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## Tense, Mood and Aspect in Mongolian

Jan-Olof Svantesson

### Introduction

This article is a sketch of the tense, mood and aspect system in Mongolian, mainly based on the tense-mood-aspect questionnaire devised by Östen Dahl (see Dahl 1985). The language described is colloquial standard Mongolian, i.e. the Khalkha dialect as spoken in Ulaanbaatar, which differs in some respects from the written language.

The literature on tense and aspect in Mongolian is not voluminous. The basic description by Ramstedt 1902 is still the most comprehensive one in a Western language, and the standard grammars (Poppe 1951, 1970, Todaeva 1951, Sanžeev 1960, Street 1963, Beffa & Hamayon 1975, Binnick 1979a) add little to his description. More details can be found in a few more specialized works, including two articles by Binnick (1979b, 1990), and the syntax by Bertagaev 1964.

The examples and analysis given here are based entirely on informant work, mainly using Dahl's questionnaire, which I have gone through with a Mongolian speaker, Ju. Mönh-Amgalan. Examples from the questionnaire are marked with Q and the number of the sentence as given in Dahl 1985:198-206. (Contexts for the sentences are given in square brackets.) I have also consulted the textbook by Vacek et al. 1979, which, as far as I can judge, closely reflects the spoken language of Ulaanbaatar.

I will follow the terminology used by Dahl 1985 and by Bernard Comrie in his books *Aspect* (1976) and *Tense* (1985) as closely as possible, and I refer to them for definitions of tense and aspect categories.

The surface forms of suffixes are changed by phonological processes (vowel harmony and epenthesis), which are described briefly in an appendix.

### Abbreviations

A tense, mood or aspect suffix is always glossed in the same way throughout this article, and the gloss is based on a typical use of the suffix. Mongolists often use the terminology of Ramstedt 1902, which I follow in many cases. The following abbreviations are used:

	Terminology used here	Suffix	Cyrillic	Mongolist terminology
COND	conditional	-wI/-bl	-вал/-бал	
DPAST	direct past	-lA	-лаа	present perfect
IRR	irreal	-x	-х	future verbal noun
HAB	habitual	-dg	-даг	
IPAST	indirect past	-že/-če	-жээ/-чээ	past imperfect
IPF	imperfect verbal noun	-A	-аа	
INT	intensive	-čx	-чих	
NONP	non-past	-n	-на	present imperfect
PAST	past	-sŋ	-сан	perfect verbal noun
PROG	progressive	-ž/-č	-ж/-ч	imperfect converb
ABL	ablative	-As	-аас	
ACC	accusative	-ig/-g	-ыг/-г	
COM	comitative	-tAi	-тай	
DAT	dative	-d/-t	-д/-т	
FP	final particle	-A, -n	аа, нь	
INSTR	instrumental	-Ar	-аар	
NEG	negation	-gui	-гүй	
QU	question suffix	-U	-уу	
REFL	reflexive	-A	-аа	

### Tense

There are two basic tenses, past and non-past. For action verbs, the non-past denotes future events. Actions that take place at the time of speaking are expressed by the progressive aspect (-ž *bai-n*), and habitual or generic situations which obtain at the time of speaking are expressed by the habitual form (-dg); these forms are described below. There are three past tense categories, differing in mood. For the lack of better terms, I will call them (plain) past, direct past and indirect past.

The tenses are expressed by the following suffixes:

	Affirmative	Negated
Non-past	-n	-x-gui
Past	-sŋ	-A-gui/-sŋ-gui
Direct past	-lA	-
Indirect past	-že/-če	-

Examples of the forms are given in the conjugation table at the end of the article. The alternation between -ž and -č in the indirect past was originally phonologically conditioned, but is partly unpredictable in modern Mongolian.

### Non-past

The non-past is formed by the suffix *-n*. For action verbs, this form refers to events that take place after the moment of speech, e.g.:

- (1) [What happens if I eat this mushroom?]  
 čii ux-ən Q81  
 you die-NONP 'You will die.'
- xerəw čii en ɔɪtən-d čɔlɔ xir-wəl, ɔrəgd-ən Q79  
 if you this bag-DAT stone put-COND, break-NONP  
 'If you put a stone into this bag, it will break.'

Negated forms and questions are formed by the suffixes *-gui* and *-U*, respectively. These suffixes cannot be added to the suffix *-n*, and non-past negated forms and questions are formed with the suffix *-x* (glossed as IRR 'irreal'):

- (2) aw-x-ɔ? aw-ən. / aw-əx-gui.  
 buy-IRR-QU buy-NONP buy-IRR-NEG  
 '[Will] you buy [it]?' 'I will.' / 'I won't.'

When the non-past form is used with static verbs, such as *med* 'to know', it denotes a state that obtains at the time of speaking:

- (3) ter mɔŋɔɔl xel med-ən.  
 he Mongol language know-NONP  
 'He knows Mongolian.'

### Past tense

As mentioned above, there are three different past tense forms, plain, direct and indirect past, formed by the suffixes *-sŋ*, *-lA* and *-že/-če*, respectively. There is also a fourth past category, formed by the suffix *-w*. According to my informant (and other Ulaanbatar speakers; cf. also Ramstedt 1902:20), this form is hardly ever used in the colloquial language, and is a stylistic variant of the plain past form. The *-w* form was preferred only in one example in the questionnaire:

- (4) bi: en xuxd-ig bat ge-ž nerl-əw Q126  
 I this child-ACC Bat say-PROG name-PAST  
 'I name this child Bat.'

Although the plain past is also possible in this presumably somewhat solemn performative sentence, the *-w* form was preferred. Performatives generally seem to require past tense.

Examples of the plain past are:

- (5) a. [When you visited your brother yesterday, what did he do after you had dinner?]  
 ter neg zax'a bič-səŋ Q14  
 he one letter write-PAST  
 'He wrote a letter.'
- (6) [A knows that B was going to meet A's brother, but does not know when.]  
 a. ta: mini ax-tai ɔlz-sən-ɔ? Q149  
 you my brother-COM meet-PAST-QU  
 'Have you met my brother?'
- b. bi: ɔlz-səŋ 'I've met [him].' Q150  
 I meet-PAST
- c. bi: ɔlz-a-gui 'I haven't met [him].' Q151  
 I meet-IPF-NEG

The sentences in (6) can also be used in an experiential sense, i.e. with (6a) meaning 'Have you ever met my brother?' (Q42, 43, 41).

The normal negated form of the past tense is formed by adding the suffix *-gui* to the 'imperfect verbal noun' *-A* as in (6c). The negation of the *-sŋ* form, *-sŋ-gui*, is not very common, and appeared only once in the questionnaire:

- (7) [The king is expected to arrive.]  
 xaŋ ir-səŋ-gui 'The king did not come.' Q154  
 king come-PAST-NEG

This form is used when a unique and definite event did in fact not occur (cf. Ramstedt 1902:229). If the context of (6) were that B had an appointment with A's brother, but couldn't come, the *-sŋ-gui* form would be appropriate:

- (8) bi: ɔlz-səŋ-gui 'I didn't (couldn't) meet [him].'  
 I meet-PAST-NEG

The negation *-gui* cannot be combined with the suffixes *-IA* and *-že*.

By using the indirect past (*-že/-če*), the speaker shows that he has not personally experienced the situation, but has witnessed its consequences and inferred that it has occurred ('inferential'), or has heard about it from someone else ('quotational'). The indirect past is typically used in story-telling. The direct past (*-IA*) shows that the speaker has witnessed the situation himself. These two forms are contrasted in:

- (9) [The speaker has just seen the king arrive:]  
 a. xaŋ ir-le 'The king has arrived.' Q135  
 king come-DPAST
- [The speaker has not seen the king but has heard (9a):]  
 b. xaŋ ir-že 'The king has arrived.' Q136  
 king come-IPAST

(9b) exemplifies the quotational use of the indirect past. All prototypical examples of the quotational category given in Dahl 1985:150-51 (Tables 5.12-13) are expressed by the indirect past in Mongolian. Its inferential use, where the speaker has witnessed the consequences of the situation and infers that it has taken place is exemplified by (10); see also (20d) below.

- (10) [Seeing that the ground is wet:]  
 bɔɔ ɔr-že 'It has rained.' Q59  
 rain enter-IPAST

The use of indirect and direct past forms is not obligatory, and it seems that the plain form is a possible alternative in most contexts, depending on whether or not the speaker wants to stress how he obtained his knowledge of the situation.

The direct past is sometimes called 'immediate past' (Hangin 1968:99), but it can be used for situations that occurred a long time ago, if the speaker remembers them clearly. One illustration of this is a number of texts in the questionnaire where the speaker is supposed to tell someone about having seen a snake when he was a child. There are two versions of this text, the first (Q166-170) where the event happened once, the second (Q193-194) repeatedly. Although both plain and direct past forms were judged possible in both cases, plain past was preferred in the first case (as illustrated in (11a)) and the direct past in the second (11b), where the speaker presumably had a more vivid memory of what had happened.

- (11) a. bi: čɔɔ aw-č mɔɔɔi-g čɔɔɔd-səŋ/la Q169  
 I stone take-PROG snake-ACC throw-PAST/DPAST  
 'I took a stone and threw it at the snake.'



perfect forms to denote the inferential which is found in several languages, e.g. Georgian (see the discussion in Comrie 1976:108ff.).

There is no special negated form of the perfect; instead the past negated form *-A-gui* is used. The negated past perfect (pluperfect) is *-A-gui bai-səŋ* (16). It can be noted that the form *-A-gui bai-n* is the negated progressive (see (17b) below).

- (16) [When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?] Q51  
 bi: ɔ:lz-a-gui bai-səŋ  
 I meet-IPF-NEG be-PAST  
 '[No] I hadn't met [him before I came here].'

### Progressive

The progressive forms are formed by the suffix *-ž/-ž*, combined with the auxiliary verb *bai*:

	Affirmative	Negated
Non-past	-ž bai-n	-A-gui bai-n
Past	-ž bai-səŋ -ž bai-la -ž bai-že	-ž bai-ga-gui
Future	-ž bai-x bəl-w-ω	

The progressive is used for ongoing actions that take place at the time of speaking (17a-b), or at the same time as another action in the past (17c-d) or future (17e).

- (17) [What is your brother doing right now?] Q5  
 a. ter zax'a bič-iž bai-n 'He is writing letters.'  
 he letter write-PROG be-NONP  
 b. ter zax'a bič-e-gui bai-n 'He is not writing letters.'  
 he letter write-IPF-NEG be-NONP  
 [A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What was he doing?]  
 c. ter zax'a bič-iž bai-səŋ 'He was writing letters.' Q9  
 he letter write-PROG be-PAST  
 d. ter zax'a bič-iž bai-ga-gui 'He was not writing letters.'  
 he letter write-PROG be-IPF-NEG  
 [What will your brother be doing when we arrive?]  
 e. ter zax'a bič-iž bai-x bəl-w-ω Q16  
 he letter write-PROG be-IRR become-PAST-QU  
 'He will be writing letters.'

In Mongolian, the progressive is the normal form for an ongoing action that takes place at the moment of speech, and it is used much in the same way as the English progressive (as noted by Binnick 1991:489). Almost all the prototypical examples of the progressive category given by Dahl 1985:91-92 (Tables 3.8-9) are expressed by the progressive form in Mongolian.

### Habitual

The habitual is formed by the suffix *-dg* which is combined with the auxiliary verb *bai* to form marked tenses:

	Affirmative	Negated
Non-past	-dəg	-dəg-gui
Past	-dəg bai-səŋ -dəg bai-la -dəg bai-že	-dəg bai-ga-gui

The habitual is widely used in Mongolian, and is obligatory for situations that occur repeatedly or habitually (see also (13c) above):

- (18) [What does your brother usually do after breakfast?] Q18  
 a. zax'a bič-dəg ' [He] writes letters.'  
 letter write-HAB  
 [What did your brother usually do after breakfast last summer?]  
 b. zax'a bič-dəg bai-səŋ ' [He] wrote letters.' Q20  
 letter write-HAB be-PRET  
 [Do you know my brother?]  
 c. bi: tum-te ɔ:lz-dəg bai-səŋ ' [Yes,] I have met him [often].' Q40  
 I he-COM meet-HAB be-PRET

The habitual is also used generically:

- (19) [What kind of sounds do cows make?] Q73  
 a. uxər mər-dəg 'Cows moo.'  
 cow moo-HAB  
 [Do cats moo?]  
 b. mər mər-dəg-gui 'Cats don't moo.' Q76  
 cat moo-HAB-NEG

The Mongolian habitual is thus a combination of Dahl's categories habitual (including habitual past) and habitual-generic, and with few exceptions, the examples of these categories given in Dahl 1985:96-101 (Tables 3.12-13, 3.15-16, 3.18-19) are expressed by the habitual form.

*Intensive*

The suffix *-čx* derives a new verb stem traditionally called 'intensive'. The intensive is used when something happens unexpectedly or suddenly or is done forcefully and completely:

- (20) a. [The speaker has just seen the king arrive unexpectedly.]  
 xarj ir-čix-le 'The king has arrived.' Q133  
 king come-INT-DPAST
- b. [Have you heard the news? No, what has happened?]  
 xarj al-əgd-čix-že 'The king has been killed.' Q57  
 king kill-PASS-INT-IPAST
- c. [Do you know what happened to my brother yesterday? He told me about it himself.]  
 ... gent ter mōgōi gišəg-čix-že Q177  
 ... suddenly he snake step-INT-IPAST  
 '... Suddenly he stepped on a snake.'



Drawing by Ö. Bat-Erdene, age 11. *Unen*, June 1, 1990

- d. čini dōgōi-g en egč zu:čix-že  
 your ring-ACC this big sister wear-INT-IPAST  
 'This young woman has taken and put on your ring.'
- e. [Did your brother do what his teacher told him to do today?]  
 ter en nōm-ig oṅš-čix-səṅ Q55  
 he this book-ACC read-INT-PAST  
 '[Yes], he read [all of] this book [as he was told].'
- f. [Mother to child:] Q146  
 xerəw čii bəmbg-ər tōgl-əx-ə zōgs-əx-gui bəl, bi: aw-čix-ən  
 if you ball-INST play-IRR-REFL stop-IRR-NEG if, I take-INT-NONP  
 'If you don't stop playing with the ball, I'll take it away.'

The intensive has something in common with the category called 'conclusive' by Dahl 1985:95, although two of the examples of this category

(Q53-54) are not expressed by the intensive in Mongolian. Like the conclusive, the intensive is often used with punctual actions, and the term 'strong perfective' suggested by Dahl seems intuitively appropriate (Hangin 1968:99 uses the term 'perfective aspect' for the intensive).

Since *-čx* is a derivational suffix, it forms a new verb stem which is inflected for tense and aspect. It is usually combined with past tense (20a-e), non-past (denoting the future: (20f)), or with the perfect (see examples (14b-c) above).

*Irreal mood*

Forms with the suffix *-x* most often occur in subordinate clauses (14b, 20f). They function formally as nouns, taking case and reflexive suffixes, and they can modify nouns. The *-x* form shares these properties with the *-sṅ* (plain past), *-dg* (habitual) and *-A* ('imperfect verbal noun') forms, all of which are often called verbal nouns in descriptions of Mongolian. This is also the historical reason why only these forms can take the negation *-gui*. Classical Mongolian had negations which could be preposed to other verb forms, but they have disappeared in modern Khalkha.

The *-x* form can also be used in matrix clauses to denote irreal mood. There is a tendency to avoid having this suffix in absolute sentence final position, and a final particle *-A* or *-n* (unrelated to the homonymous verb suffixes) is often added in such cases.

There are rather few examples of the irreal categories in the questionnaire, and more data would be required to give a clear picture of their use. Here I will just present some examples.

By using sentence final *-x*, the speaker shows that he believes that a situation obtains but does not know for sure. Tense can be shown by suffixes on the main verb combined with the irreal form of the auxiliary *bai*: *-x bai-x* for the future (21b) and *-səṅ bai-x* for past time reference (21c). The form *-ž bai-ga* (with the imperfect verbal noun ending *-(g)a* on the auxiliary *bai*) denotes irreal progressive (21d).

- (21) a. [The boy thinks that he will perhaps get a sum of money.]  
 xerəw xui mōṅg aw-bəl, oṅ 'in-d beləg aw-əx-ən Q104  
 if boy money get-COND, girl-DAT present buy-IRR-FP  
 'If the boy gets the money, he will buy a present for the girl.'
- b. ter ir-əx bai-x 'He will probably come.'  
 he come-IRR be-IRR

- c. [The speaker knows that the boy was expecting a sum of money, but he does not know if he got it.] Q105  
 xerəw xur mɔŋg aw-səŋ bəl, ɔx'ɪn-d beləg aw-səŋ bai-x-a  
 if boy money get-PAST COND, girl-DAT present buy-PAST be-IRR-FP  
 'If the boy has received the money, he will have bought a present for the girl.'
- d. [Neither A nor B can see B's brother. A asks: "What is your brother doing right now, do you think?"] Q24  
 ter zax'a bič-iž bai-ga  
 he letter write-PROG be-IPF  
 'He is probably writing letters.'

The form *-x bai-səŋ* occurred in one example (22). It seems to indicate that a hypothetical situation would have taken place before the time of speaking.

- (22) [The speaker knows that the boy was expecting a sum of money, and that he did not get it.] Q106  
 xerəw xur mɔŋg aw-səŋ bəl, ɔx'ɪn-d beləg aw-əx bai-səŋ  
 if boy money get-PAST COND, girl-DAT present buy-IRR be-PAST  
 'If the boy had received the money, he would have bought a present for the girl.'

### Appendix on phonology

Mongolian has vowel harmony which is based on the feature pharyngeality (or [ATR]) (Svantesson 1985). Vowels from the two harmony classes, pharyngeal (or [-ATR]: *ɔ*, *a*, *ɔ* and the corresponding long vowels and diphthongs) and non-pharyngeal ([+ATR]: *i*, *u*, *e*, *ə* and the corresponding long vowels and diphthong) cannot be mixed in the same word, except for /i/, which is neutral in the sense that it occurs in suffixes in both pharyngeal and non-pharyngeal words. There is rounding harmony as well. Underlying suffix vowels will be written *A* and *U*, representing the alternations *a/ɔ/e/ə* and *ɔ/u*, respectively. There are no diphthongs \**ei* and \**əi*, and when these should be expected, the vowel *e* is found. The vowel harmony relations are shown in the following table:

Stem vowel	Suffix vowel		
	A	Ai	U
ɔ, a	a	ai	ɔ
ɔ	ɔ	ɔi	ɔ
i, u, e	e	e	u
ə	ə	e	u

The indirect past suffix *-že* and the negation *-gui* are unchanged by vowel harmony.

There is a schwa vowel [ə] (realized as [ɪ] after palatalized and alveopalatal consonants), which is not phonemic but is epenthesized by fairly complicated rules. I will not write schwas in underlying forms of suffixes, which sometimes surface with a schwa and sometimes without, depending on the phonemic composition of the stem (see examples in the conjugation table below).

When a suffix that begins with a vowel is added to a stem that ends in a vowel, a consonant, *g* or *ɠ*, depending on the vowel harmony class, is epenthesized between the vowels.

## Conjugation table

	'to go out'	'to rise'	'to laugh'
Stem (=imperative)	gar	bos	ine
Non-past negated	gar-ən gar-əx-gui	bos-ən bos-əx-gui	ine-n ine-x-gui
Past negated negated	gar-səŋ gar-a-gui gar-səŋ-gui	bos-səŋ bos-ɔ-gui bos-səŋ-gui	ine-səŋ ine-ge-gui ine-səŋ-gui
Direct past	gar-la	bos-lb	ine-le
Indirect past	gar-če	bos-že	ine-že
Perfect	gar-səŋ bai-n	bos-səŋ bai-n	ine-səŋ bai-n
Past perfect	gar-səŋ bai-səŋ gar-səŋ bai-la gar-səŋ bai-že	bos-səŋ bai-səŋ bos-səŋ bai-la bos-səŋ bai-že	ine-səŋ bai-səŋ ine-səŋ bai-la ine-səŋ bai-že
negated	gar-a-gui bai-səŋ	bos-ɔ-gui bai-səŋ	ine-ge-gui bai-səŋ
Progressive negated	gar-č bai-n gar-a-gui bai-n	bos-əž bai-n bos-ɔ-gui bai-n	ine-ž bai-n ine-ge-gui bai-n
Past progressive	gar-č bai-səŋ gar-č bai-la gar-č bai-že	bos-əž bai-səŋ bos-əž bai-la bos-əž bai-že	ine-ž bai-səŋ ine-ž bai-la ine-ž bai-že
negated	gar-č bai-ga-gui	bos-əž bai-ga-gui	ine-ž bai-ga-gui
Future progressive	gar-č bai-x bol-w-᠗	bos-əž bai-x bol-w-᠗	ine-ž bai-x bol-w-᠗
Habitual negated	gar-dəg gar-dəg-gui	bos-dəg bos-dəg-gui	ine-dəg ine-dəg-gui
Past habitual	gar-dəg bai-səŋ gar-dəg bai-la gar-dəg bai-že	bos-dəg bai-səŋ bos-dəg bai-la bos-dəg bai-že	ine-dəg bai-səŋ ine-dəg bai-la ine-dəg bai-že
negated	gar-dəg bai-ga-gui	bos-dəg bai-ga-gui	ine-dəg bai-ga-gui
Intensive past	gar-čix-səŋ gar-čix-la gar-čix-že	bos-čix-səŋ bos-čix-lb bos-čix-že	ine-čix-səŋ ine-čix-le ine-čix-že
Intensive future	gar-čix-ən	bos-čix-ən	ine-čix-ən
Intensive perfect	gar-čix-səŋ bai-n gar-čix-səŋ bai-səŋ gar-čix-səŋ bai-la gar-čix-səŋ bai-že	bos-čix-səŋ bai-n bos-čix-səŋ bai-səŋ bos-čix-səŋ bai-la bos-čix-səŋ bai-že	ine-čix-səŋ bai-n ine-čix-səŋ bai-səŋ ine-čix-səŋ bai-la ine-čix-səŋ bai-že
Irreal	gar-əx (-a, -n)	bos-əx (-ɔ, -n)	ine-x (-e, -n)
Future irreal	gar-əx bai-x	bos-əx bai-x	ine-x bai-x
Past irreal	gar-səŋ bai-x	bos-səŋ bai-x	ine-səŋ bai-x
Progressive irreal	gar-č bai-ga	bos-əž bai-ga	ine-ž bai-ga
Irreal past	gar-əx bai-səŋ	bos-əx bai-səŋ	ine-x bai-səŋ

	'to go out'	'to rise'	'to laugh'
Stem (=imperative)	rap	boc	инээ
Non-past negated	гарна гарахгүй	босно босохгүй	инээнэ инээхгүй
Past negated negated	гарсан гараагүй гарсангүй	боссон босоогүй боссонгүй	инээсэн инээгээгүй инээсэнгүй
Direct past	гарлаа	бослоо	инээлээ
Indirect past	гарчээ	босжээ	инээжээ
Perfect	гарсан байна	боссон байна	инээсэн байна
Past perfect	гарсан байсан гарсан байлаа гарсан байжээ	боссон байсан боссон байлаа боссон байжээ	инээсэн байсан инээсэн байлаа инээсэн байжээ
negated	гараагүй байсан	босоогүй байсан	инээгээгүй байсан
Progressive negated	гарч байна гараагүй байна	босож байна босоогүй байна	инээж байна инээгээгүй байна
Past progressive	гарч байсан гарч байлаа гарч байжээ	босож байсан босож байлаа босож байжээ	инээж байсан инээж байлаа инээж байжээ
negated	гарч байгаагүй	босож байгаагүй	инээж байгаагүй
Future progressive	гарч байх болов уу	босож байх болов уу	инээж байх болов уу
Habitual negated	гардаг гардаггүй	босдог босдоггүй	инээдэг инээдэггүй
Past habitual	гардаг байсан гардаг байлаа гардаг байжээ	босдог байсан босдог байлаа босдог байжээ	инээдэг байсан инээдэг байлаа инээдэг байжээ
negated	гардаг байгаагүй	босдог байгаагүй	инээдэг байгаагүй
Intensive past	гарчихсан гарчихлаа гарчихжээ	босчихсон босчихлоо босчихжээ	инээчихсэн инээчихлээ инээчихжээ
Intensive future	гарчихна	босчихно	инээчихнэ
Intensive perfect	гарчихсан байна гарчихсан байсан гарчихсан байлаа гарчихсан байжээ	босчихсон байна босчихсон байсан босчихсон байлаа босчихсон байжээ	инээчихсэн байна инээчихсэн байсан инээчихсэн байлаа инээчихсэн байжээ
Irreal	гарах (аа, нь)	босох (оо, нь)	инээх (ээ, нь)
Future irreal	гарах байх	босох байх	инээх байх
Past irreal	гарсан байх	боссон байх	инээсэн байх
Progressive irreal	гарч байгаа	босож байгаа	инээж байгаа
Irreal past	гарах байсан	босох байсан	инээх байсан

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## Temporal Profiles and Tonal Configurations in French Political Speech

Paul Touati

Persuasive monologues constitute basic units for the speaking style adopted by French politicians during political debate. Rhetorical features representative of such a style are intensifiers, parallelisms and meta-discursive forms such as incidental comments. The aim of this paper is to explore how such rhetorical features are translated into prosodic categories and specified into acoustic-phonetic properties. A methodological framework developed in order to study the relationship between prosody and discourse categories is used. Focal accent, contrast in pitch range, and the use of pauses seem to account for typical prosodic means used in French political rhetoric.

### Introduction

In spontaneous speech, macrosituational constraints such as dominance relationships between speakers, general turn-taking conditions, and topic arrangements bear in a pregnant way on the use of a particular speaking style. It seems as well that prosodic correlates of a particular speaking style are specified by the speaker so that they are easily detected at a macrolevel by the listener (see Bhatt & Léon 1991).

In today's increasing mass media presence, politicians are often judged by their capacity to phrase their political message in a convincing way. Persuasive monologues constitute basic units for the speaking style they adopt e.g. when addressing a speech to the nation or when participating in pre-electoral television debates (see Bruce & Touati 1991). Rhetorical features representative of such a style are, among others things, intensifiers, parallelisms and meta-discursive forms such as incidental comments (see Nir 1988). Intensifiers are often used in order to highlight certain aspects of the argumentation. One way for the speaker to intensify what is said is to underline individual words tonally and rhythmically. The function of parallelism is to facilitate monologue processing by reducing information density and increasing redundancy; it is achieved by repeating certain words or phrases. Incidental comments are used to relate the speaker himself, his