goes through temporally indeterminate contexts, which were found to strongly favour the *pretérito perfecto*. This would be because having no adverbs at all or having adverbs like *ya* 'already' or *todavía* 'yet' (55), (56), requires

less temporal anchoring than adverbials of definite temporal reference (e.g. *ayer* ‘yesterday’ or *hace dos años* ‘two years ago’). Therefore, temporally indeterminate contexts are considered more likely to be prone to the generalization of the *pretérito perfecto* (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullós 2008:18).

(55) *No, ha salido (pretérito perfecto) ya.* ‘No, she has already left.’

(56) *No, todavía no ha llegado (pretérito perfecto).* ‘No, she has not come back yet.’⁵²

Another factor that was found to influence the rate of the *pretérito perfecto* was the tense of the preceding verb: the rate is higher when preceded by the *perfecto* and lower when the form follows the *pretérito indefinido*. Significantly, when an imperfect preceded it (57), there was a *pretérito perfecto* in 27% of cases⁵³, which represented 54% of the *pretérito perfecto* average (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullós 2008:25).

(57) Sp. *Sólo había (imperfecto) dos y me ha pedido (pretérito perfecto) uno José.*
‘There were only two and José asked me for one.’

These results show that the *perfecto* is becoming generalized as a perfective and increasingly stands in contrast to the *imperfect*.

The situation of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto* and *pretérito indefinido* is therefore one of ongoing change, as demonstrated by corpus studies and sociolinguistic

⁵² Note that here as well we have variation in form, as these examples are also acceptable in the *indefinido*.

⁵³ This is a high percentage when compared to Mexican Spanish, in which a *perfecto* only followed an *imperfecto* in 3% of cases (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullós 2008:25).

evidence. This situation of change involves variations of form (the perfective function can be shared between the *pretérito indefinido* and the *pretérito perfecto*) and function (the *pretérito perfecto* can display both perfect and perfective functions), which explain the non-prototypical behaviours of the *perfecto* found in recent corpus data. The *pretérito perfecto* is becoming grammaticalized as a hodiernal perfective past, but the route from perfect to perfective does not follow remoteness distinctions (Schwenter 1994, Serrano 1994), but seems to expand through temporally indeterminate contexts (Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos 2008).

3.2.B.ii The French and Romanian Analytic Past

The Romanian and French analytic one-step-past-referring forms are placed by Harris at the final stage of the aoristic drift, since the synthetic forms are no longer used in speech. While this is indeed the case (with the exception of some dialects, as will be shown below), the situation in the written language should not be dismissed, since the extent to which the *passé simple* and *perfect simplu* are still used in written narratives can shed light on the question of whether the languages are equally advanced on the route from perfect to perfective.

3.2.B.ii.a The *Passé Simple* / *Passé Composé* Opposition

In French, with the exception of some fixed expressions (e.g. *ce fut un plaisir* ‘it was a pleasure’) the *passé simple* has disappeared from conversation and has been replaced by the *passé composé*. In newspaper articles (Zezula 1969, Herzog 1981, Engel 1990) and in literature, however, it is used relatively frequently. The two types of

written French should be treated separately, as the *passé simple* - *passé composé* opposition and rate of occurrence depends on the type of text.

Newspaper corpus studies reveal that the frequency of the *passé simple* and therefore the rate at which it is replaced by other forms depends on the type of newspaper. Herzog (1981) noted that in his corpus of newspapers from the 20th century the *passé simple* was used on average twice as frequently in *Le Figaro* as in *L'Humanité*, which for Herzog echoes Barthes's view of this form as a 'bourgeois tense' (Herzog, 1981:106). On the other hand, *L'Humanité* exhibited a higher rate of *passé simple* than *Le Monde* in Zezula's (1969) corpus, with averages of 4.38 vs. 1.41 *passé simple* per article. Labeau (2004, 2009) looks at particular kinds of texts within newspapers and finds that the *passé simple* represents 9.86% of tense forms in obituaries and 2.64% in sports articles. Though the figure in obituaries is not negligible, she finds that the use of the *passé simple* in this type of text has reduced drastically since the fifties (*Le Monde* 1955: 19.59%, *Le Figaro* 1955: 21,66%). However, the decline of the *passé simple* in newspapers does not necessarily point to the use of the *passé composé* as a perfective past. In Labeau's (2009) corpus this function was predominantly filled by the historic present in the section relating the biography of the deceased. Occasionally, the narrative imperfect and the future were also used. The *passé composé* was either used to relate actions anterior to those related in the historic present, or in the section of the obituaries in which the death was announced, as a recent past or 'hot news' perfect. Despite its general decline in newspaper articles, including obituaries, Labeau found that the frequency of the *passé simple* stabilized around 10% in the last quarter of the 20th century, thus maintaining its perfective function in a particular type of text of journalistic French.

Written works such as short stories, novels, historical works etc. are predominantly still narrated in the *passé simple*, which opposes the imperfect with the exception of direct speech, where the *passé composé* is used. However, the *passé composé* is not incompatible with contexts of narrative progression. Indeed, Camus's *L'Étranger* is narrated entirely in the *passé composé*. de Swart and Molendijk (2002) investigate the temporal structure of the first chapters of the novel, while de Swart (2007) compares the choice of tenses in French with that of the English, Dutch, and German translations. de Swart (2007) claims that the *passé composé* can only be used to tell a story within a clear deictic dimension, i.e. in speech or in the context of a diary (in *L'Étranger* we are reading the memories of the hero). In her view, the *passé composé* advances the narrative with the help of other devices, such as connectives (*ensuite* 'then', *un moment après* 'a moment later'), expressions that mark the passing of time (*passer* 'to pass', *un long moment* 'a while'), presuppositions and implications (*précéder quelqu'un* 'to arrive before someone', *ajouter* 'to add'). She hypothesized that in languages that use 'inherently narrative' tenses (English, Dutch) the translators would make less use of the above devices, in particular of temporal adverbials such as 'then' or 'afterwards'. However, this prediction was not borne out. de Swart's conclusion was that the reason for this was that temporal adverbials play different roles when interacting with tense and aspect in the languages under investigation. Two other possible explanations were acknowledged, but rapidly dismissed: that the translations are too close to the original and that the *passé composé* does not have a weaker narrative force than its counterparts. The first possibility will always be a potential danger when working with such corpora and is inevitable (unless several translations in

the same language are consulted). The second possibility, however, seems only to be dismissed by de Swart because it would go against her initial hypothesis.

Diachronic evidence might shed some light on the issue of the strength of the *passé composé* as a narrative tense. Initially unacceptable both with past time adverbials and in temporal sequencing contexts, the *passé composé* started being used with the former from the 17th century, and with the latter as far back as the 12th century (Caudal and Roussarie 2006:15). Below is an example from the *Chanson de Roland*:

(58) *Sun destre guant a Deu en puroffrit;*
Seint Gabriel de sa main l'ad pris (passé composé).
Desur sun braz teneit le chef enclin;
Juntas ses mains est alet (passé composé) a sa fin.
Deus tramist sun angle Cherubin,
E seint Michel del Peril;
Esembl'od els sent Gabriel i vint.

'His right-hand glove, to God he offers it;
 Saint Gabriel from his hand took it.
 Over his arm his head bows down and slips,
 Joining his hands, he finished his life.
 God sent him down His angel cherubin,
 And Saint Michael, we worship in peril;
 And by their side Saint Gabriel alit.'

Clearly, no additional devices are needed above in order to express temporal succession. My claim is that the reason why the *passé composé* is not yet used in some written narratives is genre convention, not its weakness in moving the narration forward. Evidence for its ability to express temporal sequencing comes from diachronic studies: the *passé composé* was acceptable in temporal sequencing contexts before it was acceptable with past-time adverbials (and the latter usage is, to my knowledge, not called into question). Furthermore, since the *passé composé* can express temporal succession in speech and in writing (as evident from newspaper usage of tenses), there is no reason for it not to be able to do so in written narratives. The reasons for not using the *passé composé* in written narratives are therefore not linked to its inability to express temporal succession, but are of a stylistic nature.

3.2.B.ii.b The *Perfect Compus* / *Perfect Simplu* Opposition

In this section I will assess the usage of the *perfect simplu* and *compus* in newspaper texts, written narratives, and speech. This will allow an investigation of how the Romanian pair of tense forms compares to the *passé simple* / *passé composé* opposition in French (recall that the two languages were placed at the same stage along the aoristic drift by Harris).

Unlike French, Romanian newspapers do not make use of the synthetic past at all (Savič 1979), except for attempts to imitate or quote dialectal usage. The *perfect simplu* is, however, still used in literary narratives, with the exception of dialogues and first-person narratives (Canarache 1965:689). Nevertheless, the use of this tense form seems more restricted than that of its French counterpart: Canarache (1965) provides examples of novelists who prefer to use the *perfect compus* (e.g. Camil Petrescu), Călărășu (1992) points out a Romanian epistolary novel in which only the *perfect*

compus is used, while in its French translation the form used is the *passé simple*, and Savič (1990) shows that in the translation of the same passage, Romanian uses the analytic past, whereas French has both synthetic and analytic forms. Canarache (1965) points to narrative texts that display the alternation of the two tense forms in Romanian as well. The opposition between the *perfect simplu* and *perfect compus* is seen by Iorgu Jordan as stylistic, rather than temporal or aspectual: *Faptele indiferente, chiar dacă au fost săvârșite cu numai puțin înainte de a începe povestirea, se exprimă prin perfectul simplu*. ‘Unimportant events, even if they were carried out only shortly before the narration starts, are expressed in the *perfect simplu*’ (Jordan 1975:150). These corpora are at least 20 years old; in Chapter 4 I will consider the *perfect simplu* / *perfect compus* opposition in samples of three twenty-first-century Romanian novels in translation.

In the spoken language, the *perfect simplu* is still used in the dialects of Oltenia and southwest Muntenia, and of parts of Transylvania (e.g. Almaș, Arad) (Chitez 2010:57). The value of the *perfect simplu* - *perfect compus* opposition varies according to the dialect. On the one hand, in southern Romania, the opposition is sensitive to temporal distance. However, unlike Spanish (see 3.2.B.i), the form which expresses closeness to the present (mostly hodiernal uses) is not the analytic past, but the synthetic *perfect simplu* (cf. Georgescu 1957, Moise 1977, Pană-Boroianu 1982, Vulpe 1977):

(59) Ro. *Cre’că fură (perfect simplu) -n cimitir șapte-opt inși care făcură (perfect simplu) astăzi pomană*. ‘I think there were seven-eight people in the cemetery that gave/made alms today.’ (Chitez 2010:62)

On the other hand, in certain Transylvanian dialects, the *perfect simplu* is used to reflect perfectives ranging from a distant past to a hodiernal past (cf. Grecu 1980; Moise 1977; Neagoe 1985), which carry emotional value (Chitez 2010). In (60), the speaker uses the synthetic past when referring to her wedding day:

(60) Ro. *Io nu-s gi-aișea. Io mi-s gintr-altu sat, gin Cromna. Șî viniră (perfect simplu) după mine atunșea să ne cununăm dară, la nuntă.* ‘I’m not from here. I’m from another village, from Cromna. And they came after me then, for us to get married, at the wedding.’ (Chitez 2010:61)

Chitez (2010) found that there was both interference of function between the two dialects (not so much in southern dialects, but in Transylvania younger speakers are increasingly using the *perfect simplu* as a hodiernal perfective), and interference from Standard Romanian.

Finally, similarly to standard colloquial French, standard spoken Romanian no longer makes use of the synthetic past form. However, Vișan (2006) claims that the *perfect compus* is still primarily a perfect, which can be coerced (cf. de Swart, Chapter 2.3.B) into a narrative tense. Its stative value is supposedly coerced into an eventive value by a ‘narrative’ coercion operator. The *perfect compus* is taken to be primarily a perfect because, firstly, stripped of context, in ‘out of the blue’ situations, Vișan claims it is always read as a resultative (she gives examples 61 and 62 as evidence).

(61) Ro. Am venit (perfect compus). ‘I have come.’

(62) Ro. S-a dus (perfect compus) *să mănânce*. ‘He’s gone to eat.’

However, Vişan picked telics for her examples and it is not at all clear that a result would be implied from the use of a state or of an activity in the *perfect compus* (63),

(64):

(63) Ro. *Ion* a fost (perfect compus) *profesor*. ‘Ion was a teacher.’

(64) Ro. A cântat (perfect compus) *sute de cântece*. ‘She sang hundreds of songs.’

Vişan’s second argument for viewing the *perfect compus* as a perfect and not as a perfective past is that it exhibits reverse order phenomena, as opposed to temporal succession. Vişan claims that this is not the case with the *perfect simplu*. This claim is difficult to test on native speakers since the *perfect simplu* is only used in certain dialects (and with specific functions). However, the *perfect simplu* does not always represent events in a sequence. In (65) below, the events of eating and drinking are not necessarily read as consecutive, owing to real world knowledge regarding eating and drinking. Similarly, in (66), which Vişan considers unacceptable if interpreted as Marin pushing Ion, world knowledge on falling and pushing can lead to the interpretation that the event in the second sentence preceded that in the first. The same factors would lead to this interpretation in (67).

(65) Mâncară (perfect simplu) *bine și băură* (perfect simplu) *bine*. ‘They ate well and drank well.’

(66) *Ion căzu* (perfect simplu). *Marin îl împinse* (perfect simplu). ‘Ion fell. Marin pushed him.’

(67) *Ion a căzut* (perfect compus). *Marin l-a împins* (perfect compus). ‘Ion fell. Marin pushed him.’

Vișan’s final argument that the *perfect compus* is primarily a perfect is its compatibility with adverbial phrases like *de* ‘since’, unlike its French counterpart, which uses the present in such cases:

(68) Ro. *M-a iubit* (perfect compus) *de mic copil*. ‘He has loved me ever since he was a child.’

(69) Fr. *Il m’aime* (présent) *depuis qu’il était enfant*. ‘He has loved me ever since he was a child.’

Her claim that this is the case even for telics will be tested in Chapter 4, in comparison to the Spanish perfect, which is said to display the continuative function only with atelics (see 3.2.B.i). However, the existence of perfect uses of the *perfect compus* does not necessarily imply that it is primarily a perfect, just as its acceptability with past-time adverbials does not mean that it is primarily perfective. What the use of the *perfect compus* with *de* ‘since’ adverbials shows is its variation in function.

To conclude, Vişan's (2006) reasons for positing a primary resultative / stative function for the *perfect compus* are insufficient to justify the claim that its perfective value is a secondary function which results from coercing a stative *perfect compus* into an eventive one.

*

Since the periphrastic past is exclusively used in speech in both French and Romanian (with the exception of the dialectal variations discussed above), the position of the two forms along the aoristic drift needs to be established in the light of its use in the written language. Since corpus data show that the *passé simple* is still used marginally in newspaper articles and frequently in written narrative texts, while the Romanian *perfect simplu* is no longer used in newspapers and translations suggest that it is used less in literary texts, my preliminary conclusion is that the Romanian periphrastic past has gone further on the route from perfect to perfective. However, since the evidence from studies of Romanian is fairly dated, in chapter 4 I will consider the *perfect simplu / perfect compus* opposition in samples of three twenty-first-century novels.

Owing to the aoristic drift, the form that stands in opposition to the imperfect as a one-step-past-referring tense in French, Spanish, and Romanian is not only the synthetic, but also the analytic past. Since this form has both perfective (discussed in Chapter 2) and perfect functions, the latter also need to be included in an account of the form-function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance. Therefore, in

the first part of this chapter (3.1), I described the prototypical perfect functions and assessed ways to account for them formally. I concluded that first section by selecting a semantics of the perfect which makes use of a temporal (extended-now interval) and aspectual (introduction of a perfect state) representation. In 3.2 I proceeded to investigate accounts of the position of the French, Spanish, and Romanian forms along the route from perfect to perfective, in order to establish the functions for which I will have to account in Chapter 5. I assessed the traditional (Harris) view that Spanish is at Stage 3 and French and Romanian are at Stage 4 of the aoristic drift (3.2.A). Recent data have shown the Spanish periphrastic past to be in a situation of change: it maintains its perfect functions, but it is also becoming grammaticalized as a perfective hodiernal past and it displays variation of form with the *pretérito indefinido* (3.2.B.i). An initial investigation of the French and Romanian analytic past functions based on their use in the written language points to the Romanian form being more advanced on the route from perfect to perfective (3.2.B.ii). However, owing to the dated nature of the corpora, further testing is necessary. I will test this hypothesis in Chapter 4 on twenty-first-century texts.

Chapters 2 and 3 therefore raise questions not only regarding the most appropriate way to account formally for the functions of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages, but also regarding the functions themselves. Consequently, in Chapter 4 I examine two corpora designed to answer the questions raised in previous chapters regarding the functions of the imperfect and the preterite. Chapter 5 will then be concerned with solving the debate in the literature concerning the most appropriate way to account for these functions according to the answers provided in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: CORPUS STUDIES OF THE IMPERFECT – PRETERITE OPPOSITION

With the aim of investigating the form – function relationship between the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages, in Chapter 1 I considered ways to account for the tense functions of these paradigms, since they both contribute to locating events in the past (1.1 and 1.2). Regardless of the approaches considered, reference to tense proved insufficient in describing the functions of these paradigms (1.3).

Chapters 2 and 3 offered an analysis of the potential aspectual functions of the two forms. In Chapter 2 it was shown, however, that the intrinsic aspectual meaning of the imperfect and preterite forms has been contested in recent literature. Whereas earlier descriptions presented the imperfect - preterite distinction as a binary aspectual opposition conveyed by the two sets of forms irrespective of the semantics of the verb phrases (perfective vs. imperfective e.g. Comrie 1976, Bryant 1984; durative vs. punctual e.g. Price 1971, Kamp 1979; inceptive vs. non-inceptive, e.g. Cox 1982), more recently there has been a shift to explanations couched solely in terms of lexical aspect. Thus, coercion-based approaches (e.g. de Swart 1998, 2012) maintain that the imperfect and the preterite contribute only tense information and have no aspectual content themselves; they are merely sensitive to the lexical aspectual information provided by the verb construction. Viewpoint approaches (Smith 1997), in contrast, which developed from Comrie's position on aspect, propose that the imperfect and the preterite each have an aspectual meaning: they are internal or closed viewpoints which focus on the type of situation provided by the lexical aspect of the verb construction.

These two main answers to the question of whether the imperfect and the preterite have an aspectual meaning were evaluated, together with specific accounts for the French, Spanish, and Romanian forms. For French, Caudal (2005) proposed a potential reconciliation of the two approaches within a model based on the decomposition of eventualities into stages of different salience degrees, which represent the ease with which a viewpoint can focus on them. For Spanish, Cipria and Roberts' (2000) model shed light on an area in need of further research: the idea that the semantics of the preterite requires an endpoint. The analysis of Romanian accounts (Bende-Farkas 1999) pointed to potential cross-linguistics differences when compared to French and Spanish, particularly in relation to states.

In Chapter 3 it was shown that the French and Romanian preterite forms behaved differently from the Spanish preterite form, since they also displayed perfect functions. Furthermore, the Spanish periphrastic past was also shown to be undergoing aoristicization. Different ways of accounting for the perfect were analysed, and questions were raised regarding cross-linguistic differences between the periphrastic past forms, in particular with reference to the continuative in Spanish and Romanian and to the opposition with the synthetic forms in French and Romanian prose.

The following chapters aim to provide answers to the questions raised by Chapters 2 and 3:

- 1) Do the imperfect and the preterite have aspectual functions?
 - a) If so:
 - i) Do Smith's 'closed / internal viewpoint' opposition and Cipria and Roberts' semantic 'end-point requirement' for the preterite fit the data from Romance?
 - ii) What do viewpoints focus on? In other words, how should lexical aspectual information be represented?
 - (1) How can the notion of lexical aspect be refined in order to avoid the criticism of vagueness made against Smith's account?
 - (2) Are Caudal's notions of stage structure and salience necessary?
 - b) If the imperfect and the preterite do not have aspectual functions:
 - i) How can de Swart's account of lexical aspect be modified in order to capture finer distinctions of meaning (to overcome the criticism of over-generality)?
 - ii) How can the account be rendered less restricted (as some of some of these 'coercion values' result also when there is no coercion)?
- 2) What cross-linguistic differences are there, both in terms of perfect functions and in terms of the imperfect – preterite opposition?
- 3) More generally, which of the approaches outlined in the previous chapters best fits data from the three languages in question and with what possible or necessary modifications?

In the following sections, I will formulate my hypotheses according to these questions. However, since the answer to the first question (do the imperfect and the preterite have aspectual functions?) influences the subsequent path of my research (a) or

b) above) and the formulation of the following hypotheses, I will start by formulating and testing the hypothesis related to the first question ('Do the imperfect and the preterite have aspectual functions?') before addressing the rest of the questions.

4.1. Hypothesis 1: the Imperfect and the Preterite Have Aspectual Content

My first hypothesis is that the imperfect and the preterite do have aspectual content, against coercion-based approaches, which view them merely as aspectually-sensitive tenses. My reasons for formulating this hypothesis, aside from the drawbacks observed when evaluating de Swart's model for French (see Section 2.3.B.iii), stem from theoretical considerations. I will briefly expand on these before discussing ways in which this hypothesis can be tested.

4.1.A Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical considerations that lead me to question the view that the imperfect and the preterite do not have aspectual content relate to two areas: i) the initial motivation for proposing this view and ii) issues related to the imperfective paradox.

4.1.A.i Motivation

de Swart's approach to the imperfect and the preterite as 'aspectually-sensitive tenses' builds on Moens and Steedman's (1998) idea that an eventuality type can be coerced into another by aspectual operators and on Kamp and Rohrer's (1983) claim that the imperfect acts as a stativizer in discourse. de Swart's main contribution is the

idea that the French *imparfait* and the *passé simple* have identical semantic content related to tense and no inherent aspectual value themselves. This claim is solely made for Romance languages and, as discussed in 2.3.B.ii, is motivated as follows in de Swart (2012):

the morphology of the Passé Simple does not compositionally map onto this structure⁵⁴: the verb form *écrivit* cannot be split up into a part that leads to the past tense operator, and a part that introduces the perfective operator. (...) The Passé Simple introduces just a past tense operator, but requires the predicate-argument structure to introduce an event.

However, mismatches between form and function are normal in morphology (introduction to Cruschina, Maiden and Smith 2013) and the principle of semantic compositionality does not require a one-to-one form - meaning correspondence. Languages have many examples of one form with multiple meanings (e.g. the French verb paradigms, whose endings can cumulatively indicate person, number, tense, mood...), and of one meaning shared by more than one form (e.g. the two ways of forming imperfect subjunctives in Spanish, i.e. syncretism). Therefore, the morphological argument is not a sufficient motivation for postulating that the imperfect and the preterite do not contribute aspectual information.

4.1.A.ii The Imperfective Paradox

Chapter 2 included a discussion of ways to account for the different entailments of sentences in the imperfect / progressive: in (1) below, from ‘Jean poussait une charrette’ we can infer that ‘Jean a poussé une charrette’ (2), but from ‘Jean faisait un

⁵⁴ [Tense [Aspect [Eventuality]]]

gâteau’ (3) we cannot infer that ‘Jean a fait un gâteau’ (4). These different entailments were named the ‘imperfective paradox’ (Bennett and Partee 1972, Dowty 1979, Parsons 1990, Wulf 2009).

(1) Fr. *Jean* poussait (imparfait) *une charrette*. ‘Jean was pushing a cart.’

(2) Fr. *Jean* a poussé (passé composé) *une charrette*. ‘Jean pushed a cart.’

(3) Fr. *Jean* faisait (imparfait) *un gâteau*. ‘Jean was baking a cake.’

(4) Fr. *Jean* a fait (passé composé) *un gâteau*. ‘Jean baked a cake.’

As shown in Chapter 2, the different entailments are a consequence of the lexical aspect of the verb constructions above, in particular of whether the eventuality described by the verb constructions has the so-called ‘subinterval property’: if something is true at an interval, it is also true at parts of that interval. For instance, following Bennett and Partee’s (1972) account, if ‘Jean was pushing a cart’ is true at an interval *I*, then: 1) the eventuality is true at a superinterval *I'* which contains *I*; 2) since we are dealing with an activity, it has the subinterval property, which means it is also true at *I* (a subinterval of *I'*); 3) if *I* is a past interval at which ‘Jean push a cart’ is true, then ‘Jean pushed a cart’ is true. On the other hand, since ‘bake a cake’ is an accomplishment and does not have the subinterval property, if ‘Jean was baking a cake’ is true at *I*, the fact that the eventuality is true at a superinterval *I'* does not entail that ‘Jean baked a cake’ will be true at a past subinterval of *I'* (i.e. that Jean baked a cake at *I*). Thus, the different entailments in (1) – (4) are explained.

In de Swart’s model, the imperfect and the preterite can change the type of an eventuality if its initial type does not suit their requirements (states or activities for the

imperfect, events for the preterite). This means that in (1) and (3) above, owing to the use of the imperfect, we are actually dealing with homogeneous eventualities (states and activities), while in (2) and (4), owing to the use of the preterite, we are dealing with events. However, if ‘Jean was baking a cake’ in (3) describes a homogeneous eventuality, then this should have the subinterval property, which would then mean that from ‘Jean faisait un gâteau’ we could infer that ‘Jean a fait un gâteau’. This entailment is clearly incorrect.

A viewpoint approach does not run into this problem, because the aspectual and Aktionsart components deal with two different types of entities: the information on eventuality type is only present at the lexical aspect level and remains unchanged. In our example, the information regarding the baking of the cake is contained by the Aktionsart component; the information regarding the part of this whole action on which the focus lies is provided by the imperfective viewpoint. A possible counter-argument to the viewpoint approach to the imperfective paradox is that we are referring to ‘baking a cake’ as an accomplishment despite not knowing whether the cake will actually be baked, which means that the entity to which we are referring would not be an actual cake (the so-called ‘partitive puzzle’; see section 2.2.C). However, inferences involving the ‘partitive puzzle’ are frequently made. Parsons (1990) gives the example of the sentence ‘She put the cake in the oven’, which is acceptable to some speakers despite the fact that the entity will only become a cake after baking in the oven. Similarly, in our example, the entity can be referred to as a cake, even if it has not yet been baked. Should the assumption be wrong (and the ‘cake’ will not be put into the oven and baked), it would not cause a problem to this model; this is because the viewpoint component does not allow the entailment that the cake was baked, since the eventuality

described by the verb construction remains an accomplishment, which does not have the subinterval property.

To summarize, the weakness of the motivation for the proposal that the two forms do not have aspectual content, together with evidence from accounts of the imperfective paradox suggest that the imperfect and the preterite do have aspectual content. I will test this hypothesis against existing psycholinguistic evidence and propose further research that could shed light on the question. I will argue that the imperfect and the preterite are not merely aspectually-sensitive tenses and that they do have an inherent aspectual contribution.

4.1.B Psycholinguistics and Aspect

Before discussing existing psycholinguistic evidence, it is necessary to restate the points of discord and consensus between Smith's viewpoint theory and de Swart's coercion theory. This will then allow us to see first how many of these points have been investigated from a psycholinguistic perspective, and second to establish where there might be differences in results of psycholinguistic studies, according to which theory is supported by evidence.

4.1.B.i Points of Discord and Consensus

Smith's viewpoint account and de Swart's coercion account both argue that some situation types are basic, and that some are derived (coerced, under de Swart's view). Derivation (see Section 2.1.E.i), of which coercion can be considered a subtype,

occurs in cases where there are mismatches between situation types and adverbials or viewpoints (Smith 1997) / tense requirements (de Swart 1998, 2012). However, the two accounts differ with respect to *which* situations are basic and derived, owing to their different view of the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite.

Smith and de Swart concur that the sentences (5) and (6) below involve derived / coerced eventualities owing to mismatches between eventuality type and viewpoint (Smith) / tense requirements (de Swart).

(5) Fr. *Jeanne* sut (passé simple) *la réponse* (state). ‘Jeanne found out the answer.’

(6) Fr. *Jeanne* frappait (imparfait) *à la porte* (semelfactive). ‘Jeanne knocked at the door.’

For de Swart, since the *passé simple* in (5) requires an event, the state is coerced and the resultant coercion value is INCHOATIVE. Smith also finds an incompatibility between her closed viewpoint and the seemingly open interpretation of (5), and treats the eventuality as a derived achievement involving two DRSs (see Sections 2.3.A.iii and 2.3.A.iv for a DRT representation and for a critical assessment of this claim). In (6), for de Swart the imperfect requires a homogeneous eventuality, therefore the event⁵⁵ is coerced and the resultant value is ITERATIVE. For Smith, the imperfective viewpoint is incompatible with semelfactives, therefore in (6) we have a derived activity.

Furthermore, Smith and de Swart agree that the interaction between adverbials and eventuality types can lead to derived / coerced types and readings. Thus, (7) is

⁵⁵ Note that de Swart classifies ‘to knock’ as an event, since her model does not include semelfactives.

interpreted as a habitual stative rather than an accomplishment, while (8), owing to the incompatibility between the punctual event and the durative adverbial, receives an iterative interpretation.

(7) Fr. *Marie* écrivait (imparfait) *une lettre à sa mère tous les jours* (accomplishment).

‘Marie used to write letters to her mother every day.’

(8) Fr. *Marie* envoya (passé simple) *un chèque à sa mère pendant dix ans*

(achievement). ‘Marie sent a cheque to her mother for ten years.’

The main points of dispute between Smith’s viewpoint account and de Swart’s view of the imperfect and the preterite as aspectually-sensitive tenses are illustrated by the following examples:

(9) Fr. *Marie* écrivit (passé simple) *une lettre* (accomplishment). ‘Marie wrote a letter.’

(10) Fr. *Marie* atteignit (passé simple) *le sommet* (achievement). ‘Marie reached the summit.’

(11) Fr. *Marie* mangea (passé simple) *des pommes* (activity). ‘Marie ate some apples.’

(12) Fr. *Marie* fut (passé simple) *une sainte* (state). ‘Marie was a saint.’

(13) Fr. *Marie* écrivait (imparfait) *une lettre* (accomplishment). ‘Marie was writing a letter.’

(14) Fr. *Marie* atteignait (imparfait) *le sommet* (achievement). ‘Marie was reaching the summit.’

(15) Fr. *Marie* mangeait (imparfait) *des pommes* (activity). ‘Marie was eating some apples.’

(16) Fr. *Marie* était (imparfait) *une sainte* (state). ‘Marie was a saint.’

These sentences represent accomplishments, achievements, activities and states in the preterite and in the imperfect. For Smith, all these are represented at the ‘basic level’ of her model and include a single DRS (see Section 2.3.A.iii). For de Swart, however, (11), (12), (13) and (14) are eventualities coerced owing to a mismatch between tense requirements and eventuality descriptions and involve two DRSs. In (11) and (12) the *passé simple* requires an event, so the state and activity are coerced. In (13) and (14) the *imparfait* requires a homogeneous eventuality (state or activity), so the events are coerced. The resultant coercion values are BOUND for (11) and (12), PROGRESSIVE for (13) and ADD PREPARATORY PHASE for (14) (see Section 2.3.B for a discussion of these). Another potential coercion value for de Swart is PROCESS, which in the presence of a ‘for x time’ adverbial, strips the telic eventuality of its culmination and turns it into a process (17).

(17) Mark built a house for two years.

Aspectual coercion can in a sense be viewed as having a role in both Smith’s ‘viewpoint’ and de Swart’s ‘aspectually-sensitive tenses’ accounts of the imperfect and the preterite, owing to the similarity between the notions of ‘coerced’ and ‘derived’ eventualities (see 2.1.E.i): they both involve a change in eventuality type. The two accounts differ with respect to the extent to which this occurs: more specifically, are

accomplishments and achievements in the imperfect on the one hand, and states and activities in the preterite on the other, eventualities ‘to be coerced’ or basic? In the following section I will consider existent psycholinguistic studies and evaluate the extent to which they support the concept of aspectual coercion as a whole, and to which they can lend support to one or the other of the approaches outlined in Chapter 2 and exemplified above.

4.1.B.ii Existing Psycholinguistic Experiments

Ever since its first use in logical semantics (Moens and Steedman 1988), coercion has attracted a lot of attention in formal syntax and semantics (Pustejovsky 1995, Jackendoff 1997) as well as, more recently, in Construction Grammar (Michaelis 2003, Boas 2003, González-García 2007, 2009), within both formal and cognitive approaches (Lauwers and Willems 2011). Partly owing to a growing interest in cognition studies in general, and partly from a wish to challenge claims that there is no need for coercion as an explanatory phenomenon (Ziegeler 2007, 2010), there has been a considerable amount of psycholinguistic work on coercion. This work focuses on two main aspects: the timing of the process and the location of the process in the brain. Although most of the work concerns English, I will attempt to relate the results to the hypothesis under discussion in Romance and to infer from the work on English what role, if any, coercion plays in the functions of the Romance preterite and imperfect.

As described in 2.3.B.i, coercion has been formalized as resulting from a mismatch between the requirements of a functor and its arguments. When the functor is a verb and its requirements are not met, two types of coercion have been said to occur: complement coercion and aspectual coercion. Complement coercion, exemplified in

(18) below, is said to involve a type mismatch ('began' requires an 'event' type such as 'writing' or 'reading', but 'essay' is an 'entity' type), and a resolution of this mismatch: the entity-denoting noun phrase is coerced into an eventive.

(18) The student began the essay.

While the definition of complement coercion is relatively straightforward, it is much less clear what aspectual coercion involves. The main agreed difference is that while complement coercion occurs because semantic composition is impossible, aspectual coercion supposedly occurs to repair a clash with real world knowledge (Pickering et al. 2006). Aspectual coercion is a term that, as observed in the previous section, has been used with no obvious formal justification for a wide range of situations and it is unclear which of these, if any, should be considered 'coerced'. Most approaches to coercion argue that aspectual coercion is not concerned with solving type mismatches, but with so-called 'sort-shifts', which can be seen as subparts of types (Pylkkänen 2008). An example is given in (19) below, where both 'jump' and 'for two hours' are so-called 'predicates of events' and therefore match as types. However, the semantic composition of this sentence would result in the meaning of a jumping event that lasted for two hours, which clashes with real-world knowledge on the duration of jumps. Therefore, a repair strategy is claimed to coerce the meaning to an iterative one.

(19) Mary jumped for two hours.

In the following sections, I will investigate psycholinguistic studies both on complement coercion, and on some cases of so-called aspectual coercion. Should overall psycho- and neuro- linguistic correlates of coercion be found, they should help determine for which aspectual situations there can be an argument for coercion and, more specifically, when indirectly applied to Romance languages, which of the two approaches (viewpoint or aspectually-sensitive tenses) is best supported by psycholinguistic evidence.

4.1.B.ii.a Complement Coercion

Psycholinguistic experiments consistently show that the processing of sentences that are said to involve complement coercion as in (18) above (repeated in 20) requires an extra interpretive computation.

(20) The student began the essay.

This was first shown by McElree et al. (2001), who used a self-paced reading experiment to show increased processing time. It was confirmed by Traxler et al. (2002), who additionally observed eye fixations on and regressions from the noun phrase area when compared to ‘non-coerced’ sentences in eye-tracking experiments. Further evidence of processing costs was found using magnetoencephalography (MEG), which measures the magnetic fields generated by neuronal currents. As well as processing times, the location of the neuronal currents that generate the magnetic fields can be established (Pylkkänen 2008). Pylkkänen and McElree (2007) found that after reading the noun in the ‘coerced’ condition, there was increased activity in an area of the frontal lobe, situated more medially and more anteriorly than the Broca area, which

was named the anterior midline field (AMF) (Pylkkänen 2008). A further hypothesis was tested: since the AMF was generated in regions also associated with decision-making (ventromedial prefrontal), there was a possibility that the result might be to do with decision-making (e.g. the student began reading / writing / typing the essay) rather than semantic processing (Pylkkänen et al. 2009). The hypothesis that the observed effects had to do with decision-making was, however, not confirmed, and the increased neuronal activity in the AMF was thus interpreted as evidence of ‘coercion’.

4.1.B.ii.b Aspectual Coercion

If psycholinguistic research on complement coercion yields straightforward results (complement coercion elicits processing costs and an AMF effect), the results from psycholinguistic experiments on so-called aspectual coercion are much less conclusive.

Most research involves sentences such as (19) above, repeated here as (21), and dubbed *iterative coercion*.

(21) Mary jumped for two hours.

On the one hand, Piñango et al. (1999) and Todorova et al. (2000) find processing costs associated with iterative coercion. Todorova et al. show, furthermore, that these costs are not associated with iterativity in general: of sentences (22)-(25) below, in a ‘stop-making sense’ test⁵⁶ only (22) elicited processing costs, and it was twice as likely to be rejected as the other three sentences.

⁵⁶ Participants were asked to decide whether the sentence still made sense as they paced themselves through it.

(22) Even though Howard sent a large check to his daughter for many years, she refused to accept his money.

(23) Even though Howard sent large checks to his daughter for many years, she refused to accept his money.

(24) Even though Howard sent a large check to his daughter last year, she refused to accept his money.

(25) Even though Howard sent large checks to his daughter last year, she refused to accept his money.

On the other hand, Pickering et al. (2006) set up two self-paced reading and two eye-tracking experiments in which, despite using the same stimuli as Piñango et al. (1999) and Todorova et al. (2000), no processing costs were observed. Pickering et al. (2006) interpreted their results as evidence that these sentences do not involve semantic coercion, but are semantically underspecified.

Brennan & Pykkänen (2008) point to a possible cause of these conflicting results, which is the difficulty in defining ‘punctuality’: knocking can be considered punctual, but usually involves multiple knocks; certain other events, such as burping, are also usually considered punctual, but tend to involve a single occurrence at a time. Consequently, in their experiments, they only consider verbs that they qualify as ‘strong punctual’ (e.g. ‘burp’, but not ‘send a check’ in 22-25). Their behavioural and MEG experiments potentially help to elucidate previous contradictory results. Firstly, when ‘strong punctual’ verbs were used in iterative contexts, there were processing cost results, which are consistent with their ‘iterative coercion’ hypothesis, as opposed to the

‘underspecification’ account. Secondly, the MEG results showed an effect in the AMF, similar to that found in the resolution of complement coercion, also consistent with their ‘iterative coercion’ account. Thirdly, neural correlates of semantic anomaly were tested, in order to show whether an anomalous semantic meaning is initially computed. If this is shown to be the case, coercion could be interpreted as a pragmatic, rather than a semantic phenomenon, since semantic composition in such cases is supposedly blocked (cf. Dölling 2003). Indeed, there was an initial effect in right hemisphere structures, which suggests that first an anomalous meaning was formed, which was later repaired, supposedly via coercion (as showed in the midline prefrontal regions). The AMF effect could then be linked with both semantic coercion (for type mismatches) and pragmatic coercion (for aspectual mismatches).

A different type of ‘coercion’ whose psycho- and neurolinguistics correlates were tested is ‘inchoative coercion’ (26), which involves a state being coerced into an achievement in the presence of a telic modifier (‘in / within x time’).

(26) Mary was asleep within minutes.

Brennan and Pylkkänen (2008) conducted self-paced reading and MEG experiments and found both processing costs and an AMF effect. The results were therefore consistent both with the phenomenon dubbed complement coercion and with so-called iterative coercion.

Bott (2008) tested processing costs for some of Moens and Steedman's (1988) aspectual shifts, which he calls subtractive coercion (27) and additive coercion (28). In (27) the subtractive coercion supposedly strips the event of its culmination, because 'for x time' requires an atelic eventuality. This is precisely de Swart's BOUND coercion value. (28) is reminiscent of de Swart's ADD PREP coercion value. Here, however, this value results not from adding this phase to an activity, but to an achievement.

(27) John built a house for two years.

(28) John reached the top in two hours.

There were no processing costs associated with the reading of these sentences, suggesting that the processes involved differ from those dubbed iterative and inchoative coercion.

In the following section I will discuss what the psycho- and neurolinguistic experiments described in the previous section can reveal about the imperfect – preterite opposition in Romance.

4.1.B.ii.c Psycholinguistics Studies and the Romance Imperfect and Preterite

When considering the psycholinguistic studies discussed in the previous sections we must firstly note that all the experiments above investigated the usage of English constructions. Although their results can shed some light on the situation in Romance languages, direct parallelisms cannot be established.

Secondly, the studies investigate the psycho- and neurolinguistic correlates of two linguistic phenomena that are pre-labelled 'coercion' (complement and aspectual 'coercion'). They do not investigate whether 'coercion' as a unitary phenomenon exists.

The predefinition of a linguistic phenomenon as ‘coercion’ is particularly evident with studies of aspect. For instance, Bott (2008) set out to establish whether the so-called aspectual iterative coercion, inchoative coercion, subtractive coercion and additive coercion led to the same psycho- and neurolinguistic effects. When he found that this was not the case, he concluded that aspectual coercion had different psycho- and neuro-linguistic correlates. An equally plausible conclusion, however, is that in the cases where there were no extra-processing times and no AMF effect, the phenomena involved did not have anything to do with so-called coercion. These phenomena, - subtractive and additive ‘coercion’ -, are precisely those about which viewpoint and ‘aspectually-sensitive tenses’ accounts of the imperfect and the preterite differ: they are only derived in de Swart’s coercion-based model, not in Smith’s. The lack of psycholinguistic effects shown in experiments can therefore be seen as providing evidence against the claim that the interpretation of the imperfect and the preterite is based on coercion, and therefore, against the claim that the imperfect and the preterite are aspectually-sensitive tenses.

No psycholinguistic research has been done on the Romance imperfect and its potential to coerce eventualities, but there is no reason to believe that sentence (29) below would elicit extra processing costs and an AMF effect when compared with (30):

(29) Fr. Marie lisait (imparfait) un livre (accomplishment). ‘Marie was reading a book.’

(30) Fr. Marie a lu (passé composé) un livre (accomplishment). ‘Marie read a book.’

As for Smith’s viewpoint approach to the imperfect and the preterite, there was some evidence in support of her representation of derived achievements from states (so-

called ‘inchoative coercion’), since the phenomenon was linked both with processing costs and with an AMF effect. However, her other ‘derived’ eventuality type, which involved the iteration of semelfactives (dubbed ‘iterative coercion’), was more problematic: processing costs were only elicited for ‘strong punctual’ verbs (e.g. ‘to burp’), which suggests that iteration is not necessarily a derived meaning.

Indeed, a major problem with approaches that rely on coercion or derivation in general is the assumption that there is always a basic type and a derived one (see section 2.1.E.i). In some cases, however, it is not clear which type should be considered basic: for instance, in Croft’s (2012) example (31) below, it is unclear whether the basic reading is that the program started running after less than four minutes or that it ran for the duration of less than four minutes.

(31) The program ran in less than four minutes.

Furthermore, the decision regarding which aspectual type is basic and which is derived is often influenced by English. Croft (2012) points out that ‘shriek’ is considered a basic achievement verb, coerced into an iterative reading (a derived activity) by the use of the progressive in English (‘The baby was shrieking.’). However, in Russian, the morphologically basic verb describes iterativity and the achievement reading is derived by the use of a suffix.

I follow Bybee (2007) and Croft (2012) in finding a usage-based model (see section 2.1.E.i) of predicates and their meanings more plausible than a coercion / derivation model, since it is based on the usage patterns of a particular language, as opposed to a priori assumptions about coercion. The processing costs noticed with

strong-punctual verbs in iterative situations and with statives in inchoative situations in the psycholinguistic experiments described above can be explained within such a view by their less frequent use in these contexts.

To summarize, the psycholinguistic studies described above test the usage and reactions to English constructions and assume the existence of coercion as a phenomenon. Even so, since there were no psycho- and neurolinguistic effects found with two phenomena labelled as aspectual coercion only within de Swart's account, the view that the imperfect and the preterite are aspectually-sensitive tenses is compromised.⁵⁷

In this chapter I have so far established that the motivation for arguing that the imperfect and the preterite have no aspectual contribution is weak (4.1.A.i); that this approach runs into problems when accounting for the imperfective paradox (4.1.A.ii); and that psycholinguistic evidence does not lend support to the claim that the imperfect and the preterite are aspectually-sensitive tenses with no inherent aspectual content (4.2). Therefore, I argue that the imperfect and the preterite do have an aspectual contribution. Based on corpus data, the following sections will aim to define the aspectual contribution of these forms. I will firstly investigate whether the preterite

⁵⁷ A clear conclusion could be reached by testing the difference in reaction times of telics (32) and atelics (33) in the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages; (32a) and (33b) are coerced according to de Swart, but I predict that they will not elicit processing costs when compared to 32b and 33a:

(32)

(a) Fr. *Elle mangeait* (imparfait) *une pomme*. 'She was eating an apple.'

(b) Fr. *Elle a mangé* (passé composé) *une pomme*. 'She ate an apple.'

(33)

(a) Fr. *Elle chantait* (imparfait) *très bien*. 'She was singing very well.'

(b) Fr. *Elle a chanté* (passé composé) *très bien*. 'She sang very well.'

involves a closed viewpoint, corresponding to the dominant view in the literature on aspect (e.g. Smith 1997 and Cipria and Roberts 2000). I will then establish what in particular is under the focus of these viewpoints (i.e. what account of lexical aspect best fits data from Romance). Finally, I will address the question of crosslinguistic differences regarding the functions of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

4.2 Methodology

In order to gain a better understanding of the functioning of the imperfect and the preterite, on the one hand, and in order to establish cross-linguistic differences in their functions in French, Spanish, and Romanian, on the other, two types of corpora were used, corresponding to different types of language. The main corpus consists of sets of questionnaires given out to native speakers of French, Spanish, and Romanian. The second corpus consists of excerpts of three novels translated into French, Spanish, and Romanian from American English.

4.2.A The ‘Questionnaires’ Corpus

The main corpus consists of three sets of questionnaires, one in each of the languages considered. Each questionnaire consists of three exercises.

Exercises A and B of the questionnaire test both the acceptability of sentences involving predicates of different lexical aspect in the imperfect and the preterite and their potential meanings. The primary goal of this part is to determine the aspectual

content of the two tense forms and to determine the most adequate representation of lexical aspect according to these data. The secondary goal is to investigate the continuative function of the periphrastic past in Spanish and Romanian, in order to investigate whether the Romanian periphrastic past has a wider area of distribution than the Spanish (see Chapter 3: recall that Vişan 2006 claims that the *perfect compus* is used across aspectual classes, while the *pretérito perfecto* it is said to occur only with states and activities). Each hypothesis is tested by several questions, which are placed at different points in the questionnaire, and which will be exemplified in future sections.

Exercise C of the questionnaire asks the participants to fill in the gaps in each sentence with the appropriate form of the verb. Here, the goal is the cross-linguistic evaluation of the forms used in a particular context (in this case, with states in a past temporal frame).

The sentences used in each of the languages in question were translation equivalents. Though the meaning of a lexical item is never identical across languages, this study is concerned with the cross-linguistic behaviour of different *kinds* of predicates (i.e. with the same lexical aspect) rather than that of individual predicates. Therefore, the fact that perfect synonyms (within a language or cross-linguistically) may not exist will not affect this investigation.

The participants in this study were recruited according to their age (between 16 and 30) and to their native language (French, Spanish, or Romanian). The French corpus initially consisted of 80 participants from the Bordeaux Institut de Formation de Manipulateurs en Electroradiologie Médicale (IFMEM). As one participant did not meet the age criterion, one did not meet the language criterion, and two omitted this information from the questionnaire, they were excluded from the study. The final

French corpus thus consisted of 76 participants, 37 male and 39 female, aged 19 to 29. The Spanish study had 58 participants from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, three of whom were excluded because they did not meet the age criterion, one because she was bilingual, and two owing to inconsistencies noticed when making decisions (i.e. occasionally relying on punctuation or modifying sentences). The final Spanish corpus consisted of 52 participants, 18 male and 34 female, aged 18 to 27. Of the Romanian corpus from Colegiul Național Unirea, Târgu-Mureș, two participants were excluded because of inconsistencies of judgement (as above). The final Romanian corpus consisted of 58 participants aged 16 to 18, 21 of whom were male and 27 female. Chi-square tests (Fisher's exact test) were performed for each question in order to see whether answers differed significantly according to sex. This was found not to be the case in any instance. Therefore, the analysis of the results will not differentiate the sex of the participants.

All participants were aware of the general goal of the study (a cross-linguistic investigation of patterns of language usage) and gave their consent to take part in it.

4.2.B The 'Novels in Translation' Corpus

The 'Novels in Translation' corpus further investigates cross-linguistic differences in the use of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance. To this end, three contemporary novels were chosen for investigation, all written in American English, and all translated into French, Spanish, and Romanian: Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001), Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004), and Denis Johnson's *Tree of Smoke* (2007).

As well as the recent date of their publication and their translation into French, Spanish and Romanian, a further reason for choosing these novels was the need to attempt to eliminate potential idiosyncrasies in translation: thus, in each language, the three works under consideration each have a different translator.

American English was chosen as the original language because of the reduced use of the present perfect / simple past distinction (when compared to British English), which was considered to give more freedom of translation of the simple / periphrastic past form in French, Spanish, and Romanian and therefore a more reliable comparison of the use of these forms.

The first 1000 past tense forms of each novel were considered. However, when investigating the imperfect – preterite opposition, only differences in the translation of stative predicates will be taken into account. In Chapter 2 states were identified as appropriate domains of investigation of potential cross-linguistic difference. This corpus of translations from English will provide the environment in which this can be studied. Furthermore, only for stative predicates does the translator have an unbiased choice when using the imperfect or the preterite in Romance, owing to the incompatibility of states and the progressive in English (34).

(34) En. *It was being sunny.

Thus, since English only has one option in such a case, and Romance languages have two (the imperfect and the preterite), a choice will be obligatory. The difference in choices taken will be studied for French, Spanish, and Romanian.

Having outlined my methodology, in the following section I formulate the remaining hypotheses in the context of the two corpora described above.

4.3 Hypothesis 2: No Semantic End-Point Requirement for the Preterite

Having established in 4.1 that the psycholinguistic evidence supports the view that the imperfect and the preterite do have aspectual content and following the criticism of viewpoint accounts in Chapter 2 (sections 2.3.A.iv, 2.3.B.iii), I hypothesize that the preterite does not always contribute a closed viewpoint (against Smith 1997) or a semantic end point (against Cipria and Roberts 2000). My claim is that the eventuality described by the verbal construction can go on beyond the period of time to which the preterite refers, if this eventuality is atelic. I test this on states, activities, and semelfactives.

Following Croft (2012), I distinguish transitory states (e.g. ‘to be happy’, ‘to be head of the firm’) from acquired permanent states (e.g. ‘to know the answer’, ‘to be a war veteran’): while they both involve the presence of an inception point of the state, only transitory states also have an end point.⁵⁸

The acceptability of the following sentences involving two types of states was tested:

⁵⁸ Note that this is a potential, arbitrary end point, as opposed to the inherent end point of telics.

Transitory states: 'to be happy', 'to be the head of the firm'.

(35)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) heureuse avec lui et elle l'est toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) contenta con él y todavía lo está.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) fericită cu el și încă mai este.*

'She was happy with him and she still is.'

(36)

(a) Fr. *Il a été (passé composé) le directeur de l'entreprise et il l'est toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Fue (pretérito indefinido) el director de la empresa y todavía lo es.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) directorul firmei și încă mai este.*

'He was the head of the firm and he still is.'

Acquired permanent states: 'to know the answer', 'to be a war veteran'.

(37)

(a) Fr. *Elle a connu (passé composé) la réponse et elle la connaît toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Supo (pretérito indefinido) la respuesta y la sigue sabiendo.*

(c) Ro. *A știut (perfect compus) răspunsul și îl știe în continuare.*

'She knew the answer and she still knows it.'

(38)

(a) Fr. *Mon grand-père a été (passé composé) vétéran et il l'est toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Mi abuelo fue (pretérito indefinido) veterano de guerra y todavía lo es.*

(c) Ro. *Bunicul meu a fost (perfect compus) veteran de război și încă mai este.*

‘My grandfather was a war veteran and he still is.’

In the constructions that tested the continuation of activities, the two clauses were connected by ‘and’ as well as by ‘but’, in order to avoid potential acceptability issues linked with conjunctions rather than with tense form and lexical aspect.

Activities: ‘to sleep’, ‘to walk’, ‘to speak’.

(39)

(a) Fr. *Elle a beaucoup dormi (passé composé) et elle dort toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Durmió (pretérito indefinido) mucho y todavía está durmiendo.*

(c) Ro. *A dormit (perfect compus) mult și încă mai doarme.*

‘She slept a lot and she is still sleeping.’

(40)

(a) Fr. *Elle a beaucoup marché (passé composé), mais elle continue à marcher.*

(b) Sp. *Caminó (pretérito indefinido) mucho, pero sigue caminando.*

(c) Ro. *A umblat (perfect compus) mult, dar continuă să umble.*

‘She walked a lot, but she is still walking.’

(41)

(a) Fr. *Il a beaucoup parlé (passé composé), mais il continue à parler.*

(b) Sp. *Habló (pretérito indefinido) mucho, pero sigue hablando.*

(c) Ro. *A vorbit (perfect compus) mult, dar continuă să vorbească.*

‘She spoke a lot, but she is still speaking.’

Next, two examples of semelfactives in the preterite were tested:

Semelfactives: 'to blink', 'to flash'.

(42)

(a) Fr. *Après l'intervention elle a cligné (passé composé) des yeux plusieurs fois et elle continue à le faire.*

(b) Sp. *Después de la operación parpadeó (pretérito indefinido) un par de veces y sigue parpadeando.*

(c) Ro. *După operație a clipit (perfect compus) de câteva ori și continuă să clipească.*

'After the operation she blinked a couple of times and she is still blinking.'

(43)

(a) Fr. *Le phare a clignoté (passé composé) plusieurs fois et il continue à clignoter.*

(b) Sp. *El faro parpadeó (pretérito indefinido) un par de veces y sigue parpadeando.*

(c) Ro. *Farul a pâlpâit (perfect compus) de câteva ori și continuă să pâlpâie.*

'The lighthouse flashed a few times and it is still flashing.'

Furthermore, the participants were required to judge the acceptability of the constructions also in the presence of an adverbial that denotes a period of time in the past (e.g. 'for x time', 'yesterday'). The sentences with such an adverbial were included in order to emphasize the possibility of the eventuality taking place exclusively during that period of time and not exceeding it (against our hypothesis).

For states, only transitory states were considered, since permanent states do not make sense when restricted to a period in the past:

(44) * Jane was of English origin last year.

Transitory States ('to be calm', 'to be ill', 'to be angry') with adverbials denoting a bounded time in the past ('yesterday', 'for x time').

(45)

(a) Fr. *La mer a été (passé composé) calme hier et elle est toujours calme aujourd'hui.*

(b) Sp. *El mar estuvo (pretérito indefinido) tranquilo ayer y hoy sigue tranquilo.*

(c) Ro. *Marea a fost (perfect compus) calmă ieri și azi e tot calmă.*

'The sea was calm yesterday, and it is still calm today.'

(46)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) malade hier et elle est toujours malade aujourd'hui.*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) enferma ayer, y hoy todavía está enferma.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) bolnavă ieri și azi încă mai e bolnavă.*

'She was ill yesterday and she is still ill today.'

(47)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) fâchée contre moi pendant dix ans et elle l'est toujours !*

(b) Sp. Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) *enfadada conmigo durante diez años y sigue estándolo.*

(c) Ro. A fost (perfect compus) *supărată pe mine timp de zece ani și încă mai este!*

‘She was angry with me for ten years and she still is!’

Activities (‘to sleep’) with an adverbial denoting a bounded time in the past (‘for x time’).

(48)

(a) Fr. *Elle a dormi (passé composé) pendant dix heures, et elle dort toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Durmió (pretérito indefinido) durante diez horas y todavía está durmiendo.*

(c) A *dormit (perfect compus) zece ore și încă mai doarme.*

‘She slept for ten hours and she is still sleeping.’

Semelfactives (‘to knock’, ‘to flash’) with an adverbial denoting a bounded time in the past (‘for x time’).

(49)

(a) Fr. *Elle a tapé (passé composé) à la porte pendant deux heures et elle tape toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Llamó (pretérito indefinido) a la puerta durante dos horas y todavía lo está haciendo.*

(c) A *bătut (perfect compus) la ușă timp de două ore și încă bate.*

‘She knocked at the door for two hours and she is still knocking.’

(50)

(a) *Le phare a clignoté (passé composé) pendant deux jours et il clignote toujours.*

(b) *El faro parpadeó* (pretérito indefinido) *durante dos días y sigue parpadeando.*

(c) *Farul a pâlpâit* (perfect compus) *timp de două zile și încă mai pâlpâie.*

‘The lighthouse flashed for two days and it is still flashing.’

If the preterite requires a semantic end point / a closed viewpoint, these sentences, particularly those where the period of time is stated, should not be considered acceptable, since in this last case the possibility of the eventuality ending is emphasized by the use of the adverbial.

4.4 Hypothesis 3: A Finer-Grained Notion of Lexical Aspect Involving Stage

Structure is Necessary

In Chapter 2 it was shown that Smith’s (1997) model suffered from overgenerality, implying the need for finer distinctions at the lexical level. Caudal’s (2005) model included such distinctions by developing a notion also used by Smith (1997): that of stage structure, to which Caudal adds the notion of stage salience. Eventualities are seen as consisting of stages with different salience degrees; these salience degrees indicate the ease with which they can be focused on. The question that arises is whether the notion of stage structure is necessary, and if so, what stages should eventualities be composed of?⁵⁹

My hypothesis is that finer distinctions at lexical level than those specified by Smith (1997) are needed, and that they can be formalized with reference to stage

⁵⁹ Recall that a major weakness of phasal analyses of lexical aspect (see Section 2.1.E.ii.b) was the inconsistency in determining what is a phase / stage.

structure. This hypothesis was tested by investigating the acceptability of sentences involving predicates of different lexical aspect in the imperfect (4.4.A) and the preterite (4.4.B, 4.4.C) and (if acceptable) the meaning that arises from the interactions between lexical aspect and the two tense forms. This investigation will not only shed light on whether stage structure is relevant to the imperfect – preterite opposition, but will also help establish points of consensus with and divergence from Caudal’s position (see Section 2.4.A).

4.4.A Achievements in the Imperfect

I investigated the acceptability of different achievements in the imperfect. Different degrees of acceptability across achievements traditionally considered to behave uniformly within their class would demonstrate the necessity for a finer notion of lexical aspect. I tested the acceptability of sentences in which the occurrence of the punctual event itself is negated. The use of the imperfect, however, implies that some stage of the event started. If the achievement consisted of a single punctual stage, it would be impossible to start the event and not finish it. However, if the achievement has a stage structure consisting of more than the one punctual stage, should this punctual stage not be arrived at, the imperfect could focus on another available stage. I take examples of achievements that I hypothesize have a preparatory stage available (e.g. ‘to arrive’, ‘to leave’⁶⁰, ‘to win the race’) as well as achievements that do not have another stage available (‘to throw’):

⁶⁰ Note that in Caudal’s model (see Section 2.4.A), ‘leave’ was not formalized as having a preparatory stage.

Achievements with a preparatory stage : ‘to arrive’, ‘to leave’, ‘to win the race’.

(51)

(a) Fr. *Elle arrivait (imparfait) à la maison, mais elle est tombée sur son ancien ami Maurice et du coup, elle a décidé d’aller boire une bière avec lui.*

(b) Sp. *Llegaba (imperfecto) a su casa, pero coincidió con Juan, y decidió tomar una cerveza con él.*

(c) Ro. *Ajungea (imperfect) acasă, dar s-a întâlnit întâmplător cu Ion și a hotărât să iasă la o bere cu el.*

‘She was arriving home, but she bumped into John and she decided to have a beer with him.’

(52)

(a) Fr. *Je partais (imparfait) de chez moi, mais il a commencé à neiger, donc j’ai décidé de ne plus aller au parc.*

(b) Sp. *Me iba (imparfait) de mi casa, pero empezó a nevar, así que decidí no ir al parque.*

(c) Ro. *Plecam (imperfect) de acasă, dar a început să ningă, așa că am hotărât să nu mai merg în parc.*

‘I was leaving home, but it started snowing, so I decided not to go to the park anymore.’

(53)

(a) Fr. *Je gagnais (imparfait) la course, mais il a commencé à pleuvoir et on a dû s’arrêter.*

(b) Sp. *Ganaba (imparfait) la carrera, pero empezó a llover y tuvimos que parar.*

(c) Ro. Câștigam (imperfect) *curșa, dar a început să plouă și a trebuit să ne oprim.*

‘I was winning the race, but it started raining and we had to stop.’

Achievement without a preparatory stage: ‘to throw the rock’.

(54)

(a) Fr. *Je jetais (imparfait) la pierre, mais soudainement, j’ai changé d’avis et je ne l’ai pas fait.*

(b) Sp. *Tiraba (imperfecto) la piedra, pero de repente cambié de opinión y no lo hice.*

(c) Ro. *Aruncam (imperfect) piatra, dar dintr-o dată m-am răzgândit și nu am făcut-o.*

‘I was throwing the rock, but suddenly I changed my mind and did not do it.’

Should the hypothesis regarding the need of stage structure when accounting for the behaviour of achievements be verified, (51), (52), (53) above should be found largely acceptable, while (54) should be found largely unacceptable.

4.4.B ‘In x time’, and Different Verb Constructions in the Preterite

Further to my examination of achievements in the imperfect, I investigated the interaction of ‘in x time’ adverbials with verb constructions of different lexical aspect with the goal of obtaining more answers regarding the potential meaning that arises from interactions of different verb constructions, adverbials, and tense forms. This, in its turn, would lead to a better understanding of what the viewpoints are focusing on, i.e. of the most adequate way of representing lexical aspect.

With accomplishments, the meaning that arises from the interaction of an ‘in x time’ adverbial and the preterite is clear: the ‘in x time’ adverbial measures the duration

of the event (55). Examples with accomplishments in this context were therefore not included in the questionnaire.

(55)

(a) Fr. *Elle a mangé (passé composé) le dessert en cinq minutes.*

(b) Sp. *Comió (pretérito indefinido) el postre en cinco minutos.*

(c) Ro. *A mâncat (perfect compus) desertul în cinci minute.*

‘She ate the dessert in five minutes.’

I tested the acceptability of interactions of ‘in x time’ adverbials and different types of achievements and activities in the preterite; if acceptable, I explored their resultant meaning. This was tested both in the absence of any context, and in a context that led to the interpretation that the ‘in x time adverbial’ measured the time elapsed until the beginning of the event itself. The adverbial was placed either before, or after the verb construction, in order to see whether this affected the potential interpretation. If the sentences were found acceptable, participants were asked to say what they understood by them.

Activities: ‘to walk’, ‘to speak’, ‘to speak’ (context given).

(56)

(a) Fr. *En deux heures, la femme a marché (passé composé).*

(b) Sp. *En dos horas, la mujer caminó (pretérito indefinido).*

(c) Ro. *În două ore, femeia a umblat (perfect compus).*

‘In two hours, the woman walked.’

(57)

(a) Fr. *La femme a parlé* (passé composé) *en deux heures*.

(b) Sp. *La mujer habló* (pretérito indefinido) *en dos horas*.

(c) Ro. *Femeia a vorbit* (perfect compus) *în două ore*.

‘The woman spoke in two hours.’

(58)

(a) Fr. *Je l’ai convaincue* (passé composé) *de ne pas avoir peur de parler en public. En dix minutes elle a parlé devant des centaines de personnes*.

(b) Sp. *La convencí* (pretérito indefinido) *de que no tuviera miedo de hablar en público. En diez minutos habló ante unas doscientas personas*.

(c) Ro. *Am convins-o* (perfect compus) *să nu-i fie frică să vorbească în public. În zece minute a vorbit în fața a sute de persoane*.

‘I convinced her not to be afraid to speak in public. In ten minutes she spoke before hundreds of people.’

Achievements with no preparatory stage: ‘to throw the ball’.

(59)

(a) Fr. *Elle a jeté* (passé composé) *le ballon en deux minutes*.

(b) Sp. *Tiró* (pretérito indefinido) *el balón en dos minutos*.

(c) Ro. *A aruncat* (perfect compus) *mingea în două minute*.

‘She threw the ball in two minutes.’

Achievements with a preparatory stage: ‘to win the race’, ‘to arrive’.

(60)

(a) Fr. *Il a gagné* (passé composé) *la course en 25 minutes.*

(b) Sp. *Ganó* (pretérito indefinido) *la carrera en 25 minutos.*

(c) Ro. *A câștigat* (perfect compus) *cursa în 25 de minute.*

‘He won the race in 25 minutes.’

(61)

(a) Fr. *Elle est arrivée* (passé composé) *en 20 minutes.*

(b) Sp. *Llegó* (pretérito indefinido) *en 20 minutos.*

(c) Ro. *A ajuns* (perfect compus) *în 20 de minute.*

‘She arrived in 20 minutes.’

More evidence for the appropriate representation of lexical aspect should become available from these interactions. Since I hypothesize that activities and achievements such as ‘to throw’ do not have a preparatory stage, they should be less acceptable with ‘in x time’ adverbials than achievements such as ‘to arrive’ or ‘to win the race’, which do have such a stage available for focusing by the viewpoint.

4.4.C States in the Preterite

It is frequently claimed that states have the simplest lexical aspectual structure. Croft (2012), however, demonstrated that there were different types of states. Inherent permanent states such as ‘to be of French origin’ have no beginning or end point and last for the entire time for which the entities to which they refer last and beyond.

Acquired permanent states such as ‘to be a war veteran’ have an initial point, but also last during the whole ‘life’ of the entity to which they refer and beyond. Transitory states such as ‘to be angry’ have both beginning and end points and the duration of the entity to which they refer is longer than the duration of the states. Finally, point-states such as ‘to be midday’ are, unlike other states, punctual, despite claims normally made about the durativity of states (see Section 2.1.E.ii.c).

I have already shown that Smith (1997) assumed that the span of the perfective viewpoint always exceeded that of states, which were all considered to have the same stage structure in her model. In Section 4.3 I exemplified ways of testing whether it is indeed the case that the perfective involves a closed viewpoint. As well as answering questions about the nature of viewpoints, the potentially different levels of acceptability of examples in 4.3, repeated below, can provide evidence about the different stage structure of states:

Transitory states: ‘to be happy’, ‘to be the head of the firm’.

(62)

a. (Fr.) *Elle a été (passé composé) heureuse avec lui et elle l’est toujours.*

b. (Sp.) *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) contenta con él y todavía lo está.*

c. (Ro.) *A fost (perfect compus) fericită cu el și încă mai este.*

‘She was happy with him and she still is.’

(63)

a. (Fr.) *Il a été (passé composé) le directeur de l’entreprise et il l’est toujours.*

b. (Sp.) *Fue (pretérito indefinido) el director de la empresa y todavía lo es.*

c. (Ro.) A fost (perfect compus) *directorul firmei și încă mai este.*

‘He was the head of the firm and he still is.’

Transitory States (‘to be calm’, ‘to be ill’, ‘to be angry’) with adverbials denoting a bounded time in the past (‘yesterday’, ‘for x time’).

(64)

(a) Fr. *La mer a été* (passé composé) *calme hier et elle est toujours calme aujourd’hui.*

(b) Sp. *El mar estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *tranquilo ayer y hoy sigue tranquilo.*

(c) Ro. *Marea a fost* (perfect compus) *calmă ieri și azi e tot calmă.*

‘The sea was calm yesterday, and it is still calm today.’

(65)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été* (passé composé) *malade hier et elle est toujours malade aujourd’hui.*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *enferma ayer, y hoy todavía está enferma.*

(c) Ro. A fost (perfect compus) *bolnavă ieri și azi încă mai e bolnavă.*

‘She was ill yesterday and she is still ill today.’

(66)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été* (passé composé) *fâchée contre moi pendant dix ans et elle l’est toujours !*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *enfadada conmigo durante diez años y sigue estándolo.*

(c) Ro. A fost (perfect compus) *supărată pe mine timp de zece ani și încă mai este!*

‘She was angry with me for ten years and she still is!’

Acquired permanent states: 'to know the answer', 'to be a war veteran'.

(67)

a. (Fr.) *Elle a connu (passé composé) la réponse et elle la connaît toujours.*

b. (Sp.) *Supo (pretérito indefinido) la respuesta y la sigue sabiendo.*

c. (Ro.) *A știut (perfect compus) răspunsul și îl știe în continuare.*

'She knew the answer and she still knows it.'

(68)

a. (Fr.) *Mon grand-père a été (passé composé) vétéran et il l'est toujours.*

b. (Sp.) *Mi abuelo fue (pretérito indefinido) veterano de guerra y todavía lo es.*

c. (Ro.) *Bunicul a fost (perfect compus) veteran de război și încă mai este.*

'My grandfather was a war veteran and he still is.'

Note that inherent permanent states were excluded from these examples, owing to the unacceptability of (69), which is already evidence for the different interactions with the two tense forms according to state type :

(69) *She was of French origin for ten years and she still is.

Further to these examples, I tested the meanings that arise from the use of the preterite with other states, and hypothesized that there is yet another type of state, whose meanings involves the occurrence of an event subsequent to the state.

Participants were asked whether from the first sentence they understood that the second was also true:

(70)

(a) Fr. *Le livre a coûté (passé composé) 10€.* -----> *Quelqu'un l'a acheté pour 10€.*

(b) Sp. *El libro costó (pretérito indefinido) 10€*-----> *Alguien compró el libro por 10€.*

(c) Ro. *Cartea a costat (perfect compus) 50 de lei.* -----> *Cartea a fost cumpărată cu 50 de lei.*

'The book cost 10€/ 50 lei.' -----> 'Someone bought it for 10€/50 lei.'

(71)

(a) Fr. *Ça a valu (passé composé) la peine d'acheter ce livre.* -----> *Quelqu'un a acheté ce livre.*

(b) Sp. *Valió (pretérito indefinido) la pena comprar este libro.* -----> *Alguien ha comprado este libro.*

(c) Ro. *A meritat (perfect compus) să cumpăr cartea aceasta.* -----> *Am cumpărat cartea aceasta.*

'It was worth buying this book.' -----> 'Someone / I bought this book.'

(72)

(a) Fr. *J'ai pu (passé composé) l'aider.* -----> *Je l'ai aidé.*

(b) Sp. *Pude (pretérito indefinido) ayudarlo* -----> *Lo he ayudado.*

(c) Ro. *L-am putut (perfect compus) ajuta.* -----> *L-am ajutat.*

‘I was able to help him.’ -----> ‘I helped him.’

(73)

(a) Fr. Il a fallu que j’attende Maurice. -----> J’ai attendu Maurice.

(b) Sp. Tuve que esperar a Juan. -----> Lo he esperado.

(c) Ro. A trebuit să îl aștept pe Ion. -----> L-am așteptat pe Ion.

‘I had to wait for Maurice / Juan / Ion.’ -----> ‘I waited for him.’

If these inferences are considered correct by the native speakers, this would imply that states like ‘to cost’, ‘to be able to do something’, ‘to be worth doing something’ and ‘to have to do something’ are different from other states. The difference in stage structure that accounts for the divergent behaviour of these states will be represented formally in Chapter 5.

*

To summarize, the following interactions were tested:

- predicates that describe achievements and the imperfect
- predicates that denote activities, the preterite, and ‘in x time’
- predicates that denote achievements, the preterite, and ‘in x time’
- states and the preterite.

The corpus results will lead to answering the question of whether a finer notion of lexical aspect is needed and will point to the most adequate representation of lexical aspect according to these data.

4.5 Hypothesis 4: There Are Cross-Linguistic Differences in the Functions of the French, Spanish, and Romanian Imperfect and Preterite

Potential differences in the form – function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian have not been researched, except for the obvious difference that spoken French and Romanian have a single, periphrastic form which complements the imperfect, while Spanish has a periphrastic form as well as a synthetic form. The assumption has by and large been that the same form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite holds across Romance.

When cross-linguistic differences have been proposed, these have concerned perfect functions (see Chapter 3). While Harris (1982) claims that the French and Romanian periphrastic pasts are just as advanced along the ‘perfect to perfective’ route (see Section 3.2 on the ‘aoristic drift’), Vişan (2006) maintains that the Romanian *perfect compus* is further along the aoristic drift than its French counterpart. An investigation of this hypothesis involves a comparison of the opposition between simple and periphrastic past forms in French and Romanian. Since the *passé simple* and the *perfect simplu* are no longer used in speech (with the exception of idioms and of the Romanian dialects mentioned in Section 3.2.B.ii.b), this hypothesis will be tested on the corpus of novels in translation in 4.5.A.i. Furthermore, the Romanian *perfect compus* has been claimed to have a more extended use of as a ‘continuative’ when compared to other Romance languages (Vişan 2006). Since French uses the present in such a context, I will examine the ‘continuative’ functions of the Spanish and Romanian perfect in section 4.5.A.ii.

Finally, based on the analysis of Romanian accounts of tense in Chapter 2, which pointed to states as a domain of possible investigation (Bende-Farkas 1999, Section 2.4.C.ii), I will compare tense form usage with stative predicates, in order to test for cross-linguistic differences (4.5.B).

4.5.A The ‘Perfect’ Functions of the Preterite

4.5.A.i The *Passé Composé* and the *Perfect Compus*

In Chapter 3 I discussed an exception to the assumption that the functions of the forms under consideration here are the same: Vişan’s (2006) claim that the Romanian *perfect compus* is more advanced along the route from perfect to perfective than the French *passé composé*. Owing to the dated nature of the available studies (mid to late twentieth century; see Section 3.2.B.ii.b), there is a call for new data; I will investigate the current state of the matter by making use of my corpus of twenty-first century novels in translation: a first-person narrative and two third-person narratives, originally written in American English⁶¹. In order to test this hypothesis, I will consider the opposition between the simple and periphrastic past forms in samples of the French and Romanian translations of these novels. An investigation of the tense usage in these translations will reveal whether the same tense forms are used in the languages under consideration or the Romanian *perfect compus* is used more widely, and also whether tense usage in literary narratives is influenced by the narrative point of view (first- or third-person narrative) in either language or both.

⁶¹ Recall that American English was chosen precisely because it made less use of the simple / periphrastic past opposition than British English, thus being less likely to elicit a direct translations of the simple / periphrastic forms in the languages under consideration.

4.5.A.ii The *Pretérito Perfecto* and the *Perfect Compus*

As argued in Chapter 3, the functions of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto* are not as straightforwardly established as initially assumed by Harris' (1982) schema. Its continuative function is said to apply only to states and activities. In the light of more recent evidence pointing towards a shift in its functions (see Section 3.2.B.i), the acceptability of the continuative will be tested with all eventuality types. Furthermore, its continuative function will be compared with that of the Romanian *perfect compus*, an area in which there are no previous studies. The French *passé composé* is not included in this comparison, since it is well established that in the relevant contexts the present is used in French:

(74) *Il est (présent) / *a été (passé composé) seul depuis la mort de sa mère.* 'He has been alone ever since his mother died.'

I tested the acceptability of a meaning involving a continuative resulting from the interaction of transitory states, acquired permanent states, activities, achievements, and accomplishments with the *pretérito perfecto* and *perfect compus*.

Transitory state: 'to be ill'.

(75)

(a) Sp. Ha estado (*pretérito perfecto*) *enfermo desde que se fue su hermano. No sé qué hacer para ayudarlo.*

(b) Ro. A fost (perfect compus) *bolnav de când a plecat fratele lui. Nu știu ce să fac să-l ajut!*

‘He has been ill ever since his brother left. I do not know what to do to help him.’

Acquired permanent states in the preterite with ‘since’: ‘to know the answer’

(76)

(a) Sp. *Marco es inteligente. Ha sabido (pretérito perfecto) la respuesta a esta pregunta desde que tenía 10 años.*

(b) Ro. *Marius e inteligent. A știut (perfect compus) răspunsul la întrebarea aceasta de la 10 ani.*

‘Marco / Marius is intelligent. He has known the answer to this question ever since he was 10.’

Activities in the preterite: ‘to read continuously’, ‘to watch tv’.

(77)

(a) Sp. *Ha leído (pretérito perfecto) sin parar desde las seis hasta ahora.*

(b) Ro. *A citit (perfect compus) încontinuu de la ora 6 până acum.*

‘He has been reading continuously since 6 o’clock until now.’

(78)

(a) Sp. *Ha visto (pretérito perfecto) la tele desde las nueve hasta ahora.*

(b) Ro. *S-a uitat (perfect compus) la televizor de la ora nouă până acum.*

‘He has been watching tv from 9 o’clock until now.’

Achievements in the preterite with 'since': 'to arrive', 'to leave', 'to throw a rock'.

(79)

(a) Sp. Ha llegado (pretérito perfecto) *desde esta mañana*.

(b) Ro. A ajuns (perfect compus) *de azi dimineață*.

*'He has arrived since this morning.'

(80)

(a) Sp. Se ha ido (pretérito perfecto) *desde las 10*.

(b) Ro. A plecat (perfect compus) *de la ora 10*.

*'He has left since 10.'

(81)

(a) Sp. Ha tirado (pretérito perfecto) *el balón desde anoche*.

(b) Ro. A aruncat (perfect compus) *mingea de aseară*.

*'He has thrown the ball since last night.'

Accomplishments in the preterite: 'to build the house', 'to write the letter'.

(82)

(a) Sp. Ha construido (pretérito perfecto) *la casa desde hace dos años*.

(b) Ro. A construit (perfect compus) *casa de doi ani*.

*'He has built the house since two years ago.'

(83)

(a) Sp. Ha escrito (pretérito perfecto) *la carta desde las 6*.

(b) Ro. A scris (perfect compus) *scrisoarea de la ora 6*.

*‘He has written the letter since 6.’

The levels of acceptability of verb constructions of different lexical aspect in the preterite and a continuative context will permit a comparison between the ‘perfect functions’ (see Chapter 3) of the Romanian *perfect compus* and of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto*. Based on Vişan’s (2006) data on the compatibility of the *perfect compus* with predicates that span all aspectual types, I hypothesize that there will be a higher rate of *perfect compus* forms with the continuative (3.2.B.ii.a) than of its Spanish counterpart.

Aside from the ‘perfect’ functions of the preterite, the other major area of potential cross-linguistic differences revealed by the analysis in Chapter 2 involves tense usage with statives, which is the topic of the following section.

4.5.B States and the Imperfect / Preterite Opposition

The tense form used in the three languages when the eventuality described by the verb was a state was investigated in the ‘questionnaires’ corpus and in the ‘novels in translation’ corpus.

The final section of the questionnaires consisted of a fill-in questionnaire. Sentences were given out in each of the three languages, with a gap that the participants had to fill with the appropriate form of the verb. The infinitive of the verb was given in brackets. The context led them to infer that a past tense was needed. This was achieved by the choice of a topic that clearly belonged to the past (84-87), by need of coordination with another past event (88), or by adverbial usage (89-91). Both permanent and transitory states were used.

Permanent states: 'to be of Polish origin', 'to be the inventor of the telephone', 'to be gold', 'to have blue eyes'.

(84)

(a) Fr. *Marie Curie* (*être*) *d'origine polonaise*.

(b) Sp. *Marie Curie* (*ser*) *polaca de origen*.

(c) Ro. *Marie Curie* (*a fi*) *de origine poloneză*.

'Marie Curie (to be) of Polish origin.'

(85)

(a) Fr. *Bell* (*être*) *l'inventeur du téléphone*.

(b) Sp. *Bell* (*ser*) *el inventor del teléfono*.

(c) Ro. *Bell* (*a fi*) *inventatorul telefonului*.

'Bell (to be) the inventor of the telephone.'

(86)

(a) Fr. *L'alliance de mon arrière-grand-mère* (*être*) *en or. Quel dommage qu'on l'ait perdue !*

(b) Sp. *El anillo de mi bisabuela* (*ser*) *de oro. ¡Qué pena que lo hayamos perdido!*

(c) Ro. *Inelul stră-străbunicii mele* (*a fi*) *de aur. Ce păcat că s-a pierdut!*

'My great-grandmother's ring (to be) gold. What a shame it got lost!'

(87)

(a) Fr. *Jules César* (*avoir*) *les yeux bleus*.(b) Sp. *Julio César* (*tener*) *ojos azules*.(c) Ro. *Iulius Caesar* (*a avea*) *ochi albaștri*.

‘Julius Caesar (to have) blue eyes.’

Transitory states: ‘to be cold’, ‘to know the answer’, ‘to be warm’, ‘(the fog) to cover the valley’.

(88)

(a) Fr. *Elle* (*avoir*) *froid, donc elle a mis une veste*.(b) Sp. (*tener*) *frío, así que se echó un abrigo*.(c) Ro. (*a-i fi*) *frig, așa că și-a luat o vestă*.

‘She (to be) cold, so she put a coat on.’

(89)

(a) Fr. *Autrefois, il* (*connaître*) *la réponse, mais il ne la connaît plus*.(b) Sp. *Antes* (*saber*) *la respuesta, pero ahora ya no la sabe*.(c) Ro. *Odată* (*a ști*) *răspunsul, dar acum nu îl mai știe*.

‘Once, she (to know) the answer, but she doesn’t know it any more.’

(90)

(a) Fr. *La soupe* (*être*) *chaude il y a quelques minutes, mais maintenant elle ne l’est plus*.

(b) Sp. *La sopa (estar) caliente hace unos minutos, pero ahora ya está fría.*

(c) Ro. *Supa (a fi) caldă acum câteva minute, dar acum nu mai este.*

‘The soup (to be) warm a few minutes ago, but now it isn’t any more.’

(91)

(a) Fr. *Ce matin le brouillard (couvrir) la vallée.*

(b) Sp. *Esta mañana la niebla (cubrir) el valle.*

(c) Ro. *În dimineața aceasta ceața (a acoperi) valea.*

‘This morning the fog (to cover) the valley.’

In the novels in translation, of the first one thousand past tense forms in each novel, the English states where there was a cross-linguistic difference in translation were considered. When there were such differences involving the English simple past tense form with states, I investigated the imperfect / preterite correspondences in each language. The differences were considered in direct speech as well as in indirect speech.

My hypothesis is that in Romanian the preterite is used for states significantly more than in French and in Spanish. Should this hypothesis be verified, both corpora should show a higher percentage of Romanian preterites corresponding to French and Spanish imperfects.

4.6 Results and Discussion

In the previous sections I illustrated how by using a corpus of questionnaires primarily, and secondarily through a corpus of excerpts from novels in translation, the following hypotheses can be tested:

- There is no semantic end-point requirement for the preterite (4.3)
- A finer-grained notion of lexical aspect involving stage structure is necessary (4.4)
- There are cross-linguistic differences in the functions of the French, Spanish, and Romanian imperfect and preterite (4.5).

The rest of this chapter will illustrate the results obtained from these corpora and will include a discussion of these results.

4.6.A The End-Point Requirement

The hypothesis that the preterite does not have a semantic end-point requirement was tested by asking participants whether they found atelics in the preterite acceptable if the eventuality was said to continue until the moment of speech (e.g. Mary [atelic in the preterite] and she still is / does). This was tested for transitory and acquired permanent states ('to be happy', 'to be the head of the firm', 'to know the answer', 'to be a war veteran'), activities ('to sleep', 'to walk', 'to speak'), and semelfactives ('to blink', 'to flash'). Additionally, the acceptability of such sentences was tested with adverbials that denoted a period of time that ended in the past. The aim of including these sentences was to emphasize the possibility of having the eventuality 'closed' between the boundaries denoted by the adverbial and not continuing up to the present (as suggested

by Smith 1997; against the hypothesis here). If the preterite introduces a semantic end point, all these sentences should be found unacceptable by native speakers, as there would be a contradiction between the information given by the tense form (i.e. closed eventuality) and the information given by the ‘and is still x-ing’ construction. If a significant number of participants accept these sentences, then the end point is not a semantic requirement, but a pragmatic inference.

The percentages of acceptability per question are included in tables (92) (sentences with no adverbial) and (93) (sentences with adverbial). A chart will subsequently be provided, together with an analysis of results that are statistically significant.

(92)

<i>Verb Constructions</i>	<i>French</i>		<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
‘to be happy’	61.8%	38.2%	65.4%	34.6%	79.3%	20.7%
‘to be the head of the firm’	37.3%	62.7%	50%	50%	62.1%	37.9%
‘to know the answer’	75%	25%	70.6%	29.4%	75.1%	25.9%
‘to be a war veteran’	27.6%	72.4%	44.2%	55.8%	36.2%	63.8%
‘to sleep’	65.8%	34.2%	38.5%	61.5%	70.7%	29.3%
‘to walk’	66.7%	33.3%	50%	50%	81%	19%
‘to speak’	55.3%	44.7%	28.8%	71.2%	75.9%	24.1%
‘to blink’	84.2%	15.8%	40.4%	59.6%	56.9%	43.1%
‘to flash’	76.3%	23.7%	49%	51%	63.8%	36.2%

The results in (92) show on the whole that the continuation of an atelic eventuality up to the present moment is far from unacceptable when a preterite is used (averages of acceptability of 61.4% French, 48.5% Spanish, 66.8% Romanian).

The lowest values of acceptability were registered with ‘to be a war veteran’. This is because ‘to be a war veteran’ is an acquired permanent state. When verbs that denote acquired permanent states are in the preterite and the eventuality is said to continue up to the present moment there are two reasons for which the sentence could be judged unacceptable: the first is that if the entity described still exists (here, the grandfather), it would go against the Maxim of Quantity to specify ‘and he still is’ (as observed and explained by some participants); the second reason is that if the entity no longer exists, to specify ‘and he still is’ would be a contradiction. If we exclude this permanent state from the calculus of the average of acceptability, the values become: 65.3% (French), 49.1% (Spanish), 70.6% (Romanian).

Relatively low values of acceptability were also registered with ‘to be the head of the firm’. Despite it being normally considered a transitory state, like other jobs or occupations, the values of acceptability were lower (particularly in French) than those of the other transitory state (‘to be happy’). I propose that states can be construed by speakers as more or less transitory. The more permanent a state is construed as being, the less acceptable it will be in this context, owing to the possibility of its either leading to a contradiction or of going against the Maxim of Quantity. Jobs and occupations such as ‘to be the head of the firm’ seem to be construed as more permanent than states such as happiness or distress. Note, for instance, that they also belong to the individual / stage level predicates distinction: in Spanish, the verb *ser* is used for ‘to be head of the firm’, and *estar* is used for ‘to be happy’.

If professions or occupations are not necessarily permanent but seem to be construed as such, eventualities such as ‘knowing’ are listed in the literature as ‘acquired permanent states’ (Croft 2012), and yet speakers seem to construe them as transitory, owing to the possibility of forgetting.⁶² This potential construal of ‘knowing’ as transitory explains its high acceptability values in (92).

Activities and semelfactives generally have high acceptability values. In Spanish, however, the acceptability values with activities are lower than with states and lower than in French and Romanian. I will return to why this should be the case at the end of this section.

Table (93) shows the values of acceptability of the continuation of transitory states, activities, and semelfactives described by verbs in the preterite, in the presence of adverbials which denote a period of time completed in the past.

(93)

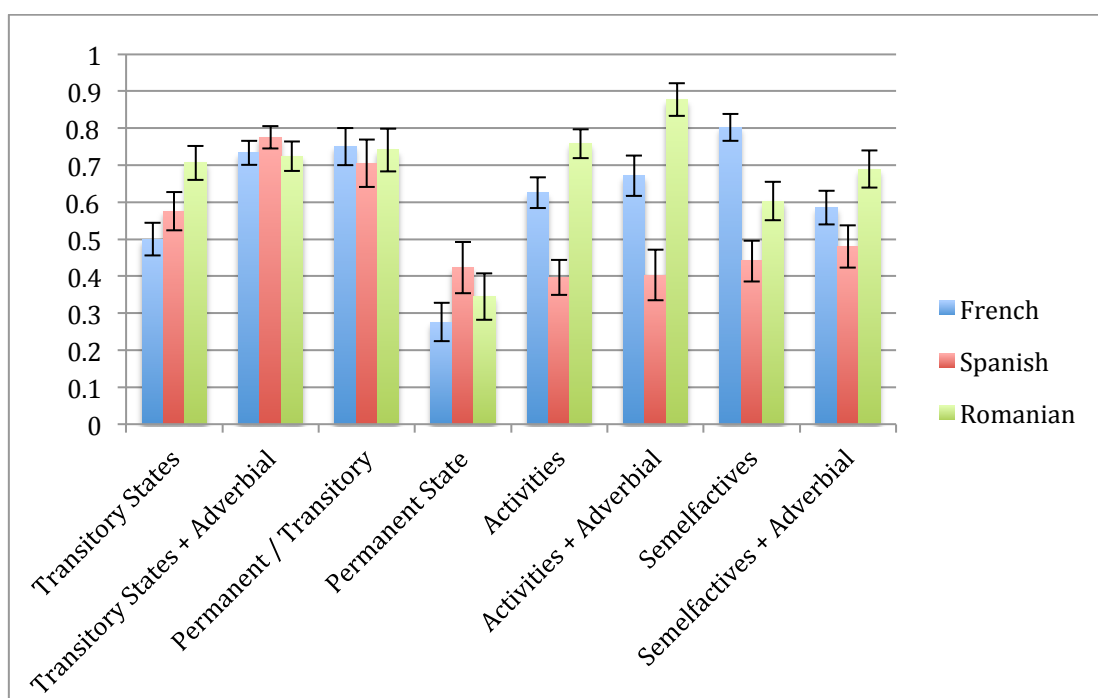
<i>Verb Constructions</i>	<i>French</i>		<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
‘to be calm (yesterday)’	86.8%	13.2%	94.2%	5.8%	82.8%	17.2%
‘to be ill (yesterday)’	81.6%	18.4%	88.5%	11.5%	69%	31%
‘to be angry (for ten years)’	52%	48%	50%	50%	65.5%	34.5%
‘to sleep (for ten hours)’	67.1%	32.9%	40.4%	59.6%	87.7%	12.3%
‘to knock (for two hours)’	56.6%	43.4%	40.4%	59.6%	62.1%	37.9%
‘to flash (for two days)’	60.5%	39.5%	54.9%	45.1%	75.9%	24.1%

⁶² Note also that ‘knowing someone’ would probably be construed as more permanent than ‘knowing something’ (e.g. knowing how to solve a mathematics problem).

The results above show that even in the presence of adverbials that describe a bounded period of time in the past, the continuation of an atelic eventuality denoted by a verb in the preterite is not judged unacceptable (averages of acceptability of 67.4%, 61.4%, 83.8%). On the contrary, in the presence of an adverbial such sentences are judged more acceptable than in its absence. This suggests that the preterite may refer to a period of time that is completed, but not to an eventuality that cannot continue. With the exception of permanent states (which need to continue if the entity to which they refer still exists, or necessarily do not continue if the entity no longer exists) atelic eventualities may continue up to the present moment, despite the use of a preterite. In other words, the preterite does not have a semantic end-point requirement. I propose that the end point is a pragmatic inference, which explains why there were also participants who did not deem the sentences acceptable.

In Figure 1 below I show acceptability values per verb class. Note that 'to be head of the firm' is included in 'transitory states', despite its construal as 'more permanent' than 'to be happy'; this will somewhat bring down the value of acceptability of transitory states. The 'permanent / transitory state' refers to 'knowing', which can be construed as either. Error bars that correspond to the calculated standard error are included in the graphs.

Figure 1. The ‘end point requirement’ in French, Spanish, and Romanian, according to aspectual class, in the presence and absence of adverbials.



The high levels of acceptability of these sentences with the exception of permanent states (and activities in Spanish) are evident from this chart. Even permanent states, however, are considered acceptable in this context by some speakers. These would be the participants who interpret the sentence as describing an entity which still exists, and who do not mind disobeying the pragmatic Maxim of Quantity.

Note, also, that the acceptability of these sentences provides further evidence that the imperfect and the preterite are not merely aspectually-sensitive tenses, which coerce eventuality types into homogenous eventualities or events, respectively. If the preterite were an aspectually-sensitive tense, it would coerce states and activities into events. The latter, however, are unacceptable in this context, as shown in (94). This means that, since these sentences were found acceptable by a large number of

participants, we are not dealing with coerced events, but with states and activities. Rather than being an aspectually-sensitive tense, the preterite provides a viewpoint. This viewpoint, however, is not closed.

(94)

(a) Fr. **Elle a mangé (passé composé) un gâteau et elle le mange toujours.*

(b) Sp. **Comió (pretérito indefinido) una tarta y sigue comiéndola.*

(c) Ro. **A mâncat (perfect compus) un tort și încă îl mănâncă.*

*‘She ate a cake and she is still eating it.’

As mentioned above and shown in Figure 1, French and Romanian display a similar behaviour, while Spanish generally shows lower values of acceptability with activities. I propose that this is for two reasons. Firstly, activities are accepted less as continuing up to the present moment than states because states, by definition, are not dynamic, therefore there is less change involved and they are less likely to stop. Secondly, the reason why this arises in Spanish more than in French and Romanian is because unlike its counterparts, Spanish still makes use of its synthetic (*pretérito indefinido*) as well as its periphrastic (*pretérito perfecto*) past tense form. It is the periphrastic form, and not the *pretérito indefinido* that refers to a period of time which extends up to the present and potentially to an atelic eventuality that continues up to the moment of speech (the ‘continuative’ perfect; see chapter 3). For this reason, the function of the *pretérito indefinido* is more restricted than that of the *perfect compus* in Romanian and of the *passé composé* in French. In order to check this hypothesis I conducted an additional short survey on the acceptability of states and activities in this

context in Northern Italian. The participants make use only of the periphrastic form in everyday speech. Should my hypothesis be correct, I would find rates of acceptability of activities similar to the French and Romanian ones, rather than the Spanish ones. The survey had 10 participants and the acceptability of the continuation of six eventualities in the preterite was tested.

States:

(95) It. È stata (passato prossimo) *contenta con Giovanni, e lo è ancora.* ‘She was happy with Giovanni, and she still is.’

(96) It. Ha saputo (passato prossimo) *la risposta e la sa ancora.* ‘She knew the answer and she still knows it.’

Activities:

(97) It. Ha dormito (passato prossimo) *molto, e sta ancora dormendo.* ‘She slept a lot and she is still sleeping.’

(98) It. Ha camminato (passato prossimo) *molto, ma continua a camminare.* ‘She walked a lot, but she is still walking.’

(99) It. Ha parlato (passato prossimo) *molto, ma sta ancora parlando.* ‘She spoke a lot, but she is still speaking.’

(100) It. Ha dormito (passato prossimo) *per 10 ore e sta ancora dormendo.* ‘She slept for 10 hours and she is still sleeping.’

The results are shown in the following table:

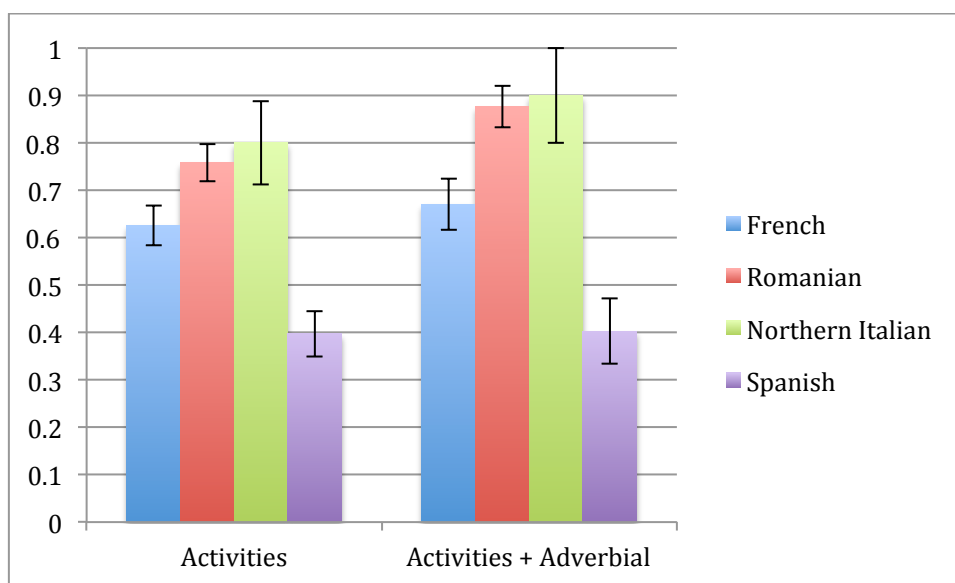
(101)

	YES	NO
'to be happy'	60%	40%
'to know the answer'	50%	50%
'to sleep'	90%	10%
'to walk'	80%	20%
'to speak'	60%	40%
'to sleep for 10 hours'	70%	30%

The results of this short survey show that Northern Italian behaves like French and Romanian, and the rates of acceptability of the continuation of eventualities denoted by the verbal construction despite the use of the preterite are high. States do not have an end-point requirement in the preterite. The lower value for 'to know' is explicable in terms of its permanent / transitory construal: while some speakers consider the possibility of forgetting something (transitory construal), for others this possibility is not acceptable (e.g. one is said never to forget how to ride a bicycle, once one knows this; permanent construal). The possibility of construing 'to know the answer' as a permanent state renders it less acceptable in this context, since asserting that a permanent state which started in the past continues up to the present moment either goes against the Maxim of Quantity or leads to a contradiction. Similarly to French and Romanian, activities are overall acceptable in these contexts (an average of 70%). The differences in percentages are most likely to do with the kind of conjunction employed.

Figure 2 below shows the results for activities in Northern Italian, French, Romanian, and Spanish.

Figure 2. The ‘end point requirement’ of activities in French, Spanish, Romanian, and Italian.



As hypothesized, Northern Italian patterns with the other two languages that only make use of the periphrastic past to express a perfective viewpoint: Romanian and French. The functions of the Spanish preterite are more restricted. However, we must bear in mind that the level of acceptability of Sp. *caminar* ‘to walk’ in this context was 50%. This high percentage of acceptability means that the Spanish preterite does not impose a semantic end point either. Nevertheless, since there is another form available to express the continuation of an atelic until the moment of speech, I propose that speakers pragmatically infer more frequently than in French and Romanian that the eventuality stopped in the past.

In conclusion, the data from French, Spanish and Romanian confirm that the imperfect and the preterite are not merely aspectually-sensitive tenses and do have an intrinsic aspectual contribution. However the viewpoint provided by the preterite is not ‘closed’. I propose that the end point of the preterite is not a semantic requirement, but a pragmatic inference. This inference is arrived at more frequently in Spanish than in French and Romanian because of the competition with another tense form, which can express continuation of atelics up to the moment of speech (the *pretérito perfecto*). In Spanish the end-point inference is also reached more frequently with activities than with states because of the non-dynamic nature of the latter. Since states are unchangeable, it is easier to infer that they do not have an end point.

4.6.B Stage Structure

In Section 4.3 I outlined the hypothesis that finer distinctions at lexical level are needed to account for the imperfect – preterite distinction, and that they can be described with reference to stage structure. This hypothesis was tested by investigating the acceptability of interactions between verb constructions of different lexical aspect and the two tense forms, and, when these usages were acceptable, their meaning.

4.6.B.i Preparatory Stages and Achievements in the Imperfect

I hypothesized that there are two types of achievements: those with a preparatory stage and those without. This was tested by enquiring about the acceptability of sentences in the imperfect, where the occurrence of the punctual event itself was negated (e.g. I was ‘x’-ing, but something happened and I did not ‘x’). The

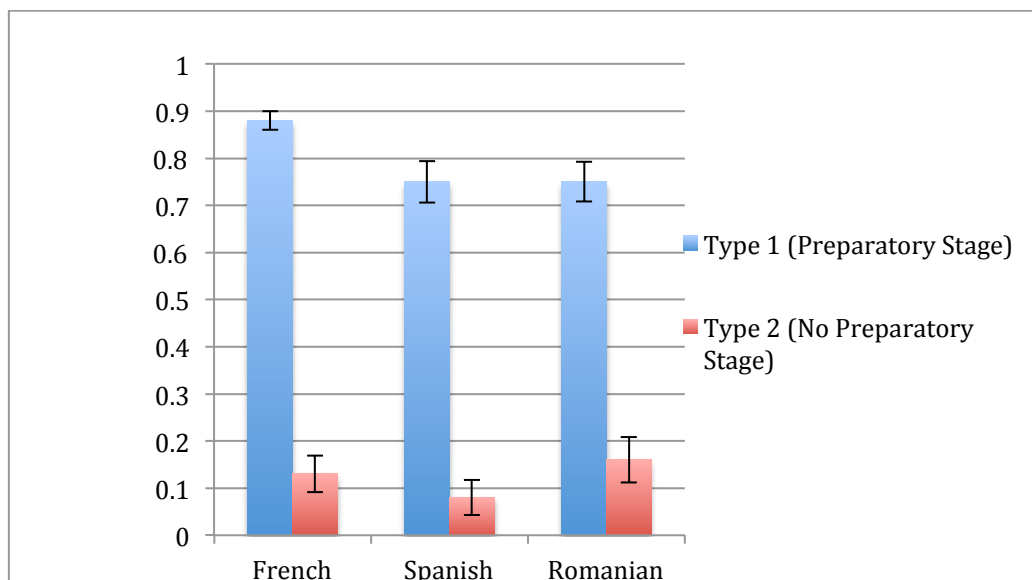
use of the imperfect, however, implies that the event has started, which leads to a contradiction if the event is punctual. If some sentences are found acceptable, and some are found unacceptable, it means that for those that are acceptable there is a durative stage available for focus: the preparatory stage.

The table in (102) and the chart in Figure 3 show the results for French, Spanish, and Romanian:

(102)

<i>Achievement</i>	<i>French</i>		<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
'to arrive'	84.2%	15.8%	76.5%	23.5%	69%	31%
'to leave'	97.4%	2.6%	84.3%	15.7%	81%	19%
'to win the race'	85.5%	14.5%	61.5%	38.5%	78.6%	21.4%
'to throw the ball'	13.3%	86.7%	7.7%	92.3%	17.2%	82.8%

Figure 3. The stage structure of achievements. The difference between ‘type 1’ and ‘type 2’ achievements is statistically significant in French, Spanish, and Romanian, as shown from the application of the ‘t-test’. French: $t=16.75$, $p<0.0001$; Spanish: $t=12.97$, $p<0.0001$; Romanian: $t=8.7$, $p<0.0001$.⁶³



The results show the need to postulate two types of achievement, based on stage structure. Achievements such as ‘to leave’ (against Caudal 2005; see 2.4.A), ‘to arrive’, ‘to win the race’, are acceptable in such contexts because they have a preparatory stage on which the imperfect viewpoint can focus. Achievements such as ‘throw the ball’ or ‘notice a mouse’ are not acceptable in these contexts because they only consist of an inner stage. Since this inner stage is punctual, an event cannot be said to start but not finish, hence the unacceptability of such sentences.

⁶³ The ‘t test’ compares means. Results are statistically significant when $t>2$, and $p<0.05$.

4.6.B.ii Eventualities, ‘in x time’ and the Preterite: Stage Structure

The notion of stage structure was also tested by investigating the potential meaning that arises from the use of an ‘in x time’ adverbial and a verb construction in the preterite which denotes an activity, an achievement with a preparatory phase, and an achievement without a preparatory phase.

The claims in the literature (e.g. Dowty 1979) are that when used with achievements and activities, the ‘in x time’ adverbial measures the time before the beginning of the event. I hypothesize that this is indeed the case with achievements which have a preparatory stage: in this case, the ‘in x time’ adverbial measures the duration of this stage. Since activities and achievements with no preparatory stage do not have this option, I hypothesize that they will be less acceptable with the ‘in x time’ construction. For activities, the effect of the position of the adverbial was also tested. If the participants found a sentence acceptable they were asked to specify what it meant. For one sentence involving a verb phrase in the preterite denoting an activity and the ‘in x time’ construction, a context was provided, leading to an ‘inceptive’ interpretation (i.e. the ‘in x time’ construction measures the length of time which passed until the activity started):

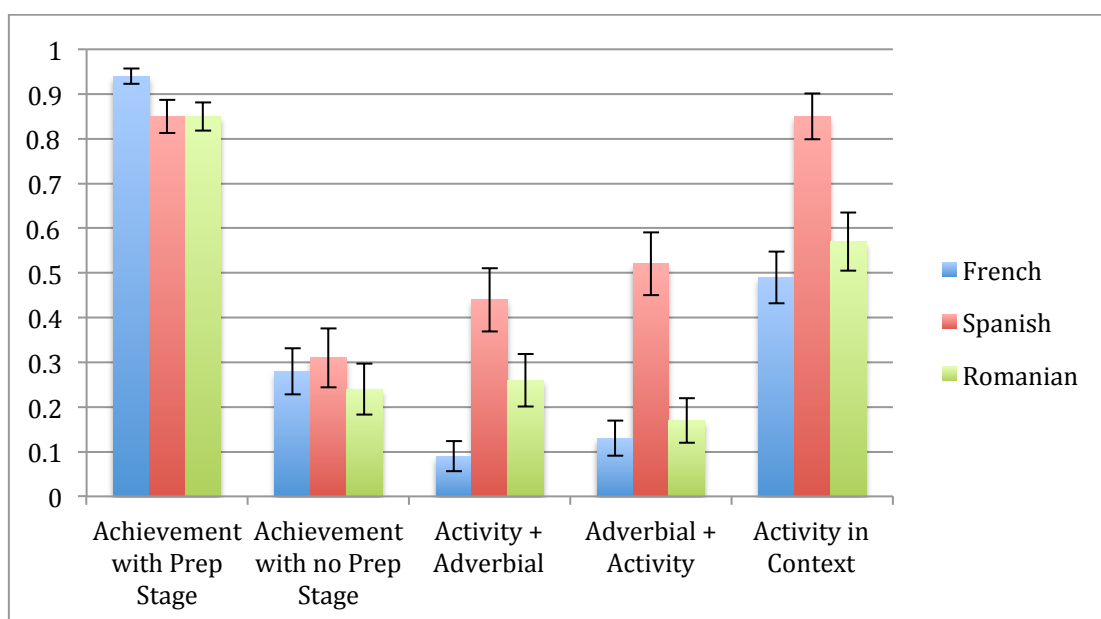
(103) I convinced her not to be afraid of speaking in public. In ten minutes she *spoke* in front of hundreds of people.

The results are shown in the table and chart below:

(104)

<i>Verb Constructions</i>	<i>French</i>		<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Prep. Stage Achievement 'to win the race'	96.1%	3.9%	80.8%	19.2%	75.9%	24.1%
Prep. Stage Achievement 'to arrive'	92.1%	7.9%	90.4%	9.6%	94.8%	5.2%
No Prep. Stage Achievement 'to throw the ball'	27.6%	72.4%	31.4%	68.6%	24.1%	75.9%
Adverbial + Activity 'to walk'	9.3%	90.7%	44%	56%	27.6%	72.4%
Activity + Adverbial 'to speak'	13.2%	86.8%	51.9%	48.1%	17.2%	82.8%
Adverbial + Activity 'to speak' (context)	48.7%	51.3%	84.6%	15.4%	56.9%	43.1%

Figure 4. The compatibility of aspectual classes with an ‘in x time’ construction.



The results clearly show that the sentence is significantly more acceptable when an achievement has a preparatory stage in its structure than when it does not. This is because the ‘in x time’ adverbial must measure a stage which has duration, a beginning, and an end. Since achievements are punctual, the only focusable durational stage is the preparatory stage. When such a stage is not available, the sentence is largely unacceptable.

When activities are provided without a context, the acceptability rates are significantly lower than those of achievements with a preparatory stage. This is because despite having a durational stage (their inner stage), activities are atelic, and are therefore not bounded at the end of this inner stage, which makes them difficult to measure. It is only when context is provided that the participants can either imagine an end point to this inner stage, or a beginning to a process which preceded the event itself,

so that the ‘in x time’ adverbial can measure something durational, with a beginning and an end.

In the absence of a context, when ‘in x time’ preceded the verb construction denoting an activity, in French and Romanian native speakers found the sentence mostly unacceptable. The speakers who did deem the sentence acceptable were asked what the meaning of the sentence was. In French and Romanian the participants who judged the sentence acceptable interpreted the ‘in x time’ phrase as measuring the duration of the event itself, as opposed to that of the time it took to start the event in almost 50% of cases (Romanian) and in 80% of cases (French). In Spanish, most participants who deemed the sentence acceptable gave it an ‘inceptive’ meaning (94.4%).

When the ‘in x time’ followed the verb construction denoting an activity, in French and Romanian the acceptability rates were again low. When a sentence was judged acceptable, the meaning associated with it was not ‘inceptive’; the adverbial was taken to measure the length of the inner stage (in 100% of cases in French, and in 83.3% of cases in Romanian). In Spanish, the sentence was found more acceptable than in French and Romanian, with half the speakers interpreting the adverbial as measuring the time before the beginning of the action and half as measuring the duration of the activity.

The generally higher levels of acceptability of activities with an ‘in x time’ construction in Spanish point to an area in need of further research. It is possible, however, than rather than being linked to tense usage, these results are a consequence of a wider use of the preposition *en* in this context, when in French and Romanian, *depuis* and *după* might be preferred for an inceptive reading.

These results provide further evidence for the role of stage structure: achievements with a preparatory stage are more acceptable with ‘in x time’ adverbials than achievements without a preparatory stage and than activities. This is because of their semantics: only achievements with a preparatory stage have a durational stage with beginning and end available for focus. When a context is provided which leads to a specific interpretation with activities, the sentences become more acceptable. The speakers pragmatically infer that there is either an end point to the activity (so that the process becomes measurable) or that there is an initial point to a process that precedes the activity (so that the time before it starts becomes measurable). Even when a context is provided, however, in French and Romanian the acceptability rates of activities in the preterite with ‘in x time’ are much lower than those of achievements with a preparatory stage. The Spanish high acceptability values in this context point to the need of further research, but could be linked to patterns of usage of prepositions, as opposed to tenses.

Having discussed the role of stage structure in relation to activities and achievements, in the following section I discuss its role in relation to states.

4.6.B.iii Types of States

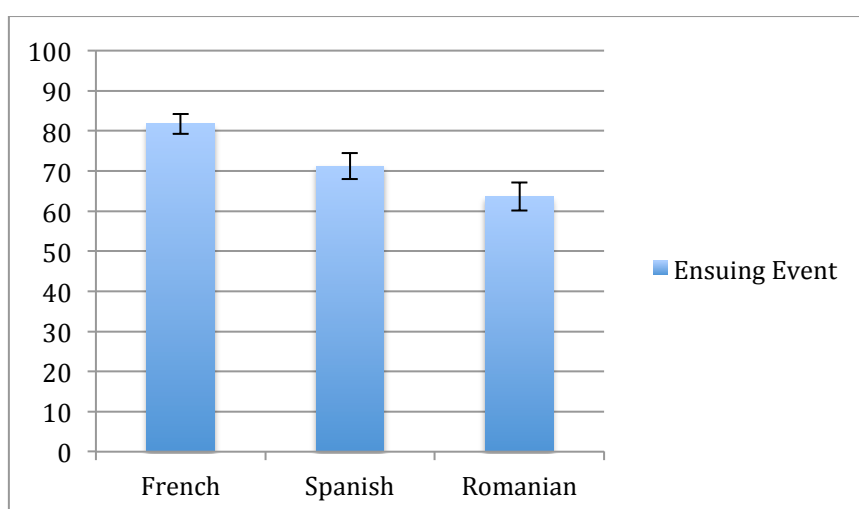
Croft (2012) demonstrated that the structure of states is not as simple as assumed in the literature. He distinguished between inherent permanent states (‘to be of French origin’), acquired permanent states (‘to be a war veteran’), transitory states (‘to be sad’), and point states (‘to be midday’). In section 4.6.B.i I have already shown that transitory and permanent states behave differently with regard to the supposed ‘end point requirement’, owing to their structure; the former have a potential arbitrary end point, while the latter continue for as long as the entity described exists. Furthermore, in

4.4.C I hypothesized that there may be a further different type of state. In order to test this, I enquired about the meaning of ‘to cost’, ‘to be worth doing something’, ‘to be able to do something’ and ‘to have to do something’ in the preterite. If by these verbs in the preterite the participants understood that another event ensued (such as ‘buying’ from ‘costing’ for example), these states can be considered structurally different from other states. The results are shown in the table and chart below:

(104)

<i>States</i>	<i>French</i>		<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	Ensuing	No	Ensuing	No	Ensuing	No
‘to cost’	71.6%	28.4%	84.6%	15.4%	53.4%	46.6%
‘to be worth’	77.6%	22.4%	67.3%	32.7%	89.7%	10.3%
‘to be able to’	85.5%	14.5%	51.9%	48.1%	56.9%	43.1%
‘to have to’	92.1%	7.9%	80.8%	19.2%	55.2%	44.8%

Figure 5. The ‘ensuing event’ reading with states.



The results show that verb constructions in the preterite denoting states frequently lead to a reading involving an ensuing event. The lower values in Romanian (with the exception of ‘to be worth’) could be due to an expansion of the *perfect compus* into the territory of the imperfect. In French, for instance, (105) below seems contradictory and an imperfect must be used (106). Some Romanian speakers, however, accept sentence (107).

(105) Fr. ?? *Le livre a coûté (passé composé) 10 euros. Je ne l’ai pas acheté.*

(106) Fr. *Le livre coûtait (imparfait) 10 euros. Je ne l’ai pas acheté.*

(107) Ro. *Cartea a costat (perfect compus) 10 euro. Nu am cumpărat-o.*

‘The book cost 10 euros. I did not buy it.’

These results show that there are reasons to postulate yet another type of state. A potential stage structure for these states will be discussed in Chapter 5, in which a new representation of lexical aspect will be proposed.

4.6.C Cross-linguistic Differences

So far in the Romance literature it has been largely assumed that the imperfect – preterite distinction is the same across Romance languages. The hypothesis here is that this is not the case and that the Romanian preterite is used more with states than its French and Spanish counterparts. The results from the ‘questionnaires’ corpus and from the additional ‘novels in translation’ corpus are discussed in 4.6.C.i. Furthermore, I compared the French and Romanian preterite in order to see whether, as claimed by Vişan (2006), the *perfect compus* is further along the aoristic drift than the *passé*

composé (4.6.C.ii). I also investigated the continuative function of the Romanian *perfect compus* and of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto*, in order to see whether the ‘perfect’ functions of the two forms match (4.6.C.iii).

4.6.C.i States in the Preterite

In the ‘questionnaires’ corpus, participants were asked to fill in the gaps of sentences with the appropriate verb form. The infinitive describing permanent and transitory states was given to them in brackets. The following table shows the choice of tense form of participants in each language. At times, other forms than the imperfect and the preterite were chosen (mostly the present). These are represented in the ‘Other’ column.

(108)

<i>States</i>	<i>French</i>			<i>Spanish</i>			<i>Romanian</i>		
	Pret.	Imp.	Other	Pret.	Imp.	Other	Pret.	Imp.	Other
'to be of Polish origin'	0%	64.5%	35.5%	19.2%	38.5%	42.3%	50%	12.1%	37.9%
'to be the inventor'	9.2%	5.3%	85.5%	86.5%	3.8%	9.7%	32.8%	0%	67.2%
'to be of gold'	0%	64.5%	35.5%	0%	19.2%	80.8%	10.3%	48.3%	41.4%
'to have blue eyes'	0%	96.1%	3.9%	3.9%	94.2%	1.9%	17.3%	79.3%	3.4%
'to be cold'	2.6%	78.9%	18.5%	5.8%	90.4%	3.8%	48.3%	43.1%	8.6%
'to know the answer'	1.3%	97.4%	1.3%	1.9%	98.1%	0%	43.1%	51.7%	5.2%
'to be warm'	1.3%	94.7%	4%	5.8%	94.2%	0%	44.8%	51.7%	3.5%
'to cover' (the fog)	17.1%	65.8%	17.1%	7.7%	88.5%	3.8%	70.7%	19%	10.3%

The averages in the use of the imperfect and the preterite per language are represented in Figure 6. Figure 7 represents the results for permanent states and Figure 8 those for transitory states.

Figure 6. The imperfect and the preterite with states. The Romanian preterite is used significantly more than its French and Spanish counterparts with states. The difference is statistically significant, as shown by the results of the 'z-test': $z=14.64$ (Romanian - French) / 7.63 (Romanian - Spanish), $p<0.0001$.⁶⁴

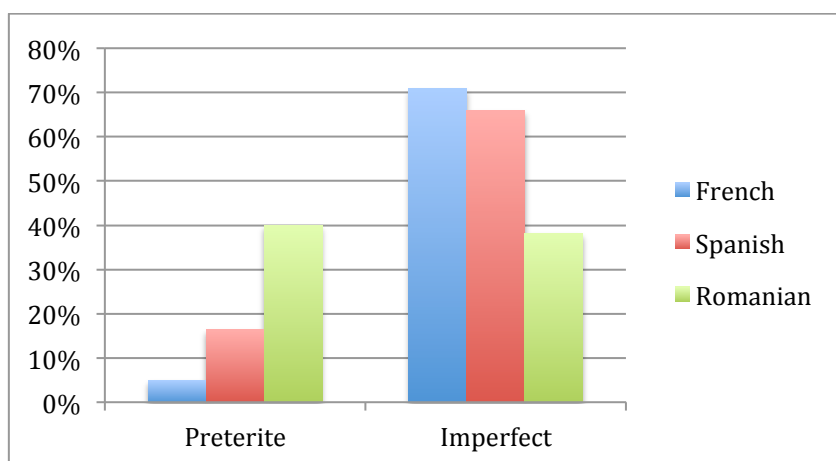
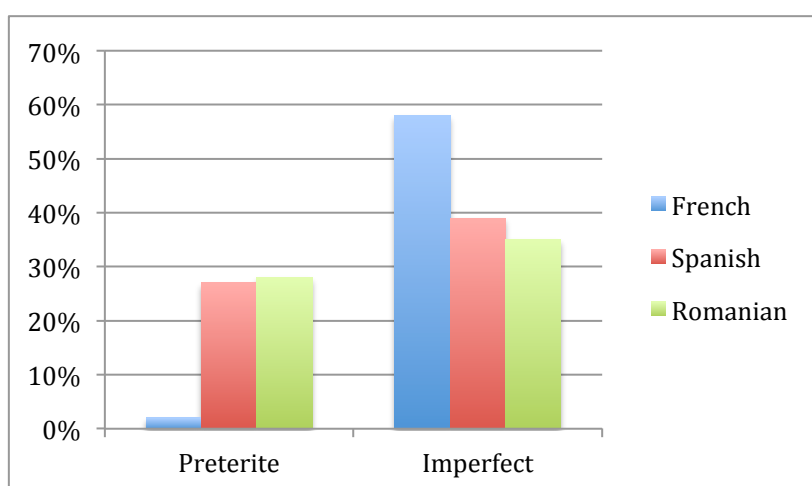
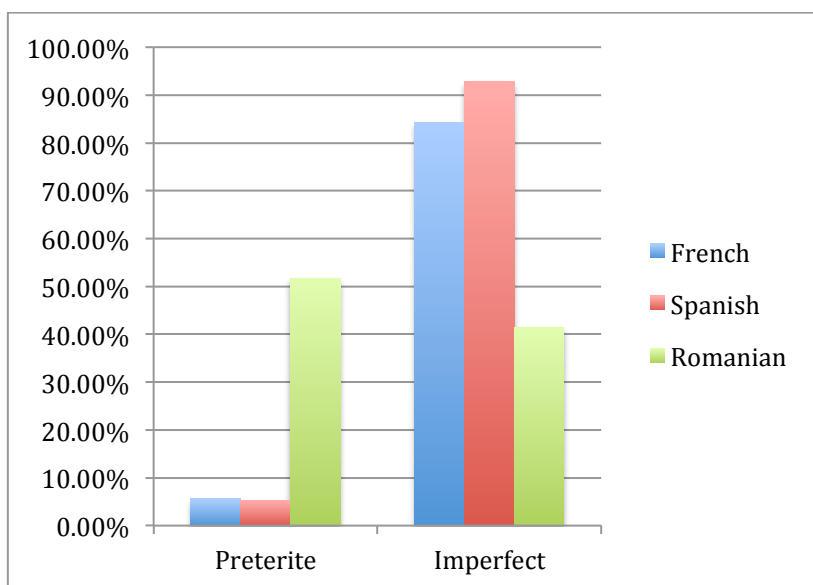


Figure 7. The imperfect and the preterite with permanent states. The Romanian and Spanish preterites are used significantly more than the French preterite. This difference is statistically significant, as shown by the results of the 'z-test': $z=8.55$ (Romanian - French), $z=8.43$ (Spanish - French), $p<0.0001$.



⁶⁴ The z-test compares proportions. Results are statistically significant if $z>2$, and $p<0.05$.

Figure 8. The imperfect and the preterite with transitory states. Repeated Measures test shows that the main effect of language is significant $F(2,20) = 6.126, p < 0.01$. Post-hoc tests show that Romanian is significantly different from French ($p < 0.01$) and Spanish ($p < 0.05$) in the use of the preterite. It is significantly different from French ($p < 0.05$) in the use of the imperfect, but just misses significance in its difference from Spanish ($p = 0.055$).



The results show that the preterite is used significantly more with states in Romanian than in French and Spanish (Figure 6 above). While in French there is a clear preference for the imperfect across different types of states, the Spanish and Romanian results (particularly the latter) are balanced when it comes to inherent permanent states (Figure 7 above). This is because inherent permanent states consist of a single stage with no beginning and no end point. Therefore, both the imperfect and the preterite will have only one stage to focus on. Since we have established that the preterite does not provide a closed viewpoint, the choice of tense form will make no difference to the meaning of the sentence.

The choice of verb form with transitory states (Figure 8 above) shows an even clearer difference between Romanian, on the one hand, and French and Spanish, on the

other. With transitory states, the Romanian preterite is used significantly more than its French and Spanish counterpart, and even more than the imperfect, going against the claim that states are preferably expressed in the imperfect.

*

The secondary corpus of ‘novels in translation’ confirms these results. The contexts were split between direct speech and narrative, and particular attention was paid to the direct speech passages, since these were thought to reflect more closely the spoken language. When translating a simple past from English, the translators into French, Spanish, and Romanian had the choice of using either an imperfect or a preterite. The point of interest involved cases where different choices were made across languages.

Forty-two states in the preterite in Romanian correspond to French imperfects (e.g. 109), of which 14 are found in direct speech, and 28 in indirect speech. Thirty-three states in the *perfect compus* correspond to Spanish imperfects (e.g. 110), of which 12 are in direct speech, and 21 in indirect speech.

(109) *Romanian preterite – French imperfect*

(a) En. Lindbergh was the first famous living American whom I learned to hate - just as President Roosevelt *was (simple past)* the first famous living American whom I was taught to love.

(b) Fr. *Lindbergh fut le premier Américain vivant célèbre que j’appris à détester, tout comme le président Roosevelt était (imparfait) le premier Américain vivant célèbre qu’on m’apprit à aimer.*

(c) Ro. *Lindbergh a fost primul american celebru în viață pe care am învățat să-l urăsc – așa cum președintele Roosevelt a fost (perfect compus) primul american celebru în viață pe care am fost învățat să-l iubesc.*

(110) *Romanian preterite – Spanish imperfect*

(a) En. And it didn't subside - not while Lindbergh *stood (simple past)* silently at the Philadelphia rostrum and heard himself being cheered once again as the nation's savior, nor when he gave the speech accepting his party's nomination (...).

(b) Sp. *Y no remitió, no lo hizo mientras Lindbergh permanecía (imperfecto) silencioso en la tribuna de Filadelfia, oyendo una vez más los vítores de quienes le consideraban el Salvador de la nación, ni cuando pronunció el discurso aceptando la nominación (...).*

(c) Ro. *Și nu s-a domolit - nu atâta timp cât Lindbergh a stat (perfect compus) tăcut în picioare la tribuna din Philadelphia și se auzea aclamat din nou ca salvator al națiunii, nici când și-a rostit cuvântarea de acceptare a nominalizării (...).*

The Spanish preterite is also found more frequently than its French equivalent: Thirty-four states correspond to an imperfect in French (e.g. 111), 6 in direct speech, 28 in indirect speech. Nineteen times a *pretérito indefinido* is chosen in Spanish while the Romanian translators opt for an imperfect (e.g. 112), but all are in indirect speech.

(111) *Spanish preterite – French imperfect*

(a) En. And I *thought (simple past)* I understood why.

(b) Fr. *Je croyais (imparfait) comprendre pourquoi.*

(c) Sp. *Y yo creí (pretérito indefinido) entender por qué.*

(112) *Spanish preterite – Romanian imperfect*

(a) En. The third child planting the tree was a Negro, and what encouraged my mother to suggest including him (...) *was (simple past) another stamp of mine...* (p.23)

(b) Sp. *El tercer niño que plantaba un árbol era de raza negra, y lo que estimuló a mi madre para sugerirle que lo incluyera (...) fue (pretérito indefinido) otro de mis sellos...*

(c) Ro. *Al treilea copil care participa la plantarea copacului era un negru, iar ceea ce o încurajase pe mama să sugereze includerea lui (...) era (imperfect) un alt timbru de-al meu...*

As for the French preterite, it does at times correspond to a Romanian and Spanish imperfect (e.g. 113), but much more rarely, and predominantly in indirect speech (10 times in Spanish, all in indirect speech, and 17 times in Romanian, twice in direct speech and 15 times in indirect speech.)

(113) *French preterite – Spanish imperfect – Romanian imperfect*

(a) En. *But she didn't believe (simple past) what he'd told her the Boss had said.*

(b) Fr. *Mais elle ne crut pas (passé simple) que le Patron ait prononcé les paroles qu'il rapportait.*

(c) Sp. *Pero mi madre no daba crédito (imperfecto) a la versión de mi padre de lo que el Jefe le había dicho.*

(d) Ro. *Însă ea nu credea (imperfect) ce i-a povestit el că spusesese Șeful.*

Figures 9 and 10 below show the following correspondences: Romanian preterite – French imperfect, Romanian preterite – Spanish imperfect, which are compared to instances where Spanish preterites correspond to Romanian imperfects and French preterites correspond to Romanian imperfects.

Figure 9. Romanian preterites corresponding to French / Spanish imperfects and French/ Spanish preterites corresponding to Romanian imperfects in direct speech and narrative.

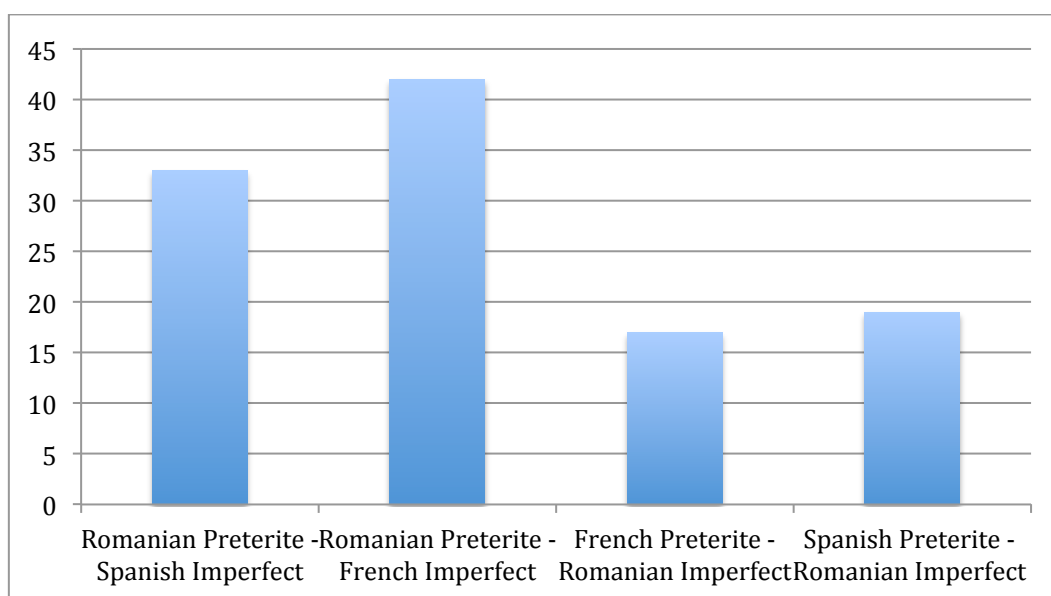
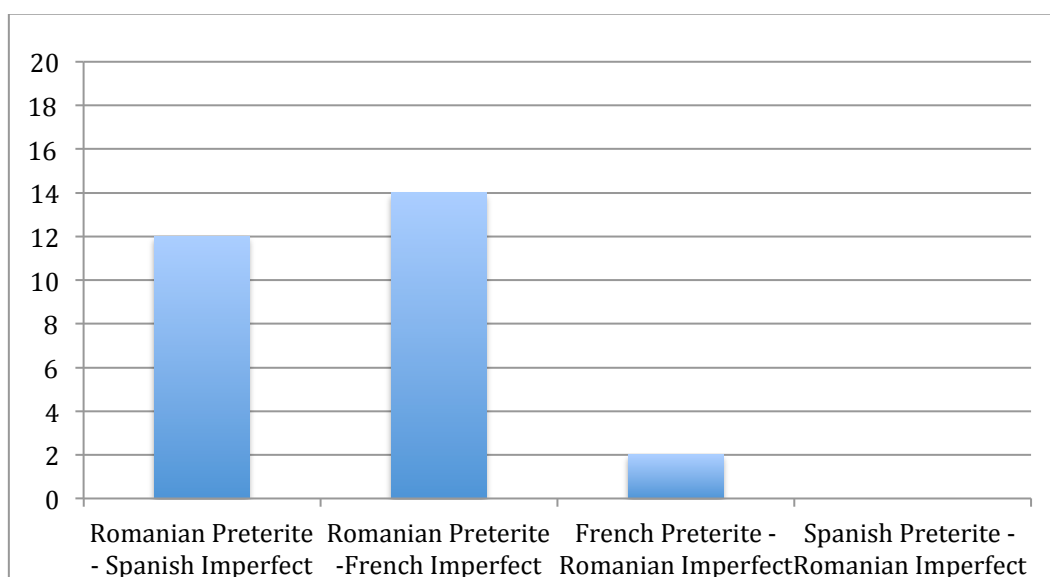


Figure 10. Romanian preterites corresponding to French / Spanish imperfects and French / Spanish preterites corresponding to Romanian imperfects in direct speech.



These results confirm that the Romanian preterite is used more with states than its French and Spanish equivalent.

4.6.C.ii The Perfect Compus and the Passé Composé in the 'Novels in Translation' Corpus

In the third-person narratives of the 'novels in translation' corpus the tense form used in opposition to the imperfect was predominantly the simple past form (*passé simple* and *perfect simplu*), both in French and in Romanian. The only exceptions to this in Romanian were instances of direct speech and free indirect thought, where the *perfect compus* was used. In French, the periphrastic form was also used in instances of direct speech and free indirect thought, but with some exceptions. In the examples below, the Romanian periphrastic past form corresponds to a French simple past form in direct speech (114) and free indirect thought (115). The difference in use between the simple

and periphrastic past in French is stylistic: in both examples, the character is narrating a story, and since stories are usually narrated in the *passé simple*, this is the form used here as well.

(114)

(a) En. Also remember that the Nielsen rating followed a week of print and broadcast news coverage of the ‘revolutionary’ plot twist of Chelsea’s death (...). Which, inevitably, several hundred thousand people actually *believed* (*simple past*).

(b) Fr. *Souvenez-vous aussi que la mesure de Nielsen est intervenue après une semaine de couverture médiatique, dans la presse et à la télévision, du tour “révolutionnaire” apporté à l’intrigue par la mort de Chelsea (...). Ce que, chose incroyable, plusieurs centaines de milliers de personnes gobèrent (passé simple) sans discuter.*

(c) Ro. *De asemenea, amintiți-vă că ratingul atribuit de Nielsen venea după o săptămână de comentarii în ziare și la televiziune, pe tema întorsăturii „revoluționare” aduse de moartea lui Chelsea (...). Zvon pe care, incredibil, câteva sute de mii de oameni chiar l-au luat (perfect compus) de bun.*

(115)

(a) En. Again he *wondered* (*simple past*) why he’d asked Hao for money. Hao’s face when he *saw* (*simple past*) me: like the puppy I *played* (*simple past*) with too roughly. The little thing came to fear me.

(b) Fr. *Une fois encore, il se demanda (passé simple) pourquoi il avait réclamé de l’argent à Hao. Le visage de Hao quand il me vit (passé simple): comme le chiot avec*

lequel j'ai joué (passé composé) trop violemment. Ce petit animal me craignait désormais.

(c) Ro. Se întrebă (perfect simplu) *din nou de ce-i ceruse bani lui Hao. Fața lui Hao când m-a văzut (perfect compus): ca a cățelușului cu care m-am jucat (perfect compus) prea dur. Piticuțul a ajuns să se teamă de mine.*

As was the case for the third-person narratives, the French translator of the first-person narrative opted for the simple past. The Romanian translator, however, used the periphrastic past (*perfect compus*) throughout. The exception to this occurred in a moment of maximum intensity in the narrative, when there was a switch from *perfect compus* to *perfect simplu* in Romanian, but not in French (116). Owing to the widespread use of the periphrastic past in Romanian, the use of the simple past draws attention to the narrative and is thus used for stylistic reasons.⁶⁵

(116)

En. (...) Sandy appeared to have fallen into a patriotic stupor, and I took my cue from him and let silence register my awe as well.

Just then a motorcycle policeman *pulled (simple past)* alongside us. “What’s up, Jersey?” he called (*simple past*) through the open window. “We’re looking for our hotel,” *answered (simple past)* my father.

Fr. (...) *Sandy semblait plongé dans une stupeur patriotique, et, prenant exemple sur lui, je choisis (passé simple) d’exprimer ma terreur sacrée par le silence.*

⁶⁵ This use is reminiscent of the Spanish ‘hot news’ perfect, particularly considering that in certain dialects of Romanian the *perfect simplu* is used with perfect functions.

C'est alors qu'un motard de la police s'arrêta (passé simple) à notre hauteur :

“Qu'est-ce qui vous arrive, les New Jersey? cria-t-il (passé simple) par la vitre ouverte.

- On cherche notre hôtel, répondit (passé simple) mon père...

(c) Ro. (...) *Sandy părea să fi căzut într-o uimire patriotică, iar eu m-am luat (perfect compus) după el și am lăsat (perfect compus) tăcerea să-mi exprime admirația.*

Chiar atunci, un polițist pe motocicletă trase (perfect simplu) în dreptul nostru.

- Care-i problema, Jersey? ne strigă (perfect simplu) el prin geamul deschis.

- Ne căutăm hotelul, răspunse (perfect simplu) tata.

To summarize, in third-person narratives the simple forms were used predominantly in both French and Romanian. In French, however, the *passé simple* was used on occasion even in passages of direct speech and free indirect thought, in which the *perfect compus* was preferred in Romanian. In first-person narratives, while the French translator still opted for the simple past form, the Romanian translator used the periphrastic past throughout, reserving the simple form for a stylistic function, pointing to a moment of maximum intensity in the narrative. The use of the tense forms in the written language of this style can therefore be seen as evidence that the *perfect compus* is, indeed, further along the aoristic drift than the *passé composé*.

4.6.C.iii The Continuative Function of the Perfect Compus and of the Pretérito

Perfecto

This section presents the results from the comparison of the ‘continuative’ function (see Chapter 3) of the Romanian *perfect compus* and of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto*. This function is said to be restricted to states and activities in Spanish, while

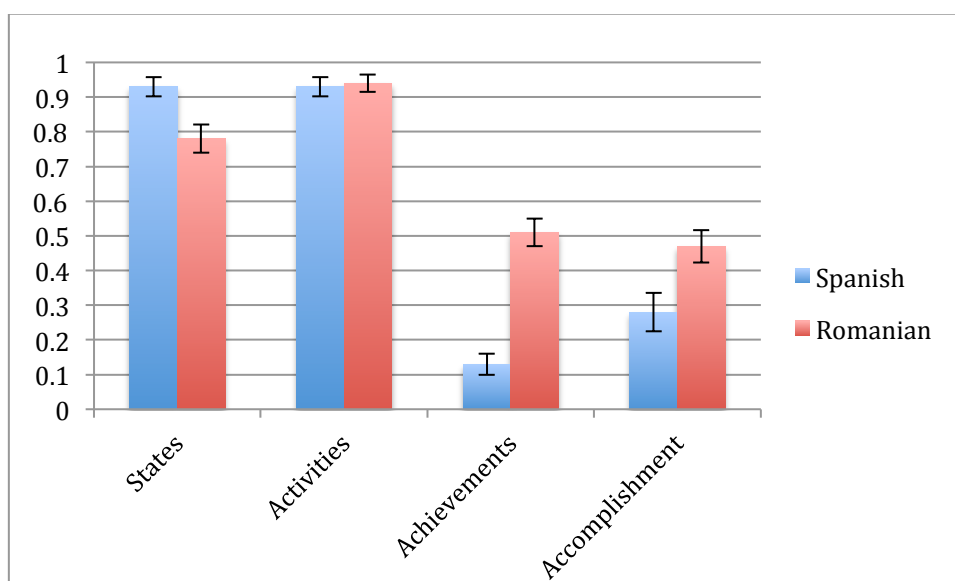
Vişan (2006) maintains that this restriction does not apply to Romanian. The acceptability of a continuative reading across aspectual classes was tested in both languages.

The results from the questionnaires corpus are shown in table (117) and in Figure 11.

(117)

<i>Verb Constructions</i>	<i>Spanish</i>		<i>Romanian</i>	
	Continuative	No	Continuative	No
'to be ill'	96.2%	3.8%	67.2%	32.8%
'to know the answer'	90.4%	9.6%	87.9%	12.1%
'to read'	98.1%	1.9%	96.6%	3.4%
'to watch tv'	88.5%	11.5%	91.4%	8.6%
'to arrive'	15.4%	84.6%	56.9%	43.1%
'to leave'	17.3%	82.7%	69%	31%
'to throw the ball'	5.9%	94.1%	25.9%	74.1%
'to build the house'	28.8%	71.2%	60.3%	39.7%
'to write the letter'	26.9%	73.1%	34.5%	65.5%

Figure 11. The acceptability of the continuative reading with different aspectual classes in Spanish and Romanian.



The results confirm that the Spanish perfect has the continuative function predominantly with atelics. The Romanian *perfect compus* also shows a significant difference in the continuative function of telics and atelics. It is therefore an oversimplification to claim that the *perfect compus* is a continuative across aspectual classes. Furthermore, the results in (117) show significant differences in acceptability even within the same aspectual class ('to throw' 25.9%, 'to leave' 69%). Once again, this points to the importance of stage structure. In Chapter 2 we saw that for Caudal 'to leave' had a 'result stage' with a higher salience degree than 'to throw', because of the acceptability of the 'He left for two hours'. 'To arrive' was judged to have a 'result stage' of the same salience degree as 'to throw', because both 'He arrived for two hours' and 'He threw the ball for two hours' (as a single event) are unacceptable. However, owing to the similar level of acceptability of 'to arrive' and 'to leave' as

continuatives in Romanian, we may postulate a result stage of the same salience degree for ‘to arrive’ and ‘to leave’ in this language.

Therefore, despite Vişan’s oversimplification regarding the continuative function of the Romanian *perfect compus*, we must note that this tense form is used more widely as a continuative than its Spanish counterpart and, of course, than French (which can only use the present in these contexts). These results, together with the results concerning the more frequent use of the Romanian preterite with states (4.6.C.i), and with the results regarding the use of the *perfect compus* (as opposed to the simple past form) in novels (4.6.C.ii), all point to the conclusion that the area of distribution of the preterite in Romanian is wider than that of its French and Spanish counterparts.

*

In this chapter I have presented my hypotheses based on the critical assessment of tense and aspect accounts of the imperfect and the preterite presented in previous chapters. My first hypothesis was that the imperfect and the preterite have aspectual content, against views that they are merely aspectually-sensitive tenses. The two approaches were considered both theoretically and in light of the psycholinguistic evidence available and the conclusion was that the imperfect and the preterite do have aspectual content, against approaches based purely on coercion (the aspectually-sensitive tenses view). I then considered the aspectual content of these forms. Going against the view that the preterite introduced a closed viewpoint / an end-point requirement (Smith 1997, Cipria and Roberts 2000), I hypothesized and demonstrated with the aid of a questionnaire corpus that this end point is a pragmatic inference rather than a semantic requirement. I then went on to use the answers from the questionnaires in order to show the need for a finer-grained account of lexical aspect (involving stage

structure) in establishing the meaning that arises from the interaction between tense forms, verb constructions, and adverbials. Finally, I investigated the cross-linguistic form – function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages. By use of the ‘questionnaires’ corpus and of a ‘novels in translation’ corpus I showed that the area of distribution of the Romanian *perfect compus* was wider than that of its French and Spanish counterparts. Chapter 5 will provide a formal representation for the imperfect - preterite opposition according to data analysed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: A REPRESENTATION OF THE IMPERFECT - PRETERITE OPPOSITION IN FRENCH, SPANISH, AND ROMANIAN

The assessment of the accounts of the temporal and aspectual functions of the imperfect and the preterite in the first three chapters of this thesis raised questions not only on how to account for these functions formally, but also on what these functions are and how they may vary cross-linguistically. Basing my arguments on these questions and unresolved debates in the literature, I formulated and tested my hypotheses in Chapter 4. I argued that theoretical and psycholinguistic evidence does not support the claim that the imperfect and the preterite are merely aspectually-sensitive tenses (contra de Swart 1998) and I maintained that they do have inherent aspectual functions. However, going against existing accounts (e.g. Cipria and Roberts 2000, Smith 1997), I demonstrated with the aid of a questionnaire-based corpus that the aspectual function of the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian is not, as previously claimed, that of requiring a semantic end point. Furthermore, following evidence on the importance of lexical aspectual information in Chapters 2 and 3, I demonstrated the necessity of including stage structure (Smith 1997, Caudal 2005, Croft 2012) within the semantics of lexical aspectual classes. Finally, my ‘questionnaires’ corpus and my ‘novels in translation’ corpus showed that there were differences in the distribution of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian, and that Romanian displayed a wider use of the periphrastic past form.

In the light of these findings, I can now raise the question of how best to describe the imperfect - preterite opposition. On the one hand, what stages are present in the structure of lexical aspectual classes, and therefore available for focus by the viewpoints (5.1)? On the other hand, on which stages do the aspectual viewpoints contributed by

the imperfect and the preterite focus, and why (5.2)? That is to say, since there is no semantic end-point requirement of the preterite, what is its aspectual contribution and how does it differ from that of the imperfect (5.3)? Finally, how do the meanings that result from the interaction of predicates of a certain lexical aspect, adverbials, and tense forms come about (5.4) and how can we account for the cross-linguistic differences observed (5.5)?

5.1 Stage Structure and Aspectual Classes

Chapter 2 included an investigation of a variety of accounts of lexical aspect, from those that rely on eventualities as primitives (Vendler 1957, de Swart 1998), to those that also postulate stage structures of aspectual types (Smith 1997, Caudal 2005). There is no consensus on the number and types of aspectual classes, nor on the stages that compose them, where stages are posited. While de Swart reduces the initial four-way Vendlerian classification (states, activities, accomplishments, achievements) to only three eventuality types (states, processes, events), Smith adds a fifth: semelfactives. When eventualities are decomposed into stages / phases, various types and numbers are proposed, sometimes for all, and sometimes for certain eventualities: inner / development stage (Caudal 2005, Smith 1997), preliminary / preparatory stage (Smith 1997, Caudal 2005), end point stage (Kamp and Reyle 1993), result / resultant stage (Smith 1997, Caudal 2005, Croft 2012), rest stage (Croft 2012), transition stage (Croft 2012) etc. (see Section 2.1.E.ii, 2.1.E.iii).

Since in Chapter 4 the necessity of including stage structure in a model of lexical aspect was demonstrated, I will propose an account of stage structure with the aim of accounting for results from the corpora and of resolving the debate in the literature regarding stage structure and lexical aspect. The inclusion of any particular stage in the lexical aspect of an eventuality will be deemed necessary only if there is evidence for it, i.e. only if the overall meaning of a sentence including the predicate in question will be that denoted by the stage. It follows from this that stages are defined as parts of eventualities that can bear focus (that can provide their meaning to the sentence).⁶⁶ A stage can become focused with the help of adverbials and viewpoints provided by tense forms. In the following sections I will provide stage structures for eventualities in each of the languages under consideration. Furthermore, I will examine whether the ease with which a stage can be focused differs from language to language.

5.1.A States

States have most frequently been described as having either the simplest, or no, stage structure at all (e.g. Smith 1997). As discussed in Chapter 2, Croft (2012), however, argues for a complex structure for states, and proposes different stage structures according to their semantics: states can be transitory ('to be happy'), acquired permanent ('to be a war veteran'), inherently permanent ('to be of Polish origin'), or point states ('to be midday') (see Section 2.1.E.ii.c).

The results presented in Chapter 4 clearly indicate the need to postulate a complex structure of states, since different predicates behave differently with regard to the

⁶⁶ Note, however, that there can also be parts of eventualities which are not independent stages. They cannot independently provide their meaning to the sentence.

supposed ‘end-point requirement’. For example, transitory states in the preterite (e.g. ‘he was happy’) were found to be more acceptable than permanent states (e.g. ‘he was a war veteran’) with a meaning of continuation up to the present moment (‘and he still is’). This is because in the structure of permanent states there is no potential arbitrary end point.⁶⁷ While it is clear that this arbitrary end point can be part of the semantics of transitory states, the question is whether or not to treat it as an independent stage; in other words, the question is whether or not it can bear focus by itself. Examples (1)-(3) indicate that it can: there can be focus on the end of a state in French, Spanish, and Romanian if this state is transitory.

(1)

(a) Fr. *Marie a arrêté (passé composé) d’être heureuse le jour où son mari est parti.*

‘Marie stopped being happy the day her husband left’ (transitory state).

(b) Fr. ??*Jean a arrêté (passé composé) d’être vétéran de guerre.* ??‘Jean stopped being a war veteran’ (acquired permanent state).

(c) Fr. ??*Jean a arrêté (passé composé) d’être d’origine française.* ??‘Jean stopped being of French origin’ (inherent permanent state).

(2)

(a) Sp. *María dejó (pretérito indefinido) de estar feliz cuando su marido se fue.* ‘María stopped being happy when her husband left’ (transitory state).

⁶⁷ Thus, the sentence Fr. *Mon grand-père a été (passé composé) vétéran de guerre et il l’est toujours* ‘My grandfather was a war veteran and he still is’ either goes against the Maxim of Quantity, if the grandfather is still alive, or is a contradiction, if he is no longer alive. See Chapter 4.

(b) Sp. ??*Juan* dejó (pretérito indefinido) de ser veterano de guerra. ?? ‘Juan stopped being a war veteran’ (acquired permanent state).

(c) Sp. ??*John* dejó (pretérito indefinido) de ser inglés de origen. ?? ‘John stopped being of English origin’ (inherent permanent state).

(3)

(a) Ro. *Maria* a încetat (perfect compus) să fie fericită când i-a plecat soțul. ‘Maria stopped being happy when her husband left’ (transitory state).

(b) Ro. ??*Ion* a încetat (perfect compus) să fie veteran de război. ?? ‘Ion stopped being a war veteran’ (acquired permanent state).

(c) Ro. ??*Ion* a încetat (perfect compus) să fie de origine română. ?? ‘Ion stopped being of Romanian origin’ (inherent permanent state).

However, this pattern does not always obtain, since (4) is also acceptable.

(4)

(a) Fr. *Marie* a été (passé composé) heureuse toute sa vie. ‘Mary was happy all her life.’

(b) Sp. *María* estuvo (pretérito indefinido) contenta toda su vida. ‘María was happy all her life.’

(c) Ro. *Maria* a fost (perfect compus) fericită toată viața. ‘Maria was happy all her life.’

In (4), the transitory state lasts for the whole period during which the eventuality exists.

Therefore, what will distinguish the structure of a transitory state from that of a

permanent state will be the *potential* presence of an Arbitrary End Point Stage (AEStage).

Acquired permanent and transitory states differ from inherent permanent states in that the former also have an inception stage (IStage). This is highlighted in (5) below, in which the overall meaning of the sentences involving acquired permanent or transitory states is inceptivity. Note, however, that while French and Spanish do not necessarily need adverbial and contextual support for this resultant meaning with the predicates in question, Romanian does. Without adverbials like ‘suddenly’, the meaning is not inceptive in Romanian (compare 5c and 5d). The inherent permanent states in (6) do not have this stage available for focus, since their beginning and end point coincides with that of the existence of entity involved in the eventuality (one does not start or stop being of a certain origin).

(5)

(a) Fr. *Marie* sut (passé simple) *la réponse*. ‘Marie found out the answer’ (transitory / acquired permanent state⁶⁸).

(b) Sp. *María* supo (pretérito indefinido) *la respuesta*. ‘María found out the answer’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

(c) Ro. *Dintr-o dată, Maria* a știut (perfect compus) *ce să facă*. ‘Suddenly, Maria knew / realized what to do’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

(d) Ro. *Maria* a știut (perfect compus) *ce să facă*. ‘Maria knew / *found out what to do’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

⁶⁸ ‘To know’ is usually considered an acquired permanent state in the literature. However, as pointed out in Chapter 4 and explained in 5.1.F, speakers can also consider it transitory, owing to the possibility of forgetting.

(6)

(a) Fr. ??*Jean* a commencé (passé composé) d'être d'origine française. ?? 'Jean started being of French origin' (inherent permanent state).

(b) Sp. ??*Juan* empezó (pretérito indefinido) ser español de origen. ?? 'Juan started to be of Spanish origin' (inherent permanent state).

(c) Ro. ??*Ion* a început (perfect compus) să fie de origine română. ?? 'Ion started to be of Romanian origin' (inherent permanent state).

Since the meaning of a sentence involving a state can be that of inception or that of end point, I diverge from previous accounts (e.g. Caudal 2005) and postulate these two stages as separate from the core stage (CStage) of the eventuality, which describes the body of the eventuality. The core stage is focused on in the examples below:

(7)

(a) Fr. *Marie* était (imparfait) contente. 'Marie was happy' (transitory state).

(b) Fr. *Jean* était (imparfait) vétéran de guerre. 'Jean was a war veteran' (acquired permanent state).

(c) Fr. *Jean* était (imparfait) d'origine française. 'Jean was of French origin' (inherent permanent state).

(8)

(a) Sp. *María* estaba (imperfecto) contenta. 'María was happy' (transitory state).

(b) Sp. *Juan* era (imperfecto) veterano de guerra. ‘Juan was a war veteran’ (acquired permanent state).

(c) Sp. *Juan* era (imperfecto) español de origen. ‘Juan was of Spanish origin’ (inherent permanent state).

(9)

(a) Ro. *Maria* era (imperfect) fericită. ‘Maria was happy’ (transitory state).

(b) Ro. *Ion* era (imperfect) veteran de război. ‘Ion was a war veteran’ (acquired permanent state).

(c) Ro. *Ion* era (imperfect) de origine română. ‘Ion was of Romanian origin’ (inherent permanent state).

Croft’s fourth type of state is the point state (‘the sun was at its zenith’, ‘it was exactly midday’), which differs from transitory, acquired permanent, and inherent states in that it only lasts for a moment in time: it is stative, but not durative. Owing to its punctual nature, I describe point states as consisting of inception, core, and arbitrary end point stage rolled into a single punctual stage.

Much of the literature on stage structure also mentions a result or resultant state, but only for telics (Croft 2012), or only for *some* telics (achievements, in Smith 1997). Caudal and Roussarie (2006), however, argue for a result state for states and activities as well, only one of a different kind: if the result state of telics begins after their end point, the result state of atelics can begin just after the eventuality has begun (as soon as Mary is happy, I can say ‘Mary has been happy’). I follow Caudal and Roussarie in

maintaining that there is no need for a telos in order to have a result ensuing from an eventuality, since the following sentences are perfectly acceptable:

(10) En. There is no chocolate cake left (resultant state). Clearly, Helen has been hungry (transitory state).

(11) En. I'm no longer hungry (resultant state). I've eaten a lot of cake (activity).

However, rather than a 'result state stage' I propose a 'perfect state stage'⁶⁹ (PerfState), since as shown in Chapter 3, this state is not necessarily a result of the eventuality (the perfect can be experiential, continuative, or 'hot news' and the state can be a cause, rather than a result of the eventuality: 'The fence is fragile. It has fallen down again.') Rather than a telos, what eventualities need in order to have this stage in their structure is an inception stage. The following examples⁷⁰ demonstrate the validity of this claim, since only inherent permanent states (which lack an inception stage) are not acceptable with this meaning:

(12) Sp. Ha estado (pretérito perfecto) *muy contenta*. 'She has been very happy' (transitory state).

(13) Sp. *Charlie Baileygates (Jim Carrey)* ha sido (pretérito perfecto) *veterano de la fuerza policiaca de Rhode Island por 17 años*. 'Charlie Baileygates (Jim Carrey) has been a veteran of the Rhode Island Police Force for 17 years' (acquired permanent state).

⁶⁹ See Chapter 3 for the need to include a state in the semantics of the perfect.

⁷⁰ The examples will be given in Spanish, since the past periphrastic forms in French and Romanian have not only perfect, but also perfective functions.

(14) Sp. *¿Cómo sabéis que ya ha sido (pretérito perfecto) mediodía?* ‘How do you know it has already been noon?’ (Point state).

(15) Sp. *¿?Juan ha sido (pretérito perfecto) de origen inglesa.* *‘Juan has been of English origin’ (inherent permanent state).

The analysis of the results in Chapter 4 also led to an addition to Croft’s types of states: a group of eventualities such as ‘to cost X’, ‘to have to VERB’, ‘to be worth VERB-ing’, ‘to be able to VERB’. When the predicate denoting this eventuality is in the preterite the meaning is that of an event ensuing from the state (16-19). I will call this the ‘ensuing event’ stage (EEStage).

(16) Ro. *Cartea a costat (perfect compus) 10 RON. -> Am cumpărat cartea cu 10 RON.* ‘The book cost 10 RON.’ ----> ‘I bought the book for 10 RON.’

(17) Ro. *A trebuit (perfect compus) să cumpăr cartea. ----> Am cumpărat cartea.* ‘I had to buy the book.’ ----> ‘I bought the book.’

(18) Sp. *Valió (pretérito indefinido) la pena comprar este libro. ----> Compré este libro.* ‘It was worth buying this book.’ ----> ‘I bought this book.’

(19) Fr. *J’ai pu (passé composé) acheter ce livre. ----> J’ai acheté ce livre.* ‘I was able to buy this book.’ ----> ‘I bought this book.’

These can be classified as a subtype of transitory states, since they have beginning and they can have an end: a book can change its price, one may suddenly have to or be able to buy a book (inceptive meaning), and a book might stop being worth buying (arbitrary end point meaning).

Finally, I follow Croft's analysis of English (2012) in postulating a rest stage for all eventualities that have an inception point (all but inherent permanent states). The existence of this stage may be demonstrated by the presence of adverbials like 'almost':

(20) *Transitory states*

(a) Fr. *Elle a presque été* (passé composé) *heureuse*.

(b) Sp. *Casi estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *contenta*.

(c) Ro. *Aproape c-a fost* (perfect compus) *fericită*.

'She almost was happy.'

(21) *Acquired permanent states*

(a) Fr. *Elle a presque su* (passé composé) *la réponse*.

(b) Sp. *Casi supo* (pretérito indefinido) *la respuesta*.

(c) Ro. *Aproape a știut* (perfect compus) *răspunsul*.

'She almost knew the answer.'

(22) *Ensuing event states*

(a) Fr. *Elle a presque dû* (passé composé) *y aller*.

(b) Sp. *Casi tuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *que ir*.

(c) Ro. *Aproape c-a trebuit* (perfect compus) *să meargă*.

'She almost had to go.'

(23) *Point states*

(a) Fr. *Le soleil était* (imparfait) *presque à son zénith*.

(b) Sp. *El sol casi estaba* (imperfecto) *en su cénit*.

(c) Ro. *Soarele aproape că era* (imperfect) *la zenit*.

‘The sun was almost at its zenith.’

(24) *Inherent permanent states*

(a) Fr. ??*Elle était* (imparfait) *presque d’origine française*.

(b) Sp. ??*Casi era* (imperfecto) *francesa de origen*.

(c) Ro. ??*Aproape era* (imperfect) *de origine franceză*.

??‘She was almost of French origin.’

To summarize, the data presented in Chapter 4 suggest a complex structure for states, as proposed by Croft, and against Smith (1997) and de Swart (1998, 2012). Following Croft, I propose four types of states: transitory states, acquired permanent states, inherent permanent states and point states. My corpus findings revealed a fifth type of state, with an additional stage, which I call ‘ensuing event’ states. Furthermore, I propose and provide evidence for a different stage structure than previously described in the literature. The different stage structures for each type of state are summarized in the following table:

(25)

STATE	Rest Stage	Inception Stage	Core Stage	Arbitrary End Point Stage	Perfect State Stage	Ensuing Event Stage
Inherent Permanent	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Acquired Permanent	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Point	yes	yes ⁷¹			yes	no
Transitory	yes	yes	yes	potentially	yes	no
Ensuing Event	yes	yes	yes	potentially	yes	yes

5.1.B Activities

As with transitory states, I propose that the stage structure for activities involves a core stage, an inception stage, a rest stage, potentially an arbitrary end point stage, and a result stage.

When the core stage is focused, the resultant meaning is that of the ongoing process described by the activity:

(26)

(a) Fr. *Elle jouait (imparfait) du violon.*

(b) Sp. *Tocaba (imperfecto) el violín.*

(c) Ro. *Cânta (imperfect) la vioară.*

‘She was playing the violin.’

⁷¹ Note that for point states, the Inception Stage and the Core Stage and the Arbitrary End Point Stage are one and the same, since they are punctual.

The beginning of an activity can also bear focus, in the presence of constructions such as ‘to begin’ or ‘to start’ (27) or of punctual temporal adverbials like ‘at 10 o’clock’ (28). We can thus postulate an inception stage.

(27)

(a) Fr. *Elle a commencé (passé composé) à jouer du violon (à dix heures).*

(b) Sp. *Empezó (pretérito indefinido) tocar el violín (a las diez).*

(c) Ro. *A început (perfect compus) să cânte la vioară (la ora zece).*

‘She started playing the violin (at ten o’clock).’

(28)

(a) Fr. *Elle a mangé, à dix heures elle a joué (passé composé) du violon et après elle s’est couchée.*

(b) Sp. *Comió, a las diez tocó (pretérito indefinido) el violín y después se fue a la cama.*

(c) Ro. *A mâncat, la ora zece a cântat (perfect compus) la vioară și apoi s-a culcat.*

‘She ate, at ten o’clock she played (i.e. started playing) the violin and then she went to bed.’

Similarly to transitory states, activities may have a point at which they stop:

(29)

(a) Fr. *Il a arrêté (passé composé) de marcher (à dix heures).*

(b) Sp. *Dejó (pretérito indefinido) de caminar (a las diez).*

(c) Ro. A încetat (perfect compus) să se plimbe (*la ora zece*).

‘He stopped walking (at ten o’clock).’

However, the corpus data analysed in Chapter 4 shows that activities do not necessarily have a point at which they stop, and that the process described can continue up to the present moment:

(30)

(a) Fr. *Il a beaucoup marché* (passé composé) *et il marche toujours*.

(b) Sp. *Caminó* (pretérito indefinido) *mucho y sigue caminando*.

(c) Ro. A umblat (perfect compus) *mult și încă mai umblă*.

‘He walked a lot and he is still walking.’

Thus, the arbitrary end point stage is optional and introduced only in special circumstances (in the presence of specific adverbials or constructions).

Furthermore, since we have established that eventualities do not need a telos in order to lead to a result reading (e.g. I’ve eaten a lot (activity). I’m not hungry any more (result).), activities will also have a perfect state stage in their structure:

(31)

(a) Fr. *Il a beaucoup marché* (passé composé). *Il a mal aux pieds*.

(b) Sp. *Ha caminado* (pretérito perfecto) *mucho. Le duelen los pies*.

(c) Ro. A umblat (perfect compus) *mult. Îl dor picioarele*.

‘He has walked a lot. His feet ache.’

Finally, since they have an inception point, activities also have a rest stage that can bear focus in the presence of ‘almost’:

(32)

(a) Fr. *Elle a presque chanté* (passé composé).

(b) Sp. *Casi cantó* (pretérito indefinido).

(c) Ro. *Aproape c-a cântat* (perfect compus).

‘She almost sang.’

The difference between activities and transitory states is that the former are dynamic, while the latter are static. They therefore have a different kind of core stage. This distinction is already made in Croft’s bidimensional model: the core stages of states do not vary on the ‘q axis’⁷², while those of activities do. According to how they vary (directionally or not), Croft proposes two types of activities: directed activities (‘to walk’) and undirected activities (‘to play the violin’). However, since there are no differences in the syntactic manifestations of these two types of activities in the languages under consideration as far as the imperfect and preterite are concerned, I will follow Occam’s Razor and maintain a single type of activity, with the following stage structure: an inception stage, a rest stage, a dynamic core stage, potentially an arbitrary point stage, and a perfect state stage.

⁷² See Section 2.1.E.ii.c: the q axis shows the way in which the eventuality unfolds.

5.1.C Achievements

The data in Chapter 4 point to the need to postulate two different types of achievement: one whose structure consists only of the core stage and of the perfect state stage ('to throw a ball', 'to notice a mouse'), and one whose structure also includes a preparatory stage ('to leave', 'to arrive', 'to win a race').

Since the core stage of an achievement is punctual, an eventuality which does not also have an available preparatory stage (PrepStage) cannot be said to start, but not finish (33). Such a pattern is, however, possible, if the eventuality also consists of a preparatory stage, which is focused in (34).

(33)

(a) Fr. ??Je jetais (imparfait) *la pierre, mais soudainement, j'ai changé d'avis et je ne l'ai pas fait.*

(b) Sp. ??Tiraba (imperfecto) *la piedra, pero de repente cambié de opinión y no lo hice.*

(c) Ro. ??Aruncam (imperfect) *piatra, dar dintr-o dată m-am răzgândit și nu am făcut-o.*

??'I was throwing the rock, but suddenly I changed my mind and did not do it.'

(34)

(a) Fr. *Je partais (imparfait) de chez moi, mais il a commencé à neiger, donc j'ai décidé de ne plus aller au parc.*

(b) Sp. *Me iba (imperfecto) de mi casa, pero empezó a nevar, así que decidí no ir al parque.*

(c) Ro. Plecam (imperfect) de acasă, *dar a început să ningă, așa că am hotărât să nu mai merg în parc.*

‘I was leaving home, but it started snowing, so I decided not to go to the park anymore.’

Though most accounts of the stage structure of telics agree that a state can ensue from the eventuality occurring, it is important to note once more that this is a perfect state; it need not be a result state that starts once the telos is reached, as shown in (35): the state of being fed up is not a consequence of leaving and certainly started before leaving (see 3.1.B.i.b).

(35)

(a) Fr. *Je suis partie (passé composé) de chez lui. J’en avais marre.*

(b) Sp. *Me he ido (pretérito perfecto) de su casa. No podía aguantar más.*

(c) Ro. *Am plecat (perfect compus) de la el. Nu mai puteam suporta.*

‘I’ve left his place. I was fed up.’

Finally, just as the core state differs from states to activities, it also differs with achievements. As suggested above, since they are dynamic punctual eventualities, the core stage of an achievement includes its inception and its end point. As shown in (36) and (37), it is impossible for the focus to be solely on these points. Therefore, they cannot be considered separate stages.

(36)

(a) Fr. *??J’ai commencé (passé composé) à jeter la pierre.*

(b) Sp. ??Empecé (pretérito indefinido) a tirar *la piedra*.

(c) Ro. ??Am început (perfect compus) să arunc *piatra*.

??‘I started throwing the rock.’

(37)

(a) Fr. ??J’ai fini (passé composé) de jeter *la pierre*.

(b) Sp. ??Terminé (pretérito indefinido) de tirar *la piedra*.

(c) Ro. ??Am terminat (perfect compus) de aruncat *piatra*.

??‘I finished throwing the rock.’

The punctual core stage is focused on in the following examples for achievements which also consist of a preparatory stage (38) and for those which do not (39):

(38)

(a) Fr. Je suis arrivé (passé composé) à *la maison*.

(b) Sp. Llegué (pretérito indefinido) *en casa*.

(c) Ro. Am ajuns (perfect compus) *acasă*.

‘I arrived at home.’

(39)

(a) Fr. *La bombe* a explosé (passé composé).

(b) Sp. Explotó (pretérito indefinido) *la bomba*.

(c) Ro. A explodat (perfect compus) *bomba*.

‘The bomb exploded.’

Even though the achievements do not have a separate inception stage available for focus, they do have a point at which the achievement begins. This means that they also have a rest stage, which is focused in (40):

(40)

Fr. *Elle a presque jeté* (passé composé) *la pierre*.

Sp. *Casi tiró* (pretérito indefinido) *la piedra*.

Ro. *Aproape c-a aruncat* (perfect compus) *piatra*.

‘She almost threw the stone.’

Croft’s reversible (e.g. ‘the door opened’) versus irreversible (‘the glass broke’) achievement distinction (see Section 2.1.E.ii.c) does not lead to different syntactic manifestations as far as the use of the imperfect and the preterite goes in the languages under consideration here and will thus not be included in my representation of lexical aspect. Both ‘to open’ (meaning ‘to become open’) and ‘to break’ have a rest stage, a punctual core stage, potentially followed by a perfect stage state.

5.1.D Accomplishments

Accomplishments are also telics, but their stage structure differs greatly from that of achievements. This is because their core stage is durative (like the core stage of activities). Unlike achievements, the inception stage (41, 42) and the end point stage (43) can be focused on without the core stage:

(41)

(a) Fr. *On a pris* (passé composé) *le petit déjeuner à sept heures.*

(b) Sp. *Tomamos* (pretérito indefinido) *el desayuno a las siete.*

(c) Ro. *Am luat* (perfect compus) *micul dejun la ora șapte.*

‘We had breakfast at 7 (i.e. We started having breakfast at 7).’

(42)

(a) Fr. *J’ai commencé* (passé composé) *à manger le gâteau.*

(b) Sp. *Empecé* (pretérito indefinido) *a comer la tarta.*

(c) Ro. *Am început* (perfect compus) *să mănânc tortul.*

‘I started eating the cake.’

(43)

(a) Fr. *J’ai fini* (passé composé) *de manger le gâteau.*

(b) Sp. *Terminé* (pretérito indefinido) *de comer la tarta.*

(c) Ro. *Am terminat* (perfect compus) *de mâncat tortul.*

‘I finished eating the cake.’

Since there is an inception point within the structure of accomplishments, they will also have a rest stage available for focus:

(44)

(a) Fr. *Elle est presque allée* (passé composé) *le voir.*

(b) Sp. *Casi fue* (pretérito indefinido) *a verlo*.

(c) Ro. *Aproape că s-a dus* (perfect compus) *să-l vadă*.

‘She almost went to see him.’

Furthermore, since they have an inception point, accomplishments also have a perfect state stage (note that my representation of lexical aspect departs from that of Smith 1997, for whom this stage was exclusive to achievements; see 2.3.A.i):

(45)

(a) Fr. *J’ai mangé* (passé composé) *un gâteau. Je n’ai plus faim*.

(b) Sp. *He comido* (pretérito perfecto) *una torta. Ya no tengo hambre*.

(c) Ro. *Am mâncat* (perfect compus) *un tort. Nu îmi mai e foame*.

‘I have eaten a cake. I am not hungry any more.’

So far, the account of stage structure of accomplishments seems very similar to that of activities. However, the difference lies in the type of end point: while for activities this was potential and arbitrary (it could occur at any point during the eventuality), for accomplishments it is inherent or natural, and always part of their stage structure. Even if this end point is never attained (e.g. I was baking a cake but I got a phone call, had to leave the house, and never finished the cake), the intention was to attain it. Furthermore, it has been shown that people frequently refer to an unfinished object as the end-product (e.g. a house that has not entirely been built can be called a house as opposed to a construction site, and a cake that is in the process of baking can

still be called a cake rather than a mix of dough and other ingredients).⁷³ Therefore, the end point of an accomplishment will be a permanent component of its stage structure and since it is focusable will be a stage in itself (the inherent end point stage - IEStage).

Moreover, note that accomplishments can also have an arbitrary end point:

(46)

(a) Fr. J'ai arrêté (passé composé) de lire *le livre*.

(b) Sp. Dejé (pretérito indefinido) de leer *el libro*.

(c) Ro. Am încetat (perfect compus) să citesc *cartea*.

'I stopped reading the book.'

(47)

(a) Fr. J'ai lu (passé composé) *le livre pendant deux semaines, mais je ne l'ai pas fini*.

(b) Sp. Leí (pretérito indefinido) *el libro durante dos semanas, pero no lo he terminado*.

(c) Ro. Am citit (perfect compus) *cartea timp de două săptămâni, dar nu am terminat-o*.

'I read the book for two weeks, but did not finish it.'

To summarize, the stages available for focus with accomplishments are: the rest stage, the inception stage, the core stage, the inherent end point stage, the perfect state stage and potentially the arbitrary end point stage.

⁷³ See Section 2.2.C on the imperfective paradox and on the partitive puzzle.

5.1.E Semelfactives

Semelfactives are sometimes included among lexical aspectual classes alongside states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, and sometimes omitted. Typical examples of this eventuality type are sneezing, knocking, tapping, burping, or blinking.

When included among aspectual classes (e.g. Smith 1997), semelfactives are characterized as punctual atelic eventualities. They are described as atelic under a definition of telicity as involving a change of state. However, sneezing and burping may involve a change of state (no longer feeling the need to sneeze or burp, or feeling relief); tapping or knocking can lead to a change in shape of the object being tapped or knocked; blinking can result in the removal of dust or discomfort from eyes etc. If the telic – atelic opposition is taken to correspond to a dynamic action that has an inherent end point versus a dynamic action that can go on indefinitely, it becomes even more difficult to classify semelfactives as atelic. From this point of view, I see ‘to knock’ and ‘to sneeze’ as no different to ‘throwing a ball’ or ‘noticing a mouse’: they are punctual events with no preparatory stage. Examples (47)-(48) show that they have the same behaviour observed in 5.1.C with achievements without preliminary stages:

(48) *Core stage that includes beginning and end points*

(a) Fr. ??*Je jetais (imparfait) la pierre, mais soudainement, j’ai changé d’avis et je ne l’ai pas fait.*

(b) Sp. ??*Tiraba (imperfecto) la piedra, pero de repente cambié de opinión y no lo hice.*

(c) Ro. ??*Aruncam (imperfect) piatra, dar dintr-o dată m-am răzgândit și nu am făcut-o.*

‘I was throwing the rock, but suddenly I changed my mind and did not do it.’

(a') Fr. ??Je frappais (imparfait) *à la porte, mais soudainement j'ai changé d'avis et je ne l'ai pas fait.*

(b') Sp. ??Tocaba (imperfecto) *a la puerta, pero de repente cambié de opinión y no lo hice.*

(c') Ro. ??Băteam (imperfect) *la ușă, dar dintr-odată m-am răzgândit și n-am făcut-o.*

??'I was knocking on the door, but I suddenly changed my mind and did not do it.'

(49) *Focus on the core stage: beginning, middle, end rolled into one.*

(a) Fr. *La bombe a explosé (passé composé).*

(b) Sp. *Explotó (pretérito indefinido) la bomba.*

(c) Ro. *A explodat (perfect compus) bomba.*

'The bomb exploded.'

(a') Fr. *J'ai cligné (passé composé).*

(b') Sp. *Parpadeé (pretérito indefinido).*

(c') Ro. *Am clipit (perfect compus).*

'I blinked.'

However, alongside their similarities to eventualities like 'throwing a rock' or 'noticing a mouse', the examples below also reveal some differences. While the achievements we saw in 5.1.C were incompatible with constructions focusing on the beginning or the ending of the situation described (50, 51), such eventualities are acceptable in the same contexts (52, 53).

(50)

(a) Fr. ??J'ai commencé (passé composé) à jeter *une pierre*.

(b) Sp. ??Empecé (pretérito indefinido) tirar *una piedra*.

(c) Ro. ??Am început (perfect compus) să arunc *o piatră*.

??'I started throwing a rock.'

(51)

(a) Fr. ??J'ai fini (passé composé) de jeter *une pierre*.

(b) Sp. ??Terminé (pretérito indefinido) de tirar *una piedra*.

(c) Ro. ??Am terminat (perfect compus) de aruncat *o piatră*.

??'I finished throwing a rock.'

(52)

(a) Fr. J'ai commencé (passé composé) à cligner.

(b) Sp. Empecé (pretérito indefinido) parpadear.

(c) Ro. Am început (perfect compus) să clipesc.

'I started blinking.'

(53)

(a) Fr. J'ai arrêté (passé composé) de cligner.

(b) Sp. Dejé (pretérito indefinido) de parpadear.

(c) Ro. M-am oprit (perfect compus) din clipit.

'I stopped blinking.'

This is because actions such as ‘blinking’, ‘tapping’, ‘knocking’ frequently occur in series, and therefore need not be perceived as single-occurring events. When this happens, the events are actually perceived as activities (notice the use of ‘stop’, rather than ‘finish’ in 53), rather than achievements, hence the behaviours manifested above.

Therefore, when describing such an event occurring a single time, I consider the stage structure of this eventuality to be the same as that of an achievement without a preparatory stage. When the action described consists of repetitive events, the stage structure will be that of an activity. My interpretation of ‘semelfactives’ will thus be of a type of eventuality that has the possibility of conceptualizing an action in these two different ways. I will not, however, introduce a different stage structure for this type of eventuality. The possibility of conceiving an action and the predicate that denotes it in more than one way is called *construal* by Croft (see Section 2.1.E.i) and will be the topic of the next subsection.

5.1.F Construal and the Data in Chapter 4

Any action can be expressed in different ways: if I saw a girl biting into an apple I could answer the question ‘what was she doing?’ by ‘she was biting into an apple’ (achievement), ‘she was eating’ (activity), or by saying ‘she was eating an apple’ (accomplishment). These are different ways of *construing* reality. Following Dahl (1985), Croft points out that there are also different ways of *construing* a predicate, depending on grammatical and discoursal context and on our experience or knowledge of the way in which the world works (Croft 2012:92). The data analysed in Chapter 4 confirm the importance of the concept of *construal*, since the questions regarding the

acceptability of a certain sentence can be interpreted as ‘Can you find a construal for the predicate in this sentence in order for it to be acceptable?’ When the answer was yes, participants were sometimes asked what this construal was. This section will investigate possible construals of French, Spanish, and Romanian predicates, as revealed by the data in Chapter 4.

At the end of the previous section, I showed that a single occurrence of an event like ‘tapping’ or ‘blinking’ can be seen as an achievement without a preparatory phase, while a repetitive ‘tapping’ or ‘blinking’ event can be conceptualized as an activity, owing to our knowledge of how ‘tapping’ and ‘blinking’ work. This construal of semelfactives as activities in French, Spanish, and Romanian was demonstrated while investigating the end-point requirement. Like atelics, semelfactives were mostly acceptable in the context ‘He VERB-ed, and he is still VERB-ing’. This is not, however, because semelfactives are an aspectual class that involves a one-time-occurring punctual atelic event (Smith 1997). This is because these actions often occur repetitively, and are thus construed as an atelic: they could go on occurring, either until an arbitrary end point, or until the present moment.

Achievements without a preparatory stage could also be construed as accomplishments. This is because even a punctual stage like the core stage of an achievement without a preparatory stage has some duration. Because this is a short duration compared to that of other events (‘noticing a mouse’ and ‘throwing a ball’ take a matter of seconds, while ‘eating a cake’ and ‘writing a novel’ take considerably longer), it is most frequently construed as beginning, middle and end rolled into one. However, if we were to have a particularly precise way of measuring (e.g. nanoseconds), we could distinguish the inception stage, the core stage and the natural

end point stage of such an event. Similarly, in a moment of maximum intensity like fear time might seem to go more slowly than it actually does.⁷⁴ Thus, an event that is construed as punctual in most cases can also be construed as having longer duration and can thus bear focus on the core stage:

(54)

Fr. *A ce moment-là il me venait (imparfait) à l'esprit l'idée d'aller en Angleterre.*

Sp. *En ese momento se me ocurría (imperfecto) ir a Inglaterra.*

Ro. *În acel moment îmi venea (imperfect) ideea să merg în Anglia.*

'At that point I was getting the idea of going to England.'

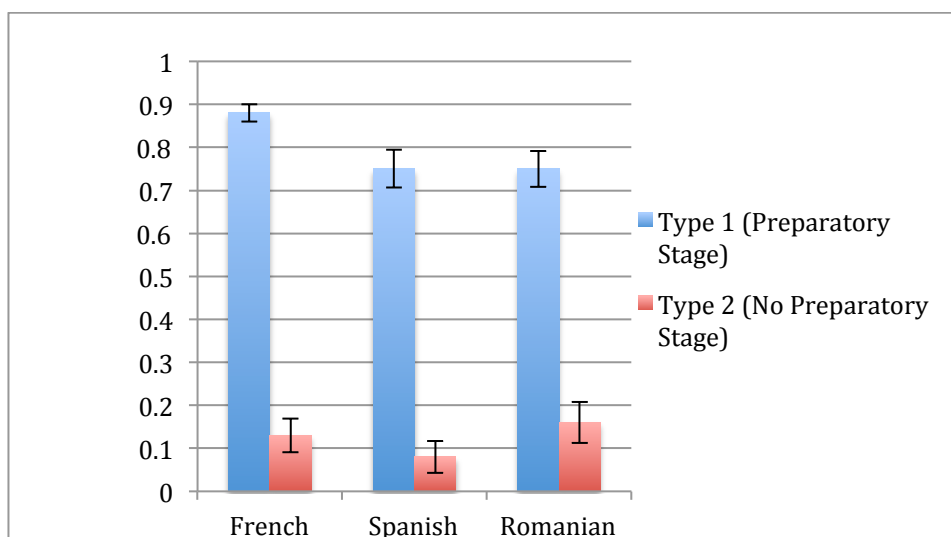
The investigation of the end-point requirement also revealed the different potential construals of states. Remember that transitory states were found to be more acceptable in the context 'She VERBed and she still VERBs' than acquired permanent states (see 4.6.A and 5.1.A for an explanation). However, despite the fact that both 'to be happy' and 'to be the head of the firm' can have an arbitrary end point stage (see 5.1.A), the former is more acceptable in this context than the latter. This must be because jobs or professions are construed as more permanent than states of spirit and moods. Similarly, 'knowing' is usually described as a permanent state (e.g. once you know how to ride a bicycle, you always will; once you've made the acquaintance of someone, you know them forever), just like 'being a war veteran'. However, the fact

⁷⁴ Indeed, having a predicate with punctual lexical aspect in the imperfect is a device used by writers in order to give a moment of maximum intensity a 'slow motion' feel (e.g. Flaubert's scene when Félicité attacks a bull in the *Trois Contes*).

that ‘forgetting’ is a possibility means that people can construe ‘knowing’ as a transitory state, hence its higher acceptability rates when compared to ‘being a war veteran’.

When investigating the need for a finer-grained model of lexical aspect involving stage structure, I showed that there were achievements with a preparatory stage (e.g. ‘leaving’, ‘arriving’) and achievements without a preparatory stage (e.g. ‘throwing a ball’, ‘noticing a mouse’). The former were deemed acceptable by the majority of speakers in a sentence like ‘She was VERB-ing, but then she changed her mind and did not do it’, while the latter were not. In Section 5.1.C this was shown to be a consequence of the stage structure of these eventualities (an eventuality that consists of beginning, middle, and end rolled into one cannot begin and not end). Though the results clearly supported this (see graph repeated in 55 below), the subjects’ views were not unanimous. This is because speakers can construe predicates in different ways. On the one hand, for some speakers ‘throwing’ involves letting go of something and propelling it through the air in one go; for these speakers, it is not acceptable to say ‘I was throwing the rock, but then I changed my mind and did not do it.’ A minority of people, however, found this sentence acceptable; this is because within their conceptualization of the experience, ‘throwing’ also includes preparing for the throw (possibly making a few steps forward, raising the arm etc.) On the other hand, for most speakers ‘leaving’ means preparing for the departure (e.g. packing a bag, heading for the door) and departing (the moment where the entity is no longer there); within this conceptualization of ‘leaving’, one can say ‘She was leaving the house, but she realized she couldn’t leave her dog behind, so she did not leave.’ For other speakers, however, ‘leaving’ does not include a preparatory stage, hence the minority of people who did not find the sentence acceptable.

(55)



Different possible construals were also evident when investigating the interaction between predicates denoting activities (e.g. ‘to speak’) and a container adverbial (‘in x time’). With respect to stage structure, the results showed that these sentences were less acceptable than when an achievement with a preparatory stage was involved, because activities did not have a measurable (i.e. bounded) durational phase available for focus. When they were deemed acceptable, answers concerning the meaning of these sentences differed from language to language. Eighty percent of the French participants construed a sentence like ‘She spoke in 10 minutes’ as an accomplishment (e.g. ‘to make a speech’). In Spanish, most participants who found the sentence acceptable gave it an ‘inceptive’ meaning (94.4%): they imagined a preparatory stage to the speech. The Romanian answers were 50% for a preparatory construal and 50% for an accomplishment construal. These results show how possible construals of predicates can differ from language to language. However, when given a context suggesting inceptivity, almost 50% of French speakers found the sentence

acceptable. On the one hand, this shows the importance of context in establishing construal (the rate of acceptability of the sentence with this interpretation doubled). On the other hand, the fact that over half of the participants still found the sentence unacceptable shows that stage structure plays a major part in establishing the acceptability of a sentence.

To summarize, the differences in acceptability judgments in the data analysed in Chapter 4 are partly due to the pragmatic inferences made by speakers (as discussed in 4.6.A for the end-point requirement hypothesis), and partly due to the ease with which speakers of a certain language can construe a situation in a different way. Stage structure makes an important contribution to this ease of construal, along, of course, with grammatical and discoursal context, world knowledge and experience.

*

Having proposed a model of stage structure for eventualities (5.1.A-E), and having shown how predicates can be construed as different eventualities (5.1.F), in the next sections I will investigate the interaction between stage structure and grammatical factors such as adverbials and tense forms.

5.2 Stage Saliency

A possible way of describing the imperfect – preterite opposition in Romance is to give all potential construals for the two tense forms when interacting with predicates belonging to different aspectual classes and with adverbials. This is a task undertaken by Croft (2012) for English tense forms and adverbials: he states which stage is profiled in which case. This is a necessary step in Romance as well, since clearly the imperfect and the progressive do not have the same meaning, and neither do the Romance preterite and the English simple past. Furthermore, in the light of disagreements in the literature, it is necessary to describe the functions associated with the Romance forms and how they vary cross-linguistically. However, stating what is the stage that is focused in a particular situation (e.g. the presence of an adverbial or tense) is merely a descriptive account. What is missing is the answer to the questions ‘How does a stage become focused?’ ‘Why is it that one particular available stage will give the final meaning of the sentence and not another stage?’ In order to explain this I will make use of Caudal’s notion of stage saliency (see Section 2.4.A). Stage saliency describes the ease with which a particular stage can receive focus (i.e. the ease with which the meaning of the sentence will be given by that stage). In the following sections I will describe the saliency of the stages identified in sections 5.1.A-E.

5.2.A The Core Stage

I follow Caudal in claiming that by default the most salient stage of any eventuality is its core stage.⁷⁵ This is because the core stage denotes what each eventuality is about. Evidence for its high salience comes from the fact that in order for the focus to be on the core stage there is no need for adverbials or lexical modifiers in the sentence. This is shown in (56) - (64) below for all aspectual classes. The tense forms used are past-referring, in line with our investigation⁷⁶, but note that the core stage would also be focused in each utterance if the present were used.

(56) *Transitory States*

(a) Fr. *Elle était (imparfait) heureuse.*

(b) Sp. *Estaba (imperfect) contenta.*

(c) Ro. *Era (imperfect) fericită.*

‘She was happy.’

(57) *Transitory States with Ensuing Event Stages*

(a) Fr. *Le livre coûtait (imparfait) dix euros.*

(b) Sp. *El libro costaba (imperfecto) diez euros.*

(c) Ro. *Cartea costa (imperfect) zece euro.*

‘The book cost ten euros.’

⁷⁵ Though note that the core stage I propose is different from Caudal’s inner stage, since the latter includes end points for telics; in my representation end points are considered separate stages, because they can bear focus.

⁷⁶ I will refrain from commenting on the tense form used in each case until section 5.3, when I will discuss the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite. For now, the purpose of the section is to show the degree of salience of the stages that make up the lexical aspectual structure of eventualities.

(58) *Acquired Permanent States*(a) Fr. *Grand-père* était (imparfait) *vétéran de guerre*.(b) Sp. *Abuelo* era (imperfecto) *veterano de guerra*.(c) Ro. *Bunicul* era (imperfect) *veteran de război*.

‘Grandfather was a war veteran.’

(59) *Inherent Permanent States*(a) Fr. *Elle* était (imparfait) / a été (passé composé) *française*.(b) Sp. Era (imperfecto) / Fue (pretérito indefinido) *francesa*.(c) Ro. Era (imperfect) / A fost (perfect compus) *franțuzoaică*.

‘She was French.’

(60) *Point States*(a) Fr. Il était (imparfait) *dix heures*.(b) Sp. Eran (imperfecto) *las diez*.(c) Ro. Era (imperfect) *ora zece*.

‘It was ten o’clock.’

(61) *Activities*(a) Fr. *Elle* chantait (imparfait).

(b) Sp. Cantaba (imperfecto).

(c) Ro. Cânta.

‘She was singing.’

(62) *Achievements without a Preparatory Stage*

- (a) Fr. *J'ai jeté (passé composé) la pierre.*
- (b) Sp. *Tiré (pretérito indefinido) la piedra.*
- (c) Ro. *Am aruncat (perfect compus) piatra.*

'I threw the ball.'

(63) *Achievements with a Preparatory Stage*

- (a) Fr. *Je suis arrivée (passé composé) à la maison.*
- (b) Sp. *Llegué (pretérito indefinido) en casa.*
- (c) Ro. *Am ajuns (perfect compus) acasă.*

'I arrived at home.'

(64) *Accomplishments*

- (a) Fr. *Je mangeais (imparfait) une pomme.*
- (b) Sp. *Comía (imperfecto) una manzana.*
- (c) Ro. *Mâncam (imperfect) un măr.*

'I was eating an apple.'

Having shown that the stage with the highest salience degree is the core stage of each eventuality, I will now discuss the salience degrees of other stages.

5.2.B The Inherent End Point Stage and the Arbitrary End Point Stage

There is a significant difference between the inherent end point stage of accomplishments⁷⁷ and the arbitrary end point stage of transitory states, activities, and accomplishments: the fact that former is always present in the stage structure of eventualities, while the latter are not necessarily present.

The arbitrary end point stage is only displayed in the presence of a lexical construction like ‘he stopped VERB-ing’ (65) or of an adverbial like ‘for x time’ (66). However, it need not be an available stage at all, as shown by the data concerning the ‘end point requirement’ in Chapter 4: (67) is acceptable.

(65)

- (a) Fr. *Elle a arrêté (passé composé) d’être triste*. ‘She stopped being sad’ (transitory state).
- (b) Sp. *Dejó (pretérito indefinido) de comer*. ‘She stopped eating’ (activity).
- (c) Ro. *S-a oprit (perfect compus) din mâncatul mărului*. ‘She stopped eating the apple (accomplishment).’

(66)

- (a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) triste pendant dix ans*. ‘She was sad for ten years.’
- (b) Sp. *Durmió (pretérito indefinido) dos horas*. ‘She slept for two hours.’
- (c) Ro. *A citit (perfect compus) ziarul timp de două ore*. ‘She read the newspaper for two hours.’

⁷⁷ Note that the other telics, achievements, have beginning, middle and natural end point rolled into one: a single punctual core stage.

(67)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) heureuse avec lui et elle l'est toujours.*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) contenta con él y todavía lo está.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) fericită cu el și încă mai este.*

‘She was happy with him and she still is.’

Inherent end points, on the other hand, play an important part in the construal of accomplishments, even if the telos is not attained. In (68) the speaker refers to the inherent end point of the event, the house, even though she explicitly states that the goal was not achieved:

(68) Ro. *Casa arăta foarte bine, păcat că nu au terminat-o de construit.* ‘The house looked great, it is a shame they did not finish building it.’

The examples above show that the arbitrary end point stage is introduced by lexical constructions like ‘to stop’ and the ‘for x time’ adverbial, and is otherwise not present in the stage structure of atelic eventualities. For this reason, when present, its salience degree will be represented as lower than that of the inherent end point stage. Furthermore, (68) shows that for accomplishments, the inherent end point can be referred to even when it is not reached; I represent this behaviour as the inherent end point having the same salience degree as the core stage for accomplishments.⁷⁸ Note that this matches Caudal’s account, in which the inner stage includes the end point, and thus they have the same salience degree. Nevertheless, I argue that it is important to keep the

⁷⁸ Note that this stage salience will be identical for achievements, for which the core stage and inherent end point stage coincide, together with the inception stage.

two as separate stages, since although the focus can be on both stages at the same time, they can also bear focus independently.

5.2.C The Inception Stage and the Rest Stage

The inception stage is available for transitory states, acquired permanent states, activities and accomplishments. As shown in 5.2.A, it can be focused with the help of lexical constructions like ‘he / she started VERBing’. Unlike the arbitrary end point stage, however, an inception stage is always present in the stage structure of these eventualities. Therefore, rather than being introduced by lexical constructions and adverbials, it is already present and its salience degree can be increased by them.

Furthermore, in 5.1.A it was shown that certain states in Spanish and French, but not in Romanian, could be focused on the inception stage without adverbial modification:

(69)

(a) Fr. *Marie* sut (passé simple) *la réponse*. ‘Marie found out the answer’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

(b) Sp. *María* supo (pretérito indefinido) *la respuesta*. ‘María found out the answer’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

(c) Ro. *Maria* a știut (perfect compus) *ce să facă*. ‘Maria knew / *found out what to do’ (transitory / acquired permanent state).

This means that in French and Spanish these states have a more salient inception stage than in Romanian (69c). Note, however, that the inception stage is not always the only focused stage in these circumstances:

(70)

(a) Fr. *Jeanne d'Arc* fut (passé composé) *une sainte*.

(b) Sp. *Juana de Arco* fue (pretérito indefinido) *una santa*.

(c) Ro. *Ioana d'Arc* a fost (perfect compus) *o sfântă*.

‘Joan of Arc was a saint.’

The sentences in (70) above are more likely to refer to Joan of Arc’s entire life, rather than only to the beginning of her sainthood. I will therefore consider the inception stage to be of a lower salience degree than the core stage, with the exception of certain states such as those in (69) in French and Spanish, for which the inception stage seems to be just as salient as the core stage.

As with inception stages, rest stages will also have a lower salience degree, since they can only be focused in the presence of adverbials such as ‘almost’. All eventualities apart from inherent permanent states include rest stages in their stage structure.

5.2.D The Preparatory Stage

Just as core stages could be focused without the aid of adverbials or lexical constructions (see 5.2.A), this is also the case for the preparatory stage of achievements, if available. Caudal (2005) argues for a lower salience degree for the preparatory stage.

However, since it is focused on just as easily as core stages, I argue that the preparatory stage and the core stage of achievements that display both should be assigned the same degree of salience. In (71) below, the core stage is not yet attained and the focus is on the stage prior to arriving:

(71)

(a) Fr. (*Je ne pouvais pas le croire!*) *Elle gagnait (imparfait) la course!*

(b) Sp. (*¡No me lo podía creer!*) *¡Ganaba (imperfecto) la carrera!*

(c) Ro. (*Nu-mi venea să cred!*) *Câștiga (imperfect) cursa!*

‘(I couldn’t believe it!) She was winning the race!’

5.2.E The Perfect State Stage and the Ensuing Event Stage

Similarly to the arbitrary end point stage (5.2.B), the perfect state of an eventuality can be part of the structure of telic and atelic eventualities (but only those which also have an inception stage; see 5.1.A). However, its presence in the stage structure of an eventuality is not obligatory: as discussed in Chapter 3, it is the perfect that introduces a state in the semantics, in the same way as a ‘for x time’ adverbial or a ‘stop VERB-ing’ construction introduced an arbitrary end point (see section 5.2.B).

By contrast, the ensuing event stage is part of the semantic structure of a particular kind of transitory state: e.g. ‘to be worth going to France’ focuses as much on the state of being worth doing something, as on what that something is (i.e. going to France); ‘to be able to sing’ reflects an ability (the state), but also what that ability enables one to do (singing); ‘to have to dance’ includes the meaning of obligation (the state), but also the ‘dancing’ one is obliged to do. The presence of the ensuing stages in

the semantics of these eventualities is demonstrated by the fact that the states ‘to be worth’, ‘to be able’, and ‘to have to’ cannot be used independently. The results in Chapter 4 show that verbs of costing behave in the same way: though someone may indeed not pay the price involved, the meaning of spending that money is included in the semantics of costing. This is the reason why the data in Chapter 4 revealed an ‘ensuing event’ from each of the states denoted by the predicates above. Since the questionnaire sentences contained no adverbial modification, it appears that the ensuing stage is just as easily focusable as the core stage of these events.

*

To summarize the findings of this chapter concerning stage structure:

- Some stages are always present in the structure of eventualities
- Some stages are present only if triggered by a certain element (e.g. an adverbial or a tense form; the arbitrary end point stage and the perfect state stage)
- Some stages cannot be part of a certain eventuality (e.g. an inception stage cannot be a part of the stage structure of inherent permanent state)
- All eventualities have core stages
- All eventualities but inherent permanent states, point states and achievements have independent inception stages⁷⁹
- All eventualities excluding inherent permanent states have rest stages
- Accomplishments have inherent end point stages⁸⁰
- A subtype of achievements has preparatory stages
- A subtype of states has an ensuing event stage.

⁷⁹ For achievements and point states the inception coincides with the core stage.

⁸⁰ The inherent end point of the other telics, achievements, coincides with their core stage, since they are construed as punctual.

The stages that can bear focus without adverbial support can be represented as having higher salience degrees: these are core stages, preparatory stages, and ensuing event stages. In addition to these, the debate surrounding the partitive puzzle revealed that reference could be made to the telos of an accomplishment even if this telos was not reached, which means that the meaning of an accomplishment is as much about the inherent end point as about the core stage; the former can therefore be deemed to have a salience degree equal to the core stage. With the exception of certain states in French and Spanish, the inception stage needs adverbial support for focus, and is therefore judged to have a lower salience degree. Rest stages are also only focused in the presence of adverbials, and were therefore also considered less salient. Even less salient are the stages that are not always in the structure of the eventuality: arbitrary end point stages and perfect state stages. I represent this by assigning them salience '0'. Following Caudal, I give salience degrees consecutive numerical values (0, 1, 2⁸¹). The following table (72) shows the stage structure of each eventuality, including salience degrees for each stage:

⁸¹ Note that these could be any three consecutive numbers.

(72)

		R. Stage	Prep. Stage	I. Stage	C. Stage	I.E. Stage	E.E. Stage	A.E. Stage	Perf. Stage
STATE	Inh. Perm.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Acq. Perm.	1	n.a.	1 ⁸²	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
	Trans.	1	n.a.	1 ⁸³	2	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
	Ensuing Event	1	n.a.	1	2	n.a.	2	0	0
	Point	1	n.a.	2		n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACTIVITY		1	n.a.	1	2	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACCOMPLISHMENT		1	n.a.	1	2	2	n.a.	0	0
ACHIEVE- MENT	Prep.	1	2	2			n.a.	n.a.	0
	Non-Prep.	1	n.a.	2			n.a.	n.a.	0

The salience degree of these stages is not fixed: it can be increased by aspectual operators such as adverbials and tense forms. This increase in salience degree can be represented by making use of mathematical operations. The highest salience degree will indicate the stage that will be focused by the viewpoint provided by the imperfect and the preterite⁸⁴ and provide the meaning of the sentence. The following section will analyse the contribution of the imperfect and the preterite as aspectual operators, as well as viewpoints.

⁸² This can be 2 for the French and Spanish states like ‘to know’ (in particular cognitive and perception states).

⁸³ Idem footnote above.

⁸⁴ Following the nomenclature in the literature, I will call these viewpoints imperfective and perfective.

5.3 The Imperfect and the Preterite: Aspectual Operators and Viewpoints

The results in Chapter 4 showed that the preterite does not introduce an end point, since the atelic eventualities described by sentences in the preterite were acceptable with a meaning of continuation. What then is the contribution of the preterite in Romance? An insight comes from Cox (1982), who claimed that the difference between *il nageait* ‘he was swimming’ and *il nagea* ‘he swam’ is that the former does not include the beginning of the swimming action, while the latter does. Cox, however, did not make reference to lexical aspectual information, whose meaning for the opposition was shown to be significant in Chapter 4, and offered no formal representation of his insight. My proposal is that the preterite in the Romance languages under consideration is an aspectual operator that increases the salience degree of the inception phase of eventualities, if available. The resultant values are shown in (73) below, and the most salient stages after the operation are shown in bold.

(73)

		R. Stage	Prep. Stage	I. Stage	C. Stage	I.E. Stage	E.E. Stage	A.E. Stage	Perf. Stage
STATE	Inherent Perm.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Acq. Perm.	1	n.a.	1+1	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
	Trans.	1	n.a.	1+1	2	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
	Ensuing Event	1	n.a.	1+1	2	n.a.	2	0	0
	Point	1	n.a.	2		n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACTIVITY		1	n.a.	1+1	2	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACCOMPLISHMENT		1	n.a.	1+1	2	2	n.a.	0	0
ACHIEVE- MENT	Prep.	1	2	2			n.a.	n.a.	0
	Non-Prep.	1	n.a.	2			n.a.	n.a.	0

By contrast, it has frequently been argued (see *Introduction*) that there is a link between the imperfect and durativity. My claim is that the imperfect aspectual operator increases the salience degree of the most salient durative stage. Table (74) shows both the resultant salience degrees and, in bold, the stages that will be available for focus.

(74)

		R. Stage	Prep. Stage	I. Stage	C. Stage	I.E. Stage	E.E. Stage	A.E. Stage	Perf. Stage
STATE	Inh. Perm.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2+1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Acq. Perm.	1	n.a.	1 ⁸⁵	2+1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
	Trans.	1	n.a.	1 ⁸⁶	2+1	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
	Ensuing Event	1	n.a.	1	2+1	n.a.	2	0	0
	Point	1	n.a.	2		n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACTIVITY		1	n.a.	1	2+1	n.a.	n.a.	0	0
ACCOMPLISHMENT		1	n.a.	1	2+1	2	n.a.	0	0
ACHIEVE- MENTS	Prep.	1	2+1	2			n.a.	n.a.	0
	Non-Prep.	1	n.a.	2			n.a.	n.a.	0

In the following sections I will describe and exemplify how the most salient stage of each eventuality will provide its meaning to the sentence and what this meaning will be for each eventuality type.

5.3.A States

An inherent permanent state (e.g. ‘to be of French origin’) does not have an inception point, thus there can be no operation of increasing its salience by the preterite. The proposal that the semantic aspectual contribution of the preterite is that of increasing the focus on the beginning of an eventuality is supported by data in Chapter

⁸⁵ This can be 2 for the French and Spanish states like ‘to know’ (in particular cognitive and perception states).

⁸⁶ Idem above.

4: on average, 0% of French and 3.9% of Spanish speakers filled in the preterite with ‘to have blue eyes’, 0% and 19.2% with ‘to be of Polish origin’, and 0% with ‘to be of gold’. Since there was no inception stage available for the inherent permanent states mentioned above, French and Spanish⁸⁷ speakers preferred to use the imperfect. Whichever tense form is used, the only stage available for focus is the core stage. Since the core stage of inherent permanent states has no beginning and no end, if a past tense is used, the resultant meaning is that there existed an entity that had the quality described by the state; the entity may no longer exist, at least as far as the speaker knows:

(75)

(a) Fr. *L’alliance de mon arrière-grand-mère a été (passé composé) / était (imparfait) en or. Quel dommage qu’on l’ait perdue !*

(b) Sp. *El anillo de mi bisabuela fue (pretérito indefinido) / era (imperfecto) de oro. ¡Qué pena que lo hayamos perdido!*

(c) Ro. *Inelul stră-străbunicii mele a fost (perfect compus) / era (imperfect) de aur. Ce păcat că s-a pierdut!*

‘My great-grandmother’s ring was gold. What a shame it got lost!’

Similarly to inherent permanent states, point states also only have one stage available. However, by contrast, point states do have a point at which they begin, only this point coincides with their core stage, owing to their punctual construal. Since the core stage is the only available stage, it will bear focus, whichever tense form is used:

⁸⁷ The implications of the results from Romanian will be discussed in the section 5.5.

(76)

- (a) Fr. *Le soleil a été* (passé composé) / *était* (imparfait) *à son zénith.*
- (b) Sp. *El sol estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) / *estaba* (imperfecto) *en su cénit.*
- (c) Ro. *Soarele a fost* (perfect compus) / *era* (imperfect) *la zenit.*

‘The sun was at its zenith.’

When the predicates that denote transitory and acquired permanent states are in the preterite, they will have two stages with equal focus available for the viewpoint: the inception stage (whose salience degree is increased to 2) and the core stage (whose salience degree was already 2):

(77)

- (a) Fr. *Elle a été* (passé composé) *heureuse.*
- (b) Sp. *Estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *contenta.*
- (c) Ro. *A fost* (perfect compus) *fericită.*

‘She was happy.’

However, since there is no end point stage (this has not been introduced by lexical items denoting termination such as ‘stop’ or ‘for x time’), the states denoted by the predicates in the preterite can continue up to the present moment, as demonstrated in Chapter 4:

(78)

- (a) Fr. *Elle a été* (passé composé) *heureuse avec lui et elle l’est toujours.*
- (b) Sp. *Estuvo* (pretérito indefinido) *contenta con él y sigue estándolo.*

(c) Ro. A fost (perfect compus) *fericită cu el și încă mai este*.

‘She was happy with him and she still is.’

Concerning the absence of an end point, there is no difference in the use of a preterite or of an imperfect: with either one, the state can continue up to the present moment. The difference lies in whether or not the beginning of the action is focused by the viewpoint. If an imperfect is used, the salience degree of the durative phase (here, the core phase) is increased to 3, and will therefore be the stage available for focus. In (79), as opposed to (77), the inception stage is not focused:

(79)

(a) Fr. Elle était (imparfait) *heureuse*.

(b) Sp. Estaba (imperfecto) *contenta*.

(c) Ro. Era (imperfect) *fericită*.

‘She was happy.’

The French and Spanish states with an inception stage of the initial stage salience 2 (e.g. *savoir*, *saber*; generally cognitive and perception states) will have their salience degree increased to 3 by the preterite and the inception stage alone will be available for focus. This explains the resulting inceptive meaning in (80):

(80)

(a) Fr. Elle sut (passé simple) *la réponse*.

(b) Sp. Supo (pretérito indefinido) *la respuesta*.

‘She found out the answer.’

However, despite their higher salience degree, the inception phases will not be focused if the predicate is in the imperfect: the inception phase will have the salience degree 2, but the core stage will have its salience degree increased by the imperfect operator to 3. This explains why the focus in (81) is solely on the core stage:

(81)

(a) Fr. *Elle savait (imparfait) la réponse.*

(b) Sp. *Sabía (imperfecto) la respuesta.*

‘She knew /*found out the answer.’

Predicates denoting ensuing event states in the preterite will have three stages available for focus: the inception stage (salience degree increased to 2 by the preterite), the core stage (salience degree already 2), and the ensuing event stage (salience degree already 2). In (82) below, the focus is both on ‘having to’ (beginning and core) and ‘dance’: the person had to dance and did dance.

(82)

(a) Fr. *J’ai dû (passé composé) danser.*

(b) Sp. *Tuve (pretérito indefinido) que bailar.*

(c) Ro. *A trebuit (perfect compus) să dansez.*

‘I had to dance (and I did it).’

By contrast, when the predicate is in the imperfect, the salience degree of the core stage will be increased (from 2 to 3), and it will become the sole focusable stage (since the inception stage has salience 1, and the ensuing event stage has salience 2). Thus, in (83) there is no implication that the person actually went on to dance.

(83)

(a) Fr. *Je devais (imparfait) danser (mais peut-être que je ne l'ai pas fait).*

(b) Sp. *Tenía (imperfecto) que bailar (pero quizás no lo haya hecho).*

(c) Ro. *Trebuia (imperfect) să dansez (dar poate nu am făcut-o).*

‘I had to dance (but maybe I did not do it).’

5.3.B Activities

Activities have the following stage structure: rest stage (1), inception stage (1), core stage (2), arbitrary end point stage (0), perfect state stage (0). When the predicate that denotes an activity is in the preterite, since the tense form acts as an aspectual operator, it will increase the salience degree of its inception stage. Thus, the inception stage and the core stage will have the same salience degree (2) and will both be available for focus. If there is no adverbial (e.g. ‘for x time’) or lexical modifier (‘to stop’), the arbitrary end stage will not be available and the activity denoted by the predicate can continue up to the present moment, as shown by the data in Chapter 4:

(84)

(a) Fr. *Elle a beaucoup dormi (passé composé) (et elle dort toujours).*

(b) Sp. *Durmió (pretérito indefinido) mucho (y sigue durmiendo).*

(c) Ro. A dormit (perfect compus) *mult* (*și încă mai doarme*).

‘She slept a lot (and she is still sleeping).’

If the predicate that denotes the activity is in the imperfect, the salience of the durative stage (here, the core stage) will be increased, and the core stage (salience 3) will be the stage focused by the viewpoint:

(85)

(a) Fr. (*Qu’est-ce qu’elle faisait?*) *Elle dormait* (imparfait).

(b) Sp. (*¿Qué hacía?*) *Dormía* (imperfecto).

(c) Ro. (*Ce făcea?*) *Dormea* (imperfect).

‘(What was she doing?) She was sleeping.’

The difference between (84) and (85) is therefore not whether or not there is an end point, but whether or not the inception stage of the eventuality is under the focus of the viewpoint.

5.3.C Accomplishments

Accomplishments have the following available stages, whose salience degree can be increased so that they become available for focus: rest stage (1), inception stage (1), core stage (2), inherent end point (2), arbitrary end point (0), perfect state stage (0).

Since the preterite increases the inception stage, a predicate in the preterite will render the inception stage of an accomplishment just as focusable as its core stage and

its inherent end point. Thus, the perfective viewpoint will show the action as beginning, middle, and end, rolled into one, as described by Comrie:⁸⁸

(86)

(a) Fr. *Elle a mangé* (passé composé) *une pomme*.

(b) Sp. *Comió* (pretérito indefinido) *una manzana*.

(c) Ro. *A mâncat* (perfect compus) *un măr*.

‘She ate an apple.’

The imperfect aspectual operator will increase the salience degree of the durative stage: the core stage will gain a salience degree 3, which will be the highest of the available stages, and the core stage will become available for focus by the imperfective viewpoint:

(87)

(a) Fr. *Elle mangeait* (imparfait) *une pomme*.

(b) Sp. *Comía* (imperfecto) *una manzana*.

(c) Ro. *Mânca* (imperfect) *un măr*.

‘She was eating an apple.’

This representation corresponds to previous insights that the end point of an eventuality is not under the focus of the imperfective viewpoint. This is indeed the case (inherent end point stage:2, core stage:3), but firstly, it only applies to eventualities that

⁸⁸ Note, however, that Comrie had given this definition of the perfective regardless of aspectual class and had not provided a formal account for his insight.

have an inherent end point. Secondly, the inception point is not under focus either, which is a more appropriate way of describing the imperfect – preterite opposition, since most eventualities have an inception point, but only accomplishments have an inherent end point stage.

5.3.D Achievements

Achievements differ regarding whether their stage structure includes a preparatory stage.

For the achievements whose structure includes a preparatory stage, this stage has the same salience degree as the core stage (2) (because it can bear focus just as easily, without adverbial modification). Since achievements do not have an independent inception stage, the aspectual operator provided by the preterite cannot increase its salience. Thus, both the preparatory stage and the core stage will remain with equal salience (2) and will be under the focus of the perfective viewpoint:

(88)

(a) *Elle est arrivée* (passé composé).

(b) *Llegó* (pretérito indefinido).

(c) *A ajuns* (perfect compus).

‘She arrived.’

For achievements whose structure does not include a preparatory phase, only the core stage will be focused by the perfective viewpoint:

(89)

(a) *Elle a jeté (passé composé) la pierre.*

(b) *Tiró (pretérito indefinido) la piedra.*

(c) *A aruncat (perfect compus) piatra.*

‘She threw the rock.’

The difference between the two types of achievement is apparent when the predicate that denotes them is in the imperfect, an aspectual operator that increases the salience degree of a durative stage. For the achievements that have a preparatory stage, since this stage is durative, its salience degree will be increased to 3 and it will become the most salient. Hence, the imperfective viewpoint focuses on this stage, prior to the inception of the eventuality:

(90)

(a) Fr. *Je partais (imparfait) de chez moi, mais il a commencé à neiger, donc j’ai décidé de ne plus aller au parc.*

(b) Sp. *Me iba (imparfait) de mi casa, pero empezó a nevar, así que decidí no ir al parque.*

(c) Ro. *Plecam (imperfect) de acasă, dar a început să ningă, așa că am hotărât să nu mai merg în parc.*

‘I was leaving home, but it started snowing, so I decided not to go to the park anymore.’

However, an achievement that does not have a preparatory stage does not have a durative stage available for the aspectual operator contributed by the imperfect to increase and for the imperfective viewpoint to focus. In this case, two things can happen: either the eventuality is construed as iterated, thus as an activity (91), or the eventuality is construed as a telic durative, thus as an accomplishment (92)⁸⁹.

(91)

(a) Fr. *Elle jetait (imparfait) la pierre (mais elle n'arrivait jamais à la faire aller très loin).*

(b) Sp. *Tiraba (imperfecto) la piedra (pero nunca conseguía hacerla llegar lejos).*

(c) Ro. *Arunca (imperfect) piatra (dar nu reușea niciodată să o facă să ajungă departe).*

‘She was throwing the rock (but she never managed to get it very far).’

(92)

(a) Fr. *À ce moment-là elle jetait (imparfait) la pierre vers l'assassin.*

(b) Sp. *En ese momento tiraba (imperfecto) la piedra hacia el asesino.*

(c) Ro. *În acel moment arunca (imperfect) piatra spre asasin.*

‘At that moment she was throwing a stone towards the assassin.’

*

In this section I have shown that as well as providing viewpoints, the imperfect and the preterite act as aspectual operators: the preterite increases the salience degree of

⁸⁹ See 5.1.F for possible construals of achievements.

the inception stage of an eventuality (if available), and the imperfect increases the salience degree of the most salient available durative stage of the eventuality denoted by the predicate in question. Since stage structure differs according to eventuality type, so does the stage that will be focused by the perfective and imperfective viewpoints.

I have shown that, in the absence of lexical modifiers and adverbials, the perfective viewpoint focuses on:

- the core stage of inherent permanent states
- the inception and core stage of acquired permanent and transitory states
- the inception, core, and ensuing event stages of ensuing event states
- the inception and core stage of activities
- the inception, core, and inherent end point stages of accomplishments
- the preparatory and core stage of achievements with a preparatory stage
- the core stage of achievements without a preparatory stage.

This explains why a continuation meaning was found acceptable with states and activities in Chapter 4, but not with accomplishments and achievements: only the latter have an end point under the focus of the perfective viewpoint.

By contrast, the imperfective viewpoint focuses on:

- the core stage of all states, activities, accomplishments
- the preparatory stage of achievements whose stage structures include one.

5.4 The Role of Adverbials

As well as tense forms, adverbials can also act as aspectual operators and increase the salience degree of a particular stage, thus having an influence on what the imperfective and perfective viewpoints will focus on. The following sections will describe the role of durational adverbials (e.g. ‘for x time’), container adverbials (e.g. ‘in x time’) and ‘point’ adverbials (e.g. ‘at ten o’clock’, ‘suddenly’).

5.4.A ‘For x time’

The role of the durational adverbial ‘for x time’ has been mentioned in previous sections in association with the arbitrary end point stage: the adverbial was said to introduce it. Indeed, all durative core stages of eventualities that are not permanent⁹⁰ can be construed as interrupted if such adverbials (or lexical items such as ‘stop’) are present in the sentence:

(93) *Transitory State*

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) fâchée contre moi pendant dix ans.*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) enfadada conmigo durante diez años.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) supărată pe mine timp de zece ani.*

‘She was angry with me for ten years.’

⁹⁰ See Section 5.1.A for permanent states: one cannot stop being of French origin or a war veteran.

(94) *Ensuing Event State*(a) Fr. *Elle a dû (passé composé) aller au théâtre pendant dix ans.*(b) Sp. *Tuvo (pretérito indefinido) que ir al teatro durante diez años.*(c) Ro. *A trebuit (perfect compus) să meargă la teatru timp de zece ani.*

‘She had to go to the theatre for ten years.’

(95) *Activity*(a) Fr. *Elle a dansé (passé composé) pendant dix minutes et après elle s’en est allée.*(b) Sp. *Bailó (pretérito indefinido) diez minutos y después se fue.*(c) Ro. *A dansat (perfect compus) zece minute și apoi a plecat.*

‘She danced for ten minutes and then she left.’

(96) *Accomplishment*Fr. *Elle a lu (passé composé) le livre pendant dix minutes et après elle a renoncé.*Sp. *Leyó (pretérito indefinido) el libro durante diez minutos y después dejó de hacerlo.*Ro. *A citit (perfect compus) cartea zece minute și apoi a renunțat.*

‘She read the book for ten minutes and then gave up.’

Though the arbitrary end point stage is in focus, in Chapter 4 it was shown that for atelics the eventuality could continue beyond the point denoted by this adverbial, even if the predicate was in the preterite. This means that the arbitrary end point stage does not become more salient than the core stage, whose development may continue beyond the point denoted by the adverbial. Thus, the arbitrary end point stage can be represented as having the resultant salience degree 2, like the core stage. The equal

degree of salience of the two stages can explain the hesitation as to whether or not the atelic eventuality can continue up to the present moment (see Chapter 4). The decision is taken at the pragmatic level, since at semantic level the stages have equal salience.

If the predicate is in the imperfect, the resultant construal is that of habituals: the eventualities in (97)-(100) are construed as repetitions of eventualities such as those described in (93)-(96).

(97)

Ro. Era (imperfect) *fericită timp de două luni (apoi se certau, apoi era din nou fericită)*.

‘She was happy for two months (then they argued, then she was happy again).’

(98)

Fr. Je devais (imparfait) *aller au théâtre pendant deux mois (après j’allais au cinéma, après au théâtre de nouveau)*.

‘I had to go to the theatre for two months (then I’d go to the cinema, then to the theatre again).’

(99)

Sp. Bailaba (imperfecto) *diez minutos (paraba, después bailaba de nuevo)*.

‘She would dance for ten minutes (then she would stop, then dance again).’

(100)

Ro. Citeam (imperfect) *o carte timp de zece minute, apoi mă opream. Nu aveam răbdare.*

‘I used to read a book for ten minutes, then I would stop. I had no patience.’

5.4.B ‘In x time’

‘In x time’ adverbials measure stages. In order for a stage to be measurable, it needs to have two properties: it needs to have duration and it needs to be bounded at both ends. The stages that fit this description are the core stages of accomplishments (bounded by the inception stage and the inherent end point stage) and the preparatory stages of the achievements that have such stages in their structure (bounded by the rest stage and by the core stage). Since adverbials can act as aspectual operators, they will increase the salience degree of these stages.

Thus, in (101) below, the initial stage structure is: rest stage (1), inception stage (1); core stage (2); inherent end point (2). The preterite increases the salience of the inception stage, which becomes 2. Then, the adverbial increases the salience of the core stage⁹¹ (from 2 to 3), which means that this will be the stage whose entire duration will be measured by the adverbial.

(101)

(a) Fr. *Elle a mangé (passé composé) le dessert en cinq minutes.*

(b) Sp. *Comió (pretérito indefinido) el postre en cinco minutos.*

(c) Ro. *A mâncat (perfect compus) desertul în cinci minute.*

⁹¹ The rest stage is also durative, but is only bounded at one end by the inception stage.

‘She ate the dessert in five minutes.’

The achievement in (102) has a preparatory stage (salience degree 2) and a core stage (salience degree 2). The preterite does not have an available inception stage whose salience it could increase, but the adverbial increases the duration of the preparatory stage (a durative, bounded stage), which becomes more salient (salience degree 3).

(102)

(a) Fr. *Elle est arrivée (passé composé) en 20 minutes.*

(b) Sp. *Llegó (pretérito indefinido) en 20 minutos.*

(c) Ro. *A ajuns (perfect compus) în 20 de minute.*

‘She arrived in 20 minutes.’

When aspectual types that do not have an available durative bounded stage for focus (e.g. states, activities, achievements without a preparatory phase) are found acceptable with such adverbials⁹², it is because they are construed as having one. Thus, the results in Chapter 4 showed that when given the sentence involving an activity in (103), speakers either interpreted the sentence as involving an accomplishment⁹³ (‘she made a speech’), or as including a beginning to the rest stage preceding the inception point of an activity, thus rendering the rest stage focusable:

⁹² See Chapter 4 for acceptability rates. Note that these are significantly lower than for achievements with preparatory stages in their structure.

⁹³ See Section 5.A.F for possible construals of activities.

(103)

(a) Fr. *La femme a parlé* (passé composé) *en deux heures*.

(b) Sp. *La mujer habló* (pretérito indefinido) *en dos horas*.

(c) Ro. *Femeia a vorbit* (perfect compus) *în două ore*.

‘The woman spoke in two hours.’

Similarly, some speakers could construe an achievement without a preparatory stage, ‘to throw’, as having one.⁹⁴ Alternatively, they could construe a beginning to the rest stage, which would then be able to be measured in (104).

(104)

(a) Fr. *Elle a jeté* (passé composé) *le ballon en deux minutes*.

(b) Sp. *Tiró* (pretérito indefinido) *el balón en dos minutos*.

(c) Ro. *A aruncat* (perfect compus) *mingea în două minute*.

‘She threw the ball in two minutes.’

When the imperfect is used, the eventualities are construed as habituals:

(105)

(a) Fr. *Elle mangeait* (imparfait) *le dessert en cinq minutes*. ‘She used to eat dessert in five minutes’ (accomplishment).

(b) Sp. *Llegaba* (imperfecto) *en cinco minutos*. ‘She used to arrive in five minutes’ (achievement with a preparatory phase).

⁹⁴ See Section 5.A.F for possible construals of achievements.

(c) Ro. Arunca (imperfect) *mingea în două minute*. ‘She used to throw the ball in two minutes’ i.e. ‘it used to take her two minutes to throw the ball’ (achievement with no preparatory phase).

5.4.C ‘Point’ Adverbials

‘Point adverbials’ such as ‘suddenly’ or ‘at x o’clock’ can be seen as having the opposite function to container adverbials as far as focus goes. While container adverbials increased the salience of durative bounded stages, point adverbials increase the salience of point stages: these are the inception stage, the inherent end point stage, and the core stage of achievements and point states.

Thus, in the presence of these adverbials, transitory and acquired permanent states and activities denoted by predicates in the preterite will have inceptive meaning (IStage increased to 2 by the preterite and to 3 by the adverbial; CStage: 2):

(106)

(a) Fr. *Soudainement, elle a su (passé composé) la réponse*.

(b) Sp. *De repente, supo (pretérito indefinido) la respuesta*.

(c) Ro. *Dintr-odată, a știut (perfect compus) răspunsul*.

‘Suddenly, she knew the answer.’

(107)

(a) Fr. *Elle a mangé, à dix heures elle a joué (passé composé) du violon et après elle s’est couchée*.

(b) Sp. *Comió, a las diez tocó (pretérito indefinido) el violín y después se fue a la cama*.

(c) Ro. *A mâncat, la ora zece a cântat* (perfect compus) *la vioară și apoi s-a culcat*.

‘She ate, at ten o’clock she played (i.e. started playing) the violin and then she went to bed.’

If the imperfect is used, the core stage of these eventualities will still have the highest salience degree (increased to 3 by the imperfect operator). Hence, the focus will be on the core of the eventuality in (108) and (109) below. Note, however, that the sentences can also be construed as habituais.

(108)

(a) Fr. *Soudainement, elle savait* (imparfait) *la réponse (chaque fois quand elle se concentrait)*.

(b) Sp. *De repente, sabía* (imperfecto) *la respuesta (cada vez que se concentraba)*.

(c) Ro. *Dintr-odată, știa* (imperfect) *răspunsul (de fiecare dată când se concentra)*.

‘Suddenly, she knew / would know the answer (every time she focused).’

(109)

(a) Fr. *A dix heures elle jouait* (imparfait) *du violon*.

(b) Sp. *A las diez tocaba* (imperfecto) *el violín*.

(c) Ro. *La ora zece cânta* (imperfect) *la vioară*.

‘At ten o’clock she was playing (i.e. in the process of playing) / used to play the violin.’

When accomplishments are in the preterite and a point adverbial is used, the focus can in theory be either on the inception point or on the end point. The sentence in (110)

below can mean both that at 10 o'clock she started eating a pizza (IStage:3, after increase by the preterite and by the adverbial), or that at 10 o'clock she finished eating a pizza (IEStage:3 after increase by adverbial). The first reading is much more common, owing to the association between the preterite and inception.

(110)

(a) Fr. *À dix heures elle a mangé (passé composé) une pizza (et à dix heures et dix minutes elle était chez moi).*

(b) Sp. *A las diez comió (pretérito indefinido) una pizza (y a las diez y diez minutos estaba en mi casa).*

(c) Ro. *La ora zece a mâncat (perfect compus) o pizza (și la zece și zece era la mine acasă).*

‘At ten o’clock she ate a pizza (and at ten past ten she was at my place).’

If the predicate is in the imperfect the meaning can either be that at ten o'clock she was in the process of eating a pizza (CStage:3 after increase by the imperfect aspectual operator), or the eventuality can be construed as habitual:

(111)

(a) Fr. *À dix heures elle mangeait (imparfait) une pizza.*

(b) Sp. *A las diez comía (imperfecto) una pizza.*

(c) Ro. *La ora zece mânca (imperfect) o pizza.*

‘At ten o’clock she was eating / used to eat a pizza.’

Achievements with no preparatory stage and point states have a single punctual core stage,⁹⁵ compatible with and increased by the point adverbial:

(112)

(a) Fr. *A dix heures elle a jeté (passé composé) la pierre.*

(b) Sp. *A las diez tiró (pretérito indefinido) la piedra.*

(c) Ro. *La ora zece a aruncat (perfect compus) piatra.*

‘At ten o’clock she threw the rock.’

(113)

(a) Fr. *Le soleil a été (passé composé) à son zénith à douze heures.*

(b) Sp. *El sol estuvo (pretérito indefinido) en su cénit a las doce.*

(c) Ro. *Soarele a fost (perfect compus) la zenit la ora douăsprezece.*

‘The sun was at its zenith at twelve o’clock.’

If the predicate is in the imperfect, either the eventuality is construed as durative (i.e. as an accomplishment / preparatory stage achievement⁹⁶ or as a transitory state⁹⁷), or it is construed as habitual:

(114)

(a) Fr. *A dix heures elle jetait (imparfait) la pierre.*

⁹⁵ Though note that achievements are telics: their core stage is dynamic and includes an inception and an inherent end point.

⁹⁶ See section 5.1.F for possible construals of achievements.

⁹⁷ Point states have a core stage that includes an inception and an arbitrary end point. Therefore, if it is construed as durative, its structure will be that of a transitory stage, which consists of inception, core, and potentially arbitrary end point.

(b) Sp. *A las diez tiraba* (imperfecto) *la piedra*.

(c) Ro. *La ora zece arunca* (imperfect) *piatra*.

‘At ten o’clock she was throwing / would throw the rock.’

(115)

(a) Fr. *Le soleil était* (imparfait) *à son zénith à douze heures*.

(b) Sp. *El sol estaba* (imperfecto) *en su cénit a las doce*.

(c) Ro. *Soarele era* (imperfect) *la zenit la ora douăsprezece*.

‘The sun was / used to be (e.g. every summer) at its zenith at twelve o’clock.’

If the achievement has a preparatory stage in its structure, its initial stage structure is: preparatory stage (2), punctual core stage (2). A point adverbial increases the salience of the point core stage to 3. Therefore, in (116) below, the focus is on the exact moment when she arrived, as opposed to the preparatory stage:

(116)

(a) Fr. *Elle est arrivée* (passé composé) *à dix heures*.

(b) Sp. *Llegó* (pretérito indefinido) *a las diez*.

(c) Ro. *A ajuns* (perfect compus) *la zece*.

‘She arrived at ten o’clock.’

When the imperfect is used, the first possibility is that the salience of the preparatory stage is raised to 3 (since it is durative, under the influence of the imperfect aspectual operator), and that of the core stage is also raised to 3 (under the influence of

the adverbial). This is the same resultant stage structure that we had when the preterite was used. This is by no means a coincidence. (117) below can be read as the ‘narrative imperfect’, which has a perfective function. The second possibility is to construe the sentence as a habitual.

(117)

(a) Fr. *Elle arrivait (imparfait) à dix heures.*

(b) Sp. *Llegaba (imperfecto) a las diez.*

(c) Ro. *Ajungea (imperfect) la zece.*

‘She arrived / would arrive at ten o’clock.’

*

Having investigated the influence of the imperfect, of the preterite, and of adverbials (durational, container, and point adverbials) on the stage salience of the stage structure of eventualities in French, Spanish, and Romanian, in the following section I will consider ways to describe the cross-linguistic differences found with respect to the imperfect – preterite opposition.

5.5 Cross-Linguistic Differences

The clearest cross-linguistic difference concerning the imperfect – preterite opposition in French, Spanish, and Romanian is that the preterite form in French and Romanian has both perfective and perfect functions. Bearing in mind that in Chapter 3 I showed that the situation is changing in Spanish as well, in 5.5.A I will discuss a way in which this cross-linguistic difference can be described. In addition to the perfective – perfect opposition, the data in Chapter 4 also revealed cross-linguistic differences with respect to the use of the preterite with states. This will be the topic of section 5.5.B.

5.5.A The Perfect

The analysis of different accounts of the perfect in Chapter 3 revealed the need to introduce a ‘perfect state’ into the semantics of the perfect. Therefore, in this chapter, a potential ‘perfect state stage’ was introduced into the stage structure of all eventualities.⁹⁸ This stage was given the salience degree 0: a conceptualization of the fact that unlike other stages with low salience degrees (e.g. the inception stage) this stage is only to be introduced in particular cases (rather in the way that lexical modifiers or durational adverbials introduce and place the focus on an arbitrary end point stage).⁹⁹ The coming into focus only in these particular cases, by means of strong-focus operators, can be represented by a ‘+2’ mathematical operation (unlike the ‘+1’ provided by other aspectual operators). For Spanish (and English), the periphrastic past form can be seen as acting as one of these strong-focus aspectual operators which not

⁹⁸ See Section 5.1.E for a discussion of why that this should not only be the case for telics or achievements.

⁹⁹ See Sections 5.1.B and 5.4.A.

only increase the salience degree of a stage and bring it into focus, but also introduce it in the semantics of the eventuality. That is, in Spanish, the *pretérito perfecto* can be seen as a stronger aspectual operator than the *pretérito indefinido* (this is represented as adding '+2' to the salience of a stage, as opposed to just '+1').

Matters are more complicated in Romanian and French, in which one form, the *passé composé / perfect compus*, can have both the function described in 5.3, and the perfect functions described in Chapter 3 and 4. Following Caudal and Roussarie (2006), I argue that the French and Romanian preterite also always introduces a perfect state stage in the semantics of the eventuality, since the perfect meaning is just as available as the perfective. In other words, in spoken French and Romanian (the latter also including written narratives sometimes) the preterite has a double role as an aspectual operator: one is to increase the salience degree of the inception stage for the potential perfective viewpoint, and the other is to render the perfect state stage focusable. Both meanings are equally available to speakers and hearers when the preterite is used. This is represented by equal salience degrees of the relevant stages once the preterite operator has increased the salience of the inception stage and of the perfect state stage. The context will provide the resultant stative or eventive meaning.

5.5.B The Preterite and States

The results in Chapter 4 demonstrated that the Romanian preterite is used more with states than its French and Spanish equivalent.

The reason why there is variation in tense form usage with inherent permanent states is clear once we refer to their stage structure: inherent permanent states only have one stage available for focus – their core stage. Therefore, regardless of aspectual

operators and viewpoints, the stage that will be focused will be this stage. In other words, the meaning of sentence (118)-(120) below is identical in (a) and (b):

(118)

(a) Fr. ?*Elle a eu (passé composé) les yeux bleus.*

(b) Fr. *Elle avait (imparfait) les yeux bleus.*

‘She had blue eyes.’

(119)

(a) Sp. *Marie Curie fue (pretérito indefinido) polaca de origen.*

(b) Sp. *Marie Curie era (imperfecto) polaca de origen.*

‘Marie Curie was of Polish origin.’

(120)

(a) Ro. *Ceasul străbunicii mele a fost (perfect compus) de aur.*

(b) Ro. *Ceasul străbunicii mele era (imperfect) de aur.*

‘My great-grandmother’s watch was made of gold.’

However, in French and Spanish few participants opted for the preterite: 0% of the French speakers and 7.7% of the Spanish speakers chose the preterite in this context (hence the ‘?’ in 118a). The low figures make sense when considering that the imperfect aspectual operator increases the salience of the durational stage, thus being compatible with the durative core stage of inherent permanent states. By contrast, if a preterite had been used, it would have no inception stage whose salience could be increased, which is

likely to be why few speakers chose the preterite in this context. The Romanian preterite usage, however, is significantly higher, reaching 50% for one of the predicates. A possible explanation is that the Romanian preterite is not as specialized for the ‘inceptive’ meaning. In any case, the decision as to which tense form to use in this context, though potentially influenced by semantics,¹⁰⁰ will be of stylistic nature, since the focus will be on the same stage, regardless of the tense form used.

Furthermore, the preterite was also used more for states in Romanian than in French and Spanish even when an inception stage was available (with acquired permanent and transitory states). I have already mentioned that while certain states (e.g. ‘to know’) can have an inceptive meaning in the preterite in French and Spanish without the need for point adverbials, this is not the case in Romanian. This could be seen as further evidence that the meaning of the preterite in Romanian, though it can be inceptive, is less specialized in this meaning than that of its French and Spanish counterpart when it comes to states.

Further evidence comes from the Chapter 4 results on ensuing event stages. The data show that more Romanian speakers than French and Spanish speakers find (121) acceptable:

(121)

(a) Ro. A trebuit (perfect compus) *să dansez, dar nu am făcut-o.*

(b) Fr. ??’J’ai dû (passé composé) *danser, mais je ne l’ai pas fait.*

(c) Sp. ??Tuve (pretérito indefinido) *que bailar, pero no lo hice.*

‘I had to dance, but I did not do it.’

¹⁰⁰ Though not by the stage structure; by the semantics of aspectual operators.

For the French and Spanish sentences to be acceptable, an imperfect should be used. The fact that the Romanian preterite is acceptable in this context suggests that the preterite may be encroaching on the functional area of the imperfect where states are concerned. This would mean that, in this context, its function is less specialized.

*

In this chapter I have proposed a representation of the imperfect – preterite opposition in French, Spanish, and Romanian, with the aim of accounting for the corpus findings from Chapter 4 and of resolving debates in the literature regarding the lexical aspectual component of eventualities and the aspectual contribution of the imperfect and the preterite.

Basing my analysis on the results from Chapter 4, I argued for a lexical aspectual component which involved stage structure and provided evidence for the inclusion of each stage within the stage structure of eventualities. The ease with which these stages could bear focus was represented as stage salience: each stage was assigned a salience degree according to whether or not it needed adverbial modification or lexical modifiers in order to be focused. Adverbials and lexical modifiers were described as aspectual operators which could increase the stage salience of available stages.

The Chapter 4 finding regarding the possible continuation of states and activities up to the present moment despite the use of a predicate in the preterite led to the proposal that rather than a semantic end point, what the preterite contributed was a semantic inception point. Acting as an aspectual operator, the preterite increases the salience degree of the inceptive stage of eventualities, thus rendering it available for the

focus provided by the perfective viewpoint. The link between the imperfect and duration was represented as an increase of the salience of a durative stage by the aspectual operator provided by the imperfect. I then exemplified and accounted for the meanings that can arise from the interaction of aspectual classes, aspectual operators provided by adverbials and tense forms, and viewpoints.

Finally, I included the crosslinguistic differences revealed by the discussion in Chapter 3 and the data in Chapter 4 in my representation of tenses. Since the French and Romanian periphrastic pasts have both perfect and perfective functions, I proposed that they not only increased the salience of the inception phase, but also introduced a perfect state stage for the perfect function associated with this form (as determined in Chapter 3). In Spanish, on the other hand, the increase of the salience of the perfect state stage is associated with the *pretérito perfecto*, while the increase of the salience of the inception stage with the *pretérito indefinido*. I then argued that the wider use of the Romanian preterite with states observed in both corpora was a result of the *perfect compus* having a function less specialized on inception in the context of states.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Prompted by the inconsistencies in descriptions of the imperfect – preterite opposition in textbook grammars as well as in academic descriptions of the Romance tenses, in this study I have investigated the form – function relationships of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian. While the attempts at explaining French and Spanish usages of the imperfect and the preterite are numerous, hardly any work has been done in the interpretation of Romanian data. Furthermore, a general assumption that the same form - function opposition holds across Romance languages has led to cross-linguistic differences rarely being examined. Romanian is thus included in this study alongside French and Spanish not only for the descriptive interest in the synchronic opposition of its past tenses, but also for the insights its description provides into the comparative study of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages.

The contribution of this study is twofold. Firstly, basing my arguments on data from a questionnaire-based corpus, I have provided a representation of the form - function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian. I have proposed a solution to debates in the literature both regarding whether the two forms have an inherent aspectual contribution and regarding the description of this contribution. Secondly I have, by making use of a corpus of samples of novels in translation and of a questionnaire-based corpus, identified cross-linguistic differences in the usage of the past tense forms in the languages under consideration.

6.1 The Imperfect and the Preterite Have an Inherent Aspectual Content

The investigation of the functions of the imperfect and the preterite revealed wider theoretical questions regarding the temporal and aspectual contribution of the two forms. I have argued that the imperfect and the preterite do not solely provide information on tense and that they do have an inherent aspectual meaning.

In Chapter 1 I showed that regardless of the model of tense (e.g. Reichenbach 1957, Bull 1960, Hornstein 1990, Verkuyl et al 2004), reference to the location of an event in time (i.e. ‘tense’), was not sufficient to distinguish between the functions of the imperfect and the preterite. Reference to aspect was made either explicitly (e.g. Bull’s model), or implicitly, by describing the relationship between event point and reference point, which can be seen as aspectual, rather than temporal (e.g. Reichenbach and Hornstein’s models). Approaches that claim that the opposition between the imperfect and the preterite relies not on aspect, but on anaphoricity (e.g. Verkuyl et al 2004 for French, Bruccart 2003 for Spanish) were dismissed, since the imperfect does not always concern simultaneity to a previously described point in speech, and the preterite does not always involve a change in reference point.

A second claim that the imperfect and the preterite do not have inherent aspectual meaning was investigated in Chapter 2; namely, the view that the imperfect and the preterite are aspectually-sensitive tenses, with only tense semantics, and the ability to coerce eventuality types into those required by the tense form (de Swart 1998, 2012). I demonstrated the weakness of the motivation for this claim: the fact that the morphology of the verb forms does not map compositionally onto a [tense [aspect]] structure. Based on this and on theoretical evidence (the coercion approach does not

hold when one considers the imperfective paradox), I argued in Chapter 4 against the claim that the imperfect and the preterite are aspectually-sensitive tenses. Data from psycho- and neurolinguistic studies were of limited utility, owing to the use of English in most experiments, and to a bias towards coercion-based theories (the experiments tested the correlates of ‘complement’ and ‘aspectual’ coercion, rather than the existence of the phenomena). However, since examples that paralleled de Swart’s ‘coerced’ situations did not elicit extra processing-times, I argued that such situations were not, in fact, coerced. The argument would benefit from further psycholinguistic studies investigating the use of tenses in Romance languages. For instance, the comparison of processing times of (1) and (2) on the one hand, and (3) and (4) on the other, would be most telling.

(1) Sp. Cantaba (imperfecto) *una canción*. ‘She was singing a song.’ (Accomplishment, supposedly coerced into an activity, owing to the requirements of the imperfect.)

(2) Sp. Cantó (pretérito indefinido) *una canción*. ‘She sang a song.’ (Supposedly basic accomplishment.)

(3) Ro. A vorbit (perfect compus) *mult*. ‘She talked a lot.’ (Activity, supposedly coerced into an accomplishment, owing to the requirements of the preterite.)

(4) Ro. Vorbea (imperfect) *mult*. ‘She was talking a lot.’ (Supposedly basic activity.)

My prediction is that there should be no extra processing costs associated with the use of predicates denoting accomplishments in the imperfect (1) and of predicates denoting activities in the preterite (3).

The data from my ‘questionnaires’ corpus support the claim that the imperfect and the preterite are not merely aspectually-sensitive tenses. Since telics are not acceptable in a continuative context when the preterite is used (5), any predicate in the preterite should be unacceptable in this context, because under the aspectually-sensitive tenses approach, the preterite coerces all eventualities into telics.

(5) Fr. * *Elle a mangé (passé composé) une pomme et elle la mange toujours.* *‘She ate an apple and she is still eating it.’ (Accomplishment).

Nonetheless, (6) and (7) were found acceptable by most speakers in my corpus. This means that the eventualities in (6) and (7) are a state and an activity respectively, rather than coerced telics:

(6) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) heureuse avec lui et elle l’est toujours.* ‘She was happy with him and she still is.’ (State).

(7) Fr. *Elle a beaucoup dormi (passé composé) et elle dort toujours.* ‘She slept a lot and she is still sleeping.’ (Activity).

The weakness of the motivation for the coercion-based approach, together with theoretical evidence and data from psycholinguistic experiments, as well as from my corpus-based study, led to the conclusion that the imperfect and preterite in Romance are not aspectually-sensitive tenses and do have an inherent aspectual meaning.

6.2 The End-Point Requirement of the Preterite : A Pragmatic Inference

Having established that the imperfect and the preterite have an inherent aspectual meaning, I investigated what their aspectual contribution involved.

Data from my questionnaire-based corpus revealed that the end-point requirement frequently assumed to describe the aspectual contribution of the preterite (e.g. Cipria and Roberts 2000, Smith 1997) is a pragmatic inference, rather than a semantic requirement. This was demonstrated by the wide acceptability of atelics in the preterite in a context that involved the continuation of the eventuality up to the present moment:

(8)

(a) Fr. *Elle a été (passé composé) fâchée contre moi pendant dix ans et elle l'est toujours !*

(b) Sp. *Estuvo (pretérito indefinido) enfadada conmigo durante diez años y sigue estándolo.*

(c) Ro. *A fost (perfect compus) supărată pe mine timp de zece ani și încă mai este!*

'She was angry with me for ten years and she still is!'

Spanish was found to have lower acceptability values than French and Romanian in sentences like (8) above. I argued that this behaviour was due to the competition of the *pretérito indefinido* with the *pretérito perfecto*, a form that can also express continuation of atelics up to the present moment:

(9) Sp. Ha vivido (pretérito perfecto) *solo desde la muerte de su padre*. ‘He has lived alone since his father’s death.’

Since the *pretérito perfecto* is associated with a continuative context, speakers can (more easily than in French and Romanian) pragmatically infer that if a *pretérito indefinido* is used, the eventuality has stopped. The end point remains, however, a pragmatic inference rather than a semantic requirement, as demonstrated by the generally high acceptability values of atelics in the preterite in continuative contexts.

6.3 A Representation of the Imperfect and the Preterite Opposition Based on Stage Structure, Stage Salience, and Aspectual Operators

The assessment of previous accounts of the imperfect – preterite opposition in Romance undertaken in Chapter 2 revealed the need to include finer distinctions of lexical aspect in representations of the form – function relationship under investigation. Consequently, in Chapter 4 I tested problematic areas and in Chapter 5 I proposed an overall representation of lexical aspectual information relevant to the imperfect – preterite opposition.

With the aid of my corpus results I demonstrated the need to include stage structure in descriptions of lexical aspect. I defined stages as parts of eventualities that can bear focus (i.e. the sentence can have the meaning of a particular part of the eventuality, which is called a stage). I provided evidence for the inclusion of each stage in the stage structure of eventualities. I thus distinguished between aspectual types and

accounted for the differences in their syntactic and semantic behaviour in relation to the imperfect and the preterite.

Rather than considering some aspectual types as basic and others as derived, I used data from my questionnaires corpus to provide evidence for the different possible construals of predicates: the different levels of acceptability of the sentences were partly due to the ease with which speakers of a language could construe a situation in a certain way. This was shown to depend on world knowledge and experience, on grammatical and discoursal context, and on stage structure.

In order to represent the way in which a stage lends its meaning to a sentence in the imperfect or the preterite, I used Caudal's (2005) notion of 'stage salience'. This describes the ease with which a particular stage can be focused. Stages that could be focused without support from adverbials or lexical constructions are represented as having the highest salience degree; stages that provided their meaning to the sentence only in the presence of adverbials received a lower salience degree; the lowest salience degree was that of stages that were not always present in the structure of eventualities. The salience degree of each stage can be increased by aspectual operators like adverbials, lexical constructions ('to stop', 'to start', 'to finish', 'to be in the process of'), and tenses.

I argued that the preterite and the imperfect act as aspectual operators: the preterite increases the salience of the inception stage of each eventuality, while the imperfect increases the salience degree of the most salient durative stage of each eventuality. Once aspectual operators in the form of tenses and adverbials have acted, the most salient stage will be focused on by the viewpoints provided by the imperfect and the preterite and will lend its meaning of the sentence.

The main distinction between the imperfect and the preterite is therefore not whether or not there is focus on the end point of the eventuality, but whether or not there is focus on its beginning. A detailed description was provided for the ways in which different meanings result from interactions between predicates of different lexical aspect, adverbials, and tense forms (5.3-5.4).

The representation of the form – function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite based on the notions of stage structure, stage salience, and aspectual operators points to new potential research directions. Corpora of first-language acquisition could reveal whether sentences in which stages of a proposed initial lower salience come into focus (after aspectual operators come into play) are acquired later, and whether mistakes are initially made in the production of such sentences. This would provide evidence for the psychological reality of stage salience.

6.4 Cross-Linguistic Differences

The clearest difference when comparing past tense forms in French, Spanish, and Romanian, is that standard spoken French and Romanian no longer make use of its synthetic past tense form (*passé simple, perfect simplu*), while standard Spanish makes use of an analytic form (*pretérito perfecto*) as well as of a synthetic form (*pretérito indefinido*). In Chapter 5 I proposed a representation of this linguistic situation. Two further main areas of divergence were pointed out in this thesis: the perfect functions associated with the periphrastic pasts, and the interaction between stative predicates and tense forms.

The analysis of different accounts of the perfect undertaken in Chapter 3 pointed to the need to include a ‘perfect state stage’ into the semantics of the perfect. In Chapter 5 I proposed a representation of the perfect and perfective functions of the French and Romanian periphrastic pasts: the preterite acts as an aspectual operator and increases not only the salience of the inception stage, but also introduces a ‘perfect state’ stage into the stage structure of each eventuality. The resultant eventive and stative meanings of the French and Romanian periphrastic pasts are represented as equally available. In Spanish, the ‘perfect state’ stage is only introduced by the *pretérito perfecto*, while the *pretérito indefinido* increases the inception stage of eventualities.

The continuative function of the periphrastic past was compared in Spanish and Romanian (in French this function is covered by the present tense form). The corpus data revealed that while both forms were acceptable in this context with states and activities, the Romanian preterite had higher acceptability values than its Spanish counterpart with achievements and accomplishments. The area of distribution of the Romanian *perfect compus* was thus found to be wider than that of the Spanish *pretérito perfecto*.

The use of the French *passé simple* and of the Romanian *perfect compus* was compared in literary narratives in translation, in order to investigate whether the past tense forms of the two languages were equally advanced on the route from perfect to perfective, as previously claimed in the literature (Harris 1982). The simple form was found in third-person narratives in both languages. However, while instances of free indirect thought or speech were always rendered in the periphrastic form in Romanian, this was not always the case in French. In the first-person narrative, while the French translator used the simple past form throughout, the Romanian translator opted for the

periphrastic past, and only used the simple form for stylistic reasons, pointing to a moment of maximum intensity in the narrative. The use of the simple and periphrastic past tense forms in written French and Romanian of this style provides evidence of the wider distribution of the *perfect compus* when compared to the *passé simple*, and therefore of the more advanced situation of the Romanian periphrastic past forms along the aoristic drift.

The second main area of divergence in the use of past tenses was found to concern stative predicates. The results from the fill-in exercise of the questionnaires corpus revealed a statistically significant wider use of the preterite with states in Romanian, when compared to French and Spanish. These results were confirmed by the ‘novels in translation’ corpus, in which there were higher rates of Romanian preterites corresponding to French and Spanish imperfects than the alternative possibilities. I argued that the Romanian preterite is less specialized in its inceptive function than its French and Spanish counterparts.

Diachronic research on the past tenses can shed more light on the cross-linguistic differences outlined in this thesis. Since the *passé simple* displayed a wider range of distribution in old French than in the contemporary language, it would be useful to investigate whether there was a similar situation in old Spanish. It would also be telling to see whether the wider use of the *passé simple* occurred in the context of statives, since to my knowledge the research on old French tense usage did not include potential correlations with lexical aspect. A possible explanation for the synchronic situation revealed by my corpus results is that Romanian is now at a stage similar to that of the old French tenses.

In this thesis I have endeavoured to resolve an ongoing debate in the literature regarding the aspectual contribution (or lack thereof) of the imperfect and the preterite in Romance languages. I have also investigated cross-linguistic differences in the supposed analogous form – function relationship of the imperfect and the preterite in French, Spanish, and Romanian.

I have provided a representation of the imperfect and the preterite opposition, based on data from French, Spanish, and Romanian. Basing myself on theoretical, psycholinguistic, and corpus-based data, I have argued that the imperfect and the preterite do have an inherent aspectual meaning. However, my results showed that this aspectual meaning is not related to the presence or absence of an end point, but to whether or not the inception stage of an eventuality is in focus. I provided a representation of lexical aspectual information relevant to the imperfect – preterite opposition and described the ways in which different meanings result from interactions between tense forms, adverbials, and predicates of different lexical aspect. My cross-linguistic investigation indicated an overall wider distribution of the Romanian preterite when compared to its French and Spanish counterpart, in particular in relation to stative predicates.

My findings point to new possible directions of research concerning tense and aspect in Romance. These include psycholinguistic studies and their relevance to coercion hypotheses, the analysis of language acquisition corpora for evidence of lexical aspectual stage salience, and the investigation of diachronic data for further insights on cross-linguistic differences concerning the imperfect – preterite opposition in Romance.

REFERENCES

- Alarcos, E. (1970). *Estudios de gramática funcional del español*. Madrid: Gredos.
- Arsenijević, B. (2006). *Inner aspect and telicity: The decompositional nature of eventualities at the syntax-semantics interface*. PhD thesis, Leiden University (LOT dissertation series 142).
- Asher, N. (1993). *Reference to Abstract Objects in Discourse*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Ayres-Bennett, W., & Carruthers, J. with Temple, R. (2001). *Studies in the Modern French Language: Problems and Perspectives*. Harlow: Longman.
- Bach, E. (1981). On Time, Tense, and Aspect: An Essay in English Metaphysics. In P. Cole (ed.), *Radical Pragmatics* (pp. 63-91). New York: Academic Press.
- Bach, E. (1986). The Algebra of Events. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 9, 5-16.
- Bende-Farkas, A. (1999). Stative Verbs and Past Tenses in Romanian. Paper presented at the Lexicon Workshop, part of the conference Going Romance at Utrecht University.
Retrieved from: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.136.9371>
- Bennett, M., & Partee, B. (1972). *Toward the logic of tense and aspect in English*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

- Berschin, H. (1976). *Präteritum und Perfektgebrauch im heutigen Spanisch*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Bertinetto, P. M., & Delfitto, P. (2000). Aspect vs. actionality: why they should be kept apart. In Ö. Dahl (ed.), *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe* (pp. 189-226). Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Bertinetto, P.M., & Squartini, M. (to appear). Tense and Aspect. In A. Ledgeway and M. Maiden (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*. Oxford: OUP.
- Bertinetto, P. M., & Squartini, M. (1995). An attempt at defining the class of ‘gradual completion’ verbs. *Temporal reference, aspect and actionality, 1*, 11-26.
- Bhatt, R., & Pancheva, R. (2005). *Aspect and Modality*. LSA 130. Retrieved from <http://web.mit.edu/rbhatt/www/lsa130/l4.pdf>.
- Bickel, B. (1997). Aspectual scope and the difference between logical and semantic representation. *Lingua, 102*(2), 115-131.
- Binnick, R. (1991). *Time and the Verb: A Guide to Tense and Aspect*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Boas, H. (2003). *A constructional approach to resultatives*. Stanford: CSLI Publications.

- Bonami, O. (2001). A syntax-semantics interface for tense and aspect in French. *Technology*, 3(5), 31-50.
- Bonomi, A. (1997). Aspect, quantification and when-clauses in Italian. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 20(5), 469-514.
- Borer, H. (2005a). *Structuring sense, Volume 1: In name only*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Borer, H. (2005b). *Structuring sense, Volume 2: The normal course of events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bott, O. (2008). Doing it again and again may be difficult, but it depends on what you are doing. *Proceedings of WCCFL*, 27, 63-71.
- Brennan, J., & Pytkänen, L. (2008). Processing events: Behavioral and neuromagnetic correlates of aspectual coercion. *Brain and Language*, 106(2), 132-143.
- Breu, W. (1994). Interactions between lexical, temporal and aspectual meanings. *Studies in language*, 18(1), 23-44.
- Brucart, J. M. (2003). El valor del imperfecto de indicativo en español. *Estudios Hispánicos*, 6, 193-233.

- Brunot, F. (1922). *La pensée et la langue: méthode, principes et plan d'une théorie nouvelle du langage appliquée au français*. Paris: Masson.
- Bryant, W. (1984). Demythifying French Grammar. *The French Review*, 58, 19-25.
- Bull, W. E. (1960). *Time, Tense and the Verb: A Study in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, with Particular Attention to Spanish*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bybee, J. (1985). *Morphology: a study into the relation between meaning and form*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bybee, J. (2007). *Frequency of use and the organization of language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bybee, J., Perkins, R., & Pagliuca, W. (1994). *The evolution of grammar: Tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Canarache, A. (1965). Perfectul compus în texte narrative. *Limba Română*, 14, 689-695.
- Carlson, G. N. (1979). Generics and atemporal when. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 3(1), 49-98.

- Caudal, P. (2005). Stage Structure and Stage Salience for Event Semantics. In P. Kempchinsky and R. Slabakova (eds), *Aspectual Inquiries* (pp. 239-264). Berlin: Springer.
- Caudal, P., & Roussarie, L. (2005). Aspectual viewpoints, speech act functions and discourse structure. In P. Kempchinsky & R. Slabakova (eds), *Aspectual Inquiries* (pp. 265-290). Berlin: Springer.
- Caudal, P., & Roussarie, L. (2006). Brands of Perfects: Semantics and Pragmatics. In P. Denis et al, *Proceedings of the 2004 Texas Linguistics Society Conference: Issues at the Semantics-Pragmatics Interface* (pp. 13-27). Retrieved from <http://www.llf.cnrs.fr/Gens/Caudal/Brands%20of%20Perfects%20%20Semantics%20and%20Pragmatics.pdf>
- Călărașu, C. (1992). Quelques significations des temps verbaux roumains en perspective romane (avec applications aux langues roumaine et française). *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*, 37, 137-143.
- Chierchia, G. (2004). Scalar implicatures, polarity phenomena, and the syntax/pragmatics interface. *Structures and beyond*, 3, 39-103.
- Chitez, M. (2010). Perfect Simple in Wallachia and Transylvania: A Typological Approach. *Linguaculture*, 1, 57-82.

- Cipria, A., & Roberts. C. (2000). Spanish *Imperfecto* and *Pretérito*: Truth Conditions and Aktionsart Effects in a Situation Semantics. *Natural Language Semantics*, 8(4), 297-347.
- Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, B. (1985). *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Copple, M. (2008). A diachronic study of the Spanish perfect(ive): Frequency of use and language change. Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico.
- Cox, T. J. (1982). The inchoative aspect in French. *The French Review*, 56(2), 228-240.
- Crăiniceanu, I. (2000). Aspect and Coercion with Romanian Perfect Compus. *Working Papers in Linguistics*, 34, 239-250.
- Croft, W. (2012). *Verbs: aspect and causal structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cruschina, S., Maiden, M., and Smith, J. C. (eds). (2013). *The Boundaries of Pure Morphology: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives* (Vol. 4). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dahl, Ö. (1985). *Tense and aspect systems*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- De Mello, G. (1989). Some observations on Spanish verbal aspect. *Hispanic Linguistics*, 3, 123-129.
- Déchine, R. (1991) *M. Bare sentences*. *SALT*, 1, 31-50. Distributed by Cornell Working Papers in Linguistics, Ithaca New York.
- Delfitto, D. (2004). On the Logical Form of Imperfective Aspect. In J. Guéron & J. Lecarme (eds), *“The” Syntax of Time* (pp. 115-142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Depraetere, I. (1995). On the necessity of distinguishing between (un)boundedness and (a)telicity. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 18(1), 1-19.
- Dickey, M. D. (2001). *The Processing of Tense: Psycholinguistic Studies on the Interpretation of Tense and Temporal Relations*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Dowty, D. (1979). *Word meaning and Montague Grammar: The semantics of verbs and times in Generative Semantics and Montague’s PTQ*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Dölling, J. (2003). Aspectual (re-) interpretation: structural representation and processing. *Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs*, 152, 303-322.
- Engel, D. (1990). *Tense and Text. A study of French past tenses*. New York: Routledge.

- Fenn, P. (1986). *A semantic and pragmatic examination of the English perfect*. Vol. 312. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Ferreira, M. M. B. (2005). *Event quantification and plurality*. Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Filip, H. (2011). Aspectual Class and Aktionsart. In K. von Stechow, C. Maienborn, P. Portner (eds), *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fleischman, S. (1983). From pragmatics to grammar: diachronic reflections on complex pasts and futures in Romance. *Lingua*, 60(2), 183-214.
- Franzen, J. (2001). *The Corrections*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Franzen, J. (2002). *Les corrections*. (R. Lambrechts, Trans.). Paris: Éditions de l'Olivier.
- Franzen, J. (2011). *Corecții*. (C. Bucur, Trans.). Iași: Polirom.
- Franzen, J. (2012). *Las correcciones*. (R. Buenaventura, Trans.). Barcelona: Salamandra.
- Galton, A. (1984). *The logic of aspect: An axiomatic approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garey, H. (1957). Verbal Aspects in French. *Language*, 33, 91-110.

- Gennari, S. (2001). Tense, aspect and aktionsart in Spanish and Japanese. *Maryland Working Papers in Linguistics*, Vol. 11 (pp. 60-84). Maryland: UMCP.
- Georgescu, A. (1957). Perfectul simplu in dialectul dacoromân. *SG, II*, 29-52.
- González-García, F. (2007). Saved by the reflexive: Evidence from coercion via reflexives in verbless complement clauses in English and Spanish. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, 5(1), 193-238.
- González-García, F. (2009). The family of object-related depictives in English and Spanish: towards a usage-based constructionist analysis. *Language Sciences*, 31(5), 663-723.
- Greco, D. (1980). Notă asupra perfectului simplu într-un grai din Banat. Note sur le parfait simple dans un parler du Banat. *Cercetari de Lingvistică*, 25(1), 61-66.
- Grobe, E. P. (1967). Passé simple versus imparfait. *The French Review*, 41(3), 344-356.
- Guillaume, G. (1933). Immanence et transcendance dans la catégorie du verbe: Esquisse d'une théorie psychologique de l'aspect. *Journal de Psychologie*, 355-368. Reprinted, 1964, in Guillaume, G. *Langage et science du langage*, 46-58. Paris: Nizet; and 1969, in Pariente, J.-C. (ed.) *Essais sur le langage*, 207-225. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

- Guțu Romalo, V. (2005). *Gramatica limbii române*. București: Editura Academiei Române.
- Haase, M. (1995). Tense, Aspect and Mood in Romanian. In R. Thierof & M. Niemeyer (eds), *Tense Systems in European Languages II* (pp. 135-152). New York: de Gruyter.
- Harre, C. (1991). *Tener + Past Participle. A case study in linguistic description*. London: Routledge.
- Harris, M. (1982). The 'past simple' and the 'present perfect' in Romance. In N. Vincent, M. Harris (eds), *Studies in the Romance verb* (pp. 42-70). London: Croom Helm.
- Hay, J., Kennedy, C., & Levin, B. (1999). Scalar structure underlies telicity in "Degree achievements". *Proceedings of SALT*, 9, 127-144.
- Heap, D., & Pato, E. (2006). Sociogeographic and lexical variability in Asturian. Presented at the *33rd Annual Conference of the Linguistics Association of Canada and the U.S.* University of Toronto.
- Heim, I. (1982). *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. University of Massachusetts Ph.D. dissertation.

- Herzog, C. (1981). *Le passé simple dans les journaux du XXe siècle*. Bern: Francke.
- Hewson, J. (2012). Tense. In R. Binnick (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect* (pp. 507-536). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hitzeman, J. (1997). Semantic partition and the ambiguity of sentences containing temporal adverbials. *Natural Language Semantics*, 5(2): 87-100.
- Hornstein, N. (1990). *As Time Goes By: Time and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Howe, L. (2006). *Cross-dialectal features of the Spanish Present Perfect: A typological analysis of form and function*. PhD Dissertation. Ohio State University.
- Huddleston, R. (1988). *English grammar: An outline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Humberstone, I. L. (1979). Interval semantics for tense logic: Some remarks. *Journal of philosophical logic*, 8(1), 171-196.
- Imbs, P. (1960). *L'Emploi des temps verbaux en français moderne*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Iordan, I. (1975). *Stilistica limbii române*. Bucharest: Editura științifică.

- Irmen, F. (1966). O pretérito composto em português. *Revista de Portugal, Série A: Língua Portuguesa*, 31: 222-238.
- Jackendoff, R. (1997). *The architecture of the language faculty* (No. 28). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jayez, J. (1998). DRT et Imparfait. Un exemple de traitement formel de temps. In J. Moeschler (ed.), *Le temps des événements* (pp. 123-154). Paris: Kimé.
- Johnson, D. (2007). *Tree of smoke*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Johnson, D. (2008). *Árbol de humo*. (J. Calvo, Trans.). Barcelona: Mondadori.
- Johnson, D. (2008). *Arbre de fumée*. (B. Matthieussent, Trans.). Paris: Christian Bourgois.
- Johnson, D. (2010). *Arborele de fum*. (M. Pricăjean, Trans.). Iași: Polirom.
- Jonge, B. de (2000). Eventuality classification: meaning and use of Spanish simple past tenses. In E. Contini-Morava, & Y. Tobin (eds), *Between grammar and lexicon* (pp. 227-254). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kamp, H. (1979). Events, instants and temporal reference. In R. Bäuerle, U. Egli, & A. von Stechow (eds), *Semantics from different points of view* (pp. 376-418). Berlin: Springer.

- Kamp, H., & Reyle, U. (1993). *From Discourse to Logic*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Kamp, H., & Rohrer, C. (1983). Tense in texts. In R. Bèauerle, C. Schwarze, & A. von Stechow (eds), *Meaning, Use, and Interpretation of Language* (pp. 250-269). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Katz, G. (2003). On the stativity of the English perfect. In A. Alexiadou, M. Rathert, & A. von Stechow (eds), *Perfect explorations:* (pp. 205-234). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kenny, A. (1963). *Action, Emotion and Will*. London: Routledge.
- Klein, W. (1992). The present perfect puzzle. *Language*, 525-552.
- Klein, W. (1994). *Time in language*. London: Routledge.
- Kratzer, A. (1998). More structural analogies between pronouns and tenses. *Proceedings of SALT*, 8, 92-110.
- Krifka, M. (1992). Thematic Relations as Links between Nominal Reference and Temporal Constitution. In I. Sag. & A. Szabolsci (eds), *Lexical Matters* (pp. 29-53). Stanford: CSLI Publications.

- Krifka, M. (1998). The Origins of Telicity. In S. Rothstein (ed.), *Events and Grammar* (pp. 197-236). London: Kluwer.
- Kuhn, S. (1979). The pragmatics of tense. *Synthese*, 40, 237-263.
- Kuhn, S., & Portner, P. (2002). Tense and time. *Handbook of philosophical logic*, 6, 277-346.
- Kuttert, R. (1982). *Syntaktische und semantische Differenzierung der spanischen Tempusformen der Vergangenheit perfecto simple, perfecto compuesto und imperfecto*. Vol. 18. Frankfurt: P. Lang.
- Labeau, E. (2004). Le (s) temps du compte rendu sportif. *Journal of French Language Studies*, 14(2), 129-148.
- Labeau, E. (2009). Le PS: cher disparu de la rubrique nécrologique?. *Journal of French Language Studies*, 19(1), 61-86.
- Laca, B. (2010). Perfect semantics. How universal are Ibero-American Present Perfects? *Selected Proceedings of the Hispanic Symposium*.
- Lascarides, A., & Asher, N. (1993). Temporal Interpretation, Discourse Relations and Commonsense Entailment. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 16(5), 437-493.

- Lauwers, P., & Willems, D. (2011). Coercion: Definition and challenges, current approaches, and new trends. *Linguistics*, 49(6), 1219-1235.
- Lenci, A., & Bertinetto, P. M. (2000). Aspect, adverbs, and events: habituality vs. perfectivity. In J. Higginbotham, F. Pianesi, & A. Varzi (eds), *Speaking of events* (pp. 245-287). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lenz, R. (1920). *La oración y sus partes*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1935.
- Levinson, S. (2000). *Presumptive meanings: The theory of generalized conversational implicature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Martin, R. (1971). *Temps et aspect. Essai sur l'emploi des temps narratifs en moyen français*. Paris: Éditions Klincksieck.
- McCawley, J. (1971). Tense and time reference in English. In C. Fillmore & T. Langendoen (eds), *Studies in linguistic semantics* (pp. 97-114). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- McCawley, J. (1981). Notes on the English present perfect. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 1(1), 81-90.
- McCoard, R. W. (1978). *The English perfect: tense-choice and pragmatic inferences*. North-Holland Publishing Company.

- McDermott, D. (1982). A temporal logic for reasoning about processes and plans. *Cognitive science*, 6(2), 101-155.
- McElree, B., Traxler, M. J., Pickering, M. J., Seely, R. E., & Jackendoff, R. (2001). Reading time evidence for enriched semantic composition. *Cognition*, 78, 15-25.
- Menéndez-Benito, P. (2002). Aspect and adverbial quantification in Spanish. In *PROCEEDINGS-NELS*, 32(2), 365-382.
- Meulen, A. ter (1997). *Representing time in natural language: The dynamic interpretation of tense and aspect*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Michaelis, L. (1998). *Aspectual grammar and past time reference*. London: Routledge.
- Michaelis, L. (2003). Word meaning, sentence meaning, and syntactic meaning. In H. Cuyckens, R. Dirven, & J. Taylor (eds), *Cognitive approaches to lexical semantics* (pp. 163-209). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Mittwoch, A. (1988). Aspects of English aspect: on the interaction of perfect, progressive and durational phrases. *Linguistics and philosophy*, 11(2), 203-254.
- Moens, M., & Steedman, M. (1988). Temporal Ontology and Temporal Reference. *Computational Linguistics*, 14(2), 15-27.

- Moise, I. (1977). Aria de răspândire a perfectului simplu în Oltenia și Muntenia. *Limba Româna*, 26(1), 91-93.
- Molendijk, A., Swart, H. de, Vetters, C. et al (2004). Meaning and use of past tenses in discourse. In F. Corblin & H. de Swart (eds), *Handbook of French Semantics* (pp. 271-308). Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Mourelatos, P. D. (1978). Events, Processes and States. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 2, 415-434.
- Neagoe, V. (1985). În legătură cu unele forme de perfect simplu și de mai mult ca perfect și cu unele valori ale perfectului simplu în graiurile populare actuale. *Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară*, 3, 176-185.
- Nishiyama, A., & Koenig J-P. (2010). What is a perfect state?. *Language*, 86(3), 611-646.
- Ogihara, T. (1994). Adverbs of quantification and sequence-of-tense phenomena. In *Proceedings from semantics and linguistic theory IV* (pp. 251-267). New York: DMLL Publications.
- Paiva Boléo, M. (1936). *O Perfeito eo Pretérito em português em confronto com as outras línguas românicas*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade.

- Pană-Boroianu, R. (1982). Remarques sur l'emploi du passé simple dans les textes non-littéraires d'Olténie. *Revue roumaine de linguistique*, 5(7), 423-445.
- Parsons, T. (1990). *Events in the Semantics of English*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Partee, B. (1973). Some structural analogies between tenses and pronouns in English. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 18, 601-610.
- Pickbourn, J. (1968). *A dissertation on the English verb, 1789*. Menston: Scolar Press.
- Pickering, M. J., McElree, B., Frisson, S., Chen, L., & Traxler, M. J. (2006). Underspecification and aspectual coercion. *Discourse Processes*, 42(2), 131-155.
- Pinkster, H. (1990). *Latin syntax and semantics*. New York: Routledge.
- Piñango, M. M., Zurif, E., & Jackendoff, R. (1999). Real-time processing implications of enriched composition at the syntax–semantics interface. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 28(4), 395-414.
- Piñero Piñero, G. (2000). Perfecto simple y perfecto compuesto en la norma culta de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. *Lingüística Iberoamericana*. Vol. 10. Madrid: Vervuert.
- Portner, P. (1998). The Progressive in Modal Semantics. *Language*, 74(4), 760-787.

- Portner, P. (2003). The (Temporal) Semantics and (Modal) Pragmatics of the Perfect. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 26, 459-510.
- Price, G. (1971). *The French language: present and past*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Prior, A. N. (1957). *Time and Modality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Prior, A. N. (1967). *Past, Present and Future*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Pustejovsky, J. (1995). *The Generative Lexicon*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Pylkkänen, L. (2008). Mismatching meanings in brain and behavior. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 2(4), 712-738.
- Pylkkänen, L., Martin, A. E., McElree, B., & Smart, A. (2009). The anterior midline field: Coercion or decision making?. *Brain and Language*, 108(3), 184-190.
- Pylkkänen, L., & McElree, B. (2007). An MEG study of silent meaning. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 19(11), 1905-1921.
- Rappaport Hovav, M., & Levin, B. (1998). Building verb meanings. In M. Butt & W. Geuder (eds), *The projection of arguments: Lexical and compositional factors* (pp. 97-134). Stanford: CSLI Publications.

Real Academia Española (1771). *Gramática de la lengua castellana*. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1984.

Reichenbach, H. (1947). *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. New York: Macmillan.

Ritz, M. (2007) Perfect change: Synchrony meets diachrony. *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistics Science Series*, 4(284), 133.

Ritz, M. (2010). The perfect crime? Illicit uses of the present perfect in Australian police media releases. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(12), 3400-3417.

Ritz, M. (2012). Perfect tense and aspect. In R. Binnick (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect* (p. 881-908). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rojo, G. (1974). La temporalidad verbal en español. *Verba*, 1, 68-149.

Roth, P. (2004). *The plot against America*. New York: Vintage.

Roth, P. (2006). *Complotul împotriva Americii* (F. Cusin, Trans.). Bucharest: Biblioteca Polirom.

Roth, P. (2007). *La conjura contra América* (J. Fibla Feito, Trans.). Barcelona: Debolsillo.

Roth, P. (2011). *Le complot contre l'Amérique* (J. Kamoun, Trans.). Paris: Gallimard.

Rothstein, S. (2004). *The syntactic forms of predication*. Amsterdam: Springer.

Ryle, G. (1949). *The Concept of Mind*. London: Barnes and Noble.

Salas González, E. (1998). Spanish Aspect and the Nature of Linguistic Time. *Hispania*, 81(1), 155-165.

Sasse, H. J. (1991). Aspect and Aktionsart: a reconciliation. *Belgian journal of linguistics*, 6(1), 31-45.

Savič, M. (1979). L'uso dei tempi passati nei quotidiani pubblicati nelle lingue romanze con particolare riguardo all'italiano. *Linguistica*, 19, 171-197.

Savič, M. (1990). L'uso dei preteriti nello stile biblico italiano (nel quadro delle lingue europee). *Italica Belgradensia*, 3, 9-18.

Schwenter, S. (1994). The grammaticalization of an anterior in progress: Evidence from a peninsular Spanish dialect. *Studies in language*, 18(1), 71-111.

Schwenter, S., & Torres Cacoullos, R. (2008). Defaults and indeterminacy in temporal grammaticalization: the 'perfect' road to perfective. *Language Variation and Change*, 20(1), 1-39.

- Serrano, M. (1994). Del pretérito indefinido al pretérito perfecto: Un caso de cambio y gramaticalización en el español de Canarias y Madrid. *Linguística española actual*, 16, 37-57.
- Serrano, M. (1995-1996). Sobre el uso del pretérito perfecto y pretérito indefinido en el español de Canarias. Pragmática y variación. *Boletín de Filología*, 35, 533-566.
- Smith, C. S. (1997). *The parameter of aspect*. London: Kluwer Academic.
- Solé, Y. (1990). Valores aspectuales en español. *Hispanic Linguistics*, 4, 57-85.
- Song, M.I. (2005). Tense and choice functions. Retrieved from <http://semarch.linguistics.fas.nyu.edu/Archive/jY1ZTcyO/tense%20and%20choice%20functions.pdf>.
- Squartini, M., & Bertinetto, P. (2000). The simple and compound past in Romance languages. In Ö. Dahl (ed.), *Typology of Languages in Europe* (pp. 403-439). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Stowell, T. (1982). The tense of infinitives. *Linguistic inquiry*, 13(3), 561-570.
- Suter, A. (1984). *Das portugiesische Pretérito Perfeito composto*. Bern: Francke.

- Swart, H. de (1998). Aspect shift and coercion. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 16, 347-385.
- Swart, H. de (2007). A cross-linguistic discourse analysis of the perfect. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 2273-2307.
- Swart, H. de (2011). Mismatches and coercion. In C. Maienborn, K. Von Stechow, & P. Portner, *Semantics: an international handbook of natural language meaning* (pp. 574-597). Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Swart, H. de (2012). Verbal aspect across languages. In *Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics* (pp. 752-780.) Retrieved from <http://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/261183>.
- Swart, H. de & Molendijk, A. (2002). Le Passé Composé narratif: une analyse discursive de *L'étranger* de Camus. In B. Laca (ed.), *Temps et Aspect: de la Morphologie à l'Interprétation* (pp. 193–211). Saint Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes.
- Talmy, L. (1985). Lexicalization patterns: Semantic structure in lexical forms. *Language typology and syntactic description*, 3, 57-149.
- Tesnière, L. (1959). *Éléments de syntaxe structurale*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Tichý, P. (1985). Do we need interval semantics?. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 8(2), 263-282.

- Todorova, M., Straub, K., Badecker, W., & Frank, R. (2000). Aspectual coercion and the online computation of sentential aspect. In *Proceedings of the twenty-second annual conference of the cognitive science society* (pp. 3-8).
- Torres Cacoullos, R. (2001). From lexical to grammatical to social meaning. *Language in Society*, 30, 443–478.
- Traugott, E. (2007). The concepts of constructional mismatch and type-shifting from the perspective of grammaticalization. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 18, 523-557.
- Traxler, M. J., Morris, R. K., & Seely, R. E. (2002). Processing subject and object relative clauses: Evidence from eye movements. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 47(1), 69-90.
- Van Hout, A. (2003). Acquiring telicity crosslinguistically. On the acquisition of telicity entailments associated with transitivity. In M. Bowerman & P. Brown (eds), *Crosslinguistic perspectives on argument structure: Implications for learnability*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Van Valin, R. (2005). *Exploring the syntax-semantics interface*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vendler, Z. (1957). Verbs and Times. *Philosophical Review*, 56, 143-160.

- Verkuyl, H., Vet, C., Borillo, A., Bras, M., Le Draoulec, A., Molendijk, A., ... & Vieu, L. (2004). Tense and aspect in sentences. In F. Corblin & H. de Swart (eds), *Handbook of French Semantics* (pp. 233-270). Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Vet, C. (1980). *Temps, aspects et adverbess de temps en français contemporain*. Geneva: Droz.
- Vişan, N. (2006). Between the Perfect and the Preterite - A DRT Analysis of the Romanian and the English Complex Past. *RRL, LI*, 55-71.
- Vlach, F. (1981). The Semantics of the Progressive. In P.J. Tedeschi & A. Zaenen (eds), *Tense and Aspect, Syntax and Semantics, 14* (pp. 239-270). New York: Academic Press.
- Vulpe, M. (1977). Despre aria de răspîndire a perfectului simplu în graiurile munteneşti. *Cercetări de Lingvistică, 2(22)*, 255-259.
- Wulf, D. (2009). Two new challenges for the modal account of the progressive. *Natural Language Semantics, 17*, 205–218.
- Zezula, J. (1969). Le passé simple dans la langue de la presse française d'aujourd'hui. *Beiträge zur romanischen Philologie, 8*, 336-345.

Ziegeler, D. (2007). A word of caution on coercion. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 990–1028.

Ziegeler, D. (2010). Count-mass coercion, and the perspective of time and variation. *Constructions and frames*, 2(1), 33-73.