The imperfective in subjunctive conditionals: fake or real aspect? [*]

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a 'real aspect' approach of the 'fake' imperfective in subjunctive conditionals and a new account of the (non)-cancellability of the counterfactual inference in SCs, largely based on Ippolito 2013. It is argued that PAST and PRES above MODAL in conditionals compete the same way as in non-modal stative sentences, see Altshuler and Schwarzschild 2012. On this view, the counterfactual inference of SCs, when cancellable, is nothing else than the cessation implicature routinely triggered by past stative sentences.

1 Background and goals

This paper is dedicated to the interpretation of tense and aspect morphology in **subjunctive conditionals** (**SC**s). SCs are often built by using one or two additional layer(s) of past tense morphology on top of the regular tense morphology found in the corresponding **indicative conditional** (**IC**). Additional layer(s) of tense morphology characteristic of SCs are said to be 'fake', because they do not locate events in time. I will call '+ 1 past' SCs (resp. '+ 2 past SCs') those SCs that add one (resp. two) layer(s) of past tense morphology on top of the tense morphology locating events in time, see (1)-(3).

(1) If John runs the marathon next spring, he will win. IC

(2) If John ran$_{+1\ PAST}$ the marathon next spring, he would$_{+1\ PAST}$ win. '+1 past' SC

(3) If John had run$_{+2\ PAST}$ the marathon next spring, he would have won$_{+2\ PAST}$. '+2 past' SC

In several languages like e.g. French, Greek, Italian or Hindi, the first additional layer of past tense is realized (a.o.) with the past imperfective aspect (IMP), cf. Iatridou 2000, 2010; see e.g. (4). Note that the French *conditionnel* (COND) found in the consequent of SCs combines the imperfective morphology *-ai-* with the future morphology *-r-*, cf. Iatridou 2000.

(4) *Si John courait$_{+1\ PAST}$ le marathon demain, il gagnerait$_{+1\ PAST}$.*
    If John run-IMP.1SG the marathon tomorrow, he win-COND.1

'If John ran the marathon tomorrow, he would win.'

Why is it that IMP makes this contribution to **counterfactuality** (**CF**) rather than the perfective (PFV) (in the relevant languages)? As Iatridou 2010 observes, this crosslinguistic generalization can be explained

in two ways. According to the 'fake aspect' approach, IMP *qua* aspect marker makes no semantic contribution to CF.[1] According to the 'real aspect' approach, IMP makes a substantial semantic contribution in SCs through the *aspectual* properties by which IMP differs from PFV. As Iatridou 2010, 14 notices, such an approach has not been much explored yet: "[We] have found no obvious way to extend [the meaning of IMP] to cover [counterfactual conditionals]".

The goal of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it aims to provide a 'real aspect' approach of the 'fake' imperfective in SCs, on the basis of French data. Secondly, it offers a new account of the (non)-cancellability of the CF inference in SCs, given the semantic contribution of aspectual operators (i.e. IMP) in these conditionals. I will argue that in languages like French, IMP is interpreted in SCs the same way as outside conditionals. However, I do not claim that the imperfective semantics is a necessary component of SCs. In fact, there is cross-linguistic evidence that it is not (see Halpert and Karawani 2012, Bjorkman and Halpert 2013, Karawani 2014). Besides, even in French, the imperfective semantics is perhaps not involved in *any* use of IMP, included *outside* conditionals (see section 6). Also, note that the 'real *aspect*' approach of IMP is independent from the 'real *past*' approach of the same morphology, according to which the additional layer of *past* in SCs is a real past. I defend both approaches here (IMP is both a real imperfective and a real past in SCs), but several authors defend the latter without committing about the former.

The paper is structured as follows. In sections 2-4, I present Ippolito's 2013 analysis and its shortcomings. Sections 5 and 6 present my proposal.

2   One vs. two additional layers of ('fake') past

2.1   The 'real past' approach of SCs

In this paper, I adopt the 'real past' approach of standard PSCs, see a.o. Dahl 1997, Ippolito 2003, 2013, Arregui 2005, Romero 2014. According to this view, the 'fake' layers of past in SCs are in fact real insofar they express temporal precedence like in the regular use of the past. However, the additional past morphology is not supposed to be interpreted within the 'bare' conditional (the structure consisting of the modal operator, the *if*-clause acting as its restriction and the consequent acting as its nuclear scope), but rather outside the *if-clause* and contributes to the interpretation of the modal:

(5)   PAST[MODAL [PAST][PAST]]
      '*fake*'   *real*

The intuition behind this idea is that we evaluate SCs as if we returned to a past time —Dahl's 1997 'choice point' — at which it was still possible that the antecedent would come true, and looked at possible futures with respect to that past. Among these approaches, I adopt Ippolito's 2013 framework because it explicitly differentiates between cancellable and noncancellable CF.

2.2   Ippolito's typology of SCs

Ippolito 2013 assumes that what I call '+1 past' SCs are modal structures under a universal present perfect, cf. (6a). What I call '+2 past' SCs are modal structures under a universal past perfect, cf. (6b).

(6)   a. PRES[PERF[$\forall_\subseteq$[WOLL[SIM[HIST p]][q]]]]   '+1 past' SCs

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[1]For instance, it has been argued that IMP is chosen over PFV because (i) IMP is a cross-linguistically default aspect (Iatridou 2010), (ii) IMP is compatible with other ingredients that prove to be necessary to CF (and not because IMP is necessary to CF), see Halpert and Karawani 2012, or (iii) IMP is aspectually underspecified (it can have both perfective and imperfective interpretations), while PFV only has perfective interpretations (see Bjorkman and Halpert 2013).

b. PAST[PERF[$\forall_{\subseteq}$[WOLL[SIM[HIST p]][q]]]]   '+2 past' SCs

In both cases, when PERF combines with $\forall$, we obtain a 'perfect interval' *t'*, such that for all subintervals *t''* of *t'*, the conditional proposition is true at *t''*. The right boundary of the perfect interval is the utterance time (UT) for '+1 past' SCs and a contextually salient past time for '+2 past' SCs. The (very much simplified) truth conditions for the '+1 past' SC (2) are in (7), and those for the '+2 past' SC (3) are in (8) (For lack of space, I have to refer to Ippolito 2013 for the details of the analysis).

(2)   If John ran the marathon next spring, he would win.   '+1 past' SC

(7)   true if $\exists t'$ such that the right boundary of *t'*=UT, and $\forall t'' \subseteq t'$, it is the case that all possible worlds historically accessible from the actual world at *t''* maximally similar to the actual world and where John will run the marathon next spring are worlds where he will win.

(3)   If John had run the Marathon next spring, he would have won.   '+2 past' SC

(8)   true if $\exists t'$ whose right boundary is a salient past time, such that $\forall t'' \subseteq t'$, it is the case that all possible worlds historically accessible from the actual world at *t''* maximally similar to the actual world and where John will run the marathon next spring are worlds where he will win.

The temporal schemata Ippolito attributes to '+1 past' SCs includes a first past component because the perfect interval extends before the UT, cf. (9). The one attributed to '+2 past' SCs has a second past component that shifts this right boundary to a past time, cf. (10).

(9)   Temporal structure for '+1 past' SCs
       PAST$_1$ [MODAL[PRES/PAST$_2$ p] [PRES/PAST$_2$ q]]

(10)   Temporal structure for '+2 past' SCs
       PAST$_1$ [PAST$_2$ [MODAL [PRES/PAST$_3$ p] [PRES/PAST$_3$ q]]]

On the other hand, MODAL is in the scope of PRES in ICs:

(11)   Temporal structure for ICs
       PRES [MODAL[PRES/PAST$_1$ p] [PRES/PAST$_1$ q]]

Note that when a '+2 past' SC describes events in the past, we add two layers of 'fake' past (above MODAL) to one layer of real past (below MODAL), cf. (10). Thus, we in principle end up with three layers of past. However, neither standard English nor standard French has a regular form that expresses three pasts within the same clause. I therefore assume (like Ippolito 2013 and Iatridou 2000 for English) that SCs about past events are expressed by the same form (a double past), whenever they instantiate a '+1 past' or a '+2 past' SC (see Iatridou 2000, 252, fn. 26, who analyzes the latter case as an instance of haplology).

3   CF is cancellable in '+1 past' SCs only

As is well-known, the inference of CF of many SCs can be canceled. SCs *à la* Anderson 1951 are of this type, cf. (12).

(12)   If John had taken arsenic, he would have shown exactly the symptoms that he has now.
       $\nvdash$ John did not take arsenic.

Ippolito 2013 proposes an important generalization, that I will dub 'Ippolito's generalization':

(13) *Ippolito's generalization*: CF is cancellable in '+1 past' SCs, but not in '+2 past' SCs.

Ippolito's first piece of evidence for (13) is provided by SCs with three layers of past found in some American and English dialects. In SCs of this type, two (fake) layers of past surface on top of regular past tense morphology, cf. (14).

(14) a. If he knew she was coming, he stayed home. $\qquad$ IC

  b. If he hadd-*a* known$_{+2\ PAST}$ she was coming, he would-*a* stayed$_{+2\ PAST}$ home.'+ 2 past' SC

Crucially, the inference of CF of SCs like (14b) is *not* cancellable, see Dancygier and Sweetser 2005, Biezma et al. 2013, Ippolito 2013. This is illustrated in Biezma et al.'s 2013 example (15).

(15) #If Jones had've taken$_{+2\ PAST}$ arsenic, he would have shown$_{+2\ PAST}$ exactly those symptoms that he in fact shows (so, he probably took arsenic).

Ippolito's second piece of evidence for (13) deals with SCs about future events built with a pluperfect. These SCs are unambiguously '+2 past' SCs, since none of the two layers of past locates the event within time. And as Ippolito observes, these SCs resist Anderson-like attempts to cancel the inference of CF, see her slightly modified example (16).

(16) If Charlie had gone to Boston by train tomorrow, # Lucy would have found in his pocket the ticket that she in fact found. So, he will go to Boston by train tomorrow.

4   Ippolito's account for Ippolito's generalization

4.1   Cancellability of the CF inference in '+1 past' SCs

Ippolito 2013 accounts for the cancellability of the CF inference in '+1 past' SCs in a straightforward way. She argues that the 'No Empty Restriction' requirement ('The restriction of a quantifier cannot be empty') accompanying the modal is only a pragmatic constraint designed to avoid vacuously true assertions. This means, in practice, that it is only required that there be *some* subinterval *t"* of *t'* when at least some antecedent-world is historically accessible. Therefore, this subinterval *t" can* be the UT (i.e. the right boundary of *t'*), but does not have to. In case *t"≠*UT *only*, the antecedent is counterfactual.

One problem of this account, as Ippolito 2013 herself recognizes, is that languages like Italian (and French) do *not* have a present perfect in the English sense (whose right boundary is given by UT). Why would they build such a perfect just in SCs?

4.2   Noncancellability of the CF inference in '+2 past' SCs

Ippolito's 2013 account for the noncancellability of the CF inference in '+2 past' SCs is more complicated. Briefly, she argues that this inference is conveyed by antipresupposition, and assumes that "unlike scalar conversational implicatures, antipresuppositions cannot be suspended or canceled" (p. 92). Before presenting her argument into more detail, let me briefly recall what an antipresupposition is, through the lexical scale <*both, all*>. On this scale, *both* is 'stronger' than *all* in that it carries the stronger presupposition that the domain of quantification has only two members. The oddity of (18a) is due to the fact that the maximize presupposition principle (Heim 1991, Chemla 2008 a.o.) is not respected.

(17) *Maximize Presupposition:* Among a set of alternatives, use the felicitous sentence with the strongest presupposition.

(18)   a.#Mary broke all her arms.   b. Mary took all her children to the park.

(19)   Peter believes that I am against the embargo.

A felicitous occurrence of the sentence with the weaker presupposition (see (18b)) is said to convey, by antipresupposition, that the speaker believes that the strongest presupposition of the competing sentence is not fulfilled. For instance, (18b) conveys by antipresupposition that the speaker believes that it is not true that Mary has two children. The same way, (19) conveys that the speaker believes that the stronger presupposition of the competing verb *know* is not fulfilled (i.e., (19) conveys that the speaker believes it to be false that he is against the embargo).

Ippolito 2013 argues that '+ 1 past' SCs and '+ 2 past' SCs compete the same way, with the former triggering the strongest presupposition. Let me illustrate through (20) which presuppositions Ippolito 2013 assumes to be triggered by '+1 past' SCs.

(20)   John died. #If he wrote a book, it would be a success. (Ippolito 2013)

Ippolito's first assumption is that the predicate *write a book* triggers an existence presupposition, namely, that its subject's referent exists at event time. For instance, in (20), the antecedent p presupposes that John is alive now. She further assumes that '+1 past' SCs require that the presuppositions of the antecedent p ($ps(p)$) be compatible with the set of worlds historically accessible at UT. For instance, the SC in (20) requires that 'John is alive now' is a possibility at UT. But this enters in contradiction with the given context, hence the problem of (20). Observe, now, that the oddity of (20) vanishes in the corresponding '+ 2 past' SC, see (21):

(21)   John died. If he had written a book, he would have been a success.

For Ippolito, this is because the presupposition triggered by '+2 past' SCs is *weaker*: those only require that $ps(p)$ be compatible with the set of worlds historically accessible *at some past time*. Since (21) only requires that it was a possibility *in the past* that John is alive now, the problem vanishes.

According to this analysis, the presupposition of '+1 past' SCs is stronger than the one of the corresponding '+2 past' SC: The set of possibilities shrinks over time; therefore, being compatible with the set of worlds historically accessible at UT — as required by '+1 past' SCs – entails being compatible with the set of worlds historically accessible at some past time preceding UT – as required by '+2 past' SCs. But the reverse is not true.

Therefore, choosing a '+2 past' SC — the weakest alternative — conveys by antipresupposition that the speaker believes that the presupposition of the '+ 1 past' SC — the strongest alternative — is not satisfied. For instance, (21 conveys that $ps(p)$ ('John is alive now') is not a possibility at UT.[2]

The account just sketched faces two important problems. Firstly, Ippolito's assumption that antipresuppositions are not cancellable seems to rely on the view that antipresuppositions have a presuppositional essence. But this is debatable; Chemla 2008 argues explicitly against this view, and describes cases where antipresuppositions are suspended when the assumption of authority and/or competence is not fulfilled. In fact, antipresuppositions seem to be cancellable even when the assumptions of authority and competence are fulfilled, see e.g. (22).

(22)   Mary believes that I am against the embargo. Well, she is totally right!

The second problem of Ippolito's account concerns her claim that the presuppositions of the antecedent of '+1 past' SCs always have to be compatible with the set of worlds historically accessible at UT. Sentences (23) and (24) are perfectly acceptable although 'Agatha Christie/Granny is alive now' (the presupposition of existence of the antecedent) is not a possibility at UT.

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[2]Several details are omitted here: Chemla's 2008 *competence assumption* and *authority assumption* are also needed in order to obtain this result.

(23) If Agatha Christie wrote a detective novel today, she would make use of the possibilities for criminals offered by new technologies.

(24) Granny died already ten years ago! But if she were in the kitchen with us right now, she would sing this song out loud.

To be sure, a contrast marker like *but* seems required in (24). But this is routinely the case when a defeasible inference is canceled. In fact, to my ears, even (20) becomes much better once such a contrastive marker is introduced.

5 Proposal for '+1 past' SCs

In this section, I propose a new account for the cancellability of the CF inference in '+ 1 past' SCs. I start with two assumptions. Firstly, I assume that '+1 past' SCs are modals embedded under PAST rather than under the present perfect. Ippolito's structure (6a) is minimally modified as in (25).

(25) PAST[$\forall_{\subseteq}$[WOLL[SIM[HIST p]][q]]]   '+1 past' SCs

Secondly, I adopt Ferreira's 2014 proposal that in conditionals, MODAL is a stativizer. Consequently, the aspect above MODAL attaches to a stative predicate. The running time ($\sigma(s)$) of the described state is the interval during which the bare conditional is true, see the modified truth-conditions (26) for (2).

(26) true if $\exists s$ with $t' = \sigma(s)$ such that t' is a past interval, and $\forall t'' \subseteq t'$, it is the case that all possible worlds historically accessible from the actual world at t'' maximally similar to the actual world and where John will run the marathon next spring are worlds where he will win.

Next, I follow Ippolito 2013 or Leahy 2011, 2015 on the view that in some cases at least, the CF inference arises from the competition between two forms.[3] However, differently from them, I argue that this CF inference arises from the competition between *('fake') tenses* above MODAL, namely PAST (in '+ 1 past' SCs) and PRES (in the corresponding ICs). More precisely, the idea is that PAST and PRES above MODAL in conditionals compete the same way as in non-modal stative sentences, see Altshuler and Schwarzschild 2012. On this view, the CF inference of '+1 past' SCs is nothing else than the cessation implicature routinely triggered by past stative sentences. This is the reason why it is generally cancellable. Besides, according to this analysis, in languages like French, IMP makes the same semantic contribution above MODAL in conditionals as in stative sentences outside conditionals.

Before spelling out the proposal further, let me first briefly summarize Altshuler and Schwarzschild's 2012 account of past vs. present stative sentences and see how it applies to languages like French, that forces to choose between two past morphologies in stative sentences, too.

5.1 Past stative sentences and cessation implicature

Altshuler and Schwarzschild 2012 argue that for stative sentences, PRES and PAST are scalar alternatives, and claim that a stative PRES-ϕ sentence asymmetrically entails ($\rightarrow$) its PAST-ϕ alternative. To see this, assume a context where a little boy named Scotty has just been brought to the hospital. Dr. Spock is talking to him, when the nurse walks in and ask: 'How is he doing?'. In that context, (27a) entails (27b), but not the reverse.

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[3]Leahy 2011, 2015 also accounts for the CF inference of SCs through the competition between ICs and SCs. My account differs from his on two points: (i) he does not link the competition between ICs and SCs to the competition between PRES and PAST outside conditionals; (ii) he exclusively deals with '+2 past' SCs, for he considers that '+1 past' SCs are not counterfactual (and argues consequently against Iatridou's 2000 point that '+1 past' SCs about the future present the antecedent as less likely as the corresponding ICs). See the contrast (41)-(42) against this view that ICs and '+1 past' SCs' do not clearly differ in terms of their antecedent falsity inference.

(27) a. Scotty is anxious.   b. → Scotty was anxious.

From this, Altshuler and Schwarzschild 2012 derive the well-known observation that a PAST-ϕ stative sentence (the weaker statement) often implicates ($\rightsquigarrow$) the negation of the stronger PRES-ϕ alternative:

(28) a. Scotty was anxious.   b. $\rightsquigarrow$ ¬(Scotty is anxious).

This is what they call the *cessation implicature*, cf. (29).

(29) Cessation implicature: the utterance of a past stative sentence implicates that no state of the kind described currently holds.

5.2   IMP vs. PVF in stative sentences

Languages like French force one to choose between IMP (the *imparfait*) and PFV (the *passé composé*) for past stative sentences too.[4] I argue that in these languages, PRES in stative sentences competes with IMP, but not with PFV. Let us see why.

For cessation to be *implicated* rather than *entailed*, the denoted state has to be potentially non-maximal, i.e. potentially included within some larger state of the same nature, cf. Bary 2009. Importantly, non-maximality can be obtained with IMP, but not with PFV. For perfective operators differ from imperfective ones in that they impose a 'maximal part requirement', which is satisfied if a VP-event culminates or ceases to develop in the actual world. This is the essence of Altshuler's 2014 (slightly modified) hypothesis (30), that builds on insight from Koenig and Muansuwan 2001 and Filip 2008.

(30)   Hypothesis about (im)perfective operators (Altshuler 2014)

      a. An operator is *imperfective* if it requires *a part* of an event in the extension of the VP that it combines with, but this part needs not be maximal.

      b. An operator is *perfective* if it requires a *maximal* part of an event in the extension of the VP that it combines with.

Thus, only imperfective stative sentences can *implicate* cessation. Perfective ones *entail* it (because of the maximal part requirement). For instance, (31), with IMP, implicates (32); (33) shows that this implicature can be canceled.

(31) *Scotty était   anxieux.*
      Scotty be-IMP.3SG anxious
      'Scotty was anxious.'

(32) $\rightsquigarrow$ ¬(Scotty is anxious).   (implicature)

(33) *Scotty était   anxieux et   l'est toujours.*
      Scotty be-IMP.3SG anxious and it is still
      'Scotty was anxious and still is.'

On the other hand, (34), with PFV, entails that Scotty was not anxious afterwards (If Scotty is (again) anxious in UT, we necessary deal with *two* different fits of anxiety). Hence the difficulty to cancel the inference with *toujours* 'still', cf. (36).[5]

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[4]Given its restricted use, I do not give examples with the *passé simple*, but the pattern is exactly the same as for the *passé composé*.

[5]Note that *à nouveau* 'again' solves the problem raised by *toujours* 'still' because it satisfies the cessation *entailment* triggered by PFV stative sentences.

(i.)   Scotty a été-PFV.3SG anxieux et l'est à nouveau. 'Pierre was anxious and again is.'

(34) *Scotty a été anxieux.*
Scotty be-PFV anxious
'Scotty was anxious.'

(35) → ¬(Scotty is anxious). (entailment)

(36) *#Pierre a été anxieux et l'est toujours.*
Scotty be-PFV.3SG anxious and it is still
'Scotty was anxious and still is.'

Note that the cessation inference does not seem to be cancellable via an explicit statement of ignorance concerning the present (differently from what happens in Tlingit, see Cable 2015):

(37) *Il a été malade ce matin. #Je ne sais pas s'il l'est toujours.*
He has been sick this morning I NEG know NEG if he it is still
'He was sick this morning. I don't know whether he still is.'

5.3 PAST compete with PRES above MODAL in SCs too

In languages like French, the cancellability of the CF inference of '+1 past SCs' is a direct consequence of the fact that the 'fake' past (above MODAL) is spelled-out with IMP. Given the imperfective semantics of IMP, and the competition between IMP and PRES, a '+1 past' SC *implicates* that the past state during which at least some antecedent-world is accessible does not hold anymore at UT. For instance, (38) implicates (39) for the same reason that (31) implicates (32). Since the CF inference (39) *is* the (cessation) implicature, it is defeasible.

(38) *Si Scotty était anxieux maintenant, il nous appellerait.*
if Scotty be-IMP.3SG anxious now he us call-COND.1
'If Scotty were anxious now, he would call us.'

(39) ⤳ ¬(the state during which at least some 'Scotty-is-anxious-now'-world is historically accessible is holding now)

On this view, in '+1 past' SCs, IMP is therefore 'real' in that it has the same semantic contribution as outside conditionals. In the following subsections, I present two arguments in favour of this analysis.

5.3.1 Asymetrical entailment between ICs and SCs

The first argument is the observation that ICs (with PRES over MODAL) asymmetrically entail the '+1 past' SC alternative (with PAST over MODAL): While (40) entails (38), the reverse does not hold.

(40) *Si Scotty est anxieux maintenant, il nous appellera.*
if Scotty be-PRES.3SG anxious now he us call-FUT
'If Scotty is anxious now, he will call us.'

5.3.2 No competition with the corresponding IC

My second argument has to do with '+1 past' SCs that do not compete with their stronger alternative (the corresponding IC), because the context makes the antecedent obviously false. Take e.g. the IC (41).

(41) John est mort. #Mais s'il écrit-PRES un roman aujourd'hui, ce sera-FUT un succès.
John is dead. But if he writes a novel today, it will be a success.

(42) John est mort. Mais s'il écrivait-IMP. un roman aujourd'hui, ce serait-COND.1 un succès. (# Ça va peut-être arriver!)
John is dead. But if he wrote a novel today, it would be a success. (# Maybe it will happen!)

In that case, the CF inference of the corresponding '+1 past' SC (42) is not expected to be a cancellable implicature. For the competing stronger statement — the IC (41) — could not be uttered to begin with, precisely because p is taken to be CF. And as the oddity of the continuation parenthesis in (42) shows, the CF inference is indeed noncancellable in (42), although we deal with a '+1 past' SC.

6 Proposal for '+2 past' SCs

For '+2 past' SCs, I keep Ippolito's analysis (6b): the bare conditional is embedded under a past perfect, introducing ⟦PAST⟧ and ⟦PERFECT⟧. The past interval t' output by this tense is perfect (bounded), and its right boundary is in the past. I account for why CF is not cancellable with '+2 past' SCs simply by assuming that antecedent-worlds are accessible *only* at (some subinterval t'' of) the denoted interval t'. Since t' never includes UT with '+2 past' SCs, these SCs are necessarily CF.

Note that under this analysis, although IMP is morphologically present in the past perfect in languages like French, the imperfective semantics does not play a crucial role in the interpretation of the 'high' past perfect, like I argued it is the case in '+1 past' SCs. But in fact, even outside conditionals, it is still a matter of debate whether the French *plus que parfait* is semantically imperfective (Schaden 2007). If the *plus que parfait* is not imperfective outside conditionals, there is no reason to expect it to be so above MODAL in SCs — it might be that IMP appears here because combining a perfect with an imperfective is the only unmarked way to build a double past in languages like French, within and outside conditionals. If, indeed, the *plus que parfait* turns out *not* to be an imperfective, the imperfective semantics is not a necessary ingredient of SCs, even in languages like French.

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