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Aspect as a communicative category
Evidence from English, Russian, and French

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Abstract

On the basis of internal evidence from primarily the use of imperfective forms and external evidence from primarily first language acquisition, it is argued that English, Russian, and French aspect differ from one another, because they go back to an obligatory choice among three possible communicative directions: should a grammatical category be grounded in the speaker's experience of a situation, in the situation referred to or in the hearer as a piece of information about the situation? The progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English is acquired in the present tense of atelic (simplex) verbs as a distinction within imperfectivity between the speaker's visual or non-visual experience. It is first-person oriented. The perfective vs. imperfective distinction in Russian is learnt in the past tense of telic (complex) verbs as a distinction between two complex situations in reality, an event and a process. It is third-person oriented. French aspect in written discourse is a three-way distinction between one imperfective form, *imparfait*, and two perfective forms, *passé composé* and *passé simple*, which present a deductive, abductive and inductive argument to the reader. It is learnt in school and is connected to the meta-distinction between atelic (simplex) and telic (complex) verbs. It is second- person oriented. The specific order arrived at reflects the Peircean categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness and their predictions. This can account for the fact that the English and Russian types can be found in the same language (e.g., Chinese) and the Russian and French types, too (e.g., Georgian), but never the English and French types.

Key words: Perfectivity and imperfectivity; external and internal evidence; atelic and telic verbs; simplex and complex verbs; communicative direction; category orientation; experiential, representational and evocative categories.

1. Introduction

1.0. On previous approaches

If we look at the theories of the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English (e.g., *He is/was singing* vs. *He sings/sang*), the imperfective vs. perfective distinction in Russian (e.g, *Ona pisala roman* 'She was writing a novel/She has written a novel' vs. *Ona napisala roman* 'She wrote a novel/She has written a novel/she had written a novel') and the tripartite distinction between *imparfait* (e.g., *Elle entrait dans la chambre* 'She was entering the room'), on the one hand, and *passé simple* (*Elle entra dans la chambre* 'She entered the room') and *passé compose* (*Elle est entré dans la chambre* 'She has entered the room/She is in the room), which is confined to Formal French, on the other hand, one observes a striking similarity. The features, notions or parameters used in English, Russian and French linguistics to account for the differences between the various forms in the languages in question are the same: ongoing process, an action in progress, an action in its non-totality, and an incompleted action are used about the English progressive form, the Russian imperfective aspect and the French *imparfait*, while an action in its totality and a completed/bounded action are applied to the English non-progressive form, the Russian perfective aspect and the French *passé simple* (the *passé composé* has been excluded from the formal system of French). Thus irrespective of language the grammatical category of aspect and its representatives are treated in the same way.

We find, however, one difference: while the form that is considered to be the imperfective version in English, viz. the progressive form, is marked with respect to [-totality] or [-completion], the Russian perfective aspect and the French *passé simple* are marked with respect to [+totality] or [+completion]. The majority of linguists who have been concerned with the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English from a more general perspective consider the progressive aspect as having something to do with the temporal distinction or contour of an event (Hockett 1957: 237), with the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Comrie 1976), with reference to one of the temporally distinct phases in the evolution of an event through time (Johnson 1981: 152), or with the relation of an event or state to a particular reference point located before, after, around (i.e. the progressive aspect) or simply at a particular point in time (Anderson 1971: 39). This view, which implies that aspect is treated as a kind of relative or secondary tense concerned with the internal time structure of a situation, has been the most prevalent one in general linguistics completely regardless of theoretical background (see Jakobson 1957, Katz 1972: 320, Coseriu 1980, Miller and Johnson-Laird 1976: 442f, Barwise and Perry 1983: 288ff, Givón 1984: 272, Talmy 1985: 77, Lyons 1977: 705, Allan 1986, Klein 1995, Bhat 1999: 43f, Radden & Dirven 2007, etc.). Precisely this view makes it possible to view the English progressive, the Russian imperfective aspect and the French imparfait as being tokens of the same type − a type which is called *imperfectivity* by Comrie (1976), Brinton (1987), and Freed (1979), or *durativity* by Friedrich (1974) and Verkuyl (1972) to mention some of the founders of modern aspectology. To my knowledge, the universalistic view on the category of aspect and its imperfective and perfective members have never been challenged. I will try to explain why it is important to do so just below.

Like most linguists since Smith (1983), I make a conceptual distinction between verb class ('situation aspect' in Smith's terminology) and aspect ('viewpoint aspect' in Smith's terminology). I distinguish three verb classes: (1) state verbs, (2) activity verbs (corresponding to Vendler's 'state terms' and 'activity terms', respectively), and (3) action verbs (corresponding to Vendler's 'achievement terms' and 'accomplishment terms'). State verbs and activity verbs are called 'simplex verbs', because both create a single propositional structure. Action verbs are called 'complex verbs' because they all comprise an activity description and a state description. These three verb classes are

meant to be universal. This means that verbs of all languages are supposed to name the same kinds of situations. Simplex verbs such as state verbs (e.g., *sit, sidet'* and *etre assis*) name a stable situation and simplex verbs such as activity verbs (e.g., *smoke, kurit'* and *fumer*) name an unstable situation that can be captured by the human eye in one single picture – a state ("a person who is sitting") will leave a stable picture, while an activity ("a person who is smoking") will leave an unstable picture. Complex verbs (e.g., *give, dat'/davat'* and *donner*) name two situations, an unstable situation in which "somebody, X, is doing something with a thing, Y" and a stable situation in which "another person, Z, has that thing, Y". These two situations cannot take place at the same time, X and Z cannot be in possession of the same Y at the same point in time – either Y is with X as it is the case during X's production of the activity, or Y is with Z as it is the case if the activity causes a change of state. This means that an action is a collective concept for two other concepts, namely a process (an activity intended to cause a state) and an event (a state caused by an activity) (I use 'event' in von Wright's understanding of it (see von Wright 1974). All Slavic languages take this into consideration and that is why they have two verbal forms for one form in the majority of other languages: the perfective form *dat'* for the event manifestation of an action and the imperfective form *davat'* for the process manifestation of an action. Slavic languages do not have a name for the collective concept itself, i.e. the common idea behind the event and the process. This specific feature, however, only concerns complex verbs. With respect to state verbs and activity verbs all Slavic languages have one basic form (always imperfective), but from this underived form one may derive several *Aktionsart* verbs (also called 'procedurals'), perfective verbs by prefixes or imperfective verbs by suffixes. If one wants to be able to explain the aspectual system of Slavic languages, it is important to make a distinction between complex verbs and simplex verbs. This does not mean that the meta-distinction is irrelevant for non-Slavic languages, as we shall see in the following sections.

Below I shall demonstrate that it is necessary to distinguish between a verb's naming properties and its communicative direction. Naming properties are linked to the three universal verb classes: states, activities, and actions. Any verb will belong to one of these three classes. Communicative direction is connected to the aspectual forms of a particular language, used in a specific communicative setting where the obligatory participants are found: the speaker, the hearer, and the situation named by the verb, viz. a state, an activity, or an action. Aspectual forms of a verb will refer to the situation named by the verb itself, but it may do so in three different ways: (1) indirectly through the speaker's experience of it; (2) directly through the situation itself; or (3) indirectly through the hearer as information. Traditionally, the grammatical category of aspect has been linked to direct reference. Nobody has considered the possibility of having more than one communicative direction.

The three languages, i.e. English, Russian, and French, have chosen for various reasons. First, they exemplify the three different communicative directions; secondly, they are all well described, and, thirdly, they are all described by using the same terms, indicating that they differ from one another only on the surface. In addition, I assume that the majority of readers will have some knowledge of these three languages and be able to understand the data and the problems with their interpretation.

1.1. Identifying the problem by using internal evidence

1.1.1. The Russian language

If we look at specific uses of state verbs (see, e.g., 1a and 1b) and activity verbs (see, e.g., 2a and 2b), in Russian and how they are translated into English, we can observe the following:

(1) a. Maria sidit (ipf/pres) v kresle. 'Maria is sitting/sits in the easy chair.'
b. Maria sidela (ipf/pret) v kresle. 'Maria was sitting/sat in the easy chair.'

(2) a. Maria vsegda kurit (ipf/pres). ‘Maria is always smoking/smokes.’
b. Maria vsegda kurila (ipf/pret). ‘Maria was always smoking/smoked.’

The examples show that Russian is not capable of making a distinction between the meaning of the progressive form (is/was sitting) and the meaning of the non-progressive form (sits/sat) in English. Normally, one would say that the Russian imperfective aspect of state and activity verbs is ambiguous, i.e. it has one form, but two meanings. This view will be challenged below. Just because utterances like (1) and (2) can be translated into two different English forms with two distinct meanings, one cannot deduce that the form under consideration has these two meanings. If we had translated the same utterances into Greenlandic, we would have arrived at far more possibilities. However, it does not follow that the Russian utterances are multi-ambiguous and thus have all the meanings corresponding to the different infixes of Greenlandic. If we translate (1) and (2) into French, we have to use *présent* in (1a) and (2a), but *imparfait* in (1b) and (2b), which certainly looks like Russian. However, this is not tantamount to saying that the Russian forms and the French forms are similar. If we look into the specific uses of the *imparfait* form, we find several meanings that have not been discovered yet in the Russian imperfective aspect.

All this leads to the following conclusion: we have to study a language in its own right without being tempted to imposing distinctions from other languages that are never made in the language under consideration. We should pay close attention to what the specific language tries to tell us. Let us look at Russian:

(3) a. Maria vsegda kurila (ipf/pret). ‘Maria was always smoking/smoked.’
b. Maria kurivala (ipf/Aktionsart/pret). ’Maria used to smoke from time to time.’
c. Maria prokurila (pf/Aktionsart/pret) ves’ vecher. ’Maria smoked/was smoking the entire evening.’
d. Maria zakurila (pf/Aktionsart/pret). ’Maria has started to smoke/lighted (a cigarette)’.

As already mentioned, Russian has a lot of *Aktionsarten* at its disposal which all represent a state or an activity in various ways. The various *Aktionsart* verbs are all derived from the imperfective activity verb *kurit’* (cf. 3a). All *Aktionsarten* of this verb refer to a smoking activity, but present it in different ways. In (3b) there were many, but sporadic periods of smoking; in (3c) a long, non-interrupted smoking activity ended; and in (3d) a smoking activity started. We could have mentioned others, but the picture will be the same: Russian seems to be interested in being precise about the process of the smoking activity named by the verb itself. Note that the forms in (3c) and (3d) are still ambiguous from the point of view of English. All *Aktionsart* verbs in (3) refer to specific manifestations of “smoking”. Since all *Aktionsart* verbs, whether they are perfective or imperfective, seem to specify the notion of activity and since the basic verb from which all *Aktionsarten* are derived must possess what is common to all derivations, namely an activity, I conclude that the Russian imperfective activity verb *kurit’* not only names an activity, but also refers to an activity when it is used in a finite form. This activity will be vague and therefore subject to various interpretations if the underived verb is used, but specific when verbs derived from this verb are used. In short, I conclude that all Russian state verbs name a state and all Russian activity verbs name an activity. When they occur in a finite form, they will all refer to a state situation or an activity situation. The underived verb will present the state or the activity as a state or as an activity, while all *Aktionsart* verbs derived from the basic, underived verb will present a state situation or an activity situation in various specific ways. If this is true, then there will be no difference between the naming properties and the referential properties when speaking of underived state and activity

verbs. The communicative direction of the Russian imperfective aspect of state and activity verbs seems to be third-person oriented, i.e. oriented towards the situation itself. This means that the hearers are directed by the speaker towards the situation referred to by the verb.

1.1.2. The English language

Let us now turn to English. What does the English language achieve by having two forms at places where Russian and French have only one form?

(4) a. Maria was always sitting in an easy chair.
b. Maria always sat in an easy chair.

(5) a. Maria was always smoking.
b. Maria always smoked.

I will argue that the two forms in (4) name the same, namely a sitting state. They belong to the same verb class. I will also argue that the two forms in (5) name the same, namely a smoking activity. They also belong to the same verb class. The question is now: do (4a) and (4b) refer to two different kinds of state situations and do (5a) and (5b) refer to two different kinds of activity situations? And if they do, what are they? Russian has several means to distinguish various kinds of state and activity situations, but none of them seem to correspond to the two English forms. I am tempted to argue that these two English forms point in a different direction to the Russian forms. Although English verbs, like verbs in all other languages, inevitably denote situations, they need not speak of these situations in external reality through the situations themselves. There is an alternative explanation.

Lorentzen (2003) made a quantitative study of Russian in which she compared the use of quality-based verbs (e.g., *ja obradovalsja* 'I was pleased') and adjectives describing a quality in a predicative position (e.g., *ja rad* 'I am pleased') and concluded that with respect to quality-based descriptions Russian verbs describe situations in external reality (cf. 6a) whereas Russian adjectives describe situations in internal reality, i.e. the speaker's own experience (cf. 6b), his/her own opinion (cf. 6c) or his/her own knowledge (cf. 6d):

(6) a. On op'janel. 'He is/got drunk.'
He.N get.drunk.pf.pret
b. On byl p'jan. 'He was drunk.'
He.N be.pret drunk.Short Form
c. On byl p'janyj. 'He was (behaved like) a drunkard.'
He.N be.pret drunk.Long Form.N
d. On byl p'janym. 'He was a drunkard.'
He.N be.pret drunk.Long Form.I

In (6a) the speaker is referring to a person who got drunk because he had been drinking too much. It is a description of a situation in external reality. The person's drinking activity caused him to go from being sober to being drunk. It refers to an event, i.e. a state caused by an activity. (6b) is not a description of a situation in external reality, but a description of the speaker's own experience of a person in a certain situation in external reality (this is signalled by the short form of the adjective) (a finding that goes back to Babby 1975). Similarly, (6c) is not a description of a situation in external reality, but a characterization by a speaker of that particular person based on his or her opinion,

which was formed by a series of experiences pointing in the same direction (this is shown by the long form of the adjective). (6d) is also a description of an internal situation, but this time a categorization of that person made by the speaker on the basis of his or her knowledge – he or she may never have seen him drunk (this is shown by the instrumental case). In (6b), (6c) and (6d) the communicative direction is different from that of (6a). In all four cases the speaker talks about a person that is part of external reality, but in (6b), (6c) and (6d) the speaker talks about that person through his or her own internal representations of that person, i.e. the hearer is directed towards the speaker's own mind. In (6b) the speaker verbalizes from his store of experiences, in (6c) from his store of opinions, and in (6d) from his store of knowledge. If Lorentzen is right, then Russian verbs can refer only to situations in external reality while adjectives can refer only to situations in internal reality. This, however, need not be a general feature of all languages of the world. It might, for instance, not be the case in English.

It is my hypothesis that the distinction between the progressive and non-progressive form in English is reminiscent of the Russian distinction between short form and long form in the nominative case of the adjective. One of the things that has led me to this hypothesis is that both *have* and *be* occur in the progressive form (see 7):

(7) a. She is being polite. (Experience – Store of experiences)
b. She is polite. (Characterization – Store of opinions)
c. She is a polite person. (Categorization – Store of knowledge)

If this hypothesis cannot be falsified by either internal or external evidence, it will be necessary to distinguish between two kinds of reference, viz. reference to the communication situation itself and reference to a situation outside the communication situation. No doubt, in all cases the speaker is referring to a third person entity in external reality, but the speaker is doing it through his or her own internal reality. In (7a) the speaker describes his/her own experience of a situation where the subject is doing something which leaves the impression with the speaker that she is behaving well. In (7b) the speaker describes his/her opinion of the subject based on a number of experiences of that person's behaviour. And (7c) describes the speaker's knowledge, which implies that the female person in question is compared to other people.

Let us now return to the examples in (4) or (5) which are repeated just below:

(4) a. Maria was always sitting in an easy chair.
b. Maria always sat in an easy chair.

(5) a. Maria was always smoking.
b. Maria always smoked.

I shall argue that the verb in (4) names a state while the verb in (5) names an activity. Consequently, it is not possible to avoid speaking of situations in external reality. But the question is: do (4) and (5) directly refer to these situations in the same way as the Russian verbs? I don't think so. The two forms have another communicative direction than the Russian verbs. Both forms direct the hearer towards the speaker's internal world. In (4a) and (5a) the hearer is directed towards the speaker's store of experiences, while in (4b) and (5b) the hearer is directed towards the speaker's store of opinions. In short, by employing this concept of direction, the hearer gets access to the speaker's mind and through that to external situations that left this impression with the speaker (cf. 4a and 5a) and created this opinion (cf. 4b and 5b). The two forms thus seem to be a specification of the Russian imperfective aspect. The two forms share the same communicative direction, i.e. that of the

speaker. They are both first-person oriented in contrast to the Russian imperfective aspect, which is very vague. The Russian imperfective aspect of state and activity verbs does not add anything new to the naming properties of these two verb classes. This leads to the conclusion that the two English forms must be two specific varieties of the imperfective aspect. In this context, Smith's (1983) distinction between situation aspect (naming/lexical properties) and viewpoint aspect (grammatical properties) makes very good sense: a state or an activity from the point of view the speaker's experience.

1.1.3. The French language

If we now turn to French, we are in a similar situation to the English progressive and non-progressive form (two English forms vs. one Russian form), but only when we speak of action verbs/complex verbs: French has two forms, the *passé simple* form and the *passé composé* form while Russian has only one form:

(8) a. Roman umer (pf/pret). 'Roman is dead/has died/died.'
b. Roman mourut (passé simple). 'Roman died.'
c. Roman est mort (passé composé). 'Roman has died/is dead.'

In (8) we are not dealing with a state verb or an activity verb, but with a combination of them, i.e. an action verb or a complex verb that names an activity as well as a state. As already mentioned, in Russian all action verbs occur in pairs with an imperfective verb and a perfective verb, e.g., *umirat'* (ipf)/*umeret'* (pf). We do not find *Aktionsart* verbs within action verbs, presumably because there are only two varieties of an action, namely, an ongoing process, i.e. activity intended to cause a state, or an event, i.e. a state caused by an activity. In (8a) we are dealing with the perfective form that presents the action named by the verb as an event. Thus (8a) means something like the following: "a particular activity took place which resulted in Roman being dead". Again we notice that Russian directly refers to a situation in external reality. Its communicative direction is third-person oriented: the perfective form does not say anything about the speaker's experience of this event or adds some kind of information to the hearer – the form points to the event situation in strictly third-person terms.

The problem relates to the fact that the two French forms, i.e. (8b) and (8c), refer to the same event as the Russian form in (8a). The two French forms could, in principle, have referred to different kinds of events: a state that was immediately arrived at or a state that was obtained after a long time, to mention some alternatives. But this does not seem to be the case. In principle, the two forms could have reflected two different kinds of experiences: one form could have reflected that the speaker saw the entire event with his/her own eyes and the other form that the speaker heard about the event from others or inferred it him- or herself. This type of distinction is found in Turkish (cf. Slobin 1977) and in Bulgarian (Mikkelsen 2002), but nothing in the use of the two French forms seems to indicate that kind of relationship. Moreover, we have to consider that in oral discourse or informal discourse the distinction between these two forms disappears, leaving the *passé composé* as the only possibility. This means that the aspectual system of French oral discourse is more or less identical to that in Russian. This might give us a clue to the distinction in written discourse. The question is what could be different but nevertheless refer to exactly the same event in reality. It is possible that the two French forms in written discourse give different kinds of information to the hearer about the same event. This could explain why French has two forms while Russian only needs one form. It need not be a distinction between new or old information. If it had been something like that, we would presumably be dealing with the category of tense, not aspect.

In French written discourse there is a tripartite distinction between *imparfait,* on the one hand, and *passé simple* and the *passé composé*, on the other. It seems to be one imperfective form vs. two perfective forms. One possibility is *information packaging*, i.e. the way some information is packaged specifically to the reader (I specifically call him/her the 'reader' to underline that we are dealing with written discourse). In the case of written discourse in which no reader is capable of witnessing the process or event referred to, it would make sense to have forms that could tell the reader how to interpret their function in the text.

(9) a. Elle entrait dans la chambre. 'She was entering the room.'
b. Elle entra dans la chambre. 'She entered the room.'
c. Elle est entré dans la chambre. 'She has entered the room/She is in the room.'

I shall argue – and later try to document – that the three different forms serve different text functions and at the same time present the reader with three different arguments. The *imparfait* in (9a) only has a descriptive function in a text and, at the same time, it represents a deductive argument to the reader. This allows the reader to conclude that the state of the action named in (9a) will obtain at a later point in time. The reasoning is as follows: from the activity (p) I can deduce the state (q) if I apply the rule "If an activity (p), then a state (q)". The argumentative direction from (p) towards (q) is specific to the French *imparfait* form and explains some of its meanings that have no counterpart in the English progressive and in the Russian imperfective aspect. An ongoing process is not the unmarked meaning of the French imparfait as it is in English and in Russian. In French it is a meaning that is given by the context (see, e.g., 31).

While *imparfait* has a descriptive function in a text, *passé simple* cannot describe, but only tells a story. Apart from having a narrative function in a text, the *passé simple* form in (9b) also presents the reader with the following inductive argument: the activity (p) referred to and the state (q) referred to are presented *en bloc*, i.e. as if the activity and the state were a single situation. This means that the reader is able to reconstruct the cause and its effect from the text and apply them to situations in reality. This meaning is specific to written French discourse as the corresponding Russian perfective form treats the activity (p) and the state (q) as two entities, albeit with focus on the state (q). In the French form there is no focus, since the two situations are presented as one situation, i.e. *in totality* as it is argued by all French aspectologists (cf. below).

The *passé composé* form in (9c) does not only have an explanatory function in a text, but, at the same time, it presents the hearer with the following abductive argument: the activity (p) referred to is the reason why the state (q) obtains at the moment of reference by applying the rule "If p, then q". This means that the hearer is able to reconstruct the cause behind the effect and apply this to situations in reality. The textual function of the *passé composé* seems to be specific to French written discourse (because of the entire system), but its meaning is also found in the English present perfect. We shall return to that in section 4.

Again we can conclude that all verbs in French name the same kinds of situations as the English and Russian verbs. When occurring in a finite form the French forms – like the English and the Russian forms - also speak about external reality. But the three French forms cannot be said to refer directly to ongoing processes and events. There is only an indirect reference, because all three forms carry different information packages to the hearer/reader in order for him/her to understand the functions of the forms in the French text and in order for the reader to arrive at the situations referred to. I argue that the communicative direction of the French aspectual system is second-person oriented, because the aspectual system of French written discourse seems to be directed towards the reader by indicating the functions of the forms in the text and by asking him/her to unpack the package presented as different logical arguments in order to arrive at the actual

situations referred to. This kind of aspectual system does not seem to be relevant to oral discourse, in which the speaker and the hearer share the same situation and the same world.

1.2. The aim and scope of the paper

After having described and explained the reasons for distinguishing three types of aspect, in the following I shall try to document that the category of aspect is not to be regarded as a universal grammatical category *per se*. If one looks at external pieces of evidence from first language acquisition as well as internal evidence from the use of what is traditionally called the imperfective aspect and combines it with a purely formal analysis of the aspectual systems of English, Russian, and French, one arrives at the following picture (see Fig. 1):

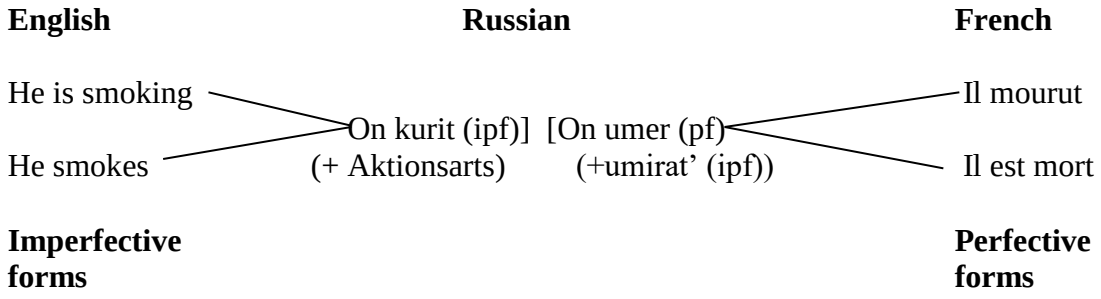

Figure 1: The three types of aspect

What we see here is that the Russian imperfective aspect is vague in comparison to the English progressive and non-progressive aspect. In the same way, the Russian perfective aspect is vague in comparison to French *passé simple* and *passé composé*. This means that English aspect is a kind of specification of the Russian imperfective aspect and French aspect is a kind of specification of the Russian perfective aspect (cf. Figure 1). In this way, we arrive at three prototype systems represented by the aspectual systems of English, Russian, and French, respectively. In the paper I shall present the external and internal evidence for this typology and, moreover, I shall argue that this trichotomy is a result of an obligatory decision that all member of a speech community have to make when being in a communicative situation. Since there are three obligatory participants, there are three possible choices: (1) the speaker's experience of the situation referred to (first person), (2) the situation referred to (third person) which is common to the speaker and the hearer, and (3) information to the hearer (second person) about the situation.

In short, my hypothesis is that aspect is a communicative-based category involving three potentially different semiotic orientations: (1) first-person orientation as in English which will yield an aspectual category based on the speaker's experiences of situations in reality. The effect is that we get a modality-oriented aspectual category; (2) third-person orientation as in Russian gives an aspectual category based on situations in reality. The effect of this is that we get a more pure aspectual category with no difference in modality or temporality between the two forms; (3) second-person orientation as in French written discourse gives an aspectual category based on information to the hearer that has to be unpacked in order for the reader to get access to the situation referred to. The effect is that we get an information-oriented aspectual category with clear textual functions – the three functions look very similar to the three of the four rhetorical modes traditionally distinguished within written discourse: description, exposition (explanation) and narration. Interestingly enough, the fourth rhetorical mode is 'argumentation', which I have placed inside the three functions by using Peirce's three-way distinction (cf. Peirce 1932).

But first I shall examine how the category of aspect in English, Russian, and French is acquired by children having English, Russian, and French as their mother tongue. Then I shall examine how aspect has been treated from a more theoretical point of view within English, Russian, and French linguistics, respectively. It is here interesting to note that the research in the last two decades contains many purely empirical works which focus on various facets of aspect without being grounded in any particular theory. This is in direct contrast to the two decades before that time, i.e. between 1976 and 1996. This period was characterized by new ideas and new theories but not so much by in-depth studies. These tendencies are clear for all three languages and seem to reflect the more or less universal shift in linguistics to corpus-based and discourse-based studies. In this connection it should be noted that since Klein 1995 no new overall theory of aspect has been presented. This could be because the scientific discussion has come to a halt because it is assumed that the whole theoretical truth of the category of aspect has already been discovered. As a researcher one should always challenge one's prejudices. As Popper (1935) argues, a theory can never be verified, only falsified, cf. the problem of induction. This paper is an attempt to start a discussion that hopefully will never end. I shall attempt to do so by employing a holistic approach that involves internal as well as external pieces of evidence and by proposing that aspect is a communicative category. It may seem provocative, but sometimes provocation can initiate a good discussion.

2. External evidence for different types of aspect

2.0. Preliminary remarks

When speaking of external evidence for different types of aspect, many sources come to one's mind: diachronic evidence, evidence from pidgins or creoles, evidence from first language acquisition, evidence from second language learning, and evidence from language pathology. It was initially my intention to include all kinds of external evidence, but I felt that the reader would be distracted by too many pieces of information, although they all tell the same story. Therefore, I decided to limited myself to evidence from first language acquisition.

2.1. Early language acquisition: Two present forms vs. two past forms

If we compare the acquisition of past and present tense forms by English children and the acquisition of similar forms by Danish children, we observe a striking difference – striking because the two languages in question are very much alike as regards grammatical structure (cf. Durst-Andersen 1984, Durst-Andersen 2011: 206-214). What seems amazing at first sight is that very early Danish children acquire the distinction between the so-called perfect (e.g., *har spildt* 'has spilt') and the so-called imperfect (e.g., *spildte* 'spilt') and that from the very beginning these two forms are used side by side, whereas English children initially have no distinction between the corresponding two English past referring forms, thus letting the simple past *spilt* (corresponding to Da. *spildte*) act as a substitute for the present perfect *has spilt* (corresponding to Da. *har spildt*). However, instead of having two past referring forms English children have two present tense forms: an ING-form (the progressive aspect) and a NON-ING-form (the non-progressive aspect). This early system has been found and described by all linguists having done longitudinal studies on English children's acquisition of tense-aspect (see Atkinson 1982, Brown 1973, Bloom et al. 1980, Fletcher 1985, Gathercole 1986, Johnson 1985, Rispoli & Bloom 1985, Shirai & Andersen 1995, and Li & Shirai 2000). The aspectual distinction present in English is absent in Danish.

2.2. Anchoring aspect in atelic (simplex) verbs or in telic (complex) verbs

The distinction between the progressive and the non-progressive form (understood as in Binnick 2005) is learnt by the English child within the present tense system of simplex verbs, but which are traditionally named atelic verbs. I call them so, because they consist of state and activity verbs that name a single situation that can be captured by the human eye in one single picture, be it a stable picture in the case of states or an unstable one in the case of activities (cf. Durst-Andersen 2011: 6-11, 2012). As demonstrated by all longitudinal studies of first language acquisition of English (cf. above), in its very beginning the ING-form occurs only with activity verbs, while the NON-ING-form occurs only with state verbs. It is not until later that the ING-form is extended to state verbs and complex verbs, a common denominator of Vendler's accomplishments and achievements, which name not one situation, but two situations, i.e. an activity related to a state by telicity, thus corresponding to telic verbs. I prefer to call them complex verbs in order to underline their complex character that differentiates them substantially from state and activity verbs, but also to have a name for accomplishments and achievements that in other languages than English have more in common than they have differences (see Durst-Andersen 2011: 11f).

However, in the Danish as well as in the English child's initial grammar simplex verbs, i.e. state and activity verbs, occur only in the present tense, while complex verbs, i.e. accomplishment and achievement verbs, occur only in the past tense. This split has not only been observed in the acquisition of English and Danish, but also of several other languages including Italian (see Antinucci & Miller 1976), Turkish (see Aksu-Koç 1988), Greek (see Stephany 1985) and Russian (see Stephany & Voeikova 2003). The importance and naturalness of this distinction is furthermore justified by phenomena which were observed for the first time in 1981 by Bickerton (cf. Bickerton 1981). In several unrelated creoles he found that certain verbs have *zero*-forms in the present tense, viz. atelic/simplex verbs, while others have it in the past tense, viz. telic/complex verbs. His early observation has not been used by scholars working with situation types and verb classes, i.e. lexical aspect. The insight is, however, found in the so-called Aspect Hypothesis (cf. Shiraj & Andersen 1995) which is popular within L2 acquisition. It says that perfective morphology is first used in telic predicates corresponding to what I call complex verbs and is later extended to atelic predicates corresponding to what I call simplex verbs. This means that the notion of verb class, i.e. Smith's 'lexical aspect', is either equally or more important in the beginning of acquisition than grammatical aspect, i.e. Smith's viewpoint aspect.

The Russian child's initial grammar (at approximately 2;6 years) can be said to be nearly identical to the Danish child's: it has one present tense form corresponding to the imperfective present and two past referring forms, viz. the perfective preterite and the imperfective preterite (see Gvozdev 1949, Pupynin 1996 and 1998, Gagarina 2003, Bar-Shalom 2002). The initial Russian and Danish child-grammar thus involves two oppositions: one of tense, and another of aspect which is restricted to past tense. The given system can be regarded as being representative of a prototype system. This appears very clearly from the great number of languages examined by Dahl (1985) on the basis of identical questionnaires. If we return to the acquisition of past tense forms in English, I shall argue that an early use of both the present perfect and the simple past must be blocked by the aspectual system developed by the English child within the present tense. Thus since the initial English child-grammar (at approximately 2;6 years) has the aspectual distinction within the present tense and no such distinction in the past tense, it seems as if this system represents another prototype which should be distinguished from the above-mentioned one. Both prototype systems consist of three forms which enter into two oppositions: one of aspect and another of tense. They differ, however, in the way the three forms are distributed in the structure (see Table 1).

English child's initial grammar at 2;6 years	**Russian child's initial grammar at 2;6 years**
Present tense with an aspectual distinction • Progressive form – *playing* (activity) • Simple form – *love* (state)	Present tense without any aspectual distinction • Imperfective form – *igraju* 'play' (activity)/*ljublju* 'love' (state)
Past tense without any aspectual distinction • Simple past – *spilt* (accomplishment)	Past tense with an aspectual distinction • Perfective – razlil 'spilt, has spilt', had spilt' • Imperfective – razlival 'was spilling, has spilt

Table 1: The early acquisition of tense-aspect forms in English and Russian

2.3. Concluding remarks

The initial Russian child-grammar has the aspectual distinction anchored in the past tense of complex verbs, whereas the English aspectual distinction is rooted in the present tense of simplex verbs (state and activity verbs) and is learnt before the past vs. non-past distinction (cf. Table 1). Since this is the case and since the aspectual distinction made by the Russian child occurs simultaneously with the past vs. non-past distinction, it makes sense to claim what has been generally accepted since Slobin 1977, namely that aspectual notions have greater accessibility to children than temporal distinctions. As a matter of fact, languages need not have tense forms, but can manage with aspect alone. Clear cases are Arab and Chinese. It seems, however, that the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English is even more accessible to a child than the perfective vs. imperfective distinction or that the grammar behind the semantic distinction in English must be more natural and obvious for children. This is furthermore supported by the fact that the English child does not overgeneralize the use of progressive forms – at least not to an extent that is striking for child linguists (see Mapstone & Harris 1985). One might of course say that overgeneralization is almost impossible in English, since, as Dahl (1985: 94) and Comrie (1976: 32) point out, in comparison with other languages having the same kind of aspect the English progressive is an "overgeneralization" of uses found in other languages, including pidgins and creoles having the distinction (cf. Holm 1988 and Mühlhäusler 1986). The point, however, is that English children never extend progressive forms to state verbs which seldom or never take this form, e.g. *believe, belong, contain, hate, know, like, need, want*, etc., and – with less probability because we are dealing with child language – *correspond, equal, own, possess, relate*, etc. (cf. Kuczaj 1978).

Since the French *passé simple* vs. *passé compose* vs. *imparfait* distinction is learnt in written discourse, it occurs much later than the two distinctions just mentioned. But if we compare the acquisition of oral French, it is identical to that of Russian (cf. above). The three-way distinction found in French written discourse could seem to be non-typical, because we are used to find binary oppositions more natural, but note that the same three-way distinction within the past tense system is found in, for instance, Italian, Spanish and Bulgarian (cf. Mikkelsen 2002). We shall return to the tripartite system of Bulgarian in section five.

3. The English type of aspect

3.1. Short introduction to previous approaches

All scholars of English aspect agree that the progressive is the marked member of the opposition. It is possible to divide existing theories into four groups. The first group considers the progressive aspect to be related to *temporariness*. It is found in Joos 1968, Leech 1971, Palmer 1988, Chafe 1970, and in the majority of grammars of English (see, for instance, GCE, Quirk et al. 1985 and Leech & Svartvik 2013).

The second group is the most widespread and is found within several linguistic frameworks. The theory states that the progressive aspect denotes *incompletion* or is marked with respect to [-totality]. Although the notion of incompletion and the feature [-totality] expresses the same content, it should be noted that the former goes back to Jespersen (1931), whereas the latter was introduced by Smith in 1983 and further developed by herself in 1991, as well as by Bache (1985) and Radden & Dirven 2007. The theory is found in Reichenbach 1947, John M. Anderson 1973, Bache 1995, Allan 1986, Brinton 1987 and 1988, Wierzbicka 1988, Jackendoff 1983, and in many others. In the same group I also include non-formal linguists who believe that the progressive aspect denotes an action in progress (e.g., Zandvoort 1962 and Fradkin 1991).

The third theory is very much like the former theory in that it also views the progressive form as expressing an ongoing process, but the two theories differ fundamentally from one another with respect to presentation. While the former theory is concerned with the meaning of the progressive aspect viewed from the point of view of the hearer, the latter theory is concerned with use conditions, or truth-conditions, which are intimately connected with the speaker. Without going into formal details, I shall say that according to the theory *the progressive is used when there is an action in progress*. It is only found among linguists who work with formal descriptions trying to define the precise conditions under which a progressive sentence or a simple sentence can be truthfully used. The group includes, among others, Bennett and Partee (1972), Dowty (1977, 1979), Freed (1979), Saurer (1984), Mourelatos (1981), Mufwene (1984), Vlach (1981), Hinrichs (1986), Landman (1992), Asher (1992), Verkuyl (1993), Parsons (1989 and 1994), Glasbey (1996), Furmaniak 2005, Wulf 2009, Altshuler 2012, Varasdi 2010 and 2013, Mayerhofer 2014, Silk 2014, and others. It should be noted that scholars working within this framework are more interested in the relationship between event structures and aspectual classes than in aspect as such, cf. Higginbotham 2000, Rothstein 1998 and Sasse 2002. The group's historical background and controversies are examined in detail by Rothstein in 2004 and by Filip in 2011.

The fourth group consists of a handful of scholars who all agree that the English progressive is not confined to the notion of aspect, but also involves *modality.* In this way the group resembles the above-mentioned one. It includes Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger (1982), Windfuhr 1985, Andersen et al. 1978, Konrad & Schousboe 1989, Ljung 1980, and probably also Portner 1998 and De Wit & Briscard 2014. I consider myself to be member of this group (see Durst-Andersen 2000).

The last decade has been characterized by a lack of interest in the progressive proper and its place in the grammatical system of English. Instead, we have witnessed a renewed interest in its history (cf. Ziegler 2006, K. Aaron Smith 2007, and Freund 2016), how it is used in various varieties of English (cf. Van Rooy 2006 and 2014, Collins 2008, Gut & Fuchs 2013, and Kirk 2015) and how it has extended its use (cf. Hundt 2004 and Śmiecińska 2003) and changed its meaning (Kranich 2010). In short, the studies of the English progressive have changed from being theoretically oriented to be empirically based with a heavy weight on corpus-based studies (for a more detailed examination of the research history of English aspect, see, for instance, Shen 2006, Zhi-fa 2006, and Mair 2012).

3.2. Introductory remarks

Supported by external evidence from first language acquisition I argue that the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English is initially coupled to the important activity vs. state

distinction, but later it is extended to all other verbs in the shape of speaker's visual experience of a situation vs. speaker's opinion of a person or thing corresponding to the image side and the idea side of a name, in this case a state verb (see figure 2).

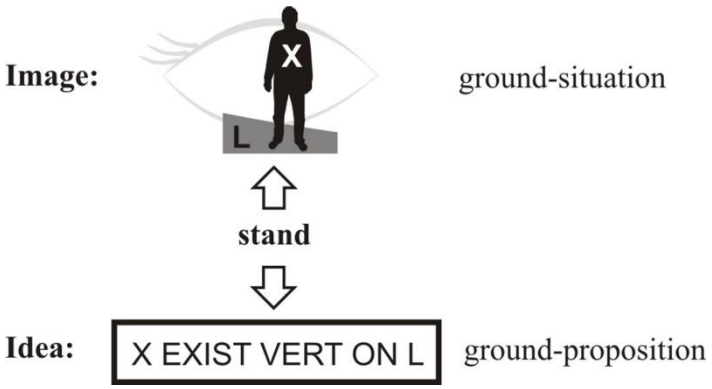

Figure 2: The verb model of the state verb "to stand"

The point is that as a lexical-grammatical form any verb potentially involves these two sides and therefore they can be activized in any language by operating either on the ground-situational structure of the verb *stand*, cf. *The statue of Nelson is standing in the middle of Trafalgar Square* (you can see Nelson, the figure, standing on the ground, Trafalgar Square), or by operating on its ground-propositional structure, cf. *The statue of Nelson stands in the middle of Trafalgar Square* (you do not see anything – it is a piece of information in which one describes the location of the statue).

3.3. The progressive aspect of simplex verbs

As all pieces of external evidence from first language acquisition suggests, the aspectual system of English is present tense based and the distinction between the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction is initially linked to the distinction between activities and states, two types of simple situations, which corresponds to the fundamental distinction between unstable and stable pictures, i.e. pictures in which the figure is either moving or not. Later it is extended to the speaker's visual experience of a simple situation vs. his or her opinion or knowledge of a person or thing:

(10) a. He is always smoking.
b. He always smokes.

(11) a. He is being polite.
b. He is polite.

(12) a. She is having a headache.
b. She has a headache.

That is why all a-examples involve a visualization effect (whenever I see him, he holds a cigarette in his hand; I can see that he is polite; I can see that she has a headache) and that is why all b-examples do not have such an effect, but simply give the speaker's opinion or knowledge concerning a specific person. This enables us to explain the well-known McDonald's slogan (cf. Freund 2016):

(13) I'm lovin' it!

The BE-part, i.e. *I am*, places the speaker, and with him the hearer, inside McDonald's. This location description which functions as an index enables the hearer to look at a person who loves the McDonald's food he or she is eating (for a similar diachronic explanation, see K. Aaron Smith 2007). This is ensured by the ING-form which gives a picture description, i.e. the hearer sees an unstable picture, i.e. an activity, before his or her eyes. Using Otto Jespersen's words: the progressive creates a frame (Jespersen 1924 and 1931).

Due to the fact that the above-mentioned examples involve simplex verbs and not complex verbs, one could question whether or not the picture presentation grounded in the speaker's experience of the situation holds good of complex verbs, too. If it does, the ING-form of complex verbs should differ from the Russian imperfective aspect of complex verbs which presents an action as an ongoing process without involving the speaker's experience at all – therefore it does not involve any visualization effect; if it does not, it should be identical to the Russian imperfective aspect and therefore be intimately linked to the notion of an ongoing process which involves the notion of purpose, i.e. that somebody is producing an activity with the purpose that it be sufficient for a new state to appear.

3.4. The progressive aspect of complex verbs

It appears that the meaning of the progressive aspect in connection with complex verbs in certain cases is close to the Russian imperfective, but what is crucial is that it is impossible to assign the meaning of an ongoing process to all complex verbs in English without distorting data. It is true of many utterances involving progressive forms of what Vendler (1967) called accomplishment terms:

(14) a. He is reading a book.
b. She is explaining her hypothesis.
c. He is writing an essay.

Here the progressive aspect can be said to present the action as an ongoing process by assigning the truth-value "T" to the activity description (i.e. it is the case that somebody is engaged in some reading-activity (cf. 14a), some explaining-activity (cf. 14b), and some writing-activity (cf. 14c) and "F" to the state description (i.e. it is not the case in (14a) that the agent has an experience of the entire book, it is not the case in (14b) that the audience have an understanding of the agent's hypothesis, and it is not the case in (14c) that the essay exists on (what I call) world-location. If this were true of present tense forms of all complex verbs in English, I would indeed have been tempted to treat English aspect as Russian aspect within complex verbs. However, it does not apply, for instance, to the following utterances involving what Vendler (1967) called achievement terms:

(15) a. He is starting his lecture now.
b. I am leaving tomorrow.
c. He is coming to visit us next month.

Here the progressive form conveys the meaning of a planned action, i.e. it is either intended by the person himself (the action is said to be agent-desired which entails that the action is controllable by the agent) or by the world (the action is said to be world-desired which does not entail that it is controllable by the agent) (for more about that, see Rothstein 2004). Nor does it apply to utterances such as the following which – I emphasize - include accomplishment terms (cf. 16a and 16c) as well as achievement terms (cf. 16b and 16d):

(16) a. She is convincing him now.
b. He is dying.
c. He is scoring another goal.
d. She is winning another race.

Here the progressive form conveys the meaning of an approaching event, i.e. a meaning that can never be rendered by the Russian imperfective aspect. This is crucial to note. In Durst-Andersen 1992 (153-65) I distinguish three types of actions corresponding to three types of complex verbs, i.e. (1) verbs like *write* (implementations) which name actions which in all normal worlds will instantiate as events by their very implementation, (2) verbs like *start* (punctuals) which, in fact, name actions from the point of view of an event whereby the activity becomes an invisible point, and (3) verbs like *convince* (attainments) which name actions which in all normal worlds do not automatically instantiate as events by their very implementation due to the fact that there is natural resistance from the patient or recipient of that action. Although there is a clear correlation between the three meanings of the English progressive (cf. 14, 15, and 16) and the distinction between three subclasses of complex verbs, it is important to stress that the hypothesis of identity between a specific meaning of the progressive form and a specific subclass of verbs naming types of actions (which looks like a natural hypothesis) seems to fall to ground when it appears that one and the same verb can have all three meanings:

(17) a. Mr. Jones is taking the oath. (Ongoing process)
b. Mr. Jones is taking her home. (Planned action)
c. Mr. Jones is taking the prize. (Approaching event)

This suggests that what matters in English is not the verb itself – as it is in Russian where the meaning of aspect is predictable from the verb itself – but the whole verb phrase, i.e. the predicate (A finding which is implicit in Vendler (1967), but explicit in Verkuyl (1972) and in Saurer (1984)). This is also an important difference between English aspect, on the one hand, and Russian and French aspect, on the other (for interesting experimental evidence for this difference, see Bott & Gattnar 2015).

It is crucial to note that all verbs of Russian corresponding to the English verbs that have the meaning of an approaching event refer to an ongoing process. The meaning of an approaching event is, however, within the meaning potential of the imperfective aspect of a minority of these (attainment) verbs in Russian, but it is certainly not their standard meaning. In short, *Vanja umiraet ot raka* 'Vanja is dying from cancer" may refer to an approaching event because of Vanja's serious condition, but the form itself just denotes an ongoing process. Let us just take an illustrative example where (18) should be compared to (16a):

(18) Ona sejchas ego ubeždaet (v tom, čto poezdku nužno otložit').
she.N now he.A convince.Pres.ipf
'At this very moment she is trying to convince him (to postpone the journey).'

The meaning of this attainment verb in Russian can be paraphrased as follows:

(18') *She is producing an activity (producing arguments) with the intention that this activity be sufficient for the fact that he shares her opinion.*

(18') represents the meaning of an ongoing process in connection with attainment verbs, i.e. one **is trying** to convince him (for further details, see Durst-Andersen 1994). This means that the conceptual

notion of *purpose* is intimately connected to the Russian imperfective aspect. This is not true of the English progressive. It seems to be linked to the perceptual notion of an unstable picture (cf. above).

3.5. Discussion

If progressive forms are assumed to be based on the speaker's visual experience of an unstable picture, i.e. an activity, it is predictable that *start, leave* and *come* cannot be used to convey the meaning of an ongoing process, because they have no separate activity at all. They are punctual verbs where the very activity marks the change itself. 'Starting-, leaving- and coming-situations' may, however, be visualized. If one does that, the picture becomes all those visual stimuli being received prior to the actual change and which leave you with an impression of a person who is about to do something, i.e. you create a certain belief. This appears quite clearly from the following question:

(19) Are you leaving?

This question is asked by the speaker because the hearer is doing something which leaves the impression that he is about to leave. What the hearer is doing is received by the speaker as a visual picture which is unstable. By linking the physical preconditions for leaving and starting and all other punctual actions, it seems natural to extend them to the psychological preconditions for performing an action, viz. an action which is planned and scheduled, or simply with something that the speaker **believes** to be the case. It should be noted that the same verb can be used in its ongoing process-meaning if it is used in the plural:

(20) Many people are leaving Syria.

This is so, because "leaving" becomes visualizable as a real activity if there are many figures (i.e. people in this case) on the same ground (i.e. Syria). Note that there will be no difference in meaning if (19) and (20) were translated into Russian – Both will involve a planned action which in Russian is solely linked to what people know. The imperfective aspect in Russian has nothing to do with the speaker's beliefs.

In the same way, if progressive forms are assumed to be based on the speaker's visual experience, it is predictable that verbs like *convincing, dying, scoring,* and *winning* cannot be used to convey the meaning of an ongoing process, because the lexical meaning of these verbs (where the state description takes a crucial part) is not visualizable as an ongoing process, where in principle one is in the middle of an action, neither in the beginning, nor in the end. In order to visualize an understanding of these actions on the basis of what is happening in reality, one has to be very near the change of state. In other words, the visual stimuli should leave you with the impression that a person is about to change his opinion (in the case of *X be convincing Y*, cf. 16a), is about to leave the world (in the case of *X be dying*, cf. 16b), that a football is about to pass the line (in the case of *X be scoring a goal*, cf. 16c), or that a person is about to breast the tape (in the case of *She is winning the race*, cf. 16d*)*. If the progressive form were based on a conceptual understanding of the world, the meaning of the progressive form in connection with these so-called *attainment* verbs (cf. above) would have been that of an ongoing process with an emphasis on the agent's trying to achieve his or her goal. This is what we find in the Russian imperfective aspect (cf. 18).

In other words, it is my hypothesis that the progressive form of complex verbs does not directly denote an ongoing process. If it did, all verbs should denote an ongoing process. It does so only indirectly through the notion of an unstable picture. Due to the fact that an action is a construct and due to the fact that one cannot but refer to situations in the real world or in an imagined world, where there

is a distinction between ongoing processes and events, people are forced to couple the progressive form to either of them. The only natural choice is here the ongoing process because it focuses on the activity, i.e. the unstable picture. In that way we can explain why people consider the progressive aspect to be closely related to incompletion, non-totality, duration, etc., i.e. all that can be attributed to the notion of an ongoing process without depriving us the possibility of explaining and describing other parts of the meaning of the progressive aspect in English. In this connection it is crucial to note that what I have tried to demonstrate, namely that the meanings of the English progressive aspect do not match the meanings of the Russian imperfective aspect, is heavily supported by data from Russian-English bilinguals (Pavlenko 2010) and by experimental evidence from studies involving native and non-native speakers of English (Schramm & Mensink 2016).

This, however, is not tantamount to saying that English grammar completely ignores the distinction between simplex verbs and complex verbs. That state and activity verbs are alike and, indeed, differ from accomplishment and achievement verbs by being simpler in meaning appears at other places in English grammar, for instance, in the present perfect. Thus *Jones has been in the army* and *Jones has worked in a factory* are alike, since they both present, respectively, the past state and activity referred to by the verb as being a present property of Jones (traditionally called the experiential use of the present perfect, but here the characterization function). This stands in opposition to achievement and accomplishment verbs, i.e. complex verbs, which may be used to characterize the subject, e.g., *Jones has written a novel* (but no poems) or *Jones has left his wife twice*, but normally are used to give news-flashes involving the direct object as theme, e.g., *Jones has (just) written a novel* (Go and buy it!) or *Jones has (just) left his wife* (so she needs somebody to comfort her). The news-flash function is completely impossible with state and activity verbs, i.e. simplex verbs, because unlike transitive sentences as *Jones has written a novel* or *Jones has left his wife* they as intransitive sentences involving atelic predicates do not contain two themes corresponding to the subject (*Jones*) and the direct object (*novel, wife*) that can be focused on – only one theme, i.e. *Jones*, the subject. In other words, *Jones has been in the army* and *Jones has worked in a factory* cannot be used to give news-flashes, because they involve intransitive, atelic predicates and thus only denote single situations in which *Jones* is the only participant and the only possible theme.

That the distinction between simplex and complex verbs does play a role in the mind of English speakers also appears from the fact that simplex verbs do not take the prefix *re-* (e.g. **re-lie, -have, -iron, -work*, etc.), but prefer *again* (e.g. *lie, have, iron, work again*), whereas complex verbs (if their lexical meaning allows it, cf. **rekill*) take this prefix (e.g. *re-write the novel, re-enter, re-construct, re-organize, re-take a scene, re-appear,* etc.). Note that if an intransitive, atelic simplex verb takes the prefix, it automatically becomes a transitive, telic complex verb, e.g. *resit an examen, replay the semifinal*, etc. This illustrates the important distinction between simplex and complex verbs in English. Here the grammatical distinction is covert, but, as we will see in the following paragraph, in Russian it is far more overt.

3.6. Conclusion

I conclude that since the meanings of simplex as well as complex verbs in the progressive aspect differ from the meanings of the Russian imperfective aspect, the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction represents a specific type of aspect. This type of aspect is present tense based and represents a distinction within the imperfective aspect. As all studies of first language acquisition show, it is initially tied up with the distinction between states and activities being coupled to the perceptual notions of stable and unstable pictures. At this stage the English child will use the ING-form when speaking of activities, cf. *Stevie swimming*, but the NON-ING-form when speaking of states, cf. *Stevie want that*. Later the aspectual distinction is extended to all verbs and during this stage the NON-ING-

form loses its connection to stable pictures and becomes attached to the notion of idea, while the ING-form keeps its connection to the perceptual notion of instability, but at the same time to the notion of visualization (see Figure 2). The consequence is that when the ING-form is used with state verbs, it will automatically refer directly to an activity situation based on a state, cf. *She is being polite*, but at the same time it will imply that the quality named appears from a picture being received by the speaker, cf. *What was it that you were wanting*; *She is hating her father*; *Are you having a headache?* In that way we can argue that the use of the ING-form is only ungrammatical if it refers to something that cannot be visualized, cf. **The bottle is containing water* vs. *The bottle is containing more and more water*; **She is knowing it* vs. *She is knowing more and more*, etc. (see also Moens 1987 for an explanation). This simple rule explains why and when the progressive form of state verbs can be used and why and when it cannot. Note that all state verbs in Russian can occur in the imperfective aspect and all state verbs in French can occur in *imparfait*. It is a characteristic feature that distinguishes English from Russian and French.

This means that although English verbs name the same situations as do all other languages including Russian and French, viz. states, activities, and actions, they do not directly refer to a state, an activity or ongoing process – only indirectly through the speaker's, primarily, visual experience of the situation referred to (the progressive aspect) and through the speaker's store of opinions of the person or thing referred to. The communicative direction of the English progressive vs. non-progressive aspectual distinction goes through the speaker. The hearer is directed by the speaker to his or her mind and through the speaker's internal reality the hearer gets access to external reality. In short, the English progressive vs. non-progressive distinction is first-person oriented and involves only an indirect reference to external situations.

4. The Russian type of aspect

4.1. Russian linguistics

As to Russian aspect, all scholars agree that the perfective is the marked member of the opposition between the perfective and imperfective aspect. Due to the fact that Russian aspect has attracted scholars' attention for the last 100 years, the literature is enormous and the existing theories are many. They may, however, be divided into three main groups: (1) *single-feature based theories* which include six separate theories. They all believe in the invariance hypothesis, i.e. it is possible to assign one meaning to the perfective aspect being the marked member; (2) *multiple-feature based theories* which also consist of six individual theories. They all abandoned the invariance hypothesis and believe in what is commonly called the variance hypothesis (cf. Timberlake 1985); and (3) *non-feature-based theories* which embrace five non-uniform theories among which the most important is the meaning↔text approach developed by Mel'čuk and Apresjan (cf. Padučeva 1990 and 2009). However, it would not be wrong to say that regardless of linguistic profile, the vast majority of Russian linguists would agree, *mutatis mutandis*, that the perfective aspect denotes a *closed* (cf. Jakobson 1957, Timberlake 1985 and 2004, Rappaport 1985, and Nichols 1985)/*total* (cf. Forsyth 1970, Isachenko 1963, Comrie 1976, Bondarko 1983, and Stunová 1990)/*bounded* (cf. Dahl 1981, Maslov 1984, Cohen 1989, and Avilova 1976) event which can be localized in time, while the imperfective aspect denotes the exact opposite, viz. an incomplete action/an action in its non-totality/an action in progress. Tatevosov (2014) seems to be the only Russian linguist who is inspired by the truth-conditional approach to aspect (cf. Dowty (1977) and thus considers the perfective to have what is named a modal character within this framework. He (2011) also believes that all Russian verbs are born aspectless. This assumption is a precondition, if one wants to treat aspect in the same way in all languages (For an account of how Russian aspect is treated in the East and the West, see Fortuin & Kamphuis 2015).

In recent years the focus has in many ways shifted. Under heavy influence from the meaning↔text tradition which emphasizes the lexical meaning of a verb and uses paraphrases to depict this meaning Russian linguists tend now to look at aspect as a lexical-grammatical category the representatives of which do not possess any invariant meaning. Instead, each verb in principle has its own specific semantic nuance of perfectivity (see, for instance, Janda 2007 and Janda & Lyashevskaya 2011). This means that the sharp distinction between lexical aspect (verb class) and grammatical aspect introduced by Smith (1991) and since then widely accepted among aspectologists has been ignored within modern Russian linguistics or to put it more directly: Russian linguists have never paid serious attention to works outside the Russian tradition. This lexically-oriented shift has caused a renewed interest in prefixes and their specific role in conceptualization (see, for instance, Nesset 2013). Moreover, the idea of empty prefixes creating perfective partners to their imperfective correlates has been completely abandoned. It is argued that they always have a semantic purpose – In Janda et al. 2013 they are treated as verb classifiers parallel to nominal classifiers in Mandarin Chinese. Others who were engaged in Russian aspect proper are now occupied with event structures (for instance, Paducheva 2009) thus combining a truth-functional approach from Partee (cf. Bennett & Partee 1972) with the lexical-semantic approaches found in Apresjan's and Wierzbicka's works.

4.2. Introductory remarks

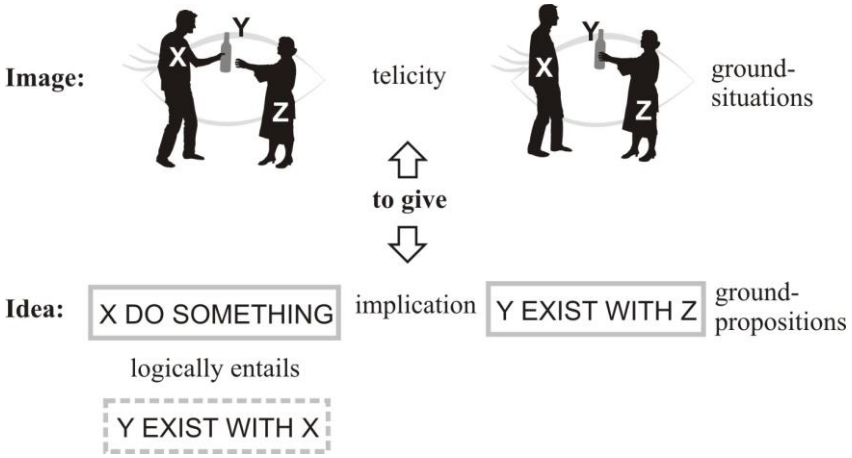

Figure 3: The verb model of X GIVE Y TO Z

I shall argue that the perfective and imperfective aspects are the linguistic counterparts of events and processes, respectively, and that a given perfective and imperfective verb pair, e.g., *dat'* (pf)/*davat'* (ipf) 'give' (see Figure 3) or *vključit'* (pf)/*vključat'* (ipf) 'turn on', constitute a pair, because they denote the same concept, i.e. that of a complex situation (if named from a quantitative point of view, i.e. an activity plus a state) or that of an action (if named from a qualitative point of view, i.e. an activity related to a state by telicity). Purely aspectual partners are, in other words, those perfective and imperfective verbs that only together complete the notion of an action. Their difference in meaning should thus be traced back to how actions manifest themselves in reality, namely, as events where the bottle (Y) is with Z, but not with X anymore, and as processes where the bottle (Y) is with X, but not yet with Z. Their shared meaning should thus be traced back to how events and processes merge into the idea of a complex situation of an action, cf. the verb model of an action where the bottle (Y) is with X and Z at the same time (see Figure 3). This demonstrates

that the complex situation of an action is a construct as well as a collective concept of an event and a process.

Based on Johnson-Laird's notion of 'mental model' (1983) I argue that human beings have at their disposal two mental models, one of events and another of processes. These mental models are used during the processing of visual stimuli, respectively, from states and activities to turn a visual input into a conceptual intake, i.e. convert pictures into mental propositions. After that the input, i.e. the experience itself, and the intake, i.e. the understanding of the visual experience, is stored as the total outcome in the present and past world stores, respectively, but in the same way, namely as a combination of what the person had been seeing, the input, and what he or she had understood, the intake. Without this intermediate level of mental models placed between the input and the outcome it is impossible to account for the fact that a concrete stable picture, e.g., an empty bottle of wine, can be understood as being the consequence of somebody's drinking activity, although nobody saw that activity (see Figure 4). The perfective aspect and the imperfective aspect seem to be the linguistic counterparts of the mental model of events and processes (For further evidence, see Durst-Andersen 2012).

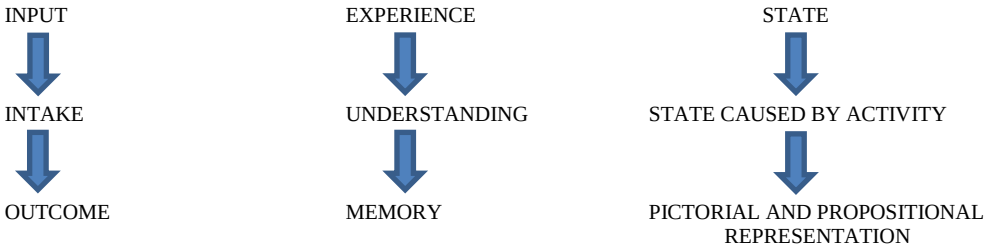

Figure 4: Processing visual stimuli on the basis of a stable picture

4.3. The perfective vs. imperfective distinction within complex verbs

Since, from a purely linguistic point of view, the two aspects pair certain propositions with certain situations, they actually represent two different statement models. The properties of these statement models are, however, identical to those of the two mental models. If we insert the perfective utterance *Oleg dal Ol'ge butylku* 'Oleg gave Ol'ga the bottle' into the perfective statement model we get the following paraphrase:

(21') a. Oleg produced an activity [the activity description]
which was sufficient for the fact
that the bottle exists with Ol'ga [the state description]

If we insert the corresponding imperfective utterance *Oleg daval Ol'ge butylku* 'Oleg was giving Ol'ga the bottle' into the imperfective (standard) statement model we get the following paraphrase:

(21') b. Oleg produced an activity [the activity description]
with the intention that the activity be sufficient for
the bottle to be existing with Ol'ga [the state description]

Let us take an authentic example from a Russian child in order to illustrate the two statement models:

(22) ...otkryvaju vorota... Otkryl!

...open.1sg.Pres.ipf. door.A... open.Pret.pf.Masc
'...I am trying to open the door...It is open now.'

(22') *...I am producing an activity with the intention that it be sufficient for the fact that the door is open...I produced the activity that was sufficient for the fact that the door is open!*

The Russian perfective aspect presents an action as an event by asserting the state description and presupposing the activity description. This is tantamount to saying that the state is foregrounded, whereas the activity is backgrounded. It is thus the very assertion of the state description (automatically foregrounding the state) that makes it possible to translate *Otkryl!* by means of *It is open!* Many English utterances involving a present tense of BE plus an adjective will correspond to perfective verbs in the past tense, because in Russian a certain state has to be related to a certain past activity. This is also a characteristic feature of the Russian aspectual system. The Russian perfective aspect, however, does not assert that the state obtains at the moment of speech (as the present perfect does in its news-flash function as well as in its characterization function) – it just asserts that a state obtains at the moment of reference. The Russian perfective aspect, however, shares the retrospective viewpoint with the present perfect. This means that both forms start in the state and then go back to the activity that caused that state. The opposite of the retrospective viewpoint is the prospective viewpoint, where you start in the activity and then go forward towards the state. This viewpoint is characteristic of the English progressive, the French *imparfait*, and the Russian imperfective aspect, but it is also found in the English simple past form and in the French *passé simple.*

The differences between Rus. *Otkryl*! and Eng. *I opened it*! are many, although we cannot translate it otherwise: the Russian perfective focusses on the state, whereas the English simple past focusses on the entire action; the Russian perfective has a retrospective viewpoint, whereas the simple past has a prospective viewpoint; and the Russian perfective places the activity, but not the state, in the past world, whereas the English simple past places the entire action in the past world. In other words, the two forms differ in three ways: with respect to situational focus, time perspective, and time anchoring.

The Russian imperfective aspect is the "negation" of the perfective aspect or its converse counterpart – it asserts the activity description and leaves the state description as a *standard implicature*, i.e. it is to the hearer to decide whether it is true or false (cf. Durst-Andersen 1992 and 1994). In short, the imperfective aspect is unmarked and can be used to denote an ongoing process, a cancelled event, a habitual action, an intended action, a characterization, etc. (for a detailed examination, see Sonnerhauser 2008). No doubt, the assertion of an activity description with a certain intention is the standard meaning of the imperfective aspect, i.e. this meaning underlies all meanings that can be attributed to the imperfective aspect.

In short, the perfective aspect involves two truth-value assignments to two different propositions. This is important because only complex verbs involve two so-called ground-propositions, i.e. an activity description and a state description (see Figure 3). The Russian aspectual distinction being intimately linked to complex verbs has, however, been extended to simplex verbs, too. This is a general tendency in all languages and is not something that is specific to Russian. The result of this extension is, however, that we find perfective and imperfective verbs everywhere and therefore also among simplex verbs, i.e. state and activity verbs, cf. 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d. Thus if we did not have at our disposal data from first language and second language acquisition and evidence from so-called heritage Russian and the diachronic development of Russian aspect, it would, probably, have been impossible or, at least, very difficult to see where the original aspectual distinction in Russian sets out.

All available data from the early acquisition of Russian point to the fact that the distinction between telic and atelic verbs, corresponding to my distinction between complex verbs and simplex verbs, plays a dominant role, and that imperfective verbs occur in the present tense of atelic verbs, i.e. simplex verbs, while perfective verbs occur in the past tense of telic verbs, i.e. complex verbs (cf. Stoll 2001, Stephany & Voeikova 2003, Bar-Shalom 2002, and Gagarina 2003). This distinction is easily learnt by Russian children, but is difficult to learn by English speaking bilinguals acquiring Russian at the same time, which is worth noting (cf. Slabakova 2005). Moreover, all available pieces of evidence from heritage Russian and bilingual studies clearly demonstrate that the persons speaking Russian make a big difference between what is called pure aspect, i.e. aspect within complex verbs, and *Aktionsarten* or procedurals, i.e. aspectual markers within simplex verbs (cf. Pereltsvaig 2008, Stoll 1998 and 2005, Bar-Shalom & Zaretsky 2008, Braginsky & Rothstein 2008, and Pálosi 2014). Therefore I conclude that the distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity within complex verbs is a purely grammatical distinction, whereas the distinction between various perfective and imperfective *Aktionsarten* within simplex verbs is a lexical-grammatical one (see below). This is the reason why Russian-English bilinguals do not make mistakes when they use the perfective and the imperfective aspects, but a lot of lexical errors (cf. Bar-Shalom & Zaretsky 2008).

4.4. The perfective vs. imperfective distinction within simplex verbs

What is called procedural verbs, or *Aktionsart* verbs in traditional Slavic terminology, is solely restricted to simplex verbs, i.e. state and activity verbs, which all involve a single ground-proposition (see, for instance, Figure 2, and the examples in (3)). This means that procedural verbs can be regarded as an extension of the original purely aspectual system within complex verbs. The assignment of two truth-values to one and the same propositional content necessarily implies two *opposite* truth-values. This means that a perfective procedural verb asserts that a certain state description or activity description is true and, at the same time, that it is false, or vice versa. Let us take an example. By saying *Ivan uvidel* (pf/pret) *Petra* 'Ivan saw Petr' (lit. began to see) one refers to a certain state where Ivan has a visual experience of Petr, but asserts that *Petr existed visually for Ivan* is false prior to the time of reference and that *Petr existed visually for Ivan* is true at the time of reference. Thus the perfective procedural verb *uvidet'* presents the state referred to as an event, i.e. as a change from not being in that state to being in that state, i.e. as a change from *minus* to *plus*. This view of procedural verbs enables us to divide the perfective procedural verbs into three distinct groups: the inchoative, the completive and the circumstantial groups – I emphasize that the inchoative and completive meanings are found in the French *passé simple* form of simplex verbs, too: Inchoatives (e.g. *uvidet'* 'see', *pojti* 'walk, go') mark a change or a leap *from minus to plus* (start seeing, start walking), whereas completives (*počitat'*, *pročitat'*) mark a change or a leap *from plus to minus* (stop reading) – the different prefixes indicate the duration of the activity or state referred to, in casu the reading activity. Thus, both *počitat'* and *pročitat'* refer to a reading-activity and assert that *X produced reading-activity* is true prior to the time of reference, but that it is false at the time of reference. By doing so, they present the reading-activity referred to as an event, i.e. as a change from being in a reading-activity to not being in that reading-activity. The third group, called circumstantials, can be said to include 'begin-verbs' as well as 'stop-verbs', but in a highly specified manner. Thus *razgovorit'sja* is not only 'start talking', but 'gradually get into a conversation by becoming more and more interested in it', and thus *zabegat'sja* is not only 'stop running', but 'gradually stop running by becoming more and more tired'. This group thus specifies the *quantitative* as well as the *qualitative conditions of the change* itself, *either* the change from minus to plus *or* from plus to minus. Interestingly enough, the last group is signalled by a certain prefix and the

suffix '*-sja*'. Note that procedural verbs belonging to this group have a certain tendency to be reinterpreted as perfective action verbs, i.e. they may easily be interpreted as complex verbs and when this happens, an imperfective partner will automatically be created.

It must be emphasized that from some of the perfective procedural verbs it is also possible to derive imperfective procedurals, e.g., *pochityvat'* 'to be used to read a little bit' or *popisyvat'* 'to be used to write a little bit'. In that way the system does not consist of one imperfective and one perfective form as it does within complex verbs, but of one imperfective non-derived basic form and several imperfective and perfective forms that are all derived. They thus create a triangle. Note also that it is not possible to derive a passive form from any perfective procedural verb at all, although it seems to be transitive (cf. **Pirogi bily prožareny babuškoj celye tri časa* < *Babuška prožarila pirogi celye tri časa* 'She was frying the Russian pies for 3 hours), whereas it possible from its homonym, i.e. the perfective complex verb (cf. *Bifšteks byl prožaren babuškoj za polčasa* < *Babuška prožarila bifšteks za polčasa* 'She fried the beef steak in half an hour') (For a similar description of syntactic differences between simplex verbs and complex verbs seen from a Vendlerian point of view, see Braginsky & Rothstein 2008).

What the different groups of perfective procedural verbs thus share is that they present the non-action referred to as an event (a change from a non-state/non-activity to a state/activity or a change from a state/activity to a non-state/non-activity) – they differ, however, in what they focus upon: either the plus (i.e. inchoatives), the minus (i.e. completives), or the relation between plus and minus (i.e. circumstantials).

As already mentioned at several places, the existence of perfective and imperfective *Aktionsart* verbs within simplex verbs makes the Russian system easily to compare with other Slavic languages, but not with English or French. At this specific place, we are dealing with hundreds of triangles consisting of the underived, basic imperfective state or activity verb and all perfective and imperfective *Aktionsart* verbs derived from it. Within complex verbs we only find purely aspectual pairs consisting of a perfective and an imperfective form. This is the reason why I argue that the distinction between simplex verbs and complex verbs is overt in Russian.

4.5. Concluding remarks

The aspectual system of Russian ignores the English aspectual distinction unlike the aspectual system of Chinese which consists of the perfective aspect signalled by the particle *le*, but has at its disposal two imperfective forms: (*zheng*)*zài* which gives a situation description and *de* / *guo* which both give a characterization: *de* from the point of view of the present world and *guo* from the point of view of the past world (see also Klein, Li & Hindrichs 2000). The imperfective aspect in Russian is completely vague in this respect. Russian aspect is past tense based and is grounded in conception. The distinction between an event, a state caused by an activity, and a process, an activity intended to cause a change of state, cannot be drawn on the basis of perception alone, although the identification of an event takes its starting point in a stable picture, and the identification of a process takes its point of departure in an unstable picture. However, in order to identify an event and a process one need the concepts of causation and purpose, respectively. In other words, the distinction is conceptually based which opposes it to the English progressive vs. non-progressive distinction which is perceptually based. Moreover, with the introduction of the concepts of an event and a process the concepts of past, present, and future get extremely relevant, since the identification of an event relates a present state to a past activity, and since the identification of a process relates a present activity to a later future state. All this is the result of viewing a complex situation as consisting of two components, i.e. an activity and a state.

I also conclude that the distinction in Russian between simplex verbs and complex verbs is far more overt than in English: all complex verbs in Russian consist of aspectual pairs, whereas all simplex verbs are born imperfective without any perfective partner. That is to say, if one takes all non-derived verbs in Russian (i.e. verbs without prefixes and suffixes), you create two groups: one imperfective group and another group being perfective. In the perfective group all will have an imperfective partner. This is the case with the majority of Slavic languages and this is exactly what distinguishes Slavic aspect from aspect in non-Slavic languages. From this one can conclude that telicity and perfectivity cannot be the same in Russian (or in any other language, for that matter, cf. Verkuyl 2008), but, interestingly, it appears that English learners of Russian think so (see Lenchuk 2016). Telicity is tied to action verbs/complex verbs; perfectivity is originally related to a specific view on an action, but later extended to a specific view on any kind of situation.

As this examination of Russian aspect has demonstrated all over the place, the perfective and imperfective aspect in Russian is exclusively oriented towards external reality. All action verbs/complex verbs occur in pairs, e.g., *arestovat'* (pf)/*arestovyvat'* (ipf), in opposition to action verbs/complex verbs in English and French where we always find a single verb, e.g, *arrest* in English and *arrêter* in French. The reason is that Russian cannot give a name to something that cannot be found in external reality. An action, an activity related to a state by telicity, is a collective concept that has no immediate counterpart in external reality, but it manifests itself either as an event, a state caused by an activity, or as a process, an activity intended to cause a state. That is why Russian has two names: a perfective form that names the event and an imperfective form that names the ongoing process. The interest of the Russian language in external reality is even more apparent in state and activity verbs (simplex verbs) where *Aktionsart* verbs are used in order to specify the exact way in which a certain state obtained or the exact way in which a certain activity took place. I conclude that the communicative direction of the Russian perfective vs. imperfective distinction is oriented towards external reality. It is third-person oriented. We found no traces of first person in the use of Russian aspect as we consistently did in the use of the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English. And we found no traces of second person in the use of Russian aspect either as we will see below when examining the use of the three aspectual forms in French written discourse.

5. The French type of aspect – its system in written discourse

5.1. French linguistics

The number of theories of aspect in French is minimal compared to those found in English and Russian linguistics. This might be partly explained by the fact that traditional grammars treat aspectual forms as if they were tense forms, cf. Hawkins & Towell 2010. The majority of scholars agree (see, e.g., Nolke & Olsen 2003, Waugh 1975 and 1990, Vikner 1985, Sten 1952, Nicolau 2003, Desclés & Guentchéva 1990, Labeau 2002, Molendijk 1990 and 2005, Haff 2005, and Kragh 2015) that as the marked member *passé simple* views an action in its totality, whereas the *imparfait* form views it in its non-totality. It must, however, be mentioned that these French linguists have solely looked at the aspectual system of formal or written French and completely neglected the aspectual system of informal or oral French. Moreover, they regard the aspectual system of formal French as consisting of only two past forms, i.e. *passé simple* and *imparfait*, leaving out *passé composé* (see below) and with a heavy interest in the unmarked member of the opposition, i.e. *imparfait* – presumably, because it has so many interesting functions in written as well as in oral discourse (cf. Bres 2005, Berthonneau & Kleiber 1999 and 2007, Caudal, Vetters & Roussarie 2003, Engel & Labeau 2005, Anscombre 2004, de Saussure & Sthioul 2005), but almost no interest in *passé simple*

(see, however, Molendijk 1990, Nicolau 2003, Caudal & Vetters 2007 and Brisard 2010). New grammars of French (cf. Mosegaard Hansen 2016 and Jubb & Rouxeville 2014) or completely new accounts of aspect (cf. Salaberry 2017) look at modern French from the point of view of oral discourse and thus ignore the *passé simple* form viewing *passé composé* and *imparfait* as the real aspectual distinction in French.

Traditionally, the two past forms, viz. *imparfait* and *passé simple*, are treated as if they were identical to the Russian imperfective and perfective aspects having both past and present tense forms. This is particularly unfortunate, because if one of the aspectual systems of French should be compared to that of Russian, it should be the aspectual system of informal or oral French (For a similar view, see Cox 1994 and Nossalik 2014). One has to distinguish the aspectual system of written/formal French which consists of three past forms, i.e. *imparfait*, *passé composé* and *passé simple*, and the aspectual system of oral/informal French which consists of two past forms, i.e. *passé composé* and *imparfait*, as well as two future forms, i.e. *future* and *future prôche*. In order to be completely explicit about formal and informal French we shall take a look at (23) and (24):

(23) Il écrivait (imparfait) une lettre, quand j'entrai (passé simple). [Formal French]
(24) Il écrivait (imparfait) une lettre, quand je suis entré (passé composé). [Informal French]

In (23) and (24) *imparfait* denotes an ongoing process, whereas the event referred to differs in the two examples. In (23) *passé simple* is used to refer to the event. This is a characteristic feature of written or formal discourse. In (24) *passé compose* is used to refer to the event. This is a characteristic feature of oral or informal discourse. They are both used to tell a story. As mentioned several times, in oral or informal speech *the passé simple form* is missing, leaving us with a binary distinction between one imperfective form, *imparfait*, and one perfective form, *passé composé*. The type found in oral discourse thus represents a two-way distinction which from the point of view of content is more or less identical to the Russian distinction between the perfective and imperfective aspect. Note, however, that from the point of view of form they are not alike.

Let me repeat the examples touched upon in the introduction, but let us focus on the temporal meanings of these forms in the oral/informal system and in the written/formal system of French.

(25) a. Elle entrait dans la chambre. 'She was entering the room.'
b. Elle entra dans la chambre. 'She entered the room.'
c. Elle est entré dans la chambre. 'She has entered the room/She is in the room.'

If we apply a temporal point of view to (25c), it becomes obvious that *passé composé* in informal French is very different from the *passé composé* as it is used in formal French (see Apothéloz 2016). The former is identical in that respect to the *passé simple* form, whereas the latter is not. *Passé simple* in (25b) may be considered to be a genuine past tense form that places the activity as well as the state in the past world. This is not tantamount to saying that the form cannot be used about an event the state of which still holds good. The only thing we know from hearing (25b) is that "I was in the room" is the case at the moment of past reference, but whether "I am in the room" at the moment of speech is to the hearer to decide. The form itself does not say anything about this. If we look at (25c), the same holds good for the *passé composé* in informal or oral French. In other words, when speaking of the *passé composé* of informal/oral French, *suis* does not mean "true in the present world". It means that the state is foregrounded, while the activity is backgrounded. All this is achieved by asserting the state description and presupposing an activity description (which may refer to either an ongoing activity, an intended activity or an obligated activity). The order of attention is, as already indicated just above, signalled by the order of morphemes: *suis entré*. This is

extremely important, because it is exactly this relationship that is lacking in formal French. In this formal system of written discourse the *passé composé* asserts that a state description holds good at the moment of speech/writing, and that is why it cannot be used in narration in written discourse.

In the following we shall concentrate entirely on the three-way distinction found in written discourse, because it constitutes a type of its own.

5.2. Introductory remarks

As well-known, the French *passé simple* vs. *passé compose* vs. *imparfait* distinction is learnt in written discourse and for that reason it occurs much later than the two other aspectual distinctions examined above. The distinction is restricted to the past tense and is developed within complex verbs. This applies especially to the *passé simple* form the original meaning of which is found within complex verbs, but later has been extended to simplex verbs. Here the form has either an inchoative meaning or a completive one: *Il voyagea* means either "He started traveling" or "He has ended his travelling" and *Il travailla* means either "He started to work/working" or "He stopped working". This is exactly what we see in Russian, cf. above. We shall return to this crucial observation just below.

5.3. The imparfait form

As an aspectual form *imparfait* belongs to the imperfective aspect, which means that is directly opposed to both the *passé composé* and the *passé simple*. The form is multi-ambiguous (see, for instance, Labeau 2002 where all its contextual meanings proposed by various aspectologists are given, and Brisard 2010 where the virtuality component is emphasized), but for our purpose the following specific meanings will suffice:

(26) Il lisait un livre [Ongoing process]. 'He was reading a book'.

(27) Une heure plus tard, il prenait le train pour Paris [Planned action]. 'An hour later he was going to take the train for Paris.'

(28) Une heure après, il prenait le train pour Paris [Imparfait pittoresque]. 'An hour before he had taken the train for Paris.'

(29) Il tombait de fatique [Imparfait de conatu]. 'He was about to fall from fatigue'.

(30) Si tu avançais, je frappais [Imagined world]. 'If you step forward, I will hit you.'

(31) Je faisais le taxi de nuit, pendant que je terminais mes études. 'I drove a night taxi, while I was finishing my degree.'

This variety of meanings suggests that the *imparfait* is the unmarked member. Thus it may refer to an ongoing process (cf. 26), a planned action (cf. 27), an event (cf. 28), a non-event (cf. 29), a future event (cf. 30), and a characterization of the subject referred to (cf. the first *imparfait* form of (31)). What remains common to all these uses is the descriptive function. The *imparfait* fulfills this function by asserting that the activity description (p) is true, and by leaving the state description (q) as what was above called a standard implicature, i.e. it is to the hearer to decide whether it is true or false in the situation referred to. Sometimes the state description of the action is false (cf. 26, 27, 29,

and the second *imparfait* form of (31)), sometimes it is true (cf. 28 and 30). As should be evident, the *imparfait* involves the same assertive abilities as the Russian imperfective aspect, but, nevertheless, it has three meanings, cf. 28, 29 and 30, that are completely foreign to the Russian imperfective and therefore also to people having Russian as their mother tongue. This definitely suggests that *imparfait* must be something else, and that it is part of another way of thinking than the Russian imperfective aspect, although in certain respects it shares the vagueness of the Russian imperfective aspect (see 31). As it appears from the translation, English uses the non-progressive form to give a characterization of the person referred to (i.e. he had the quality of being a taxi-driver) and the progressive form to denote an ongoing process (i.e. he was in the process of finishing his degree), but French does not distinguish between the two meanings. In this way, French resembles Russian. But whereas the Russian imperfective aspect has an ongoing process as its standard meaning, the same meaning in French seems to be a contextual one. This clearly appears from (31). Note that these two meanings have not been separated by French aspectologists.

5.4. The two perfective forms plus the imparfait

The French aspectual distinction in general seems to presuppose Russian aspect and seems, instead, to superimpose a distinction between two ways of presenting an event, i.e. to interpret the notion of perfectivity in two different ways. The French aspectual system in written discourse incorporates the event vs. process distinction, which in itself incorporates the activity vs. state distinction. In that way, French aspect in written discourse is grounded on a meta-conceptual level. It is founded in the complex vs. simplex verb distinction which is related to the interrelative concepts of telicity and lack of telicity between two situations (compare Figure 2 with Figure 1). This appears clearly from the use of *passé simple* in French written discourse: in connection with complex verbs the form presents an action, i.e. a complex situation, in its totality; however, in connection with state and activity verbs (simplex verbs) it gets an inchoative meaning or a completive meaning. This observation is extremely important, because it demonstrates exactly the same as we stated in connection with the perfective procedurals in Russian in 4.4., namely, that the aspectual meaning of *passé simple* in connection with simplex verbs is not the original one, but a derived meaning. The original meaning is found within complex verbs where both *passé simple* and *passé composé* involve two truth-value assignments: both the activity and the state description are true with respect to the situations referred to – that is why both forms refer to an event, i.e. a state caused by an activity. In short, in connection with French written discourse, we have three forms that all enter into the past tense system: *passé simple*, *passé composé* and *imparfait*.

In my attempt to look for an explanation for the tripartite system as well as an explanation for the reason why it only applies to complex verbs involving two different descriptions, my attention was attracted to Peirce's argument forms (cf. Peirce 1932). Why that? Because he distinguishes, not two, but three logical argument forms, viz. deduction, abduction, and induction, and, as we know, an argument must involve two premises, i.e. *p* (in casu: an activity description) and *q* (in casu: a state description). In other words, his logical system could explain the two peculiarities at the same time: why French aspect has three forms and why it is restricted to complex verbs having *p* as well as *q*. Only complex verbs, and not simplex verbs, have the ability to enter into logical argumentation, which always involves two premises, i.e. *p* and *q*, and a conclusion, *if p, then q* (just to give an example, in this case of an inductive argument). Simplex verbs lack the ability to combine *p* and *q* due to their non-complex structure. And the French aspectual system involves three forms just as Peirce's logic consists of three argument forms.

5.5. The three logical arguments

A logical argument consists of two premises and one conclusion drawn from the premises. The three obligatory components are consistently called the same by Peirce, i.e. Rule (if p, then q), Case (p) and Result (q). This allows one to see what is going on when we shift from one argument to another. Since the two premises always appear in pairs of two, we get three logical argument forms each involving its own conclusion. This means that Rule, Case and Result all act as the conclusion where the remaining two components compose the premises. Let us take an illustrative example.

A. Deduction: A conclusion where one goes from Rule via Case to Result – one goes forward in time and makes a prediction. The view is prospective:

   RULE: All the beans from this bag are white
   CASE: These beans are from this bag
   RESULT: These beans are white

The Result "These beans are white" constitutes the point of departure for the next logical argument:

B. Abduction: An explanation where one goes from Result via Rule to Case – one goes back in time in order to find the answer to the reason why. The view is retrospective:

   RESULT: These beans are white
   RULE: All the beans from this bag are white
   CASE: These beans are from this bag

The Case "These beans are from this bag" makes up the starting point for the last logical argument:

C. Induction: A generalization where one goes from Case via Result to Rule, not once, but actually over and over again – one goes forward and then backward in time, from Case to Result and then from Result to Case, to find a law. The view is interspective:

   CASE: These beans are from this bag
   RESULT: These beans are white
   RULE: All the beans from this bag are white

And the Rule "All the beans from this bag are white" forms the input to the first logical argument, i.e. deduction. In other words, we get a non-ending circle. It is crucial to note that behind the general statement "All the beans from this bag are white" lies a series of single conditional statements: If this bean is from this bag (p), then it is white (q); if this bean, too, is from this bag, then is white, and so on and so forth. In other words, although the Rule "All the beans from this bag are white" seems to be one single statement, it is a conditional statement where the antecedent is composed of what is called CASE, i.e. (if) the beans are from this bag, and where the consequent is composed of what is called the RESULT, i.e. (then) the beans are white. This clearly shows that the Rule is made up of the Case and the Result – the test "if p, then q" should, however, be multiplied with the amount of beans in the back. In short, the two autonomous descriptions, *p* and *q*, are contained within the entire description, "if p, then q", but appears linguistically as a compact mass which seems to be impossible to decompose, i.e. "All the beans from this bag are white". This is extremely important from our linguistic point of view, since I shall argue that behind the *passé simple* form one finds an inductive argument.

If we apply Peirce's categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness to the three logical argument forms, it appears that deduction is Firstness, abduction is Secondness and induction is Thirdness. This is the reason why the conclusion (q) arrived at in deduction forms the first premise of abduction, and the conclusion arrived at in abduction (p) forms the first premise in induction. This is also the reason why we go forward in time in deduction, i.e. from a present *p* to a future *q*, but returns to the same place in abduction, i.e. from a present *q* to a past p. Thirdness does always presuppose Secondness and Firstness, but it is situated at another level that is more abstract than the two other levels. This applies nicely to induction as indicated above.

These preconditions might seem irrelevant, but for our purpose they are highly relevant. I shall argue that the *imparfait* form involves a deductive inference, the *passé composé* form an abductive inference and the *passé simple* form an inductive inference. If this is true, we should be able to conclude that the the *passé simple* form cannot exist alone – it represents Thirdness that presupposes Secondness and Firstness. In other words, *passé simple* presupposes the existence of *imparfait* and *passé composé*, and not the other way around. This is confirmed by the history of individual languages. We begin to understand that it would be wrong to analyse the *passé simple* in opposition to the *imparfait* and leave out the *passé composé*. All three forms make up the aspectual system of French written discourse, and if a form should be left out, it should be the *passé simple*. Just as it appears from the tense-aspect-mood system of informal/oral French.

5.6. French aspect as logical forms of argumentation

5.6.1. Introductory remarks

I shall try to demonstrate that *imparfait, passé composé* and *passé simple* should be treated as the linguistic counterparts to the three logical forms of argumentation, i.e. deduction, abduction and induction, as we find them in Peirce (cf. Peirce 1932). As mentioned above, all three forms of argumentation involve Law, Case and Result, but differ with respect to the way in which the exact argument is built up. If we transfer this to our linguistic forms, they should be composed of two premises that together form a conclusion. This is exactly what is found in complex verbs, but only in complex verbs: they all contain an activity description (p) and a state description (q) that by relating them to one another can form a conclusion. Let us test this hypothesis. We shall start with the *imparfait* form:

5.6.2. Imparfait – a past activity (p) having a consequence (q)

As already pointed out, in connection with simplex verbs the French *imparfait* cannot enter into an argumentative structure, because one is referring to either *p* or *q*. Only in connection with complex verbs which name p as well as q, the possibility arises. Here we find the one of the many functions of the *imparfait*, where it is used to present an action as an ongoing process, i.e. an activity having a state as its purpose:

(32) *Jean entrait dans la chambre.* 'Jean was entering the room.'

The French *imparfait* has the activity as its foreground and the state as its background – as we shall see, it is converse in relation to *passé composé*. As an aspectual form it belongs to the imperfective aspect, which means that is directly opposed to both *passé composé* and the *passé simple*. The form is multi-ambiguous (cf. examples 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31). What remains common to all these uses is the descriptive function in written texts. The *imparfait* fulfills this function in connection with complex verbs by asserting that the activity description (p) is true, and by leaving the state description (q) as what I call a standard implicature, i.e. it is for the hearer to decide whether it is

true or false in the situation referred to (cf. above). As a tense form it places the activity as well as the state in the past world – just as the *passé simple* form. As a textual-aspectual form it gives an argumentative direction which is found in deduction:

Grammatical argumentation: Deduction – Conclusion

RULE*:* if p, then q
CASE: Jean produced an activity (p)
RESULT: Jean existed in the room (q)

The speaker takes his starting point in a Rule that says that if an activity description is true, then the state description is true if we are dealing with all normal worlds – in an abnormal world, so to speak, people may fall and break their leg before they actually enter a room. By presenting the reader with a past activity without specifying the state, the hearer is forced to decide whether the state will obtain at a certain later moment. If we are dealing with a normal world the hearer will conclude that the state does not obtain at the moment of reference, but will obtain at a certain later moment. Note that (28) is always used as a conclusion and that (30) can be said to repeat the argumentative direction of the deductive inference, but to relate to an imagined world. In that way the theory is capable of explaining these two interesting uses of the *imparfait*, which are not found within the potential meanings of the Russian imperfective aspect. I argue that the reason is that the Russian imperfective is not connected to the logical argument of deduction where the argumentative direction goes from *p* (the activity) to *q* (the state). Since this direction is missing in Russian, the two meanings would be impossible.

5.6.2. Passé simple – presentation of the event in its totality (p and q)

The French *passé simple* (see 33) is reminiscent of the Bulgarian aorist form (cf. Durst-Andersen 2011: 246f), but completely lacks its purely modal content – in Bulgarian the aorist form asserts that the speaker saw the activity situation as well as the state situation, and this is the reason why the speaker can commit himself to the truth of the following statement: p caused q. This does not seem to be the case in French:

(33) *Jean entra dans la chambre.* 'Jean entered the room.'

There is no visual experience involved, at all. Moreover – and this is highly important – formal French does not treat *p* and *q* as situations which can be seen, but as propositions that form a message directed toward a specific reader with the intention that he or she must unpack it in order to get access to situation in external reality. If, however, we disregard these two important things, we find the same argumentative direction in the French *passé simple*:

Grammatical argumentation: Induction – Setting up a rule/generalization

CASE: Jean produced an activity *(p)*
RESULT: Jean existed in the room *(q)*
RULE: if p, then q

Entrer is an action verb naming an activity as well as a state. This is a precondition for the *passé simple* form to participate in this kind of argumentative structure (That is why the *passé simple* of state and activity verbs simply have another meaning – they act as inchoatives and completives).

From a referential point of view the *passé simple* will always present an action as an event – this is the pure aspectual meaning of the form. Its temporal meaning is past tense, while its textual-aspectual meaning is reflected in its narrative function where two autonomous pieces of information, the activity description and the state description, is packed into one single message in a context where it is unnecessary to distinguish between old and new information. The message is part of a story telling in which only new persons or new things or places can be presented as new for the reader. The story lives its own life in a world in which cause (p) and effect (q) have to be created by the reader him- or herself because of the condensed presentation of the *passé simple*. In other words, *entra* is a complex verb, because it consists of an activity description (p) and a state description (q) – this is what I call its lexical-grammatical content. Moreover, *entra* belongs to the perfective aspect because it presents the action, i.e. p Telicity q, as an event, i.e. as p Cause q. Since this means that not only is p true, but also q, I shall call this its propositional-semantic content. In addition to this, *entra* is a past tense form because it localizes the activity as well as the state in a past world, i.e. the activity as well as the state are claimed to obtain prior to the moment of speech. I call this the referential-semantic content of the *passé simple*. We have now accounted for all pieces of content except for one, namely the textual-aspectual properties of the form. How is it possible to account for the fact that *passé simple* presents the event in its totality? A meaning that nobody disagrees about. It is exactly here that the textual-aspectual properties of the form come into the picture. It is not only stated that the activity description p and the state description q constitute the premises, but also that the two descriptions are presented as one bloc, i.e. as on single message where the very description of (p causes q) is presented *en bloc*, i.e. (if p, then q), as one information unit in its totality. In other words, the form transforms (p causes q) in a past world into a condensed message. The essence of induction has to do with that fact that one makes a generalization from a Case (e.g., ”These beans are from this bag”) and a Result (e.g., ”These beans are white”) by putting these two isolated descriptions into one single description without losing its content at all (e.g., ”All the beans from this bag are white” which means: If the beans are from this bag (p), then they are white (q)”). The two autonomous descriptions are contained within the entire description, but as a compact mass. This is exactly the same compactness we find in the French *passé simple* and therefore also the argumentative direction of induction, i.e. *if Jean produced an activity of entering, then Jean existed in the room* is presented *en bloc* as *Jean entered the room*. The interesting thing is that this description does not add anything new to what has hitherto been said by French aspectologists (see, for instance, Nolke & Olsen 2003, Waugh 1975 and 1990, Vikner 1985, Sten 1952, Nicolau 2003, Desclés & Guentchéva 1990, Labeau 2002, Molendijk 2005, Haff 2005, and Kragh 2015): they all claim that it views an action in its totality. What is new is that the theory just examined explains why it is so, how it is achieved and what it means to the reader. Such questions are important and the answers to them should be found in a theory in order to try to avoid any associations with what has been called “hocus pocus” linguistics (cf. Wierzbicka 1988).

The reader knows that the *passé simple* involves an inductive form of argumentation and he or she is therefore capable of reconstructing the situations behind the message, namely that Jean produced an activity and that this activity caused a state where Jean exists inside a certain room – the effect of the activity. This reconstruction is made by the reader and is not part of the meaning of the form. In other words, the *passé simple* is the linguistic answer to motion picture, but the form itself can only convey information – if you wish to say the same by using a motion picture presentation you will have to use the *imparfait* (cf. Berthonneau & Kleiber 1999, Haff 2005, Anscombre 2004, Kragh 2015, and Mosegaard Hansen 2016). In that respect the *imparfait pittoresque/narratif/rupture* is opposed to the *passé* simple. The French *imparfait* can speak with two voices: with the hearer’s voice and with the speaker’s voice. This is exactly what makes it unmarked. In the former case we are dealing with information, in the latter case with experiences,

i.e. what the speaker saw happening before his eyes (For more about this, see Durst-Andersen 2011: 243ff). Note, however, that although the *imparfait* in this specific context substitutes for the *passé simple*, it preserves its descriptive function – the *imparfait* cannot tell, only describe. Just the opposite of the *passé simple* – it can only tell, not describe.

5.6.3. Passé composé – a present state (q) is a consequence of a past activity (p)

The French *passé composé* lacks the modal content of the Bulgarian perfect, where the speaker asserts that he saw the state himself, and since a state normally is an effect of an activity the speaker can commit himself to the truth of the entire statement (cf. Durst-Andersen 2011: 248f). The corresponding French form, the *passé composé*, completely lacks the modal content – in principle, the French speaker might have seen the activity as well as the state and might still use the *passé composé*. The form is not based on the speaker's experience of the activity situation and the state situation – in using the form the writer (to be more precise since we are dealing with written discourse) gives an explanation in information terms to the reader:

(34) *Jean est entré dans la chambre.* 'Jean has entered the room.'

The *passé compose* form also belongs to the perfective aspect, since it refers to an event. It does not differ from the *passé simple* in that respect. Both forms imply that Jean produced an activity that was sufficient for the fact that Jean exists/existed in the room. They differ with respect to the way in which they present the past event. Unlike the *passé simple* the *passé composé* has the state description *q* as foreground and the activity description *p* as background. *Est* in *est entré* is simply an index of this foregrounding – it forms the first premise – while *entré* in *est entré* is an index of a past activity to which the reader returns in his conclusion. In other words, in the formal system of French the *passé composé* asserts that it is true in the present world of writing that "Jean exists inside the room". Moreover, the truth of the state description is explained by the truth of the activity description "Jean produced an activity" which holds good in a past world. In other words, the *passé composé* does not only give a news-flash, but at the same time it gives an explanation in information terms:

Grammatical argumentation: Abduction – Explanation

RESULT: Jean exists in the room (q)
RULE: If p, then q
CASE: Jean produced an activity (p)

Due to the fact that *entrer* does not specify the activity itself, the rule may apply to any possible world where Jean either flew, ran, swam or walked into the room. It should be noted that the *passé composé* is not only used in its news-flash function (which requires a complex verb), it is also used in connection with simplex verbs to give a characterization of a person with the same argumentative structure: *J'ai habité à New York pendant deux ans* 'I have lived two years in New York (but I am not living there anymore)' has exactly the same meaning: I have the quality of having lived in New York for two years because "I lived in New York two years". In other words, the *passé composé* gives a characterization of a person by offering a physical explanation of a psychological quality which will hold good for the rest of the person's life. Once again the abductive inference as well as the reference to the present world of writing are quite evident. The Rule is here that all physical and psychological experiences produced in the past remain in the person as present time qualities. In other words, the *passé composé* is a hybrid form. As a pure aspectual form it belongs to the

perfective aspect because it presents an action as an event. As a temporal form it is a present form as well as a past form because it describes the present world as well as the past world. And as a textual-aspectual form it has the argumentative direction which is found in abduction: a present state is explained to the reader by a past activity situation. In short, it has a retrospective viewpoint in contrast to *passé simple* that has a prospective viewpoint. These viewpoints are intimately linked to the two different argument forms. This means that it is now possible not only to describe, but also explain two fundamental differences in time presentation.

5.7. Concluding remarks

It is impossible to know why the aspectual system of formal/written French has been analyzed as a binary system consisting of *passé simple* and *imparfait* and that of informal/oral French as a binary system consisting of *passé composé* and *imparfait*. It makes no sense to include a member in the system of oral French that is not part of its written system, i.e. *passé composé*, and at the same time claim that *passé composé* in the oral system takes over the functions of *passé simple* from the written system, however, without becoming identical to it, as described by Apothéloz (2016). If a member takes over a function from another member, they must have something in common and be part of the same system – this is a necessary precondition. In excluding *passé composé* from the original system in written discourse, in fact, one deprives oneself of accounting for what *passé composé* and *passé simple* have in common, namely that they both belong to the perfective aspect. French aspect in informal/oral discourse is undoubtedly a two-way distinction as it is in Russian (cf. Mosegaard Hansen 2016 and Jupp & Rouxeville 2014), but in formal/written discourse it must be a three-way distinction between one imperfective form, *imparfait*, which presents an action as an ongoing process, planned action, an visually experienced event, as a failed event, as an event in an imagined world and as a characterization of a person, and two perfective forms, *passé simple* and *passé composé*, which both refer to an event, but differ in the way they present it to the reader: they name the same, but frame it differently. Note that Old Russian had the same system consisting of the aorist, the perfect and the imperfect – this tripartite system was replaced with a new dichotomic system consisting of the perfective and the imperfective aspect within complex verbs (cf. Andersen 2006). In other words, what we are witnessing in Modern French has been observed before. But an important question remains: Is it possible to demonstrate that the *passé simple/aorist* and the *passé composé/perfect* forms are both perfective? Let us take a closer look at the Bulgarian language which might contain the answer.

In Bulgarian we observe a sharp distinction between perfective and imperfective forms of verbs as in Russian, i.e. they have different stems, but unlike the Russian language Bulgarian has imperfect, perfect and aorist forms of all imperfective and perfective verb forms (cf. Mikkelsen 2002, Andrejčin 1978, Gerdžikov 1984, Stojanov 1977). This is particularly interesting, because it shows one crucial thing: neither the aorist nor the perfect form are identical to the perfective aspect – the aorist is one way of presenting something perfective, whereas the perfect is another way of presenting the perfective. The same is true of the imperfect form: it is not identical to the imperfective aspect – if it were, how could it then be capable of being connected with perfective as well as imperfective verb forms? In other words, the complex Bulgarian TAM-system clearly shows that the perfective vs. imperfective distinction is one thing, while the tripartite system consisting of the imperfect, the perfect and the aorist (or *passé simple*) indeed exists and should be treated as an autonomous and real system placed upon the original basic aspectual system. This means that the imperfect, the perfect and the aorist presuppose the existence of a basic aspectual system, but not the other way around. If we transfer this to French, we get the following: The French *imparfait*, *passé composé* and *passé simple* are placed upon a basic aspectual system which is *covert* in formal

discourse, but becomes *overt* in oral discourse simply because the tripartite system placed upon it disappears and makes the underlying system visible. All this is extremely important, but has been completely neglected in French linguistics (for a discussion of binary and tripartite systems of tense, see Verkuyl 2008).

In that way we can argue that French aspect in formal or written discourse incorporates Russian aspect, but at the same time it marks a distinction within perfectivity itself thus constituting a system of its own. It is solely restricted to written or formal discourse and it is learnt in school. It turns out that the three forms, each in its own way, present an argument to the reader. The *imparfait* form presents a deductive argument, the *passé compose* form an abductive argument and the *passé simple* form an inductive argument. And this is the same in Bulgarian (cf. Durst-Andersen 2011: 245-249), but unlike French, Bulgarian treats the trichotomy as a modal system closely related to the speaker's universe. That is why we cannot say that the Bulgarian system comprises a specific type of aspect. In French, however, the trichotomy has been linked to textual functions. The *passé simple* form tells the story, the *imparfait* form describes, and the *passé compose* form explains. As already mentioned, these three textual functions are identical to three of the four rhetorical modes traditionally distinguished: narration, description, and exposition. The fourth mode 'argumentation' is not directly represented – only indirectly through the three aspectual forms that are said to carry the three logical arguments found in Peircean logic (cf. Peirce 1932). Moreover, it is important to note that the role of the reader is highlighted in French, because he or she has to unpack the various types of messages in order to get access to the situations referred to. The role of the reader or hearer is not accentuated in that way in English, nor is it in Russian. In English it is the role of the speaker and in Russian it is the role of reality, i.e. which situation a specific form is referring to. In other words, it could seem as if this aspectual trichotomy should not be treated as a matter of coincidence, but more as a matter of principle. I shall elaborate on this issue below.

6. The three types of aspect and the principle of communicative direction

6.1. Summing up what has been said so far

On the basis of the various pieces of external as well as internal evidence presented in the introduction and in section two and on the basis of the different properties of three aspectual systems outlined in section three, four, and five I argue that the progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English, the perfective vs. imperfective distinction in Russian (together with the distinction between the French *passé composé* and *imparfait* in informal or oral discourse), and the distinction between the French *imparfait*, *passé composé* and *passé simple* in formal or written discourse represent three different aspectual systems. Due to the fact that English aspect is a distinction within imperfectivity, French aspect a distinction within perfectivity and Russian aspect a distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity we are dealing with three different aspectual types, cf. the following illustration (originally introduced as Figure 1):

Figure 5: The three types of aspect and their connections

6.2. On the important question: Why three types?

We have just arrived at a typology of aspect which consists of three prototypes exemplified by the English progressive vs. non-progressive distinction, the Russian perfective vs. imperfective distinction, and the French *passé simple* vs. *passé compose* vs. *imparfait* distinction. It was pointed out that they enter into a certain order, which means that the three types do not exclude each other (cf. Figure 5). Therefore it is possible to find languages in which the Russian type of aspect exists at the same time as does the English type. This is found in Chinese having a progressive and a non-progressive imperfective form both being opposed to the perfective aspect marked by *le*. Moreover, it is possible to find languages in which the tripartite system of French exists at the same time as the Russian type of aspect. This is found in Georgian in which the aorist, the imperfect, and the perfect correlate with, respectively, the so-called ergative, absolutive, and dative sentence construction types. All this is crucial, but the question still remains: Why do we have three types and not one type, or two or four types, for that matter?

6.3. Introducing the principle of communicative direction

From Figure 4 (see Figure) it appears that what is normally called reality exists in three modalities: (1) the input, the visual experience of a simple situation, be that a state or an activity; (2) the intake, the understanding of a complex situation, be that an event or a process; and (3) the outcome, a combination of the input and the intake stored in the present as well as the past world (in the case of events) or in the past world (in the case of a process). If we now turn to a communicative setting, we are faced with the same three modalities of existence. This is so because a communication situation always involves three obligatory participants: the speaker, the hearer, and something to communicate about, i.e. reality (see Figure 6 which is a modernized variant of Bühler's Organon Model).

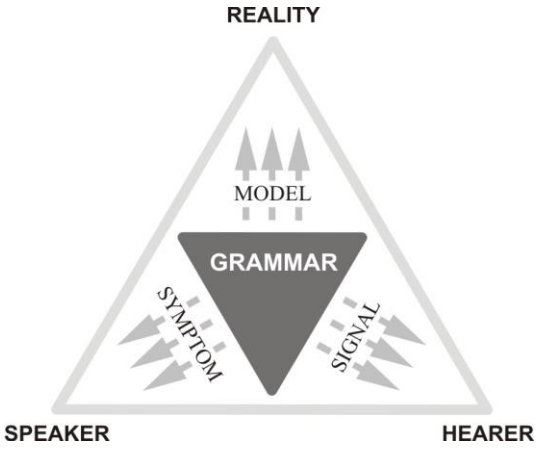

Figure 6: The grammatical triangle

In any communicative setting reality exists as (1) the situation being common to the speaker as well as the hearer (cf. the notion of reality in Figure 6); (2) the speaker's experience of that situation (cf.

the notion of speaker in Figure 6); and (3) the hearer's experience of that situation (cf. the notion of hearer in Figure 6). And the point is that what was called input in Figure 4 corresponds to the speaker's experience of a situation in Figure 5; what was called intake in Figure 4 corresponds to the situation being common to the speaker and the hearer in Figure 5; and what was called outcome in Figure 4 corresponds to the hearer's experience of a situation in Figure 5. This is so, because if you speak about reality through the hearer's experience of it, you must compare your own outcome as a speaker with that of the hearer, and the result of this comparison will be either positive or negative. If it is positive, it is called old information in communication terms; if it is negative, it is called new information. In order to be able to communicate effectively the speaker and the hearer must agree on a *common voice*, another name for a grammar, which may involve (1) situations such as states, activities, processes, and events, i.e. third person entities; (2) the speaker's own experience of situations which also include his or her belief, opinion and knowledge of various situations, i.e. first person entities; and (3) new or old pieces of information to the hearer based on the speaker's experience of situations, i.e. second person entities.

Any grammatical category can in principle speak with the voice of reality, with the speaker's voice or with the hearer's voice, but the speakers and the hearers, i.e. all members of a speech community, must agree on a common voice in order to be mutually intelligible. If they do not find a common voice and agree on using it, then the category will have no semiotic direction whatsoever, and the result will be plenty of room for miscommunication. It will be up to the hearer alone to find the specific communicative direction of every category in every single utterance. There will be no clue to the specific meaning of a form.

In principle, *I'm lovin' it* (cf. ex. 13) could be either a pure situation description, i.e. a model of reality, or a deductive argument to the hearer, i.e. a signal to the hearer, or a presentation of the speaker's experience of a situation, i.e. a symptom of the speaker (cf. Figure 6). If the English speaker and hearer had not agreed on the communicative direction of the category of aspect, nobody would have been sure about the meaning of *I'm lovin' it*. Everything, however, points to the fact that they have agreed on its communicative direction, because all members of the English speaking speech community agree that it means: The speaker is eating at McDonald's and through the visual picture the hearer can see that the speaker loves it. The communicative direction of the progressive aspect thus points to the speaker. The form is first-person oriented and thus a symptom of the speaker's experience of a situation (see Figure 6).

In principle, *Ona ego ubeždala* (cf. ex. 18) could be either a presentation of the speaker's impression or belief, or a deductive argument to the hearer in which he is informed about the speaker's conclusion, or a pure description of a present complex situation referred to. If the Russian speaker and hearer had not agreed on the communicative direction of the category of aspect, nobody would have known what *Ona ego ubeždala* really meant. However, it turns out that they have decided on a direction for their communication, because all members of the Russian speaking speech community say that it means: A female person was trying to convince a male person at the moment of reference. The communicative direction of the Russian imperfective thus points to reality in which we find an ongoing process. The form is third-person oriented and thus a model of the situation referred to (see Figure 6).

And, in principle, *Une heure après, il prenait le train pour Paris* (cf. ex. 28) could be either a description of what the speaker saw at the train station, or a description of what the speaker knew, namely that the situation referred to was planned, or the speaker's deductive argument to the hearer which he has to unpack in order to arrive at the situation referred to. If the French speaker and hearer had not agreed on the communicative direction of the category of aspect, nobody could really know what *Une heure après, il prenait le train pour Paris* means. But everything suggests that all members of the French speaking speech community have agreed on its semiotic direction, because

all agree that it means: the reader is presented with a motion picture of the male person taking the train to Paris so he or she can see it with his own eyes as if he or she had seen him leaving the station. It is a description of an event – a function that is unique to French. The communicative direction of the French *imparfait* thus points to the reader. The form is second-person oriented and functions as a signal to the hearer (see Figure 6).

6.4. The principle of communicative direction and the notion of category orientation

All members of a speech community must agree on the communicative direction of a grammatical category. If they did not do so, then there would be no semiotic direction attached to the members of a category and therefore no clue to the meaning potential of its various forms. Under these circumstances, effective communication would be impossible. This applies not only to the category of aspect, but to all grammatical categories and to all speech communities. This is the reason why I use the notion of principle. A principle cannot be avoided or ignored without serious consequences. It has to be followed, and if it is followed, everything will work, at least, in all normal worlds.

The principle of communicative direction thus says that members of a speech community must make an obligatory choice among three possible communicative directions corresponding to the three obligatory participants in a communication situation: the category can either be first-person oriented and thus be a symptom of the speaker' experiences in the broad sense of the term; or it can be third-person oriented and thus be a model of the situation referred to; or it can be second-person oriented and thus be a signal to the hearer to unpack the information in order to get access to the situation referred to.

In that way categories exist either as first-person oriented (English aspect; the active vs. inactive case distinction in Guaraní; the so-called definite vs. indefinite distinction in Bulgarian), as third-person oriented (Russian aspect; the ergative vs. absolutive distinction in Hindi; the Chinese classifier system), or as second-person oriented (French aspect; the nominative vs. accusative vs. dative distinction in German; the zero vs. definite vs. indefinite distinction in English).

As a result of the various arguments put forward in the preceding paragraphs I argue that English aspect, Russian aspect, and French aspect represent three different aspectual prototype systems which enter into that specific order. The progressive vs. non-progressive distinction in English is a distinction within imperfectivity and grounded in the present tense. It can be said to be an *experiential category* linked to first person, the speaker. In Peirce's phenomenologically based philosophy of pragmatism (cf. Peirce 1932) experience belongs to the category of Firstness.

Within the perfective vs. imperfective distinction in Russian the imperfective form itself incorporates both the progressive meaning and the non-progressive meaning. In that way the aspectual system of Russian ignores the English aspectual distinction and constitutes an aspectual system of its own grounded in the past tense. Here we find the important distinction between two complex situations, viz. a state caused by an activity, in von Wright's terminology an event (cf. von Wright 1974), and an activity having a state as its purpose, i.e. a process. This distinction cannot be seen or experienced, but can only be identified in reality and understood, if one has the necessary mental models of events and processes, respectively, and is capable of relating a present state to a past activity and a present activity to a later future state. In other words, this aspectual distinction is conceptually based. In that way Russian aspect is a *representational category* connected to third person, reality. In Peirce's terminology it belongs to Secondness, which presupposes Firstness.

The aspectual category found in written French is neither experiential, nor representational – it is an *evocative category* which is second-person oriented. It involves mediation and comparison, in our case between the speaker's outcome and the hearer's outcome, but it presupposes the speaker's

understanding of his own experience. It is reflection upon what is understood, and the result is a rule or a law in Peirce's terminology. The French aspectual system is the result of connecting three linguistic forms to three different argument forms, viz. deduction, abduction and induction. These three types could have been understood as different types of reasoning, but they have been coupled to the speaker's/the writer's presentation of a logical argument to the reader – an argument he or she has to unpack. In that way, it is second-person oriented. In Peirce's terminology it belongs to the category of Thirdness, i.e. the reflexive level of rules that is based on understanding which in itself involves experience.

But why does French have a discourse split and thus two different prototype systems? This is also explainable in terms of category orientation. It is, of course, a challenge for any theory to explain how two distinct systems can co-occur in the same language community. And it should be noted that French is not alone in this respect. If one takes a look at German, one observes the same, although, admittedly, German does not know of the distinction between an imperfect form and an aorist form: in written German the imperfect form is the narrative form, whereas in oral German it is the perfect (cf. Andersen & Hansen 2009). But the split in function is exactly the same as in French. Why is it that one form has narrative functions in one medium, and another form has it in another medium? This question calls for an answer. I argue that oral discourse has a natural affinity to the third-person oriented notion of situation, which is common to the speaker as well as the hearer, whereas written discourse has a natural affinity to the second-person oriented notion of information, which the writer and the reader may or may not share. In any case, the writer and the reader do not share the same situation, because they are separated in space and time. This explains why languages can have two systems that seem natural for the members of the speech community and do not disturb one another.

7. Conclusion

The category of aspect falls into three prototypes here represented by the English, Russian and French aspectual systems, respectively. This means that all languages with an aspectual category fall into one of the three prototypes, but it does not mean that they will be identical to the three prototypes represented here. Situations in reality, speakers' experiences and information to hearers/readers can be divided in a far more detailed way by languages not belonging to Indo-European languages. The three languages examined here are prototypes on the grounds of the principle of communicative direction which involves an obligatory choice among three possibilities corresponding to the three obligatory participants of a communication situation. In that way any linguistic category will be either first-person oriented, third-person oriented or second-person oriented, corresponding to Peirce's phenomenological categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. No category can be formed on the basis of equal attention to the three obligatory participants of a communicative setting or on no attention at all. Members of a speech community must agree on communicative direction and the three types of aspect examined in this article illustrate this obligatory choice by forming three types of aspect, each with its own orientation. As the prominent member of the English aspectual opposition, the progressive form is oriented towards the speaker and verbalizes the speaker's visual experience. As the prominent member of the Russian aspectual system, the perfective aspect is oriented towards reality and verbalizes the complex situation shared by both the speaker as well as the hearer, in which an effect has been linked to its cause, i.e. an event. The *passé simple* form being the prominent member of the aspectual opposition in written French is oriented towards the reader and verbalizes an inductive argument, the result of which is a condensed message to the hearer which he or she has to unpack in order to get access to the activity situation, the cause, and the state situation, the effect. Due to the

principle of communicative direction any grammatical category is formed in a communication situation, has its raison d'être there and serves specific communicative functions within the limits of the chosen direction.

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