

4. 4. Other Rhetorical Employments.

Sometimes the speaker may find that it sounds more friendly, and so more preferable, to make use of the non-conclusive tone of the imperfective aspect in cases like

I *was saying* only yesterday how pretty she has grown (*Sanseido's Dictionary of Eng. Gr.* s. v. Prog. Tense),

because the imperfective aspect suggests that the speaker's admiration did not end at a certain time of yesterday, but that it continued till much later and even that it still continues.

4. 5. When speaking about a future happening which is supposed to be welcome, the speaker may choose to employ the imperfective aspect in order to make sure that the future action occurs very soon; indeed, that it will be in process very soon, e. g.,

We'll *be seeing* you again soon.

There may be perhaps "endless possibilities"<sup>30)</sup> in the rhetorical employment of the imperfective aspect, and they are beyond the scope of grammar.

October 20, 1967.

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30) R. A. Close, loc. cit.

We go in to old Susy's place. Hell of a nice place. Old Susy's laugh— *always crackin'* jokes. (*Ibid.*)

In the following examples the emotional element seems to be a little weaker.

.... the music of Brahms or Beethoven or Bach and many other composers — *I'm constantly finding* new depth in it, new meanings, new nuance of emotion .... (L. Stokowsky, "On Music Conducting," in Summerfield & Thatcher, eds., *The Creative Mind and Method.*)

Few students are aware of the fact that in their normal everyday life they *are constantly creating* new linguistic structures that are immediately understood. (N. Chomsky, "The Current Scene in Linguistics," a paper read at November 1965 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English.)

#### 4. 3. Meiotic Employment of the Imperfective Aspect.

The perfective aspect, which expresses actions as concluded in the past time or to be concluded in the present or future time, has accordingly a conclusive decided tone, and in our social life there are many occasions when such conclusive decided statements had better be avoided and non-conclusive statements should be preferred. The speaker may not be confident enough to make a conclusive statement, then he may employ the imperfective aspect and say

I'm thinking you're right

instead of

I think you're right.

And this is "the sort of subtlety into which native speakers like to take refuge in social self-defense."<sup>29)</sup> The imperfective aspect which grasps the action in process gives much safer standpoint to the speaker than the perfective aspect which grasps the action as conclusive, for the former leaves room for him to amend the statement without much shame in case it is wrong. This is the opposite of the hyperbolic employment of the imperfective aspect, and I think this may be called meiotic employment.

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29) R. A. Close, *English as a Foreign Language*, p. 78.

He *is always writing a story* which ends with suicide of a heart-broken girl.

It is said that in sentences like

You are always finding fault with me. (Jespersen)

or

He is always smoking. (Poutsma)

the expanded form gives an “emotional colouring”<sup>27)</sup> to the sentence or that it has “characterizing function,”<sup>28)</sup> and, indeed, it is treated as if it forms a separate distinct function of the expanded form. But to my mind it seems that this should be interpreted as an exaggerated employment of the secondary functions of the imperfective aspect. In reality the person in question does not *always* find fault with “you” nor does *always* smoke incessantly. The person may not be in the act when the speaker makes the statement, but the person’s habitual action gives so strong an emotion to the speaker that he thinks in an exaggerated way as if it were constantly in process and there is no end to it. This may be called a case of hyperbole, just as we say “a person of no brains” even though we are sure that every person has a certain amount of brains. The exaggeration in our case is clearly shown by the unrealistic time expression like *always*, *constantly*, *perpetually*, *for ever*, etc., suggesting that the imperfective state continues as if perpetually and for ever. This hyperbolical employment of the imperfective aspect is what gives “emotional colouring” to the sentence with regard to the speaker’s attitude, and also what gives the effect of “characterizing” the person whom the speaker is talking of.

Any of the secondary functions may be employed for this kind of hyperbole. “He is always smoking” may be regarded as secondary function (1), while “You’re always finding fault with me” is a case of secondary function (3).

... that’s just the sort of black *I’m always putting up* with Liz.

(T. Rattigan, *The Deep Blue Sea*.)

They’re *all time talkin’* about it, but it’s jus’ in their head.

(J. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*.)

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27) Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, § 12.5.5.

28) Poutsma, *The Character*, B, 34-35.

be convinced that scientists... are anything special in the way of brains. (A. Standen, *Science Is a Sacred Cow.*)

If it [i. e. photography] starts within himself, then the photographer *is impinging* something onto it ... (E. Steiden "On Photography" in *The Creative Mind and Method*, ed. by J. Summerfield and L. Thatcher.)

Note the use of the adverb *then* at the beginning of the principal clause in the above.

When we lay our nickels and dimes on the line for our daily dose of vicarious catastrophe and conflict, it is almost as though we *were paying* the newspapers for getting us ready to commit human suicide. (H. A. Overstreet, *The Mature Mind.*)

Senator Eugene J. McCarthy ... has charged that the agency is making foreign policy and in so doing *is assuming* the roles of President and Congress. (*The New York Times Weekly Review*, Feb. 19, '67.)

... they teach words, supposing that in so doing they *are teaching* science. (A. Standen, *Science Is a Sacred Cow.*)

... the Georgia Legislature, in denying Julian Bond his seat because of his antiwar views, *was denying him* his constitutional rights. (*The New York Times Weekly Review*, Feb. 26, '67.)

#### Rhetorical Employments of the Secondary Functions

4. 1. There are various psychological bases which induce the speaker or writer to choose the imperfective aspect instead of the perfective. Among others, it has been noted, emotional elements play an important role in the choice of the imperfective. If the imperfective aspect seems irrelevant to the contextual situation given by the sentence, the employment of it here can be regarded as motivated by some rhetorical purposes, either as something like hyperbole, or something like meiosis.

4. 2. Hyperbolical Employment of the Imperfective Aspect.

The first action may also be expressed by adverbial groups introduced by *in* or *by*

In so doing he *is defending* his own position (Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 12.8.)

I do not consider that any servant *is doing* her duty ...

by wanting to go to chapel four times a week. (A. Smith.)

This contextual peculiarity is partly caused by the fact that the two actions are of the same person; i. e. the subject in the principal clause is the same as that in the subordinate clause, or the same as the understood logical subject of the verbal in the adverbial group. Another fact is that the first action is intentional while the second is supposed to be unintentional, and that the first conditions the second. Hence the implication that the second is the logical consequence of the first. When this is applied to the same personal subject, we have the logical relation which has been called "identity" or "equality" of two actions. But this logical relation does not affect at all the fact that the second action is grasped in the imperfective aspect. The time point for the imperfective grasp is given by the time of occurrence of the first action. That is, the second action is in solid, intermittent, or repeated process, or in prospect when the first action takes place and completes, no matter whether they are hypothetical or actual. Addition of adverbials like *then* or *at that time* to the principal clause predicator will make clear the imperfective value of the expanded form:

If I give him up, *then* I will *be giving up* a great opportunity.

Other examples.

When we tell someone, for instance, the address of a house he has never seen, we *are doing* something which no animal can do. (L. Bloomfield, *Language*.) (Secondary function (1): solid process.)

If we allow their expectations to be disappointed, we shall both *be wasting* scarce skills and talents and *building up* vast trouble for ourselves in the future. (*The New York Times Weekly Review*, Jan. 8, '67.) (The first is (1): solid and the second is (4): prospective.)

... we *are having* wool pulled over our eyes if we let ourselves

can have this contextual peculiarity.

### 3. 3. 'Identity of Two Actions.'

When he described the horrible sights of the A-bombed city, he *was writing* an anti-war story.

Jespersen says that "the expanded form implies identity of the two acts" in the following example.

If I should go to one of the tea-parties in a dressing-gown and slippers, I should *be insulting* society, and *eating* peas with my knife.<sup>24)</sup>

Here the implication appears to be that the action "to go to one of the tea-parties in such and such an apparel" would be equal to the action "to insult society, etc." In other words, the action expressed by the simple form in the sub-ordinate clause is regarded as logically equal to the action expressed by the expanded form in the principal clause. This is called "identity of the two acts" or "equality"<sup>25)</sup> of two actions.

The simple form is commonly found in a subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction *if* or *when*, while the expanded form occurs in the main clause. A few more examples from Jespersen of *if*-construction:

If I give him up, I'll *be giving up* a great opportunity.

if I said that, I shouldn't *be telling* the truth.

And we find a number of examples in Arvid Smith.<sup>26)</sup>

if I said I thought of it all the time, I should *be telling* a silly lie.

if you assist me to defeat this man you will *be rendering* him the greatest service one can render to another.

.... he asks my forgiveness .... If I stopped here ... I should *be refusing* it him.

*When*-construction is much fewer:

When Elizabeth put Ballard and Babington to death she *was not persecuting*. (Bodelsen, *Englische Studien*, 71, p.237.)

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24) *MEG*, IV, 12. 8.

25) Akira Ota, *Kanryokei, Shinkokei*, § 34.

26) "Über eine bisher unbeachtete funktion der progressive form," *Anglia Beiblatt*, 28 (1917), p.244 ff.

duration), we may have expanded tenses in both sentences . . . ,”<sup>23)</sup> and gives the following and other illustrations.

All the time he *was addressing* them in this way, he *was* secretly *looking out* for some means of escaping. (*MEG*, IV, 12. 9. 4.)

Every morning when he *was having* his breakfast his dog *was staring* at him. (*Ibid.*, 12. 9. 5.)

Here the two actions are in progress in parallel with each other, and these are grasped at one and the same point of time ; that is, they are grasped in the imperfective aspect at one and the same moment. They are naturally put in the expanded form in one sentence. This is called expression of “co-extensive” actions. They are, so to speak, a double imperfective expression.

But when she *was standing* in the doorway showin’ her legs, you *wasn’t lookin’* the other way, neither. (J. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*.)

. . . even when one sound *is being formed* the speech organs *are* already *moving* on to the position in which the next is to be formed. (C. H. Prator, Jr., *Manual of American English Pronunciation*.)

Note that the latter example is also an illustration of the contextual peculiarity we called “instantaneousness” (§ 2. 1.).

Much attention paid to this case seems to be due to the sentence construction in which one expanded form is put in the subordinate clause, while the other is in the principal, but the same situation may be found in two or three co-ordinate clauses.

Bill *is sitting* near the window and I *am sitting* in the middle of the room. (N. Osman, *Modern English*.)

My cake *is burning*, and the saucepan *is boiling over*, and the telephone *is ringing*. Can’t you come and help me? (*Ibid.*)

When we see these examples in which the expanded forms are co-ordinated, we will be unable to find any peculiarity worth special mentioning in the so-called “co-extensive” use. Any one of the four secondary functions

3. 1. 'Instantaneousness.'

There are some noteworthy cases of contextual peculiarity in the employment of the secondary functions of the imperfective aspect discussed in the above. First we will have a look at the case which might be called 'instantaneousness.'<sup>22)</sup>

He dashed into the room, and the next moment he *was writing* a story at his desk.

This kind of expression appears in the context accompanied by adverbials like *soon after*, *next moment*, *an hour later*, *within an hour*, *in another minute*, etc. A stylistic effect of this use is to emphasize the notion of 'already.'<sup>23)</sup> The adverbial group gives the point of time at which the speaker or writer grasps the action in the imperfective. It indicates the distance in time from a point of time mentioned earlier to that for the imperfective aspect, and implies that the distance is too short for the action to occur. This leads to the emphatic suggestion of 'already.'

Next minute they *were having* their first quarrel. (Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 12.6.5.)

The next moment she *was tapping* at her husband's dressing room. (loc. cit.)

These two examples from Jespersen belong to the secondary function (1): solid continuance. Other examples.

The next minute Curley *was flopping* like a fish on a line, and his closed fist was lost in Lennie's big hand. (J. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*.)

By week's end, word *was circulating* in Washington that the revelations so far were "just the beginning." (*The New York Times Weekly Review*, Feb. 19, '67.)

These are cases of the secondary function (1), too.

3. 2. 'Co-extensive' Actions or 'Simultaneousness.'

While his wife *was knitting* on the sofa, he *was writing* a story at his desk.

Jespersen says "When two actions or states are co-extensive (have equal

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22) Cp. Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 12.6.5. B. M. Charleston, *Studies on the Emotional*, p. 251. *Sanseido's Dictionary of English Grammar*, s. v. Progressive Tense.

23) Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 12.9.4.



on a certain point of time, or rather on every point of time within the period, and not on the period as a whole. The implication is “at all the times or time points within the time period expressed by the adverbial group.” Cp. Jespersen’s paraphrase of *always* as “at all the times we are just now concerned with,” and the fact that he treats it together with the adverbials such as *all day long*, *all that afternoon*. Otherwise, we will not be able to see the difference between the following two:

Yesterday, from six o’clock to seven o’clock, we *were listening* to an interesting play on the radio.

Yesterday, from six o’clock to seven o’clock, we *listened* to an interesting play on the radio.

Thus, this function of the expanded form is not distinct from any of the secondary functions (1), (2), and (3), but overlaps with them.

What *were* you *doing* all morning? (Hornby, 944c.)

belongs to the secondary function (1): solid process, while

She *was writing* letters all afternoon (loc. cit.)

is the case of the secondary function (3): repeated continuance.

He *was playing* tennis for the whole of yesterday afternoon. (above)

... I *was driving* from Edinburgh to London (above)

may be regarded as the secondary function (2): intermittent process.

The prospective function may also be found either with an expression of time point or of time period. A prospective action can be viewed either as taking place in a moment or for a period of time. It doesn’t matter which.

In the above we have seen that the system of the secondary function of the imperfective aspect consists of the four terms: (1) solid process (2) intermittent process, (3) repeated process, and (4) prospective action. These four are mutually exclusive and do not overlap one another. They make up a closed system. And we have seen that the function of the expanded form to denote duration of an action for a period of time does not make a term in the system, but merely a variant of the four terms.

Some Contextual Peculiarities of the Employment of the Secondary Functions.

2. 5. So-called Expression of "Duration" of the Action: the Expanded Form with the Adverbials of Time Period.

It has been noted that the expanded form can be combined with adverbials of time period like *always*, *ever*, *constantly*, *all day long*, *all that afternoon*, etc.<sup>19)</sup>

He *was playing* tennis for the whole of yesterday afternoon.

(J. M. Ward, *The Use of Tenses in English*, p. 37.)

Yesterday, from six o'clock to seven o'clock, we *were listening* to an interesting play on the radio. (*Ibid.*, p. 35)

Between the second and the ninth of the month, they *were staying* with the Smiths. (*Ibid.*, p. 36.)

You couldn't possibly have seen me at the time you say. Between ten to eight and ten past eight, I *was having* breakfast at home. (*Ibid.*, p. 36.)

"Where were you yesterday?" "I *was driving* from Edinburgh to London." (i. e. between the two extremities of yesterday; that is, all yesterday, from early morning until night.) (*Ibid.*, p. 37.)

In these examples, it is said that the expanded form is used "to show that the action is/was happening continuously during the whole (or at all events, the major parts) of the time."<sup>20)</sup> The adverbial phrases express the time period during which the action continues or continued. When *always* is used, this means "at all the times we are concerned with."<sup>21)</sup>

This function of the expanded form to express "duration for a period of time" may seem to form a term within the system of the secondary functions of the imperfective aspect. But I think it is doubtful if there is any essential difference between the case of continuance at a given moment of time and the case of continuance for a period of time, as far as the imperfective aspect is concerned. In spite of the period of time expressed by the adverbial group, the speaker's point of view should be regarded as

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19) Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 13.1.1. *Sanseido's Dictionary of English Grammar*, s. v. Progressive Tense. B. M. Charleston, *Studies on the Emotional and Affective Means*, p. 226. Hornby, *A Guide to Patterns and Usage*, § 44c. J. M. Ward, *The Use of Tenses*, pp. 35-38.

20) J. M. Ward, *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

21) Jespersen, *MEG*, 13.1 (1).

verbs,<sup>18)</sup> only if the context clearly points to the time-sphere which is or was to come or will come.

He [i. e. Sean Connery] said he had no idea what pattern his career would take now that he *was giving up* Bond. (By the Associated Press, London, July 22, *The Asahi Evening News*.)

Unhappily, we *are losing* a pair of chambers this week with the departure of ... Mr. and Mrs. Tage Petersen. (Jane Rees, "Here in Tokyo," *The Asahi Evening News*, Aug. 12, '66)

Now the moment [i. e. the beginning of a match] *is* rapidly *arriving*. ("Sports Reel," FEN, AFRTS.)

In the last example the adverb "rapidly" shows that the action (arrival of the moment in the near future) is grasped as if it were really in progress.

The general *is eating* here today. Maybe you'd like to jazz up the dinner. (Mort Walker, "Beetle Baily," *The Asahi Evening News*, Oct., 4, '67)

US Secretary of State Dean Rusk *is satying* at the Miyako Hotel during the 5th joint US-Japan Conference which opened today. (*The Asahi Evening News*.)

Here the adverbial group 'during the 5th...' indicates that the expanded form is used in the propective function. The conference has just begun, and the main part of the time for the conference is yet to come.

... Police ... announced they *were offering* a reward of 5,000 marks ... for the return alive of the girl. (*The Asahi Evening News*.)

MRS. HALL: What *are* we *doing* today? — MR. HALL: What would you like to do? (R. Kingdon, *English Intonation Prattice*.)

MRS. ELTON: ... How much would you get for a thing like that? —  
HESTER: Well—for the two *I'm asking* twenty five pounds.—  
HESTER: ... (She turns to the picture.) It's rather good, I think, don't you? — COLLYER: Yes. *Are* you *selling* it?  
(T. Rattigan, *The Deep Blue Sea*.)

contradiction in itself.

The prospective function is commonly found with the verbs whose time character is punctual, such as *leave* in the above, and the following.

When's Mr. Page *coming* home? (T. Rattigan, *The Deep Blue Sea*.)

HESTER: Mrs. Elton! Mrs. Elton! — MRS. ELTON: *Coming*, dear. (*Ibid.*)

PHILIP: . . . He's *coming* round. — HESTER: How soon? — PHILIP: He said, at once. (*Ibid.*)

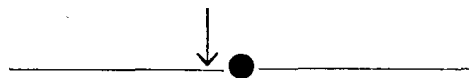
*I'm going* home tomorrow: it is my mother's birthday. (Sweet, N. E. G., § 2232.)

George — why *ain't* we *going* on to the ranch and get some supper? (J. Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*.)

Used ta dress up Sundays even when he *wasn't going* no place . . . . (*Ibid.*)

“An' where's George now?” “In town in a whore-house. That's where your money's *going*.” (*Ibid.*)

This is because punctual verb actions have no duration in time. The beginning of the action is in itself the end of it. It has no dimension, no process. When this kind of action is put in the imperfective aspect, the speaker's point of view cannot be put within. It is necessarily put just before the point.



Thus in

They *are killing* him,

the action is grasped just before its realization. This leads to the implication of a prospective or anticipatory grasp of the action. This seems to be the starting-point of the prospective function of the expanded form. It was said that this function was restricted mainly to the verbs of movement and a handful of other verbs.<sup>17)</sup> But in reality this is possible with most

17) Jespersen, *MEG*, IV, 14. 1-3. Poutsma, *The Characters*, B, 32-3.

18) See, R. A. Close, *English as a Foreign Language*, § 154. R. Volbeda, “The ‘Definite Forms,’ ” *Neophilologus*, XX (1935), p. 295.

is broadcast every Sunday morning. The audience are expected to enjoy the program every Sunday repeatedly.

Repeated aspect of the expanded form should not be confused with the case of such verbs whose meanings contain in themselves an iterative idea, e.g. *tap*, *tremble*, *swing*, etc. These may be called iterative verbs as a sub-class of the definitely durative verbs. But both iterative and non-iterative actions can be grasped in their repeated process as well as solid process.

#### 2. 4. Secondary Function (4): Prospective Action.

*He is writing* a war story next month.

The prospective function of the imperfective aspect is somewhat peculiarly different from the other three. Here the action is in a strict sense not expressed as actually in progress. At least the main part of the action is not in process; only its preparation is in process, or we should say it is the introductory or precursory part that is actually in process. And only in this sense we can say the action is grasped in process. So in reality, the main body of the action is not grasped in the imperfective, but rather in the perfective in prospective, i.e., as it is in the time-sphere which is to come after the point of time for the finite predication. Thus the real part of the action is not in process, so it cannot be either solid, or intermittent, or repeated.

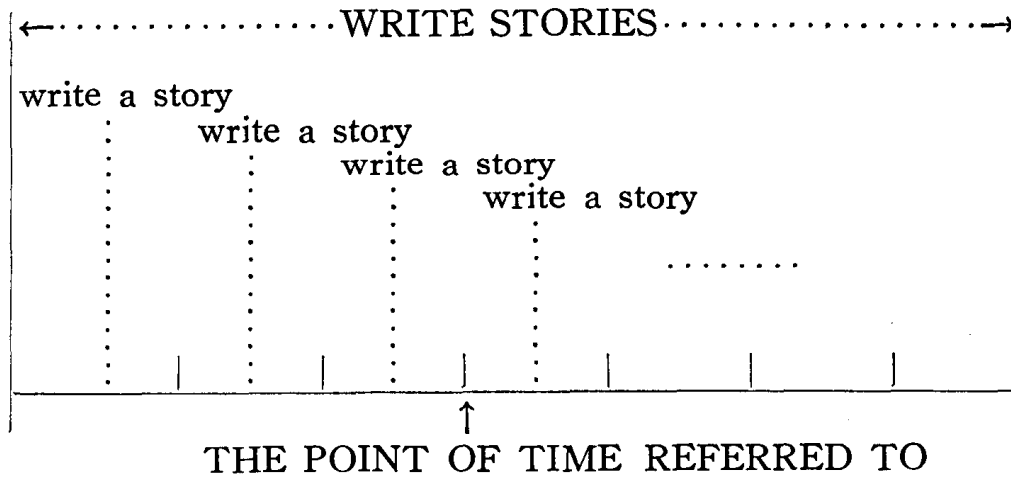
This kind of function of the expanded form has been called as an expression of "futura,"<sup>15)</sup> but I prefer to call it "prospective," following Poutsma.<sup>16)</sup> It is true that in 'He is leaving for America next week,' the realization of the action lies in the future time, for the utterance is made in the present moment. But when this is put in the past tense as "He was leaving for America the next week," we cannot say that the expanded form expresses the action in the "future," for the action lies in the past time-sphere. In a case like this it is sometimes called "future in the past." But this is nonsensical. Past is past and future is future; past cannot be future, and future cannot be past. The concept "future in the past" is a

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15) Jesperen, *MEG*, IV, 14.1.2.

16) *The Character*, B, §29 ff.

and this is regarded as in its process, in the imperfective aspect. This kind of secondary aspect may be represented by the following diagram.



Here the implication of repetition does not make the essential part of the imperfective aspect, for the implication is found in the unexpanded simple form as well.<sup>14)</sup> Repeated actions can be grasped both in the perfective and in the imperfective, according to whether they are grasped as a whole or in process.

Impossible things *are happening* every day. (Oscar Hammerstein, Jr., *Cinderella*.)

One impossible thing after another repeatedly takes place, and this repetition is grasped and expressed in the imperfective aspect, suggesting that it will continue further.

Newspapers, with their vested interest in catastrophe, *were playing up* every cross word spoken. (H. A. Overstreet, *The Mature Mind*.)

it is almost as though we *were paying* the newspapers for getting us ready to commit suicide. (*Ibid.*)

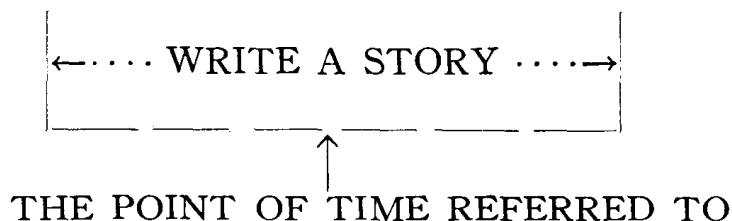
That is, it is as if we were paying the newspaper daily or monthly repeatedly.

Let us know how you *are enjoying* this program. ("Message to Israel," FEN, AFRTS.)

This is a part of a radio commercial. The program "Message to Israel"

14) Cp. my "Max Deutschbein's Aspect Theory," p. 21.

action broken by a lot of activities of daily routine. It is clear that the action is suspended when he is coming out of the room. This imperfective aspect can be called 'intermittent.' This may be schematically shown as follows.



Some examples.

GINA IN MINI—Miniskirted Italian actress Gina Lollobrigida poses with American actor Eduard G. Robinson at a Rome hotel Wednesday, where they *were* both *shooting* movies. Miss Lollobrigida *is filming* “Death Has Laid the Egg,” while Robinson *is working* on “Operation St. Peter.” (AP Radiophoto, *The Asahi Evening News*.)

All these three cases are in the intermittent imperfective aspect. When the actor and the actress posed for the photograph, their actions ‘shooting,’ ‘filming’ and ‘working’ were suspended for the time being.

I think I have a talent for conducting; but after that it’s just a question of study, study, study. *I’m studying* all the day and every day new scores. (L. Stokowsky, “On Music Conducting,” J. Summerfield & L. Thatcher, eds., *The Creative Mind and Method*.)

This was spoken at a symposium. When Stokowsky spoke this, he was not actually studying scores.

Moscow now *is speaking out* on peace and actively hunting ways to end the war with maximum advantage to North Vietnam. (*The New York Times Weekley Review* Sept. 19, '67.)

## 2. 3 Secondary Function (3) : Repeated Process.

He *is writing* a number of war stories these years.

The action is expressed neither as in solid process nor as in intermittent process, but as it occurs repeatedly. In other words, a series of repeated activities are taken together as if they were a single synthetic activity,

Here the aspect is neither intermittent (2), nor repeated (3), nor prospective (3), but in solid process (1).<sup>12)</sup>

Whose voice *are* you *hearing*? *I'm hearing* your voice.  
(*Linguaphone English Course.*)

Here the point of time for the imperfective aspect is the moment of speaking.<sup>13)</sup>

She touches his arm sympathetically. He takes hold of a bracelet she *is wearing*. (T. Rattigan, *The Deep Blue Sea*)

This is part of the stage direction of the play. The point of time for the imperfective aspect is the moment "he" takes hold of the bracelet, and it is the present time for the writer, reader and the audience.

"Dan McMeal's Breakfast Club" *is coming* to you from Erlington Hotel in the busy heart of Chicago. ("Dan McMeal's Breakfast Club," FEN, AFRTS.)

This announcement was made in the midst of the program.

And as he looked into the sky, like a huntsman who *is watching* a flying bird, he thought to himself ... (D. H. Lawrence, *The Fox.*)

## 2. 2. Secondary Function (2) : Intermittent Process.

Do you see that man coming out of the room? He *is writing* a shocking tell-tale story now. It will be published very soon.

Here the action 'to write a story' is not in solid continuance. It is an

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12) This secondary function may further be divided into two: (a) even and (b) developing, e. g.,

even: he *is walking*,

developing: he *is making* a box.

A developing action inevitably reaches its end in the long run, and no further continuation is possible except when it is repeated. The difference here is given by that of the time character of the actions.

13) Note this quite ordinary imperfective use of the verb of physical perception. It is generally said that these kind of verbs do not assume the expanded form except when in their somewhat transferred meaning. The example above seems to prove to the contrary. This kind of example may only rarely be found, but the rarity does not come from the syntactical peculiarity of the behavior of the verb, but from the rarity in actual speech of the situation in which the action is grasped in the imperfective aspect.



cannot be identical with B or C or D.

- (c) if a new term is added to the system this changes the meaning of all the others.

Now the secondary functions of the English imperfective form (i. e. the expanded form) are, in my opinion, four in all. They are the expressions of the action as (1) in solid process, (2) in intermittent process, (3) in repeated process, and (4) prospective action. These secondary functions make up the system of the imperfective aspect, that is, every particular case of the use of the imperfective aspect is of one of these four. And with most verbs, one and the same verbal idea can be used in any one of the four secondary imperfective aspects, given a definite contextual situation. This can be shown by the following four model sentences made up of one and the same verb group 'to write a story.'

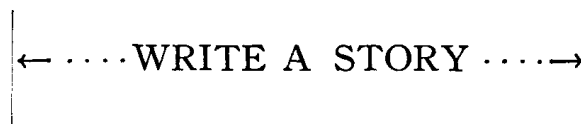
- (1) Solid process: He *is writing* a story now, so don't enter his room.
- (2) Intermittent process: Do you see that man coming out of the room? He *is writing* a shocking tell-tale story now. It will be published very soon.
- (3) Repeated process: He *is writing* a number of war stories these years.
- (4) Prospective action: He *is writing* a war story next month.

### Secondary Functions

#### 2. 1. Secondary Function (1): Solid Process.

He *is writing* a story now, so don't enter his room.

Here the action 'to write a story' is grasped as actually and solidly continuing at the moment of speaking or at the point of time referred to. This may be shown diagrammatically as follows.



THE POINT OF TIME REFERRED TO FOR THE ACTION

action, ... action in general...." 7) Mr. Igeta divides the present tense imperfective into five in all: 1) single process in progress: A) process attempted and tried, B) single simple process, C) single complex process; 2) repeated process: A) ordinary repeated process, B) generalized repeated process. 8)

1. 3. Similar distinction is possible with the English imperfective aspect. The English imperfective form is the expanded form. 9) I think it has been clear that this form has the function to express the primary value of the imperfective aspect we have observed in the above. The study of the function of the expanded form has a long history, and its various functions have been noted. H. Poutsma made one of the most detailed descriptive studies of them, 10) and distinguishes between the "fundamental function" and the "secondary functions," which latter are composed of five: the progressive, the relieving, the prospective, the characterizing, and the qualitative functions. But this differentiation seems to lack system, and is far from a clear description of the functions of the expanded form. Another detailed study worth mentioning is Jespersen, *MEG IV*, §12.5ff. But this does not satisfy us either. We will not enter here any detailed discussion of their treatments, but we will refer to them on occasion in the below.

1. 4. I should like to show here a synopsis of a system of my own of the secondary functions of the expanded form, that is, the imperfective aspect. These secondary functions are supposed to be the subclasses of the primary function when delicately differentiated. They form a closed system of which they are the terms. The word "system" here has all the implications made clear by M. A. K. Halliday. 11) That is,

(a) the number of the term is finite: they can be listed as A B C D, and all other items E... are outside the system.

(b) each term is exclusive of all the others: a given term A

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7) *Russian Grammar* (Oxford, 1957), p.206.

8) S. Igeta, ВИДЫ РУССКОГО ГЛАГОЛА (The Aspect of the Russian Verb) (1941, Sanseido), p.90 ff.

9) Cp. my "Max Deutschbein's Aspect Theory," note 11.

10) *The Characters of the English Verb and the Expanded Form*, Part B (1921).

11) "Categories of the Theory of Grammar," *Word*, 17 (1961), p.247.

und erfahren wird.”<sup>5)</sup> It goes without saying that we can go nowhere with those kinds of ambiguous definitions. It is true that there are emotive and other psychological factors in the substrata of the imperfective aspect, but those factors do not form the essential part of the aspect. The aspectual opposition should be defined solely as difference in the grasp of the action of the verb with regard to completion or incompleteness, and not with regard to presence or absence of emotive factors on the part of the speaker.

Moreover, there are some situations in which there is no freedom of choice between the two aspects. For instance, the situation

When I was returning home, I met my brother in the street.  
is expressed in Czech by the imperfective aspect as :

Gdy *wracalem* do domu, spotkalem brata na ulicy.

Here the imperfective aspect is obligatory. On the other hand, when we have to express the situation

When I returned home, I found his letter on my writing-table.  
the perfective aspect is obligatory :

Gdy *wrócilem* do domu, znalazlem jego list na biurku.<sup>6)</sup>

The action “to return home” is the same in both cases. But the contextual situations in which the action is grasped are different. We find no emotive factor here. The speaker is factual and matter-of-fact. I think here is a key to the essential meaning of the aspect. Given a definite situation, the imperfective or the perfective aspect is obligatory.

1. 2. The definition of the imperfective aspect we have seen in the above is the most abstract, the most generalized, and the least differentiated one. It is stated in the form of the utmost generalization. This may be called the primary value or function of this aspect. And according to the situation in which the imperfective aspect is employed in speech, some delicate differentiation within the value is possible. We can discern a certain number of particular cases. We may call these as secondary values or functions. In Russian, for instance, B. O. Unbegaun discriminates variants such as “the action itself, ... action attempted, ... habitual

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5) M. Deutschbein, “Aspekte,” p. 142.

6) H. Pilch, “Das ae. Präverb *3e-*,” *Anglia*, p. 131.

# The Imperfective Aspect of the Expanded Form

Fumio Miyahara

The following is an attempt at a systemic explanation of the function of the expanded form in terms of the concept of the imperfective aspect. I think that various functions of the expanded form noted by many grammarians can be reduced to a small number of secondary functions of the imperfective aspect, and that their variations are produced by peculiarities of the context, or by their rhetorical employment.

## Primary Function and Secondary Function

1. 1. The imperfective aspect expresses that the action denoted by the verb is viewed as going on, as “*geschehend*,” as in its process toward completion. The perfective aspect expresses the action otherwise: not as in process but as it is realized as a whole. This is what seems to be agreed upon by a number of grammarians of Slavic languages and of comparative linguistics.<sup>1)</sup>

The choice between the two aspects generally depends upon the speaker. One and the same objective happening can be grasped in either of the two aspects. Here subjectivity plays a role. And this seems to have caused such ambiguous definitions of the imperfective aspect as “*Phantasiedenk-akt*,”<sup>2)</sup> “*Ausdruck der lebhaften Vorstellung*,”<sup>3)</sup> or as an act of “*Einführung*,”<sup>4)</sup> or as it expresses an action as “*eine Gegenwart, die erlebt*

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1) Cp. my article “Max Deutschbein’s Aspect Theory” (*Studies in Literature and Thought*, 29 (1966)), §3. 2, note 10. Also I should like to add here Dr. Mazon’s definition of the aspect as the opposition of “*développement*” and “*achèvement*.” (*Emploi des aspects du verbe russe* (1914), pp.101 & 238.)

2) E. Lorck, “*Passé défini, Imparfait, Passé indéfini*. . .,” *GRM*, 6, p. 43.

3) E. Lerch, *Hauptprobleme der Französischen Sprache* I, p. 139 ff. as quoted in Deutschbein, “*Aspekte und Aktionsarten im Neuenglischen*,” p. 131.

4) E. Winkler, “*Die seelische Grundlage der Imperfektverwendung im Romani-schen*,” *GRM*, 12, p. 236 ff.