

## [YAO + V] in Chinese / [Aller + V] in French: prospective aspect or tense of future?

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[YAO + V] in Chinese as a temporal-aspectual construction is often translated by [aller + V] in French, as in the following example:

Ex. “黎明前那列车快要到了。” (莫言 2004 : 95)

黎	前	车	快	要	到	了
明						
L	Q	C	K	Yào	D	Le
ímíng	ían	à	iè	hē	uài	ào
D	B	V	R	be.g	A	particl
awn	efore	hat	LF	ehicle	apidly	oing.to
					rrive	e.PRF

The train before the dawn is going to arrive

Le train qui passe avant l'aube va arriver. (MO Yan 2004 : 152)

When [aller + V] is used in the present tense, it can express as well the future tense as the prospective aspect. Like Barcelo, G. J. and Bres, J. have concluded in *Les temps de l'indicatif en français*, "The FS1 and the PRP2, which compete on many usages, share the expression of the future in French today."<sup>3</sup> (Barcelo, G. J. et Bres, J. 2006: 175).

Chinese is considered as an aspectual language rather than a temporal language, then how to distinguish these two situations in Chinese?

This study leans on a French-Chinese corpus made and aligned by the present author (about 1 million words in Chinese and about 700,000 words in French) which is composed of 10 novels and their translations, 5 in French, 5 in Chinese.

This study describes the different usages of [YAO + V] as an aspectual-temporal construction, compares it with [Aller + V] in French and tries to discuss the criteria that distinguish the prospective aspect from the future based on the theories of Comrie (1976), Gosselin (1996, 2005), using the concept of prospective aspect, the SdT4 theory, etc.

We postulate that the differences of usages of [YAO + V] come from the distance of the future (near future, mid-term future or far future), the time adverbial etc., which also serve as the criteria to distinguish the prospective aspect from the tense of future.

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<sup>1</sup> "Futur simple" in French, the future tense

<sup>2</sup> "présent prospectif" in French, the prospective present

<sup>3</sup> Translated in English by the author, the original in French is « le FS et le PRP, qui sont en concurrence sur bien des emplois, se partagent donc l'expression du futur en français actuel ».

<sup>4</sup> "La sémantique de la Temporalité" in French, The semantics of temporality