The real, the fake, and the fake fake: In counterfactual conditionals, crosslinguistically
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Final Remarks

In this short chapter, I only wish to cast light on some of the conclusions reached in this dissertation and point out a couple of issues that remain open awaiting future work.

5.1 Non-Actual Veridicality or Stronger

Building on Iatridou’s notion of exclusion and Giannakidou’s notion of veridicality, this dissertation motivates the meaning of past tense morphemes (in those languages that employ the past tense morpheme in temporal clauses as well as counterfactual clauses) in terms of non-actual veridicality (NAV). Non-actual veridicality is a notion that tries to capture the fact that a sentence including past tense morphology does not allow for actual verification of the proposition expressed by the sentence, i.e. by employing a NAV morpheme one points to a presupposition set or information state according to which one cannot verify the proposition at the here and now. As such, NAV semantics varies over pairs of worlds and times. It presupposes that the proposition or event it applies to is different from the pair consisting of the actual world and the utterance time. NAV thus captures the temporal use by specifying that the time variable is different from $t^0$, i.e. the present time. It captures the counterfactual use by specifying that the world variable is different from $w^0$, i.e. the actual world.

The meaning of dedicated markers should be construed as stronger than NAV. Giannakidou’s notion of anti-veridicality is instructive here. If we allow dedicated CF markers to vary over world variables alone, we are able to capture
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do not hallucinate.

the fact that dedicated markers are able to render CF readings on their own, as they specify that the world variable is different from \( w^0 \).

The meaning of imperfective and subjunctive morphemes should be construed along the same lines but weaker than NAV semantics. Something along the lines as (non)-actual completion or (non)-actual belief, respectively for the imperfective and subjunctive; but the exact formulation I leave for future work.

This notion of NAV is useful because with minimal adjustments it can account for the usage of non-temporal morphology in counterfactuals, such as participant oriented or location oriented languages. For example, if, informally, NAV varies over pairs of worlds and times specifying that this pair is different from \([w^0, \text{now}]\). It can be made to vary over pairs of worlds and participants in a conversation, or worlds and location – specifying that these pairs are different from \([w^0, \text{us}]\) or \([w^0, \text{here}]\), respectively. The exact formulation I leave for future work, too.

As such, the underspecification approach to the semantics of past, distal, or identity markers can account for the double use of such markers as denoting time, place, or participants and counterfactuality. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one proposal that attempts at a unified analysis, and it is syntactic in nature. By looking at different languages, Ritter and Wiltschko (2009, 2010) propose that the common denominator between those morphemes that play a role in yielding counterfactual constructions is the fact that they are Inf morphemes.

As explained in detail in chapter 3, Ritter and Wiltschko (2009, 2010) derive counterfactuality syntactically by relying on a feature checking mechanism. They follow Hale (1986) in defining “spatial, temporal and identity relations in terms of ‘central’ versus ‘non-central’ (or ‘terminal’) coincidence” (Hale 1986:238). They argue that past tense morphemes have a \([\neg \text{coin}]\) feature and they extend this to languages that do not employ the past tense but other Inf area morphemes that carry a \([\neg \text{coin}]\) feature. They follow Demirdashe and Uribe-Etxebarria (2000) in assuming that in spec-IP there is an abstract utterance situation argument relative to which the event is evaluated; and they follow Mezhevich (2006) in assuming that there is an abstract evaluation situation argument in spec-CP relative to which the utterance is evaluated (cf. also Zagona 2003). “Thus the abstract past marker in \text{COMP} of counterfactuals indicates that the utterance situation does not coincide with the evaluation situation” (Ritter and Wiltschko 2010:46) – hence the counterfactual inference.

This proposal comes closest to account for the relation between counterfactual syntax and counterfactual semantics, but unfortunately it fails to offer an explanation concerning real tense interpretation inside counterfactuals (as I point out in chapter 3). Second, it falls short of offering a semantics-free syntax – a problem which the underspecification approach argued for in this dissertation overcomes.

The underspecification approach to the semantics of NAV is also favourable to semantic accounts which rely on past tense semantics as restricting accessibility relations (Ippolito 2003, 2004, 2006) or as restricting similarity (Arregui
2005, 2009) because the approach argued for here is extendible to languages that do not have tense systems or do not employ past tense in counterfactuals.

That said, the notion of NAV as defined in this dissertation appears, albeit at face value, to fail to account, on the basis of semantics alone, for why one past tense morpheme is insufficient to yield both past and counterfactuality in one and the same clause, i.e. why one NAV morpheme is insufficient to yield a past counterfactual reading – but only either a past non-counterfactual, or a counterfactual non-past.\(^1\) Nevertheless, there exist crosslinguistic data that show that past counterfactuality can actually be yielded by single past tense morphology, cf. Hebrew. This means that the ban on expressing past CFs by means of a single past tense morpheme is then just a blocking effect in those languages that allow stacking strategies, such as Palestinian (which exhibits an auxiliary strategy that allows the stacking of two past tense morphemes) and English (which exhibits the perfect strategy that stacks a past tense morpheme on top of a participle that is lexically specified for anteriority).\(^2\)

### 5.2 A CF Complex and a Semantics-Free Syntax

The underspecification approach to the semantics of so called past tense morphemes in terms of NAV proposed here allows for a semantics-free syntax of CFs. That the underspecification approach to the semantics of NAV allows the corresponding morpheme to be interpreted as modal or temporal means that the corresponding readings are yielded compositionally. Semantics reads off the syntactic structure via NAV semantics and temporal specification without alluding to syntactic T-C Agreement (as argued for in Bjorkman 2011, Ritter and Wiltschko 2010). This is especially important because T-C Agreement, which makes possible such operations as conditional inversion, is not restricted to counterfactuals and can be found in non-counterfactual conditionals as is attested in languages that allow conditional inversion in indicative conditionals, as exemplified in (290) and (291).

(290) Kommt Hans dann geht Susanne.
    comes Hans then goes Susanne
    ‘If Hans comes, Susan goes.’  Iatridou and Embick (1994:190 (2))

(291) Hafi hann faridh, eg kom.
    have.prs.subjnc he gone, I come
    ‘If he has gone, I will come.’  Heimir Freyr Viðarsson (p.c.)

\(^1\) I thank Chriss Kennedy for making this observation.

\(^2\) Interestingly, Cleo Condoravdi reports of English examples (from the news) in which one past tense morpheme results in a past counterfactual as we will see in 5.4. I have also mentioned a Palestinian example in chapter 2 where one NAV morpheme is sufficient to yield both pastness and counterfactuality. See footnote 21 in chapter 2.
Note that it is not only that in non-CF conditionals the verb is also able to move to C, but further when it does, Mood shows up, in Icelandic as illustrated in (291). This might be evidence for the fact that conditionals, in general, include a C and a mood phrase, but CF and non-CF conditionals differ in that only CFs include a node for (a second) T – forming what I have called a CF complex.

Interestingly, were in English counterfactuals might just be the movement of the NAV morpheme from T into Mood as is evident by its subjunctive inflection, or lack of person agreement if you’d rather. This further shows that those ‘past’ tense morphemes that are active in yielding counterfactuality are found in a structurally different (and higher) position than those which yield past tense. Furthermore, the lack of agreement features on had and were in English CFs might just be another piece of evidence for the instantiation of NAV morphology above the structural position which activates agreement.

Conditional inversion, *per se*, thus does not give rise to counterfactuality. What does give rise to a counterfactual antecedent is the presence of CF ingredients, in particular a morpheme with NAV semantics (like a past tense morpheme) but one which is found in the right structural position heading the T node in the CF complex. Movement of the NAV morpheme from TP to the CP domain only results in an emphatic effect – a generally witnessed effect arising from optional and, therefore, redundant operations. See (292), which is Bjorkman’s implementation.

(292) Had you ...

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(292)Had you ...                  CP
       C^0                     Bjorkman (2011:6 (6))
         TP
          you
           T^0
             had
               i
                 i-coin
                   u-coin

(293) a. iz-kan-no
      fi l-bet
      if-be.pst.3sm-subjnc.3sm in the-house
      ‘If he had been home, ...’
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5.3 Upperbound on Real Tense and Aspect?

Palestinian offers a good example for transparency of tense and aspect in counterfactuals. This is why the proposal concerning counterfactual syntax based on Palestinian (in chapter 2) was extendible with modifications to other languages (in chapter 3). Nevertheless, it is relative transparency. While, in Palestinian, the availability of auxiliary structures ensures that the verb under kaan is free to carry real tense and aspect, Palestinian does exhibit a construction which is less transparent and that is the construction that expresses counterfactual habits.

The facts of counterfactual habituals are such that past and non-past counterfactual habits are expressed by the same morpho-syntactic construction: kaan b-impfv. Hence, while kaan expresses counterfactuality and b-imperfective expresses habituality, real tense in the past habit case remains unspecified – as is exemplified in (295a). As is the case in the English paraphrase, there is ambiguity between a present habitual reading and a past habitual reading. The same is true of counterfactual statives, as exemplified in (295b) which, in principle, is ambiguous as well between a past counterfactual state and a present one were it not for the locative and temporal adverbs.

(294) Hefði hann farið kæmi ég have,pst,subjnc he gone, come,pst,subjnc I 'had he gone, I would have come.' Heimir Freyr Viðarsson (p.c.)

(295) a. iza kan-no kaan fi-h faree’t basket, if be,pst,subjnc,3sm be,pst,3sm in-it team basket-ball, kaan b-il'ilab ma'li-hom be,pst,3sf b-play,impfv with-them 'If there had been a basketball team, he would have played for it.'

b. iza kan-no kaan hunaak, kaanat if be,pst,subjnc,3sm be,pst,3sm there, be,pst,3sf b-ituun mabšu'ta wa't-ha b-be,impfv,3sf happy,f time-that,f 'If he had been there, she would have been happy at that time.'
In CFs that receive a past-imperfective interpretation, a second past marker is needed: one for CF meaning and one for real past. In these constructions, we only see a second past in the antecedent clause; the consequent clause does not stack the auxiliary *kaan*, however. This means that in the antecedent, all of the real tense and aspect morphology is transparent, stacking below CF past morphology and yielding a double auxiliary structure. In the consequent, however, because the stacking of *kaan* is not possible, real past is not transparent. And, thus, the constructions that express a CF past habit and a CF non-past habit are identical. In other words, *kaan* b-impfv, which when transparent expresses non-past counterfactual, is actually ambiguous and can express a counterfactual past habit, too.

One might explain the facts of counterfactual habituality by alluding to syntactic-semantic restrictions particular to Palestinian such as (i) the fact that the stacking of *kaan* is not tolerated in verbal structures in the consequent (cf. */?? kaan kaan vP*), and (ii) the fact that the habitual morpheme b- is coupled with non-past tense. However, the more interesting explanation might lie in the cross-linguistic picture.

First, it is not uncommon for imperfective forms in general (cf. Romance and Greek), and habitual or future morphemes in particular (cf. Hindi, English and Zulu), to accompany fake past tense and function as ingredients in counterfactual structures. But more importantly, it might be the case that there is an upper bound to the expression of real tense and aspect in counterfactuals which depends on the syntactic and semantic restrictions or limitations of the language (if we take the inability to stack double auxiliary in the consequent as a limitation). This means that the main ingredient (i.e. fake past tense) remains the necessary morpheme, while tense and aspect morphemes are traded off in favour of those morphemes which maximize the range of expression. This explains why the imperfective is found in counterfactuals in language after language: it is the form that is compatible with both perfective and imperfective interpretations. Furthermore, it is the form that combines with future/habitual morphemes (cf. Arabic and Hindi) or is specified for future/habitual on its own (cf. Romance and Greek). At the expense of expressing counterfactuality, transparent/real tense becomes less important: since the event is counterfactual, the time at which it happens in the counterfactual world is less significant (especially if the antecedent, as well as contextual cues, are able to add that piece of information). What is significant is that the syntactic requirements are met. In Palestinian, there is a syntactic requirement that (real) tense be overtly filled. This requirement is parametrized and it allows us to independently predict when the language will exhibit fake aspect. The underlying assumption, thus, is that languages aspire to express real tense and aspect in counterfactuals, but may fail to do so depending on the availability of auxiliary structures in the language or the morphological inventory of tense in the language – in particular, on whether tense and aspect are intertwined on a single morpheme.
5.4 Semantic Upperbound (to CF strengthening)?

In this section, I want to address the question of whether we can assume there to be a semantic upper bound to counterfactual strength. In our discussion of conditionals in chapter 4, we identified a tri-partition of conditionals and distinguished them by modelling how information states alluding to beliefs and expectations capture the meaning of conditionals. I sketched three pictures, which semantically/logically exhaustify the options for a given proposition in relation to its compatibility with expectations and beliefs/knowledge in a given state—hence the semantic upperbound for counterfactuals which according to the proposal in chapter 4 can come in two flavours only. A counterfactual conditional either signals that the antecedent is unlikely (and hence can be uttered by someone who is in fact agnostic but has certain expectations with respect to \( \varphi \), namely expects that \( \neg \varphi \)) or that the antecedent is excluded (because the relevant state alludes to knowledge of \( \neg \varphi \)).

Nevertheless, in our crosslinguistic discussion that followed we could see that there appears to be lack of transparency resulting from availability of more or less morpho-syntactic tools. Hence, we saw examples showing that the ideal picture is often blurred. This is not because the ideal language does not exist, but rather because there is often trade-off between the need to signal reference to the exact information state and the need to refer transparently to the tense and aspect describing the situation by including the relevant tense and aspect morphemes. When a language has more tools, there is more room for gradability; when a language has less tools there will be overlap.

In English one most probably cannot have a singly marked conditional referring to the past. This fits in well with what I noted in chapters 2 and 3, namely that one NAV morpheme cannot signal both that we are talking about a distant time and an unreal world. To be able to refer to both these things, one needs two NAV morphemes. English does so by employing the pluperfect. The problem begins once we notice that this marking, which if we count correctly is single marking, as one NAV goes to the temporal past and the other to signal modality, in fact, receives the semantics we have associated with double marking, namely that the antecedent is incompatible with knowledge. This is a problem because our proposal predicts that one ought to have used triple marking, with one going to the temporal past, and two more operations to get us first to \( E \neg \varphi \) and then to \( K \neg \varphi \). Ideally, this kind of marking is not absent in English: it occurs in examples which involve I-to-C movement, as noted by Embick and Iatridou (1994) and mentioned earlier in chapter 3. To signal that the past event is inconsistent with what is known, English employs a syntactic strategy, namely the I-to-C movement, on top of the pluperfect to achieve this double marking. Compare the examples in (296).

\[(296)\quad a. \text{ Had I been offered the job, I would have brought champagne.}\]
b. If I had been offered the job, I would have brought champagne.

Iatridou and Embick (1994:200 (45))

Embick and Iatridou (1994) write that the inverted version signals that the falsity of the antecedent is old information (1994:200). In our terminology here, the dialogical situation should be one that pertains to knowledge of \( \neg \varphi \) if this move is to be licensed.

Why is this form not used as often as it ought to be? One reason is the following. There is the common observation that inversion sounds opaque or old fashioned – therefore, unless one really has to, one doesn’t use it in everyday speech. This is not crosslinguistically uncommon; we have noted similar effects in Modern Hebrew in chapter 3, where speakers refrain from using the available dedicated counterfactual marker \( \text{ilu} \) for avoiding to sound biblical.

Why is the ‘singly marked’ then enough to signal that \( \varphi \) is inconsistent with knowledge, when we are talking about the past? One reason may be that, in fact, more often than is necessary, the past is taken to be known. It is not surprising, then, that the semantic theories of time that we discussed in chapter 1 model the past as closed. Another reason may be particular to English and that is that if one wants to signal knowledge of \( \neg \varphi \) without sounding opaque one has to do this with tense marking. In other words, if the only way a language can talk counterfactually is by using a past morpheme, then you can only make two steps by using the past. In a language like English, where the choice is always between the simple past and the pluperfect, in this case, one must opt for the pluperfect. And, if all you have is the pluperfect, then the need to use the strongest form possible to signal counterfactuality trumps the need to be transparent, especially when it is contextually available that one is talking about the past. Another interesting reason for all this may be the observation noted in Schulz (2007), namely corpus studies as Boyland (1995) point to the fact that \textit{would have} has grammaticalized into a form that signals counterfactuality (in the strong sense).

Further, because the simple past is ungrammatical in non-indicative sentences about the past, English has no way to express that the antecedent \( \varphi \) is consistent with what you know but not with what you expect. The reason for why the simple past is not available for this is because it looks like in many languages, when you are talking about the past, and you use a past tense, then this morpheme cannot be interpreted as a fake tense. Ideally, we need two NAV morphemes, one to talk about the past and the other to signal at the same time that we don’t expect it to hold in the real world. Interestingly, though, such cases (with one past tense morpheme in the antecedent) have been attested, as the example in (297) shows. The example is taken from Cleo Condoravdi in personal communication. Even though she maintains that the example sounds odd, she does report to have heard it used by a novelist.\(^3\)

Context: My novels are shaped by the fact that I grew up in blue collar projects in the 50’s.

a. If I grew up in California, ... [my style would have been different]
b. If I grew up in the plains, ...

Although, we see that the picture is blurred, nevertheless, before we have a formal pragmatic apparatus, the account presented in this dissertation comes closest to accounting for the crosslinguistic diversity as well as the principles underlying conditional structures. It is worth noting that Ippolito’s (2003 et seq.) crosslinguistic observations support the sketch presented here, not only in terms of the strength (uncancellobility in her terms) of the CF inference, but also with respect to the projection behavior of presuppositions from inside the antecedent of CF conditionals. This topic was deemed beyond the scope of this work, but it is worthwhile pursuing along the same lines especially in terms of stacking of information states.

I realise that the above statements are rather bold and speculative given the evidence that we looked at in 4.5, and as we mentioned there a complete analysis awaits more conclusive empirical evidence.

5.5 Lexical Aspect in Counterfactuals and Temporal Specification

Iatridou (1996, 2000) discusses the intriguing effects of lexical aspect (or Ak- tionsart) on temporal specification in (non-past) counterfactuals – exemplified in (298).

(298)  a. Stage level stative predicate yielding PresCF: If he were drunk (now), he would be louder. Iatridou (2000:250 (64b))

b. Stage level stative predicate yielding FLV: If he were drunk (at next week’s meeting), the boss would be really angry. Iatridou (2000:250 (64a))

c. Individual level stative predicate yielding PresCF: If I believed in ghosts, I would be afraid now. Iatridou (2000:249 (61))


In the examples above, we see that eventives yield readings that are solely future oriented. The rest of the examples seem to be compatible with either a present or a future oriented interpretation. Note that although Iatridou (2000) notes that individual level predicates yield only present tense readings, a future oriented reading (and hence a FLV) can be denoted by (299), or say If he were tall (when he is reborn in another life), ..., for example.
Individual level stative predicate yielding FLV: If he were tall (when I see him for the first time tomorrow), Mary would win the bet.

Hence, the only type of predicate that seems to block a present tense reading is an eventive predicate: if he read this book now does not mean if he were reading this book now and the event cannot be interpreted as simultaneous to utterance time.

Iatridou (1996, 2000) explains the differences in the temporal readings achieved by arguing that different predicate types provide different evaluation points. She appeals to telicity and argues that the telic vs. stative distinction is able to explain the facts above.

“When the antecedent contains a telic predicate, the situation described can only come about at a time after the utterance time. When it contains an individual-level stative predicate, it is talking about a situation that, if it is to hold, will already be doing so at the utterance time. Finally, when the antecedent contains a stage level predicate, it can either describe a situation that, if it is to hold, will do so in the future, or a situation that can contain the utterance time.”

Iatridou (2000:251)

Although Iatridou discusses telics versus statives, nevertheless, telicity does not suffice to explain the above facts, as activity predicates can be atelic and yet are incompatible with present tense readings. In fact, what seems to be the determining factor is whether or not the predicate carries an event argument. Activity verbs which can be part of atelic VPs actually pattern with telics. A better characterization perhaps is a stative vs. eventive distinction. This allows us to conclude that eventives are incompatible with present tense interpretation while statives are compatible with present interpretations. See, a.o., Enc (1991) for arguments that eventive predicates contain an event variable which must be bound by a modal or temporal operator other than present tense.

For Iatridou (1996, in Han 1996) “the sphere of worlds is evoked by virtue of the semantics of conditionals” which means that, in a conditional environment, the past tense morpheme (reinterpreted as an exclusion feature) is free to function with a modal value. Based on Palestinian data, Karawani and Zeijlstra (2010) argue that a conditional environment is not sufficient to license the modal function of the past tense morpheme (reinterpreted in terms of a NAV morpheme). In fact, in addition, time must be saturated – that is, the underlying predicate must be specified for tense. This dissertation builds on this idea and shows that while the requirement for real semantic tense specification is universal, the language involved may or may not require this tense specification to be morphologically overt or syntactically active – as real morpho-syntactic tense is shown to be a parameter across languages, but also within one and the same language. For example, we see that in Palestinian tense specification is a syntactic requirement, but it is parametrized within Palestinian in so far as T
in the antecedent (i.e. if-clause) is allowed to be covert, but must be overt in the consequent (i.e. main clause).

Looking at English, Han (1996) proposes a similar idea, but does not say that tense specification is necessary. Instead, she proposes ad hoc null present tense for English based on the fact that counterfactuals which exhibit a sole past tense morpheme are interpreted as present counterfactuals. According to Han, the fact that “the interpretational system is fooled into yielding a present tense interpretation” wouldn’t have been possible were it not for the fact that English grammaticalizes present tense with null morphology (Han 1996:9).

Following Iatridou (1996), Han argues that for the sentence to be interpretable, the semantics looks for the earliest possible point in time for the evaluation of truth. The earliest possible evaluation point for telic predicates is in the future of UT, and so telic predicates in counterfactuals yield FLVs. On the other hand, atelic predicates provide a simultaneous evaluation point to UT and thus contribute present CFs. Han (1996) argues that for this to be possible there must be a covert tense which is contributing the non-pastness of the CF. Hence, to explain the facts concerning non-past CFs (present CFs or FLVs), Han (1996) postulates that English has null present tense. In turn, the sole past tense morpheme is interpreted modally to yield counterfactuality and lexical aspect determines the exact temporal reading be it present or future.

In contrast, it seems to me that, although lexical aspect is indeed able to establish temporal relations, data showing lexical aspectual sensitivity do not constitute an argument for null tense per se. In fact the ability of lexical aspect to establish temporal relations in English is a compensation of the system for the lack of morphological aspect. In languages that exhibit perfective-imperfective aspectual distinctions we find an incompatibility between perfective aspect and present tense interpretation correlating with the incompatibility of telicity/eventivity and present tense interpretation recorded of English.

For example, the behaviour of telic predicates, in English, with respect to tense correlates with the behaviour of perfective marked verbs with respect to tense, in Palestinian. In both cases, (i) the present tense reading is excluded, (ii) the same ambiguity is attested when embedded in a conditional: the resultant reading is a past indicative or FLV. This (morphological/lexical) aspectual sensitivity can, thus, be narrowed down to the fact that the present tense rules out perfectivity/telicity in favour of a past or a future interpretation.

As discussed in chapter 3, English seems to be a language which requires syntactic tense but has no further requirement as to whether this tense must be fake or real. Contrary to Palestinian, where the past tense is not allowed to function as fake, unless real tense requirement is syntactically provided. In other words, while Palestinian has a requirement for real tense and thus Palestinian counterfactuals require real tense as well as fake tense to be selected syntactically (hence, two TPs in Palestinian counterfactual structures), English has a general requirement for tense – and since this can be checked by real or fake tense, English antecedents get to be ambiguous between indicative and counterfactual interpretations. The fact that past indicatives in English
are not sensitive to lexical aspect while non-past counterfactuals are shows that in the absence of real tense, on the one hand, and adverbial modification or pragmatic cues, on the other, the semantics looks for a last resort to save meaning and the only thing that can be ultimately established is ruling out a present tense interpretation in case the predicate is telic/eventive. This operation takes place on morpho-syntactic grounds – instead of lexical – in case the predicate carries perfective morphology in languages that show morphological aspect distinctions.

In a nutshell, a non-past counterfactual reading is available in English not due to the grammaticalization of null present tense as Han (1996) argues, but rather due to the fact that grammatical real tense is not required. In other words, due to there being no requirement for syntactic real tense in English, but merely a requirement for tense. Thus without postulating null present tense, we can say that in the absence of present tense morphology (for example when the verb is in bare form), it looks like the link to UT is derived compositionally through aspectual relations and adverbial modification, but also through contextual sensitivity.

We see, then, that aspect – be it lexical (Aktionsart) or morphological (perfective-imperfective) – is able to manipulate temporal readings. Importantly, though, it seems to be the case that lexical aspect is able to do so only in the absence of morphological aspect. This is why, it seems to me, that the data discussed by Han (1996) are a by-product of the lack of morphological aspectual distinctions in English (Guérón 2007) and not indicative of null tense per se. By looking at English, as a language which lacks morphological aspect (Guérón 2007), we see that lexical aspect is able to specify tense/temporal information – a function which imperfective aspect plays in other languages like Greek or Romance.

The discussion of tense specification via lexical aspect is important because it helps us proceed with answering an important question that was raised in this dissertation – namely, the question as to whether the presence of imperfective aspect in counterfactuals is essential. We conclude that the imperfective is not a necessary ingredient but it is instrumental insofar as it is able to specify temporal relations and meet the requirement for tense. This dissertation’s attempt at answering this question establishes that the requirement for tense is twofold – syntactic and semantic. The requirement for real syntactic tense is parametrised, whereas the requirement for semantic tense, thus far, is argued to be universal. The semantic requirement may be met by tense morphemes, aspect morphemes, or lexical aspect. As such, I think that the role of lexical aspect in counterfactuals deserves our attention, because it can shed light on the role that morphological aspect plays in those languages in which imperfective aspect surfaces and seems to be a necessary ingredient in counterfactuals. Moreover, it can shed light on the role of syntactic and semantic tense in counterfactuals. Special attention should, therefore, be given to languages that lack morphological aspect and in which lexical aspect determines temporal readings. This is material enough for another book, hence the end of this one.