

## ASPECT FROM A TEXTUAL APPROACH

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**Abstract:** Basing upon the intense and extense categories proposed by C. Zilberberg, this paper identifies the different aspectual values that describe the time measure of the actions narrated on texts.

**Keywords:** aspect - textual aspect.

This paper examines aspect from an enunciation approach. More specifically, it intends to describe the role of aspect in the textual organization determined by the enunciation. In this context, aspect is characterized as an extensive category which is disseminated along the text and is defined as the act of a subject of the utterance - the observer - who determines a point of view (non-deictic) about the time. Temporalization and aspectualization are so considered to be two different procedures. Through the first one, the narrative actions are situated temporally in relation to the time of the enunciation. Through the second procedure, the observer fixes a point of view upon the time of the actions changing them into discursive processes (Greimas and Courtés, 1979). We distinguish three different aspectual properties that constitute a unified system of values: the segmentation, the dimension and the *tempo*. These aspect properties are, here, described by the application of the intense and extense categories, proposed by C. Zilberberg (1990). These categories are conceived from the syllabication studies of Saussure and Hjelmslev. From the first linguist, Zilberberg detaches the rhythmic definition and, from the second, the syntagmatic conception. The intense and the extense categories are reinterpretations of the implosion and the explosion which describe the patterns of Saussure's syllable. Zilberberg considers these categories as two functional possibilities that result from acceleration and from deceleration. These categories allow the description of the aspect values in a dynamic and comparative way. The intense and extense categories are mobile and recursive and can be applied in different plans and levels of analysis.

In this way, an element can be characterized as extense in a level and as intense in another level, when it is put in context with other elements. The recursive character of these categories makes possible their reapplication, defining, in this way, the different aspects. First of all, we have the segmentation and the non-segmentation of time that reveal two perspectives upon time: the global one, defined by the extense category, that takes time in its totality, as a continuity, and the secant one, marked by the intense category, that divides time, attributing different aspects to it. Through the global perspective, the processes seem to pre-exist and subsist to the enunciation. In this way, it is the perspective used in utterances that present subjects considered true or scientific. The limit of the extension, in the secant perspective, is durativity and the limit of the intension is punctuality. The segmentation comprehends so an organization of aspectual values which qualifies the time as punctual or durative. Durativity (continuous or non continuous) is defined as the negation of punctuality which presupposes inchoativity and perfectivity. The description of the utterance aspects is completed by the quantification of durativity. It implies dimension and *tempo*. Through a new application of Zilberberg's categories the durativity is presented as long durativity, defined by the extension, and short durativity, characterized by the intension. From the combination of durativity and *tempo*, we have rapid durativity, marked by the intension, and slow durativity, defined by the extension. The dimension and the *tempo* of durativity result from the application of the same categories upon time, but they are distinguished: the dimension is characterised by stativity and the *tempo*, by dynamicity. After identifying the aspectual values, we examine their meaning effects and the formal means that express them in the Portuguese language. The textual approach of aspect determines the examination of different devices, which, together, account for its meaning. The analysis shows that there are verbal tenses in Portuguese which express perfectivity and durativity and that the other aspectual values are manifested by auxiliary verbs and adverbial expressions. Concerning these expressions, it is so necessary to distinguish the ones which have a temporal role from those which have an aspectual role. Finally, we examine the articulation of these formal means, including the lexical items, which, in their turn, can be classified as punctual or durative according to the possibility of combination, in an explicit or implicit way, with punctual or durative adverbial expressions. Punctuality is, then, manifested by adverbial expressions and by lexical items. Durativity, in other words, the temporal extension considered without its limits, is manifested by verbal tenses, auxiliary verbs, adverbial expressions and lexical items. There are also linguistic devices in Portuguese that express the different types of durativity. The slow durativity is manifested by auxiliary verbs and by adverbial expressions. Long, short and rapid durativity is expressed by adverbial expressions. The extense and intense categories apply dynamics to the linguistic system. *Tellement que la définition du système devrait elle-même être reconsidérée en vue d'inscrire le devenir, non comme un accident, une faille du système, mais comme sa raison même* (Zilberberg, 1990: 37). The acceleration and the deceleration put the system elements in movement. In this way, the elements marked by the extense category are those which have the capacity of interacting with distant elements and the ones defined by the intense category are those which interact locally with its neighbouring elements (Tatit, 1994). To Zilberberg, the extense elements have a superior value and can modify the intense elements. In this way, when different forms that manifest aspects are joined, the one marked by the extense category modifies the others. With the presence of a tense that marks aspect, its value is dominant upon the aspects marked by other resources, without these tenses, the aspectual values of the adverbs reveal to be dominant. When we have aspects expressed by auxiliary verbs and lexical items, the values manifested by the first group are dominant upon the ones of the second

group. In all these cases, however, there are two operations governing the various possibilities of aspectual composition: the perfectivization which adds the perfective trace to durativity, and the durativization, which neutralises the perfective mark.

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