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The Past Participle and the Periphrastic Passive Construction in French

Our hypothesis is that the past participle is a singular form in the TAM (tense-aspect-mood) linguistic system in French, in that it represents the internal time of the process on its terminal mark ($[R = E_t]$). Due to this detensive representation of internal time, the p.p. can be related to the second argument – the patientive argument - of a direct transitive process : it is the essential element of the passive construction. Contrary to what is often written, the copula *être* is an *optional* element: it may serve to develop the construction in its *periphrastic* dimension, but it is not necessary to the passive construction itself, as the cases of the passive in the participial clause demonstrate. Moreover, the p.p. is not intrinsically *resultative* or *processive*, no more than it is *active* or *passive*: from its detensive aspect $[R = E_t]$, it can, in interaction with different contexts, participate in the production of these different effects of meaning in discourse.

Keywords: past participle, periphrastic passive, detensive aspect

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Introduction

Since at least the 1970s, several publications have highlighted the importance of the parameter of the grammatical aspect in the study of verb tenses and put it at the center of their analyses (*i. a.* Comrie 1976, David & Martin 1980, Dahl 1985, Cohen 1989, Smith 1991). This was not the case for the past participle (henceforth, p.p.): the aspectual representation of the process of the past participle in French has not been a specific research object, as most researchers have agreed to see it as having an *accomplished* value, *viz. resultative*, in the sense that it would represent the resulting state of the process's completion. This definition appears to us as both simplifying and imprecise. We have begun to reconsider the question of the aspect of the p.p.: this form, which is included in different constructions, can be considered, precisely by virtue of its aspectual dimension, the cornerstone of the system of tenses and, to a lesser degree, of the system of voices in French.

We will first explain the aspectual (and temporal) value of the p.p. in French and specify its singularity in relation to the aspectual representation of other forms (section 1.). We will then present the three principal uses of the p.p. in discourse – in the participial clause, in the analytical construction, and in the periphrastic passive construction – and quickly recall our

analyses of the first two (Bres & Le Bellec 2017, 2018) (section 2.). We will then study its behavior in the periphrastic passive construction (section 3.).

The excerpts quoted in this paper primarily come from *Frantext*, a database of French literary, legal, scientific and political written texts ranging from the 16th to the 20th century, supplemented by our own personal readings.

In order to assure the comprehensibility of our developments, we have adopted the representation, shared by different researchers (*i.a.* Dik 1989, Tournadre 2004, Gosselin 2011), according to which a process can be understood according to three phases, pre-processual, processual (represented by the interval between the initial mark (E_i) and the terminal mark (E_t))¹, and post-processual:

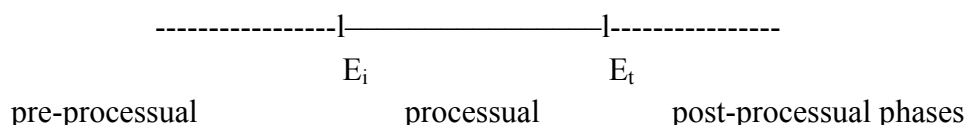


Figure 1. The phases of the process

1. The aspectual singularity of the past participle

We will explain the aspect of the p.p. (1. 1.) before specifying its singularity in relation to the aspectual representation of other verbal forms (1.2.).

1.1. Internal time and aspect of the p.p.

The p.p. produces a *specific* aspectual representation of the process, which it does not share with any other form of the verbal system. In order to explain this, we refer to the analysis that G. Guillaume presented in his 1929 publication of his general theorization of tenses and moods of French (Guillaume [1929] 1970), which he used again in his later articles ([1933]1964, [1938]1964, [1943]1964). However, he did not endeavor to clarify its heuristic potential for the study of the p.p. and, more specifically, of its different behaviors in discourse, as that was not the subject of his study.

The aspectual singularity of the p.p. arises from the way in which this form represents the “implicated time”² (Guillaume [1933]1964: 47) by the process. This notion – we prefer call it *internal time* (borrowed from Comrie 1976: 5, “situation-internal time”) – corresponds to the time of realization of the *tension* of the verb (defined as “the impression of progressive mobility” (Guillaume [1929] 1970: 15), from the initial mark (E_i) of the processual phase to its terminal mark (E_t) (Fig. 1). Unlike nouns (*book*, *glasses* or *shoes*, etc.) all processes, as representations of an event (or a state), involve time which is necessary for the representation of the temporal realization of its processual phase³. In a language such as French, the passage of the internal time of the processual phase can be represented, given the morphological

¹ The processual phase can be subdivided into the initial, median and final phases (Tournadre 2004: 23). We will not make this distinction in the present study.

² « The implicated time is [the time] which is inherent to the verb, which is an integral part of its substance” ([1933]1964: 47).

³ Some nouns also *implicate* time: *chanson* (song), *promenade* (stroll), *nuit* (night), etc. But, unlike verbs, they do not have morphological variation to signify the different aspects of the passage of this internal time.

variation of the verb, according to three *aspects*. Let's look at the system of non-finite moods (infinitive and participle). The internal time of a verb such as *tomber* ('fall') can be represented:

(i) only in tension (\emptyset /*tension*) : this is the case of the infinitive: *tomber* represents the internal time of this process *globally*;

(ii) in a mix of detension and tension (*detension* /*tension*): this is the case of the present participle: *tombant* ('falling') represents the internal time of the verb *during its course*;

(iii) only in detension (\emptyset /*detension*): this is the case of the p.p.: *tombé* ('fallen') represents the internal time of the process *tomber* at *the end of its course*.

We use the terms *global* (i), *cursive* (ii) and *detensive* (iii) aspects.

Before returning to the *detensive* aspect of the p.p., it is important to add that the internal time of the process, such as we have just defined it, concerns the processual phase, between the initial mark (E_i) and the terminal mark (E_t). It is (principally) realized by *synthetic* forms (in the indicative: present : *il tombe*; future: *il tombera*; present conditional: *il tomberait*; imperfect: *il tombait*; simple past: *il tomba*). But it can be represented, *before* its passage, in the *pre-processual* phase: such it is used in the *prospective periphrastic* forms of the present and the imperfect constructed on *aller* ('go') which is grammaticalized as an auxiliary (*il va tomber*, *il allait tomber* ('he is going to fall', 'he was going to fall')). Or after its passage, in the *post-processual* phase: such it is used in the *analytic* forms (in the indicative: present perfect: *il est tombé*; future perfect: *il sera tombé*; past conditional: *il serait tombé*; past perfect: *il était tombé*; past anterior: *il fut tombé*; immediate anterior: *il vient de tomber*):

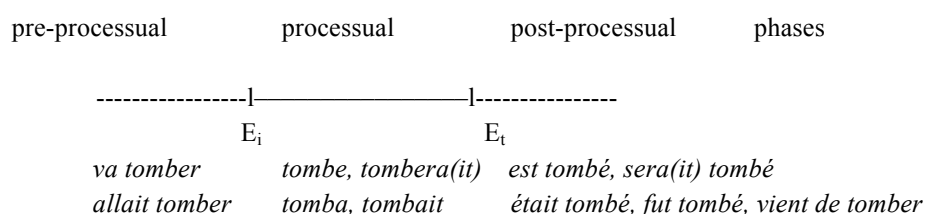


Figure 2. Phases of the process and verbal tenses

Let's return to the p.p. and its aspectual representation of the internal time. Given its position in the system, this form represents the internal time at the end of its passage, very precisely on the terminal mark E_t (Fig. 3) of the processual phase. Note that our analysis cannot be identified with the traditional grammatical approach, which argues that the p.p. marks the *accomplished*, i.e. that it signifies the post-processual phase. We will see (*infra*, 2.2.) that if, in view of its position in the system on the terminal mark of the processual phase, the p.p. is particularly capable of participating in the production of the resultative meaning in discourse; however, it can also be used for the production of other meanings.

Placing our analysis in the terms of Reichenbach (1947), we can adopt the *reference point* R and the *speech point* S while reformulating the *event point* E into the interval of the process

with the initial mark and the terminal mark (E_i - E_t) (Azzopardi & Bres 2017) to describe the p.p.:

- temporally (R/S relation): the p.p. is an atemporal form, like the infinitive and the present participle (henceforth, present p.); *viz.* it does not situate the reference point R in relation to the speech point S in one of the three periods (past, present or future). There is a consensus in the literature on this subject.

- aspectually (R/E relation): the reference point R coincides with the terminal mark of the interval E_i - E_t of the processual phase of the process E, *viz.* $[R = E_t]$.

Taking into account the non-marking of the temporal relationship, we can describe the p.p. as a form that only marks the aspect, specifically the detensive aspect, according to the formula: $[R = E_t]$.

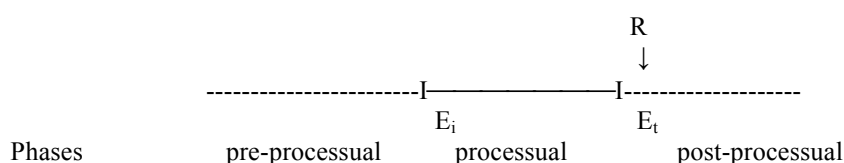


Figure 3. The aspect of the p.p.

1.2. Aspect of the p.p. and aspect of other verbal forms

It is this aspectual representation of the internal time that creates the specificity and the uniqueness of the p.p. Indeed, no other synthetic form represents the internal time on the terminal mark: they represent it either *globally* (case of the simple past: R_i - $R_t = E_i$ - E_t), *cursorily* (case of the imperfect: $R \subset E_i$ - E_t), or *neutrally* (case of the future: $R \subseteq E_i$ - E_t) (Azzopardi & Bres 2017). The p.p. is a unique form, because it represents the internal time in a unique way: at the precise moment when the internal time is represented as entirely spent, *viz. detensively*.

This singularity appears in a particularly prominent way when the p.p. (1), used as an apposition, is compared to the closest non-finite form, the present p. (2):

- (1) L'âme d'Herminien, soudain fraternelle et **réconciliée** (*se réconcilier*-P.P.), lui sembla venir à lui avec le souffle de la tempête. (J. Gracq, *Au Château d'Argol*, 1938)
'The soul of Herminien, all of a sudden fraternal and **reconciled**, seemed to come to him with the blow of the storm.'
- (2) [...] cette mère qui, par la suite, allait quitter le château, maudire le premier fruit de son ventre, [...] ne **se réconciliant** (*se réconcilier*-PRESENT P.) qu'à la veille de sa mort avec celui qu'elle considérait comme un assassin. (C. Simon, *Les Géorgiques*, 1981)
'[...] this mother who, thereafter, was to leave the castle, and curse the first fruit of her belly, [...] only **reconciling** on the day before her death with whom she considered an assassin.'

In (1), the p.p. *réconciliée*, takes the feminine form of the NP *une âme* to which it is related syntactically, while the present p. *se réconciliant* in (2), related to the NP *cette mère*, does not take the feminine form. If the p.p. agrees with the noun to which it is related, like an adjective,

this is because, owing to this aspectual representation of the internal time, it is closer to an adjective than to a verb. If other verbal forms, notably another non-finite form like the present p., do not fulfill this type of agreement, this is because the internal time that they contain prevents them from slipping out of the verb category.

More covertly but just as significantly, the p.p. in the participial clause does not realize the reflexive pronoun of reflexive verbs (*réconciliée* in (1)), unlike the present p. (*se réconciliant* in (2)) (or of any other tense). This can be explained by the *detensive* aspect of the p.p.: in the reflexive construction, the reflexive pronoun *se* serves to block the tension of the internal time of the process on the first argument; this blockage is no longer necessary when the verbal form is detensive⁴.

The morphology of the p.p. confirms this singularity: while it enters into the analytic and bi-analytic construction of all other verbal forms (*infra* 2.2.), it does not have such forms itself:

forms	synthetic	analytic	bi-analytic
present p.	Partant (<i>partir</i> -PRESENT P.)	étant parti (<i>être</i> -PRESENT P.) + <i>partir</i> -P.P.)	ayant été parti (<i>avoir</i> -PRESENT P. + <i>être</i> -P.P. + <i>partir</i> -P.P.)
p. p.	parti (<i>partir</i> -P.P.)	∅	∅

Table 1. Morphology of present and past participles

The bi-analytic form specifically:

- (3) tu as dû être bien triste hier au soir, quand tout le monde **a été parti** (*avoir*-PRESENT. + *être*-P.P. + *partir*-P.P.) (G. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, 1850)
‘you would have been sad last night, when everyone **had left**.’

produces the analytic form of the auxiliary *être* in the present perfect (*[a été] parti*), not the analytical form of the p.p. *parti* (*a [été parti]*).

Why then, while every tense of every mood has analytic and bi-analytic forms, the only form which lacks these is the p.p.? The aspect [R = E_i] seems to also explain this impossibility: the “dead” form (Guillaume [1938] 1964: 79) of the verb in the p.p., *parti*, cannot be “reanimated” (cf. *infra* 2.2.) by another “dead” form, viz. the p.p. of the auxiliary (*été*).

2. Uses of the past participle in discourse

The past participle is principally found in three types of uses which we illustrate here with the transitive verb *fermer*: participial clauses (4), participating in the construction of analytic forms of active voice (5) and pronominal (6), as well as in the construction of the periphrastic passive form (7):

- (4) Un jour il revient. Il trouve la fenêtre **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.). (A. Ernaux, *L'autre fille*, 2011)

⁴ Legendre notes this absence of realization of the reflexive pronoun and explains it by the participial morphology: “the reflexive marker fails to appear because of the participial verbal morphology” (1989: 133). But why this absence of realization in the participial morphology?

‘One day he comes back. He finds the window **closed**.’

- (5) La porte du couloir, le vent l'**a fermée** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.). (P. Guyotat, *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats : sept chants*, 1967)
‘The hallway door, the wind **closed** it.’
- (6) La barrière **s'est fermée** (*être*-PRESENT + *se fermer*-P.P.), le bateau est parti vers le grand large. (É. Viennot, *État des lieux*, 2012)
‘The gate closed, the boat **left** toward the big open sea.’
- (7) La grande porte **a été fermée** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *être*-PP + *fermer*-P.P.) après le passage du convoi. (M. Duras, *Le Vice-consul*, 1965)
‘The large door **was closed** after the passage of the convoy.’

The p.p. can also be re-categorized as an adjective (8):

- (8) Oui, parfois je suis **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.) ou bien je n'ai rien à dire. (C. Akerman, *Ma mère rit*, 2013)
‘Yes, sometimes I am **closed off** or else I have nothing to say.’

How is the p.p. involved in these three constructions that, at first glance, are very different? Our analysis of the p.p. as representative of the internal time on the terminal mark in the processual phase, namely as a detensive form ([R = E_t]), has allowed us to document, in two previous works, the participial clause of the past participle (4) (Bres & Le Bellec 2017) and its role in the analytic construction (5, 6) (Bres & Le Bellec 2018). We will briefly summarize here these previous analyses, which will allow us to contrast the behavior of the p.p. in these two constructions with its behavior in the periphrastic passive construction which we will study in detail in section 3.

2.1. The p.p. in the participial clause

When discussing participial clauses, we are referring to the cases in which the p.p. is related to an argument without the mediation of *être* or *avoir*. In these types of construction, the p.p. is, according to the type of verb, possible or impossible. We distinguish the following types of verbs:

- transitive verbs (ex. *fermer*, ‘close’) in which the first argument is agentive and the second argument is patientive;
- intransitive-*avoir* verbs (ex. *vivre*, ‘live’) in which the first argument is agentive;
- intransitive-*être* verbs (ex. *partir*, ‘go away’) and reflexive verbs (ex. *se réconcilier*, ‘reconcile’) in which the first argument is simultaneously agentive and patientive.

The p.p. in a participial clause can be related to the first argument of intransitive verbs which construct their analytic form with the auxiliary *être* (*intransitive-être*) (9), to certain *reflexive* verbs (1), as well as to the second argument of *transitive* verbs (10)⁵. However, it cannot be related to the first argument of the intransitive verbs which (the large majority), construct their analytic form with the auxiliary *avoir* (*intransitive-avoir*)⁶ (11), nor of the *transitive* verbs (12):

⁵ A fact that is not exclusive to French: “the existence of participles that can be oriented toward the patient of transitive verbs or the subject of unaccusative intransitive verbs is [...] widely attested across languages” (Haspelmath 1994: 157).

⁶ We will not use the terms “unaccusative” (\approx *intransitive-être*) or “inergative” (\approx *intransitive-avoir*) proposed by the *unaccusative* hypothesis for the analysis of intransitive verbs (Perlmutter 1978, Grimshaw 1987, Legendre

- (9) Elle se penchait pour m’embrasser, distraitement, déjà **partie** (*partir*-P.P.), déjà ailleurs. (E. Blach-Dano, *Porte de Champerret*, 2013)
 ‘She bent over to hug me, absent-mindedly, already **gone**, already somewhere else.’
- (1) L’âme d’Herminien, soudain fraternelle et **réconciliée** (*se réconcilier*-P.P.), lui sembla venir à lui avec le souffle de la tempête. (J. Gracq, *Au Château d’Argol*, 1938)
 ‘The soul of Herminien, all of a sudden fraternal and **reconciled**, seemed to come to him with the blow of the storm.’
- (10) Une fois la porte **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.) la scène éclata, terrible. (J. K. Huysmans, *En ménage*, 1881)
 ‘Once the door **closed**, the stage broke out, terrible.’
- (11) Voilà une femme, une vraie, ***vécu** (*vivre*-P.P.) et souffert. (H. Montferrand, *Les Amies d’Héloïse*, 1990) (*ayant vécu*, avoir-present p.+vivre-p.p.)
 ‘*There is a woman, a real one, **lived** and suffered. (/ *having lived*)’
- (12) ***fermé** (*fermer*-P.P.) sa fenêtre, elle s’était remise à écrire. (C.-F. Ramuz, *La Grande peur dans la montagne*, 1926). (/ *ayant fermé*, avoir-present p. + fermer-p.p.)
 ‘***closed** her window, she put herself back to writing. (/ *having closed*)’

Our description confirms diverse previous studies, notably those carried out in the framework of the unaccusative hypothesis (Legendre & Sorace (2003), Helland (2014)), which analyse the p.p. as a marker of unaccusativity (Legendre (1989), Helland (2001)). As pertinent as it is, for us it seems the unaccusative analysis states a fact but doesn’t explain the reasoning behind the participial clause of the p.p. The aspectual definition of the p.p. as [R = E_t] proposes an explicative hypothesis of possibilities as impossibilities of the p.p. in participial clauses: in basing our work on *praxematic* anthropological linguistics (Lafont 1978) that links the tension of the internal time of a verb to the agentivity of the argument, on the one hand, and the detension to its patientivity, on the other, we would say that, because the p.p. does not contain internal time, (i) it can be related to *patient* (10) or *patient/agent* (1, 9), viz. *affected* arguments; and (ii) it cannot be related to arguments which are only *agentive* (11, 12).

2.2. The p.p. in the analytic construction

Unlike Latin, which constructed the vast majority of its verbal tense system on synthetic forms, French, like other romance languages, constructed it (i) in doubling the *synthetic* forms of *all* the verbs, in all moods (except, precisely, for the p.p., *supra* 1.2.) and in all tenses, by the *analytic* forms constructed on the use of the p.p. preceded by an auxiliary (*être* or *avoir*) conjugated in the tense of the corresponding simple form, viz. [auxiliary *être/avoir* + p.p.]; and (ii) in doubling the *analytic* forms of all the verbs, in all moods and all tenses, with *bi-analytic* forms constructed on the use of the p.p. preceded by an auxiliary (*être* or *avoir*), itself in the

1989, Legendre & Sorace 2003). These works propose the hypothesis that, in deep structure, the argument of inergatives corresponds to a *subject*, while that of unaccusatives corresponds to an *object*. The *unaccusatives* have as the subject an *internal* argument, non-agentive but *affected* by the process, and select preferentially the auxiliary *être* (*arriver*, *venir*, *sortir*, *mourir*, *tomber*, etc.). The *inergatives* have as the subject an *external* agentive argument, and select preferentially the auxiliary *avoir* (*courir*, *dormir*, *travailler*, etc.). If we do not share this hypothesis according to which the subject of an unaccusative in surface structure is a direct object in deep structure, we agree that the *subject* of unaccusative verbs (intransitive-*être*), unlike the *subject* of inergative verbs (intransitive-*avoir*), is *affected* by the process and has a patientivity component, which is similar to the *direct object* of transitive verbs.

analytic form, viz. [auxiliary *être/avoir in the analytic form* + p.p.]. For example, for the analytic and bi-analytic forms of the present tense:

forms	synthetic	analytic	bi-analytic
auxiliary <i>être</i>	je pars (<i>partir</i> -PRESENT)	je suis parti (<i>être</i> -PRESENT + <i>partir</i> -P.P.)	j'ai été parti (<i>avoir</i> -PRESENT P. + <i>être</i> -P.P. + <i>partir</i> -P.P.)
auxiliary <i>avoir</i>	je ferme (<i>fermer</i> -PRESENT)	j'ai fermé (<i>avoir</i> -PRESENT + <i>fermer</i> -P.P.)	j'ai eu fermé (<i>avoir</i> -PRESENT P. + <i>avoir</i> -P.P. + <i>fermer</i> -P.P.)

Table 2. Morphology of the present tense: synthetic, analytic, bi-analytic⁷

What precise role does the p.p. play in the analytic construction? Temporal semantics studies on the analytic forms of French, notably on the present perfect or the past perfect, deal with the group *aux.* + *p.p.* but do not explain the contribution of each element (*i.a.* Benveniste ([1959] 1966, Fleischman 1983, Wilmet 1992, Squartini & Bertinetto 2000, Vet 2010, Desclés & Guentcheva 2003, Caudal & Vetters 2007, Vetters 2009, Apothéloz 2016)⁸. Bres and Le Bellec (2018), building upon the path of grammaticalization in three stages proposed by Bybee *et al.* (1994: 105):



have shown how the analytic form of the present perfect, when constructed on the auxiliary *avoir*, stems from a Latin construction of the second predication (stage 1) which has been preserved in contemporary French⁹:

(13) Elle **a** les yeux **fermés** (*fermer*-P.P.), mais elle ne rit pas, c'est le contraire. (M. Duras, *Le Vice-consul*, 1965)

‘Her eyes *are closed*, but she does not laugh, it’s the opposite.’

The p.p., in participial clause, is the predicate of the object: because it represents the internal time on its point of detension, it signifies here the resulting state of the verb *fermer* ('close')

In a second phase (stage 2, from Late Latin), the construction *a [les yeux fermés]* is reanalyzed as *[a fermé] les yeux*.

⁷ We will not study the bi-analytic forms in this paper.

⁸ With the exception of a few studies (Waugh 1987, Gosselin 1996, 2017, Wilmet 2010) which develop the hypothesis that the p.p. represents the processual phase of the process *globally*. We discuss this hypothesis in Bres & Le Bellec 2018.

⁹ For simplicity, we illustrate with examples of contemporary French.

(14) Karl – (il *a fermé* (avoir-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.) les yeux et parle d’une voix étrange) Hola !ho !
(J.-P. Sartre, *Le Diable et le bon dieu*, 1951)

‘Karl - (he *closed* his eyes and speaks in a strange voice) Hola! ho!’

Thus, by grammaticalization, the analytic form of the perfect is created, which is then extended to all the verbs. The p.p., as it signifies the end of the tension of the internal time of the processual phase, is recovered by an auxiliary in order to signify the internal time *after* its passage, in the *post-processual* phase¹⁰, and to thus produce the *resultative* meaning, viz. the resulting state at the speech point S.

In a third phase which spreads from Ancient French to Modern French, the present perfect comes to represent the process no longer in its resultative post-processual phase of the present as in (14); but in its processual phase of the past (15) (stage 3). It becomes a narrative tense of *processive* value that is in competition with the synthetic form of the simple past:

(15) Elle a secoué les cheveux noirs et lourds qui encadrent son visage et elle *a fermé* (avoir-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.) les yeux. (R. Nimier, *Le Hussard bleu*, 1950)

‘She shook her dark and heavy hair that framed her face and she *closed* her eyes.’

The p.p., in view of its position on the terminal mark E_t , presupposes that the process is executed fully (unlike the present p., for example) and before. In accordance with the context, that which was only presupposed becomes the focus: in (15), in interaction with the narrative succession of processes [*a secoué* → *a fermé*], the present perfect represents, starting from its terminal mark, the internal time of the process *fermer* in its processual phase, globally, in the past¹¹.

Unlike the participial clause which, as we have seen, cannot be related to the first argument of transitive verbs and intransitive-*avoir* verbs; the analytic construction has been developed on all the types of process and can be related to all types of arguments: even though the utterance (12) **fermé* (‘closed’) *sa fenêtre* is incorrect, one can say, however, *ayant fermé* (‘having closed’) *sa fenêtre*. This is because, thanks to the auxiliary which “gives life” to the p.p., one obtains, in a way, another verb, *avoir fermé*, which uses its own internal time - the internal time of the post-processual phase. And, owing to the aspect [$R = E_t$] of the p.p., the analytic form (avoir-PRESENT + verb-P.P.) can, within certain contexts, have a *resultative* value as in (14) or a *processive* one as in (15).

The analysis of the aspect of the p.p. [$R = E_t$] allows for an easy explanation of the participial clause and the analytic construction. What about the periphrastic passive construction?

3. The p.p. in the periphrastic passive construction

¹⁰ Cf. Guillaume (1992:24-25): “[the p.p.] *marché* is the verb that has no future internal time, which expires at the end of its course. The role of the auxiliary is to resuscitate it at the moment of expiration and to make it a new conjugated verb.”

¹¹ For similar explanations in another theoretical framework, cf. Comrie (1981), Cohen (1989).

The passive is traditionally¹² associated with the periphrastic construction: [être_{conjugated} + p.p.transitive verb]¹³. Let's look at (7) again:

(7) La grande porte **a été fermée** (avoir-PRESENT + être-PP + fermer-P.P.) après le passage du convoi.
(M. Duras, *Le Vice-consul*, 1965)

‘The large door **was closed** after the passage of the convoy.’

The p.p. *fermée* of the transitive verb *fermer* is preceded by *être* in the present perfect (*a été*), and has for subject the argument 2 (*la porte*) of the construction [X *fermer* Y].

After having mentioned the main differences between this construction and the analytic construction [auxiliary *avoir* ou *être* conjugated + p.p.] (section 3.1.), we will analyze the morpheme *être* (section 3.2.) and the role of the p.p. (section 3.3.) in the periphrastic passive construction, which will lead us to redefine it. We will see if the aspectual analysis of the p.p. that we offer here can explain the aspectual-temporal semantics of the passive (section 3.4.).

3.1. The periphrastic passive construction and the analytic construction

At first sight, nothing seems to distinguish the periphrastic passive construction *Corinne est surprise de cette nouvelle* from the analytic construction *Corinne est rentrée de Paris*: the structure [être_{conjugated} + p.p. (+PP)] is used in both cases. The similarities end there. Indeed, as we know, the periphrastic passive construction:

(i) only uses *être*, unlike the analytic construction which, according to the type of process, uses *être* or (/and) *avoir*;

(ii) only exists in the periphrastic form: unlike Latin, the simple passive construction (*amor*, ‘je suis aimé’) does not exist, while every active analytic construction corresponds to a synthetic construction (*avoir aimé* > *aimer*);

(iii) is only possible (for the most part) with a direct transitive verb if the patientive argument 2 is the subject: in (7), the subject *la grande porte* (‘the large door’) is the patientive second argument of the actantial structure [X + *fermer* + *la porte*], while the analytic construction is possible for all types of processes as for all types of arguments.

Moreover, the p.p. of the passive construction can be pronominalized (16) just like a predicative adjective (17), which is much more difficult, even impossible, for the p.p. of the analytic construction (18):

(16) Mais ma vie n'**est** pas seulement **hantée** (être-PRESENT + hanter-P.P.) par l'avenir : elle **l'**est aussi par les fantômes de mon propre passé. (D. Éribon, *Retour à Reims*, 2009)

‘But my life **is** not only **haunted** by the future: it is also (haunted) by the ghosts of my own past.’

(17) [...] la neige, *fine et grise* comme elle **l'**est à Paris. (M. Havet, *Journal*, 2003)

‘[...] the snow, *fine and gray* like it is in Paris.’

¹² The works dedicated to the periphrastic passive in French are extremely numerous. We only mention here a few of them which seem to be representative of the research on this subject: Lamiroy (1993), Gaatone (1998), Carlier (2002), Helland (2003), Jalenques (2017).

¹³ Haspelmath (1990: 29) confirms Dryer (1982: 55) according to which the majority of languages does not have this structure of the passive: if the passive tends to be defined by an “auxiliary” followed by a p.p. in Indo-European languages, it takes the form of an affix in many languages of the world.

(18) * Corinne **est arrivée** (*être*-PRESENT + *arriver*-P.P.) hier, Pierre ne **l'est** pas encore¹⁴.
 ‘*Corinne **arrived** yesterday, Pierre has not yet.’

Let us add that the p.p., when it is *gradable*, can be modalized by the adverb *très* (20) (Authier 1980), as the adjective, while the p.p. of the analytic construction can be modalized, when possible, by the adverb *beaucoup* (21):

(20) Ma tante hésita longtemps, elle **était très affectée** (*être*-IMPERFECT + *affecter*-P.P.) par la mort de son mari. (B. Lamblin, *Mémoires d'une jeune fille dérangée*, 1993) (?*était beaucoup affectée*)

‘My aunt hesitated for a long time, she **was very upset** by the death of her husband. (? *was upset a lot*)’

(21) J'avais décidé de rejoindre Max après la disparition de mon mouton, qui m'**avait beaucoup affecté** (*avoir*-IMPERFECT + *affecter*-P.P.) (F.-O. Giesbert, *l'Affreux*, 1992) (**avait très affecté*)¹⁵

‘I had decided to join Max after the disappearance of my sheep, which **had upset me a lot**. (* *had very upset*)’

But what about *être* in the periphrastic passive construction? Is it, like in the analytic construction, an *auxiliary*?

3.2. Être in the passive construction: auxiliary or copula?

Être is not, like in the analytic construction, an *auxiliary* (Gaatone 1998) but a *copula*¹⁶.

- It is not an *auxiliary*: the synthetic form of the passive does not exist like in Latin. The passive, in French and in most romance languages, is immediately a compound form: *amor* corresponds to *je suis aimé*. The main purpose of *être* is not, unlike the analytic construction (14, 15), to develop an *extensive* form, which notably allows to signify the post-processual phase of the process;
- It is a *copula*: *être* explicates that the p.p. is related to the subject in the same way as in the construction [*être* + predicative adjective], which explains that the p.p. can be pronominalized (16) and modalized by the adverb *très* (19).

As a copula as well, *être* can fall short: the passive construction does not require it, contrary to the habitual definition given of the passive as a periphrastic construction [*être*_{conjugated} +

¹⁴ We have found that only the p.p. of *mourir* can support pronominalization :

(19) Mrs. Ramsay **sera morte** (*être*-FUTURE + *mourir*-P.P.). *Morte* (*mourir*-P.P.), elle **l'est** peut-être déjà, un peu, dès la première scène, cette femme en gris assise dans l'encadrement d'une fenêtre. (M. Depussé, *Les morts ne savent rien*, 2006)

‘Mrs. Ramsay **will be dead**. *Dead*, she is maybe already, a little, from the first scene, this woman in gray sitting in the frame of a window.’

¹⁵ We can find *beaucoup* modalizing the passive construction (22), even *très* modalizing the analytic form (23) in some non-standard or idiolectal uses in French :

(22) La maladie **est beaucoup affectée** (*être*-PRESENT + *affecter*-P.P.) par ce qu'on mange et en quelle quantité. (<https://fr-facebook.com/fabiosa.france>, consulted 08.03.2018)

‘The illness **is affected** a lot by what we eat and in what quantity.’

(23) Là comme plus tard au nord on **a vraiment très crevé** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *crever*-P.P.) de faim. Céline, *D'un château l'autre*, 1957)

‘Right now like later in the north we really died of hunger.’

¹⁶ The same analysis is developed in Guillaume ([1943] 1964: 75), Benveniste ([1960] 1966: 189), Moignet (1981: 108), Abeillé & Godard (1996: 53-59), Wilmet (2010: 334), Gosselin (2017:58).

p.p.transitive verb] taken from the beginning of this section. This is the case in some participial clauses of the p.p. (Bres & Le Bellec 2017: 390):

- (10) Une fois la porte **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.), la scène éclata, terrible. (J. K. Huysmans, *En ménage*, 1881)
 ‘Once the door closed, the stage broke out, terrible.’

The construction is passive: the p.p. *fermée* is related to the patientive argument of the transitive verb *fermer*, i.e. *la porte*; therefore, no need to presuppose or reestablish the copula. Would the p.p. be in itself passive since it is sufficient for the construction of this voice?

3.3. Is the p.p. in the passive construction *passive*?

It is commonplace to speak of the “passive p.p.” (Gaetone 1998: 51), which seems to us to be a misuse of language, more precisely an error, common in linguistic analysis, which consists of attributing to an element of an utterance the production of a meaning to which it contributes but which does not belong to it intrinsically.

Intuitively, it appears that, in (10) as in (7) which we recall here, the p.p. *fermée* has a passive meaning:

- (7) La grande porte **a été fermée** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *être*-PP + *fermer*-P.P.) après le passage du convoi. (M. Duras, *Le Vice-consul*, 1965)

‘The large door **was closed** after the passage of the convoy.’

But how do we explain that in (5) *fermée* appears to have an active meaning?

- (5) La porte du couloir, le vent l'**a fermée** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.). (P. Guyotat, *Tombeau pour cinq cent mille soldats : sept chants*, 1967)
 ‘The hallway door, the wind **closed** it.’

Are there two p.p. *fermé*, one with a passive meaning and the other with an active meaning (Helland 2002: 45)? Or is the p.p. polysemous¹⁷, its meaning varying depending on the context? We have another analysis: *fermé* as a p.p. is neither active nor passive, but corresponds to the stage in which the internal time of the transitive process *fermer* has entirely passed. From this position, it is possible to develop an active analytic construction *in interaction* with the auxiliary *avoir* and with the agentive first argument as subject: “le vent l’a fermée” (5); or a passive construction, putting the p.p. as related to the patientive second argument (“une fois la porte fermée” (10)), possibly preceded by the copula *être* (“la porte a été fermée” (7)). Recalling the notion of *orientation* from Haspelmath (1994: 154), we would say that the p.p. of the transitive verb in French is not “inherently oriented”: according to the context, it can be related to the agent or the patient.

Our proposal of the neutrality of the p.p. in regards to the active/passive distinction is confirmed by the behavior of the p.p. in a participial clause (Bres & Le Bellec 2017). As the examples presented *supra* demonstrate, the p.p. in a participial clause, when it is related to the

¹⁷ This is the analysis of Langacker (1991:201) for the p.p. in English: he considers that there are different variants of the past participle and that, in the passive construction, we deal with “the passive variant of the past-participle morpheme (-ed).”

first argument of an *intransitive-être* verb such as *partir* (9) or to the first argument of a *reflexive* verb such as *se réconcilier* (1), produces an *active* meaning. It becomes a part of the production of a *passive* meaning only when it is related to the second argument of a *transitive* verb (10) such as *fermer*:

- (8) Elle se penchait pour m’embrasser, distraitement, déjà **partie** (*partir*-P.P.) déjà ailleurs. (E. Blach-Dano, *Porte de Champerret*, 2013)
 ‘She bent over to hug me, absent-mindedly, already **gone**, already somewhere else.’
- (1) L’âme d’Herminien, soudain fraternelle et **réconciliée** (*se réconcilier*-P.P.), lui sembla venir à lui avec le souffle de la tempête. (J. Gracq, *Au Château d’Argol*, 1938)
 ‘The soul of Herminien, all of a sudden fraternal and **reconciled**, seemed to come to him with the blow of the storm.’
- (9) Une fois la porte **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.), la scène éclata, terrible. (J. K. Huysmans, *En ménage*, 1881)
 ‘Once the door closed, the stage broke out, terrible.’

For example, the verb *descendre* is even more convincing: in its intransitive use, the p.p. *descendu*, related to the first argument, produces the resultative active meaning (24); in its transitive use and related to the second argument, the same p.p. *descendu*, produces the resultative passive meaning (25):

- (24) Une fois **descendue** (*descendre*-P.P.) du car, elle pose sa valise par terre, s’assied dessus, sort un carnet du sac qu’elle porte à l’épaule, [...]. (H. Murakami, *Kafka sur le rivage*, 2011)
 ‘Once **out** of the car, she put her suitcase on the ground, sat upon it, took a notebook out of the bag she wore on her shoulder, [...].’
- (25) J’en profite d’être dans un hôtel hors de prix. Une fois ma valise **descendue** (*descendre*-P.P.), un taxi m’attendait juste devant l’entrée, oh merci dieu ! (<https://www.wattpad.com>)
 ‘I am taking advantage of being in a prohibitively expensive hotel. Once my suitcase **was taken out**, a taxi was waiting for me right in front of the entry, oh thank God!’

Additionally, the lasting impression of the passive meaning of the p.p. proceeds from the fact that the p.p. does not contain internal time, it can be employed in the participial clause only related to an affected argument (first argument of intransitive-*être* verbs, of reflexive verbs; second argument of transitive verbs) and not to a fully agentive argument (first argument of intransitive-*avoir* verbs and transitive verbs).

The passive meaning proceeds from the fact that the p.p. of the transitive verb is related to the patientive second argument of the process, due to the aspect [R = E_t] of the p.p., and not from the fact that the p.p. of a transitive verb is actualized by the copula *être*. We will say that the passive construction can be described as [patientive argument + p.p.-transitive verb], and that the periphrastic passive construction, which we reformulate as [patientive argument + *être*_{conjugated} + p.p.-transitive verb] is only a variant, the copula *être* being optional, in the same way as the agent PP. This can be represented by putting the optional elements in parentheses:

[patientive argument (+ *être*_{conjugated}) + p.p.-transitive verb (+ passive agent PP)].

In addition, the patientive argument may not “raise” as subject, like in the *impersonal passive* construction:

- (26) il **a été publié** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *être*-P.P. + *publier*-P.P.) à Bruxelles, une édition tronquée de ce livre. (V. Hugo, *Les Châtiments*, 1853)

‘they **published**, in Brussels, a shortened version of this book.’

(27) sur le net il **est dit** (*être*-PRESENT + *dire*-P.P.) beaucoup de mensonges (<https://forumfr.com>, 04/06/2016)

‘on the internet they **say** many lies’

The second argument - “une édition tronquée de ce livre” (‘a shortened version of this book’) in (26), “beaucoup de mensonges” (‘many lies’) in (27), does not “raise” to the subject position. This function is assumed by the impersonal *il*, which, as it is not agentive at all, can perfectly be related to a p.p.¹⁸.

Our analysis of the copula *être* as optional in the passive construction is in opposition with research that explains the *resultative* value (cf. *infra* 3.4.1.) of the passive with a telic verb by the copula *être*. Thus, for Carlier (2002: 53 & sq.), if the *resultative* reading of the passive utterance with a telic verb such as *le vin est servi* (‘the wine is served’) (corresponding to the active utterance *on a servi le vin*) appears as more prominent than the *processive* reading (corresponding to the active utterance *on sert le vin*), this sticks to *être* as it is “on the aspectual plane, the prototype of the stative verb” (*ibid.*). Putting the stativity of *être* at the heart of the production of the passive, the author must dismiss the counter-example of the passive without copula such as (29) (cf. as well as (10) “une fois la porte fermée” (‘once the door is closed’), in which *fermée* signifies the resulting state of the act of closing:

(29) Sa tête élevée et son regard assuré inspirent la terreur. Sa bouche, quoique **fermée** (*fermer*-P.P.), est pleine d’âme et de feu. (A. Lenoir, *Histoire des arts en France*, 1811)

‘His head raised and his assured expression inspires terror. His mouth, although **closed**, is full of soul and fire.’

A. Carlier argues that “when the past participle is used without an auxiliary, this auxiliary can be restored and corresponds invariably to the verb *être*” (*op. cit.*: 57. Cf. as well Gosselin 2017: 58), namely, if one takes our examples, that “sitôt la porte *fermée*” (‘immediately the door closed’) can be glossed by “sitôt que la porte *a été fermée*” (‘as soon as the door had closed’); that “sa bouche, quoique fermée” (‘his mouth, although closed’) can be glossed by “sa bouche, quoiqu’elle soit fermée” (‘his mouth, although it is closed’). Significantly, A. Carlier takes, for the phrases like (29), the denomination of “truncated passive” (cf. as well Lamiroy 1993) which presupposes that an element -- inevitably *être* -- is subjected to a truncation.

This argument does not convince us: while it appears always specious to us to hint at an element in an utterance that does not actualize it (except, of course, in cases of ellipsis), it is appropriate to note that, as Jalenques (2017: 47) developed it, it is not always possible to render a gloss by *être* on a passive in a participial clause. Let’s consider the examples of the author:

¹⁸ The impersonal passive construction is obligatory for some indirect transitive verbs that are passivizable, such as *répondre à* (‘answer to’) (28):

(28) Il **a été répondu** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *être*-P.P. + *répondre*-P.P.) à cette objection que presque tous les Kabyles comprennent l’arabe. (Gallica.bnf.fr, 1879)

‘It **was answered** to this objection that almost all Kabylisians understand Arabic.’

(30) On est certes loin de l'anglais *parlé* (*parler*-P.P.) dans le Commonwealth par 1 milliard 200 millions de personnes.

'We are certainly far from the English *spoken* in the Commonwealth by 1 billion 200 million people.'

(31) L'anglais *parlé* (*parler*-P.P.) par un Tchèque, c'est assez drôle. ('The English *spoken* by a Czech, it's quite funny.')

If in (30) the passive in the participial clause "l'anglais *parlé* par 1 milliard de personnes" ('the English *spoken* by 1 billion people') supports the gloss of the periphrastic passive in the autonomous utterance *l'anglais est parlé par un milliard de personnes* ('English is spoken by a billion people'), the same cannot be said of (31): "l'anglais parlé par un Tchèque" ('the English spoken by a Czech') cannot be glossed: ??*l'anglais est parlé par un Tchèque* ('English is spoken by a Czech'). A similar gloss is only possible in a subordinated clause: *l'anglais, lorsqu'il est parlé par un Tchèque, c'est assez drôle* ('English, when it is spoken by a Czech, it's quite funny').

We have said that the periphrastic passive, which actualizes *être*, was a variant of the base structure of the passive [patientive argument + p.p.transitive verb]. Furthermore: a *significant* variant: as a copula, *être* places the p.p. as a predicate *characterizing*, like all predicate adjectives, the NP to which it is related. This explains the difference between the glosses of (30) and (31): if (30) can be glossed by *l'anglais est parlé par un milliard de personnes* ('English is spoken by a billion people'), that is because this fact is a characteristic of English; if (31) cannot be glossed by *l'anglais est parlé par un Tchèque* ('English is spoken by a Czech'), this is because this fact is not known to be a characteristic of English (Jalenques 2017: 48). If the gloss is only possible in a subordinated clause (*l'anglais, lorsqu'il est parlé par un Tchèque, (...) ('English, when it is spoken by a Czech'))* this is, because of the subordination, the fact of being spoken by a Czech is no longer set as a general characteristic of English. The copula status of *être* accounts for the fact that the passive signified by *être* + p.p. is more constrained than the passive signified by the participial clause: in absence of *être*, the p.p. is not placed as a predicative adjective characterizing the second argument, but as a simple attributive adjective (31) or a simple apposition.

We argue that the passive construction proceeds from the fact that the p.p. of the transitive verb is related to the patientive second argument, which is made possible by the aspect [R = E_t] of the p.p., the copula *être* confirming this relation, and making the p.p. a predicative adjective that characterizes the aforementioned argument.

It should be noted that the neutrality of the French p.p. with regard to time and voice was not the case of the Latin p.p. ending in *-tus*, which had two voices: *active* and *medio-passive*. The *middle* voice formed its analytic construction with the help of the auxiliary *esse* ('être') + p.p., that being: [p.p. --us + *sum*]. It was notably composed of verbs of rather active meaning (*imitor, imitatus sum*: 'j'imite' ('I imitate'), 'j'ai imité' ('I imitated') and verbs of rather passive meaning (*amor, amatus sum*: 'je suis aimé' ('I am loved'), 'j'ai été aimé' ('I was loved')). The participle was temporally a past form: one could translate *imitatus sum* by 'je suis ayant imité' ('I am having imitated'); and *amatus sum* by 'je suis ayant été aimé'¹⁹ ('I am

¹⁹ As French does not have analytic p.p. (**été aimé*), we translate *amatus* by an analytic present participle: 'ayant été aimé'.

having been loved’); and, according to the verb, of rather active (*imitatus*) or rather passive (*amatus*) meaning. From Latin to French, the p.p. lost both its past temporal instruction and its passive or active meaning (Guillaume, 1974: 188): *imité*, *aimé* represents the internal time only on its terminal mark. This neutrality with regard to time and voice enables the p.p. of transitive verbs to participate in the active analytic construction (*j’ai imité Corinne, j’ai aimé Corinne*), in the passive construction, related to the second argument (*Corinne est souvent imitée, Corinne est aimée*), and... in the compound passive construction: *Corinne a été souvent imitée, Corinne a été beaucoup aimée*²⁰.

The p.p. is greatly involved in the passive construction: not that, in itself, it has a passive meaning, but that, representing the internal time of the process as elapsed, it can be related to the second argument, patientive, of the transitive verb.

The passive is completely a *construction*, in the sense of construction grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2003): the passive meaning cannot be deduced from the composition of different elements²¹. This is the relationship of the aspect of the p.p. [R = E_t] with the second argument of the transitive verb, with or without the copula *être*, that produces the passive meaning.

3.4. Resultative meaning and processive meaning

The question of the value of utterances in the periphrastic passive construction is complex. It appears that the three parameters to take into account for its study are:

- the lexical aspect of processes (*telic* (achievement, accomplishment)/*atelic* (activity, state) distinction),
- the grammatical aspect of the time of the copula *être*,
- and the syntax of the passive utterance.

We will only deal with the case of utterances in the present passive.

3.4.1. Telic processes

It has been frequently observed that, when the process is telic, the passive construction [*être*_{present} + p.p.] tends to produce a resultative meaning (32), but that, in interaction with some contextual elements, it can produce the processive meaning (33) (*i. a.* Damourette & Pichon [1911-1936]1970; Authier 1972; Blanche-Benveniste 1984; Carlier 2002).

For an example of achievement, the verb *fermer*:

(32) Tour de France : L’Alpes d’Huez, c’**est fermé** (*être*-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.)!

En raison de la forte affluence attendue, l’accès à l’Alpes d’Huez *a été fermé* dès hier soir à partir de Bourg d’Oisans. (www. Ledauphine/sport, 18/07/2013)

‘Tour de France: The Alps of Huez **are closed**! Owing to the large crowds expected, the access to the Alps of Huez *have been closed* since last evening from the Bourg d’Oisans’

²⁰ We should note that the p.p. of adjectival value of some transitive verbs such as *oser*, can be related to the first argument and produce an active meaning: *une personne osée* is a ‘personne qui ose’. We see here the trace of participles of Latin integral deponents, such as *imitatus sum*, ‘j’ai imité’, of active meaning.

²¹ For a critique of the French passive in terms of *construction* and for the defense of a “holistic” *compositional* analysis, cf. Jalenques 2017.

(33) Une école **est fermée** (*être*-PRESENT + *fermer*-P.P.) par jour depuis dix ans. Quelle régression!
(Bugey-insoumis.fr, 04/06/2017)

‘A school **is closed** every day for ten years. What a decline!’

In (32), the present passive *est fermé* (‘is closed’) is *resultative*; it corresponds to the active present perfect *on a fermé* (‘we have closed’). In (33), the same form *est fermée* (‘is closed’) is *processive*; it corresponds to the active present: *on ferme une école par jour* (‘we close a school every day’).

For an example of accomplishment, the verb *servir*:

(34) On toquait à la porte, deux doigts discrets.
- Le dîner **est servi** (*être*-PRESENT + *servir*-P.P.) monsieur. (A.-M. Garat, *Pense à demain*, 2010)
‘One knocked at the door, two discreet fingers. - Dinner **is served**, sir.’

(35) Mon père péroré. Il feint de poser sur chacun de nous son oeil vitreux. Il ne nous **est servi** (*être*-PRESENT + *servir*-P.P.) qu’un unique plat de semoule au jus de légumes, agrémenté d’une petite portion de pois chiches. (M. Ndiaye, *Autoportrait en vert*, 2005)
‘My father holds forth. He fakes laying his glazed eye on each of us. They **serve** us only a single meal of semolina with vegetable gravy, garnished with a small portion of chickpeas.’

The present passive *est servi* (‘is served’) is *resultative* in (34): it can correspond to an active present perfect: *on a servi le dîner* (‘they have served the dinner’). It is *global processive* in (35): it can correspond to the active present: *on ne nous sert qu’un unique plat* (‘they serve us only a single meal’).

It is important to note that the processive representation, which is the most often represented globally like in (35), can be represented cursively, in interaction with the PP such as *en ce moment* (‘at the moment’) (36), or with the help of an aspectual auxiliary *être en train de* (‘be in the process of doing’) such as in (37):

(36) Monsieur le directeur pense bien que le repas qui nous **est servi** (*être*-PRESENT + *servir*-P.P.) **en ce moment** est du Roger Dumont tout pur. (Internet)
‘The director thinks that the meal which is **served** to us **at the moment** is absolutely Roger Dumont-like.’
(37) Au dernier étage de l’auberge, le petit-déjeuner **est en train d’être servi**. (*être en train de*-PRESENT + *être*-INF. + *servir*-P.P.) (Internet)
‘On the top floor of the inn, breakfast is **being served**.’

What explains this tropism for the resultative meaning of the passive construction of the present of a telic verb, even if the processive meaning can be actualized? We have excluded (*supra* 3.3.) the explanation of Carlier (2002) according to which the preferential resultativity of this type of phrase proceeds from the stativity of the copula *être*, since we observe similar tropism in the participial clause (10, 29). It seems to us that our aspectual hypothesis of the p.p. as [R = E_t] explains this easily: as for the active analytic forms (*supra* 2.2.), the p.p., in view of its aspectual position on the terminal mark of the telic process, tends to signify the process in its resultative post-processual phase (32, 34). But it can signify the global processual phase (33, 35) (even cursive with certain cotextual helpers (36, 37)) which is presupposed by this position, in interaction with a cotext that requires it: in (35) for example, the narrative sequencing requires to represent the internal time of the process globally in its

processual phase. In (37), it is the auxiliary *est en train de* which requires to represent the internal time of the verb cursively in its processual phase.

3.4.2. Atelic processes

Does our aspectual hypothesis explain as easily the meaning produced by the periphrastic passive on an atelic verb in the present? At first examination, it seems, on the contrary that it is quite obviously disputed. Take for example the verbs *attendre* ('expect', activity) and *aimer* ('love', state):

(38) L'hôtesse a pris sa voix suave et dit : « Mme Duralex **est attendue** (*être*-PRESENT + *attendre*-P.P.) au point rencontre ». (V. Mréjen, *L'Agrume*, 2001)

'The hostess put on a suave voice and said: "Madam Duralex **is expected** at the meeting place".'

(39) Songez donc que jamais, vous entendez bien, jamais une femme ne brûle, ne déchire, ne détruit les lettres où on lui dit qu'elle **est aimée** (*être*-PRESENT + *aimer*-P.P.). (G. de Maupassant, *Contes et nouvelles*, 1888)

'Consider therefore that a woman never, you hear, never burns, tears, or destroys the letters in which one tells her that she **is loved**.'

It is possible to gloss these present passives by present cursive actives: "Mme Duralex *est attendue*" ('Madam Duralex is expected') ≈ 'on attend Mme Duralex' ('We are expecting Madam Duralex'); "on lui dit qu'elle *est aimée*" ('someone tells her that she is loved') ≈ 'on lui dit qu'on l'aime' ('someone tells her that he loves her').

- The present passive has, not the resultative, but the processive meaning, and even more precisely, the processive cursive meaning: the processes *expect* as well as *love* that are related to the second argument are represented in their course.

Furthermore, like the participial clause, the passive of an atelic verb, in interaction with a PP such as *pendant x temps* ('during x time'), signifies the processual phase globally:

(40) L'empereur n'est en aucune manière *deus ex machina* puisqu'il est annoncé dès la première scène du premier acte, et qu'il **est attendu** (*être*-PRESENT + *attendre*-P.P.) **pendant toute la pièce** [...].(Voltaire, *Correspondance*, 1768)

'The emperor is in no manner *deus ex machina* since he is foreshadowed in the first scene of the first act, and he **is expected throughout the whole play** [...]'

(41) Une femme abandonnée se réfugie à la campagne et **est aimée** (*être*-PRESENT + *aimer*-P.P.) **pendant plusieurs années** par un autre jeune homme qui évidemment l'abandonnera. (Internet. Résumé, de H. de Balzac, *La femme abandonnée*)

'An abandoned woman takes refuge in the countryside and **is loved for several years** by another young man who will obviously abandon her.'

- It can only produce the resultative meaning with the auxiliary *être* in its analytic form (*a été*):

(42) Cette grâce victorieuse, qui **a été attendue** (*avoir*-PRESENT + *être*-P.P. + *attendre*-P.P.) par les patriarches [...] se trouve comme délaissée pour des intérêts si indignes. (B. Pascal, *Les Provinciales*, 1657)

'This victorious grace, which **had been expected** by the patriarchs [...] finds itself rather neglected for such unworthy interests.'

(43) Ses succès dans le monde, [...], peuvent justement rendre un peu fière la femme qui **a été aimée** (avoir-PRESENT + être-P.P. + aimer-P.P.) de lui comme je l'ai été, car il m'aimait bien. (A. Karr, *Sous les tilleuls*, 1832)

'His successes in the world, [...], can justly make proud the woman who **had been loved** by him like I had been, for he loved me a lot.'

Does the production of the cursive processive meaning of the present passive of atelic verbs not directly contradict our analysis of the aspect of the p.p. as representing the internal time on its terminal mark ($[R = E_t]$)? In the occurrences (38, 39), isn't the internal time represented in the course of the processual phase *viz.* $[R \subset E_i - E_t]$ (or globally if the co(n)text requires it (40, 41)) but not (according to the resultative tropism previously mentioned) in the post-processual phase?

Before answering these questions, we will attempt to explain the cursive processual representation. In order to do this, we must correlate both telic processes and countable nouns (*luth*, *fourchette* ('lute', 'fork')), and atelic processes and uncountable nouns (*lait*, *sable* ('milk', 'sand')) (*i.a.* Langacker 1987: 258-261; Asnès 2005, Dickey, 2016). Uncountable nouns, unlike countable nouns, do not have intrinsic limits: a grain of sand is just as much sand ("Principle of arbitrary divisibility", Dickey 2016: 350) as a ton of sand ("Principle of cumulativity", *ibid.*). *Mutatis mutandis*, this also holds true for atelics which represent homogenous processes in the same way that uncountable nouns represent homogenous substances: owing to the fact that they lack an intrinsic mark, the process of *attendre* like that of *aimer*, whether they are reduced temporally to a small temporal unit (a few seconds) or increased indefinitely, are resultative from the beginning of the realization of their internal time; and the second argument is fully affected no sooner the act initiated. It is not necessary, like for telic processes, for the internal time to have entirely passed in order for the resulting state represented by the p.p. to be related to the patientive second argument: it is fully *affected* no sooner the act initiated. Mme Duralex is *attendue* ('expected') in (38) like the woman is *aimée* ('loved') in (39) from the beginning of the process²². Therefore, we will say that, in the case of atelic verbs, there is a discordance between the homogenous aspectual structure of this type of process and the detensive aspectual representation supplied by the p.p. This discordance is resolved by the production of the cursive processive meaning.

The p.p., owing to its interaction with an atelic process, is related to the patientive argument in the course of the internal time, not on its terminal mark. We explain this variation by the interaction of the p.p. with the homogenous character of this type of verb, which implies that the second argument can be *characterized* by the p.p. from the beginning of the realization of the process.

Evaluation: the p.p. is the basis for the passive construction, and this, owing to its detensive representation of the internal time which allows it to be related to the second argument of direct transitive verbs. Contrary to what is often written, the copula *être* is an *optional* element: if it serves to develop the construction in its *periphrastic* dimension, it is not necessary to the passive construction itself, as the cases of the passive in the participial clause

²² Langacker (1982: 281) supplies a similar explanation of the English p.p. for examples such as *The castle is surrounded by a moat*.

demonstrate. Moreover, the p.p. is not intrinsically *resultative* or *processive*, no more than it is *active* or *passive*: from its detensive aspect [R = E_t], it can, in interaction with different co(n)texts, participate in the production of these different effects of meaning in discourse.

Conclusion

After having explained our hypothesis – that the p.p. is a singular form in the TAM (tense-aspect-mood) linguistic system in French, in that it represents the internal time of the process on its terminal mark, *viz.* [R = E_t] –, we have attempted to show in which ways this aspectual definition that allowed us, in previous studies, to explain two of its constructions in discourse (the participial clause and in the active analytic construction) also allows for the explanation of its use in the periphrastic passive construction.

We have distinguished the periphrastic passive construction from the active analytic construction: in the first, the p.p., related to the second argument of transitive verbs (for the most part), allows for the construction of another voice, with the *optional* support of the copula *être*; in the second, an *obligatory auxiliary* (*avoir* and/or *être*) gives a second life to the p.p., which allows for the construction of other tenses, and this of all types of verbs, transitive as well as intransitive; and of all types of voices: active, passive, reflexive; and of all types of moods: finite or non-finite... except for itself : we have seen that an analytic form of the p.p. does not exist.

After having signaled these differences, we can highlight a partial morphological convergence: *être* is certainly used as a *copula* for the passive; and as an *auxiliary* for the analytic forms of intransitive-*être*: however, it is the same signifier *être*, which makes sense to us. In both cases, *être* is related to a not-strictly agentive argument: patientive for the passive or agentive/patientive for intransitive-*être* (including reflexive verbs). There is a general coherence of the system: in *Corinne est venue* ('Corinne has come') like in *Corinne est aimée* ('Corinne is loved') the one who has come and the one who is loved is an affected argument. It is worth repeating that it is only in these cases (intransitive-*être*, reflexive, passive) that the p.p. (i) takes the feminine form (*Corinne est venue, s'est suicidée, est aimée*); and (ii) can be in participial clauses, which goes in the same direction as our hypothesis of the p.p. [R = E_t]. These facts must be related to the fact that the intransitive-*être* verbs, the reflexive verbs and the passive construction in French come from the same voice: the middle voice of Latin, an identity that is found (certainly without knowing it) by those who, like Helland (2001) or Jalenques (2017), relate p.p., passive, and inaccusativity.

The p.p. is this singular form – it is the only one that does not have a corresponding analytic form due to the fact that it is the only one that signifies the internal time on its terminal mark – which, precisely because of this singularity, is the cornerstone of the system of tenses (the doubling of synthetic forms by analytic and bi-analytic forms) and voices in French. French – and more globally romance and germanic languages – has succeeded in constructing a tool that, in its detensive aspect and in its neutrality with regard to tense and voice which puts it outside of the system, allows for the construction of the system from and around it.

If the p.p. is the cornerstone of the system, the notion of internal time, rarely used²³ in linguistics, is the cornerstone of our hypothesis: the developments that we have presented rest entirely on the analysis according to which the specificity of the verb comes from the internal time of its aspectual dimension. This internal time is represented by the p.p. on its terminal mark, which makes it a form intrinsically *marginal* to the verbal system, always ready to change into the adjective category, in which it adopts the agreement of gender and number, and *at the heart* of the same system through the constructions of tenses and of voice(s), of which it is the principal ingredient.

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²³ If Comrie (1976: 5) distinguishes *situation-internal time/situation-external time*, following the distinction *implicated time/explicated time* of Guillaume ([1933]1964), to our knowledge, he does not use the notion of *internal time* in order to explain the aspect of verbal tenses. It would also be interesting to confront the notion of *internal time* to that of *conceived time* of Langacker (1987: 167-168, 252-253; 266-267) in order to clarify what brings them closer and what differentiates them. We will look at this in a coming research.

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