

Tense and aspect in swing conditionals

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This paper focuses on past subjunctive conditionals (PSCs) in French. French PSCs have a *conditionnel 2* in the consequent. It is often assumed that French (like Greek) requires imperfective aspect as a counterfactual marker in the antecedent (Iatridou 2000). This should explain why we find in the antecedent of PSCs the *plus que parfait*, a double past combining an imperfective morphology to a first layer of past, cf. (1a). Non-imperfective past tenses, a.o. the present perfect, are supposed to be banned, as confirmed by (1b).

- (1) Si on (a.) avait réfléchi (b.) *a réfléchi, on n' aurait pas
 if we (a.) had thought (b.) has thought we NEG have.COND. NEG
 signé.
 signed
 'If we had thought/ have thought about it, we wouldn't have signed.'

We found, however, many occurrences of conditionals with a *conditionnel 2* in the consequent and a present perfect in the antecedent in corpora, cf. (2).

- (2) Si un missile sol-air a effectivement été utilisé, il
 if a missile ground-air has indeed been used it
 aurait été tiré à partir d' un bateau.
 have.COND. been launched from a boat
 'If a ground-air missile has indeed been used, it would have been launched from a boat.'

We show that conditionals as in (2) are true subjunctive conditionals, but differ from standard PSCs in several respects (a.o. the fact that they require the antecedent to be undecided relative to the current context) as well as from standard past indicative conditionals. The absence of the imperfective morphology is analysed as a case of agreement failure and signals, we propose, that subjunctivehood is obtained in other way than through the counterfactuality of the antecedent.

Reference: Iatridou, S. 2000. The grammatical ingredients of counterfactuality. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 31:231-270.