

# PROSPECTIVE READINGS REVISITED\*

## Abstract

In this paper I analyse the Prospective readings of sentences like *El Ton cantava ahir, però li van ajornar la funció* ('Ton was to sing yesterday, but they postponed the performance'). I follow Delfitto's (1998) proposal for generics and try to extend it to prospectives, which are another reading of imperfective morphology. I will point out that, as it happens with habitual readings, in prospective readings the event asserted is not the one expressed by the verb, but a complex event created from the material in the VP plus an operator binding the event variable of the verb: a modal operator with a lexical meaning paraphrasable as *was to* + Infinitive, which is characteristic of prospective readings. This idea allows me to make a distinction between the temporal/aspectual modifiers that are associated with the Event Time of the event of the verb and those that affect the temporal reference of the sentence. I will suggest that in prospective readings, the temporal/aspectual modifiers associated with the Event Time of the event expressed by the verb modify this event as event-type, not as a concrete token of this event-type: they behave as circumstantials, they contribute circumstances of the predication.

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present an analysis of prospective readings associated with imperfective morphology (the reading of, for example, *En Joan cantava demà, però s'ha ajornat l'actuació* 'Joan was to sing tomorrow, but the performance was postponed'). I adopt Delfitto's (1998) idea that imperfective morphology encodes the instruction that the VP must be predicational and not propositional. The author proposes an analysis for habituales and progressives based on this conception of imperfectivity. In this paper I point out that this idea applies also to prospective readings of imperfective morphology, and I develop an analysis of prospective readings in these terms. If this analysis of imperfective morphology is on the right track, then we will be able to defend a uniform conception of imperfectivity and, thus, a unique lexical entry for imperfective morphemes.

I will point out that, as it happens with habitual readings, in prospective readings the event<sup>1</sup> asserted is not the one expressed by the verb, but a complex event created from the material in the VP plus an operator binding the event variable of the verb. In

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\* For writing this paper I have benefited from the Proyecto DGS PB96-1199-C04-02 of the Ministerio de Educación y Cultura and from a FI scholarship granted by CIRIT 1997 SGR 00033 and 1999SGR 00113 of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

<sup>1</sup> I use the term *event* in a lax sense, including both events in a strict sense and states. From here on, if I do not state explicitly the contrary, I use it in this lax sense.

prospective readings this operator is a modal operator with a lexical meaning paraphrasable as *was to* + Infinitive, which is characteristic of prospective readings.

This idea that in prospective readings the event expressed by the verb is not asserted allows me to make a distinction between the temporal/aspectual modifiers that are associated with the Event Time of this event and those that affect the temporal reference of the sentence. I will suggest that in prospective readings, the temporal/aspectual modifiers associated with the Event Time of the event expressed by the verb modify this event as event-type, not as a concrete token of this event-type. If I am right, in these cases the temporal/ aspectual modifiers behave as circumstantials, they contribute circumstances of the predication. Those modifiers that contribute to determine the temporal reference of the sentence are associated with the interval of truth of this sentence<sup>2</sup>, which in turn is included in the Event Time of the event which is asserted.

## **2 A unique analysis for imperfective morphology**

In this section I will present Delfitto's (1998) analysis for generics (2.1). This author associates genericity with imperfective morphology, and points out that the same analysis should extend to other readings of imperfective morphology, like the progressive one, without going into detail. In subsection 2.2 I present an analysis for the progressive reading of imperfective morphology, based on Delfitto's (1998) comments. This notwithstanding, in section 2.3 I will present another group of readings, the prospective readings, which are the central subject matter of this paper.

### *2.1 Generics*

Delfitto (1998) deals with the relation between genericity on the one hand and the absence of any aspectual encoding or default aspectual morphology (which crosslinguistically, the author claims, is imperfective morphology)<sup>3</sup> on the other hand. He puts forward a non quantificational analysis of genericity, in which generic

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<sup>2</sup> The *interval of truth* of a sentence is the interval with respect to which you must check the truth conditions of the sentence as a whole and with respect to which the speaker makes an assertion when stating the sentence.

<sup>3</sup> From now on I will refer to both imperfective morphology and absence of aspectual marking as *imperfective morphology*.

sentences have a predicational logical form: they involve the ascription of a property to an intensionally defined individual. See (1) (Delfitto's (1)):

(1) John is intelligent.

Predicates associated with imperfective morphology involve the realization of one of their arguments as external to the maximal projection of the head. This argument occupies the specifier position of a functional projection PredP, and the head Pred performs a type shifting operation. As a result, the VP is interpreted as a property (type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ), and the argument in [Spec, PredP] is interpreted intensionally, as a property set.

Therefore, from Delfitto's (1998) point of view, generic sentences are not based on episodic sentences, by inserting an implicit operator that quantifies over time variables or situation variables as in other approaches (see Delfitto (1998): 1-2 for some references). The intensional/nomic meaning of generic sentences depends on the intensional/modal interpretation of predicational structures.

The same analysis applies to cases like (2) (Delfitto's (5)), with an eventive predicate: the verbal predicate has a PredP in its extended projection, and its external argument occupies the [Spec, PredP].

(2) Abigail fetches my newspaper

Eventive predicates like the one in (2) have an extra event argument, realized as a Davidsonian event variable associated with the verb head of VP. This requires the presence of a Q-adverb that binds this event variable, and yields a logical representation like (3) (Delfitto's (15))

(3)  $\lambda x [Qe [C(e,x) [\text{fetch my newspaper } (e,x)]]]$  (Abigail),

which means literally: «the property of  $x$  such that for  $n$  events  $e$  involving  $x$ ,  $x$  fetches the newspaper in  $e$ , is a property of Abigail». Thus, with eventive predicates, it is a complex property which is ascribed to the individual associated with the argument in

[Spec,PredP]. This complex property is created by means of an implicit Q-adverb quantifying over the event variable of the verb.

Therefore, according to Delfitto (1998), both eventive and non-eventive generic sentences share the same syntactic format (*predication* in the sense explained above), and involve the ascription of a property to an individual. Then, generic sentences are not based on episodics, and the nomic/intensional reading of generics depends on their predicational structure. With respect to imperfective morphology, it encodes that the maximal projection of the predicate is predicative (i.e., the VP does not constitute a proposition, but a property, which is predicated of the argument in [Spec,PredP]); that is, one of the arguments of the verb occupies a position outside the VP.

## 2.2 *The progressive reading*

Delfitto (1998) points out that, in order to defend a unitary interpretation of the imperfective morphology, we should be able to analyse it in terms of the predicational analysis when presenting the progressive reading as well (see (4)).

- (4) Ara el Joan canta<sup>4</sup>  
now the Joan sings  
'Now Joan is singing'

However, Delfitto (1998) does not explicitly present an analysis of the progressive reading of imperfective morphology. Here I will try to construct an analysis for this case, taking as a point of departure Delfitto's comments scattered throughout his paper.

According to this author, when presenting the progressive reading, the verb with imperfective morphology enters the derivation endowed with an extra argument of spatio-temporal location<sup>5</sup>. This spatio-temporal argument can be syntactically realized as a phonetically null argument when it is interpreted as a speaker-orientated indexical,

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<sup>4</sup> Unless I say the contrary, examples which are not English are Catalan sentences.

<sup>5</sup> This argument of spatio-temporal location would be the Kratzerian spatio-temporal argument of stage-level predicates. According to Delfitto, this argument is optional, and it is not present in the syntactic derivation with all stage-level predicates, but only when these predicates somehow select it, according to the construction in which they appear. See footnote 7 for more comments on this issue.

as corresponds to structures interpreted as observational reports on the passing scene, for instance progressive sentences. To Delfitto, the progressive reading obligatorily presupposes a given/familiar time at which the ongoing event takes place. This given/familiar time would correspond to the speaker-orientated null spatio-temporal argument. The presence of this indexical spatio-temporal location of the event triggers an operation of existential closure at the VP level and, consequently, of existential quantification over the verb's event variable (the other possible semantic trigger for this operation being, according to Delfitto, perfective morphology). This explains the fact that structures associated with imperfective morphology which present a progressive reading are episodic, despite their predicational character.

In accordance with the analysis presented in Delfitto (1998), an operation of lambda-abstraction applies to the trace of the verb's argument displaced to [Spec,PredP]. This is the type-shifting operation performed by Pred as a result of which the VP is interpreted as a property, as a lambda-abstract predicated of the argument displaced to [Spec,PredP] (see, in subsection 2.1, the discussion regarding example (2)). Because of this predicational relation between the argument in [Spec,PredP] and its VP-internal trace, the displaced argument cannot undergo reconstruction to its original position. This ensures the intensional interpretation of this argument.

When imperfective morphology is associated with a progressive reading, the subject of the predicate (i.e., "el Joan" in (2)) receives a non-intensional, existential reading. This could be accounted for straightforwardly if this argument was reconstructed to its VP-internal position (because of the operation of existential closure operating at the VP level, triggered by the presence of the indexical spatio-temporal location mentioned earlier). However, this is impossible if this argument has previously been displaced to [Spec,PredP]. The idea suggested explicitly by Delfitto is that, in structures with a progressive reading, it is the spatio-temporal argument of the predicate that displaces to [Spec,PredP] in order to satisfy the requirement encoded in the imperfective morphology that the VP be non-propositional. The indexical character of this external argument would prevent the application of the type-shifting operation, because indexicals are not sensitive to intensional operators.

To summarize, in the progressive reading of imperfective morphology, the argument that goes to [Spec,PredP] is a spatio-temporal null argument, which is an indexical. Moreover, there is existential quantification over the event variable of the verb, and consequently the VP is propositional.

### 2.3 The prospective reading

In this section I describe the data that present what I call the prospective reading. Consider the data in (5) and (6):

- (5) El Ton *cantava* ahir, però li van ajornar la funció  
 the Ton sang-imperf. yesterday but to-him they-postponed the performance  
 ‘Ton was to sing yesterday, but they postponed the performance’
- (6) El Ton *cantava* demà, però li van ajornar la funció  
 the Ton sang-imperf. tomorrow but to-him they-postponed the performance  
 ‘Ton was to sing tomorrow, but they postponed the performance’

The examples in (5) and (6) have prospective readings, which, as these sentences show, are stative readings<sup>6</sup>. In spite of this, this kind of reading appears only with predicates that are endowed with a Davidsonian event variable<sup>7</sup> (see (7)).

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<sup>6</sup> In the sentences in (5) and (6), the predicate associated with imperfective morphology presents a counterfactual reading. Here I will leave this issue aside. Note, however, that this counterfactuality of prospective readings with past imperfective morphology is a conversational implicature, not an assertion. In fact, there are sentences like (i) that have a prospective reading which is not counterfactual:

- (i) a. El Joan venia, a sopar, aquesta nit, no?  
 the Joan came-imperf. for dinner tonight not  
 ‘Joan was to come, for dinner, tonight, didn’t he?’  
 b. Sí, amb ell som set  
 yes, with him we-are seven  
 ‘Yes, counting him, we are seven’

On the other hand, even in the case of sentences that can have a counterfactual prospective reading, the counterfactual implicature can be cancelled. See (ii):

- (ii) A: Ah, per cert, tu quin dia cantaves?  
 particle by certain you what day sang-imperf.  
 ‘Oh, by the way, what day were you going to sing?’  
 B: Jo cantava ahir  
 I sang-imperf. yesterday  
 ‘I was to sing yesterday’  
 A: Ai, ho sento, jo volia venir a sentir-te!  
 particle it I-feel I wanted come-infinitive to hear you  
 ‘Oh, I’m sorry, I wanted to come to hear you!’

<sup>7</sup> I follow Delfitto (1998) in the distinction that he establishes between the Davidsonian event variable and the Kratzerian spatio-temporal argument. The obligatoriness/non-obligatoriness of the Davidsonian event variable permits Delfitto to distinguish individual-level from stage-level predicates. According to this author, individual-level predicates are those that can receive an eventive or a non-

- (7) a. #El Joan estava malalt ahir  
the Joan was-imperf. ill yesterday  
‘Joan was ill yesterday’
- b. #Antonio era futbolista a esta hora (Spanish)  
Antonio was-imp footballer at this time  
‘Antonio was a footballer at this time’

In (7)a, with a predicate like *to be ill*, we only obtain the prototypical stative reading, and we cannot create the complex ‘predicate’ that would give the prospective reading. In (7)b, with the modifier *at this time* indicating the Utterance Time of the sentence<sup>8</sup>, we can only obtain a habitual reading. In this reading of (7)b, the predicate *to be a footballer* presents an eventive reading that can be paraphrased, for example, as ‘behaved/acted as a footballer’. Delfitto (1998: 15) proposes to consider i-level (individual-level) predicates as those for which the presence of a Davidsonian event variable and the consequent eventive reading are optional. This definition seems to apply to the predicate in (7)b, which in the derivation of this sentence takes an event argument. If the habitual reading of (7)b shows that the predicate *to be a footballer* can take an event variable, and though, we cannot obtain a prospective reading for this sentence, it seems that the necessity of an event variable in the derivation is not the restriction that accounts for the presence/absence of a prospective reading in (7). It seems then that the presence of a Davidsonian event variable is a necessary but not sufficient condition for prospective readings.

There is another kind of evidence in the same direction. It might be difficult to obtain the prospective reading with certain activities (see (8)), despite the fact that they are clearly endowed with an event variable:

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eventive interpretation, in his frame those that can enter the syntactic derivation with or without a Davidsonian event variable associated with them. On the other hand, stage-level predicates are those that always enter the syntactic derivation with a Davidsonian event argument associated with them. In contrast, according to Delfitto (1998), the Kratzerian spatio-temporal argument is optionally present with stage-level predicates, and it can undergo syntactic realisation as a null category depending on the syntactic configuration or on specific selectional requirements of the predicate.

<sup>8</sup> With the term Utterance Time I refer to the time at which the speaker utters the sentence. This term corresponds, then, to the Speech Time of Reichenbach (1947).

- (8) a. ?Ando mañana<sup>9</sup> (Spanish)  
 I-walk tomorrow  
 ‘I walk tomorrow’
- b. ?Parlava avui  
 s/he-talked-imperf. today  
 ‘S/he was to talk today’

I believe that the restrictions illustrated in (8) are pragmatic in nature. Because it might be hard to obtain the prospective reading in (8)a, but it is much easier, I believe, with a verb like *to run*, for example. Thus, *Corro mañana* (‘I run tomorrow’) can be paraphrased more easily by ‘I take part in the competition tomorrow’, for example, because the verb *correr* (‘to run’) is very usual with this kind of meaning. As regards (8)b, it is quite common in the jargon of linguists, in which *to talk* is very usual with the meaning ‘to make a talk’, ‘to give a lecture’. In short, it is difficult to obtain the prospective reading with activities that do not easily take an accomplishment-like reading, a bounded reading. This leads to the hypothesis that it is the boundedness/ability to be bounded of the predicate that is required for prospective readings<sup>10</sup>, and not just the presence of an event variable (which is independently required in order to be bound by the modal operator). This also explains the absence of prospective readings in the examples in (7): it seems that the predicates *to be ill* and *to be a footballer* can hardly take a bounded reading, they codify an unbounded reading.

Then both prospectives and habituais require that the predicate takes a Davidsonian event variable, but prospectives also require that it can take a bounded reading. On the other hand, prospectives and habituais differ from each other in that the relation between the event expressed by the verb and the complex *predicate* that results from an operator (a modal operator and a Q-adverb respectively) binding the event variable of the verb in each case is different. In a sentence like (9),

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<sup>9</sup> I thank Myriam Uribe-Etxebarria for calling my attention to this restrictions.

<sup>10</sup> I mean predicates that are or can be interpreted as having a bounded Event Time without requiring the presence of perfective morphology nor the presence of a modifier or of a sentence that introduces another Event Time (something like *En Joan estava malalt, però es va prendre la medicina i de seguida es va posar bé*, ‘Joan was ill, but he took the medicine and he recovered at once’, where the event *to recover* interrupts the event *to be ill*).



(9) John smokes

the complex property ascribed to John is literally, “the property that John has in virtue of the relation between (...) the events in which John is involved that naturally favor smoking (...) [and] the events in which John actually smokes” (see Delfitto (1998): 2). This relation depends on the lexical meaning of the overt/covert Q-adverb that quantifies over the event variable of the verb.

In the case of prospective readings, I will propose that the relation between the event expressed by the verb and the complex event which is the one asserted in the sentence depends on the lexical meaning of a modal operator that binds the event variable of the verb. The meaning of this complex event corresponds roughly to the meaning of the periphrasis *was to* + Infinitive combined with the meaning of the VP (that is, the meaning of the verbal predicate plus its arguments and modifiers). Although this periphrasis combines only with past tense, and the prospective readings appear both with present and past imperfective forms, the periphrasis with *was to* + Infinitive is useful to see the contribution of the operator that binds the event variable of the verb in the prospective reading.

Both in habitual and prospective sentences, the event is not the one encoded in the lexical meaning of the verbal predicate, but a complex one that results from an operator binding the event variable of the verb. However, the event expressed by the verbal predicate can have temporal modifiers that restrict or precise the Event Time that corresponds to this event (see (10) and (11))<sup>11</sup>.

(10) El Lluís corria la maratón demà, però l’han ajornada  
the Lluís run-imperf. the marathon tomorrow but it-they-have postponed  
‘Lluís was to run the marathon tomorrow, but it was postponed’

(11) L’ any que vaig compartir pis amb ell, el Lluís dinava  
the year that I-shared flat with him the Lluís had-lunch-imperf.

*a les dues*

at the two

‘The year I shared flat with him, Lluís had lunch at two’

But these modifiers (in italics in (10) and (11)) enter the derivation in the thematic phase (see Chomsky (1998)) and affect only the predication, and not the temporal reference of the sentence, which is encoded in the functional phase (see Chomsky (1998)). It is clear that the interval of truth of (10) does not even overlap the interval designated by the modifier *demà* (‘tomorrow’), and that the interval of truth of (11) is not confined to the intervals designated by the modifier *a les dues* (‘at two’), but includes all the period designated by the modifier *l’any que vaig compartir pis amb ell* (‘the year I shared flat with him’), which in turn includes the intervals designated by the other modifier. The modifier *l’any que vaig compartir pis amb ell* (‘the year I shared flat with him’) enters the derivation in the functional phase, and modifies the temporal reference of the sentence: it determines its interval of truth. The interval of truth of (10) is not linguistically delimited, because, differently from (11), in (10) there is no modifier associated with a functional category, there is no modifier that determines the temporal reference of the sentence. While in progressive readings there is a presupposed given/familiar time (see section 2.2, and footnote 7), in habituales and prospectives there is no such a presupposition and, consequently, there is no null spatio-temporal argument with an indexical interpretation (recall that this argument corresponds to what sometimes is called Assertion Time<sup>12</sup>, which is the interval of truth of the sentence). This makes possible that with habituales and prospectives, when there is no modifier associated to the interval of truth, the exact temporal reference of the sentence remains linguistically indetermined.

The exact duration of the Event Time of a lexical state combined with imperfective morphology is never linguistically determined (unless we have another event, introduced by another sentence, which interrupts it and determines its end point)<sup>13</sup>. In

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<sup>11</sup> With the term Event Time I refer to the total interval in which the event or the state of the sentence holds.

<sup>12</sup> The term *Assertion Time* comes from Klein (1995) and designates the interval of which an assertion is made.

<sup>13</sup> Because of their intrinsic nature, the events expressed by lexical states do not have boundaries that can be modified by temporal or aspectual modifiers. It seems that these boundaries can only be

these cases, modifiers can only delimit the interval of truth (which is contained in the Event Time). In (11), the modifier *l'any que vaig compartir pis amb ell* ('the year I shared flat with him') determines the interval of truth of the sentence, which is included in its event time. I will analyse modifiers more in depth in section 4.

### 3 The prospectives: an analysis

In this section I will present my analysis for prospective readings, which is based on the predicational analysis that Delfitto (1998) proposes for imperfective morphology. If I want to maintain that imperfective morphology is not ambiguous, I should be able to show that prospective readings can be analysed in terms of this same predicational analysis that I have assumed for generics and progressives.

In section 3.1 I will analyse some of the characteristics of sentences with prospective readings, which will allow me to relate them to generics and progressives within the "predicational" frame that I assume here. I will suggest that, despite being stative, prospective readings like those in (5), (6) and (10) are episodic. In section 3.2 I will derive this episodic character that, despite their predicational structure, have some prospective readings, from the lexical meaning of the complex predicate, created by the modal operator binding the event variable to the verb.

#### 3.1 Prospective readings, between generics and progressives

I repeat below the examples with prospective readings:

- (5) El Ton *cantava* ahir, però li van ajornar la funció  
the Ton sang-imperf. yesterday but to-him they-postponed the performance  
'Ton was to sing yesterday, but they postponed the performance'
- (6) El Ton *cantava* demà, però li van ajornar la funció  
the Ton sang-imperf. tomorrow but to-him they-postponed the performance  
'Ton was to sing tomorrow, but they postponed the performance'

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introduced by perfective morphology or by another event which is expressed by another sentence. See

(10) El Lluís corria la maratón demà, però l'han ajornada  
the Lluís run-imperf. the marathon tomorrow but it they-have postponed  
'Lluís was to run the marathon tomorrow, but it was postponed'

In section 2.3 I pointed out that prospective sentences are stative. In addition to this, I argued that we only obtain prospective readings with non-stative predicates (see the examples in (7)) that can present a bounded reading. If the predicational analysis of imperfective morphology extends to the cases in (5)-(6) (prospectives), the restriction of prospectives to structures with non-stative predicates means that we only get the prospective reading by means of a complex predicate, created by a kind of modal operator (and not by means of a lexical property, as it is the case with non-habitual generic sentences) that gives the meaning that can be paraphrased as *was to + Infinitive*. This gives a theory-internal reason for the restriction of prospective readings to eventive predicates: there needs to be an event variable for the operator to bind.

According to Delfitto (1998), habituals are a subcase of generics: all of them are cases of predicational structure and of ascription of a property to an individual. The particularity of habituals among generics is that the ascribed property is a complex one: it is the property of behaving in a certain manner in a contextually restricted set of occasions. This complex property is the result of an implicit or explicit Q-adverb quantifying over the event variable of the verb. The nomic reading of all generic sentences derives from this predicational structure.

I suggest that prospectives as well are cases of predicational structures (and this is desirable if we want a uniform analysis of imperfective morphology), and that they are cases of a complex predicate created by an operator binding the event variable of the verb. But prospective readings like those in (5)-(6) and (10) do not seem to be cases of ascription of a complex property to an individual, differently of what happens with habituals.

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footnote 10.

In fact, I believe that despite being stative, prospective readings can be episodic (I will go over this idea again a little bit later)<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, some of the characteristics of episodic prospective readings are reminding of some of the characteristics of progressive readings, which are also stative structures with an episodic reading.

According to Delfitto (1998), when progressive readings are associated with imperfective morphology, they can be analysed in terms of predicational structures, despite the fact that they are episodic readings that constitute reports on the current state of affairs. The key element in this analysis is the given/familiar time that, according to Delfitto, the progressive reading presupposes. This familiar time would correspond to the speaker-orientated null spatio-temporal argument present in the derivation of the structure with the progressive reading, which is the argument that moves to [Spec,PredP] and that, as an indexical, can receive an existential reading (in accordance with the VP-level existential closure operation that it triggers), despite the position it occupies.

In my opinion, prospective readings do not presuppose any given/familiar time and consequently, there is no spatio-temporal argument in their derivation. Delfitto & Bertinetto (1995) make a distinction between the progressive and the habitual readings of the Imperfect in Italian in terms of D-linked quantification versus non-D-linked quantification. According to these authors, the Imperfect introduces a universal quantifier over times that, in progressive readings, is relativized to contextually prominent times, and that, in habitual readings, is contextually restricted. To me this D-linked character of the progressive reading can be restated in terms of the given/familiar time presupposed, Delfitto's (1998) spatio-temporal null argument. I believe that in this sense prospectives parallel with habituais and not with progressives, since prospective readings do not presuppose a given/familiar time (I will come back to this issue in section 4, talking about modifiers). In an example such as (12), which

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<sup>14</sup> In the frame of Delfitto (1998), stativity derives from the predicational structure that is projected with imperfective morphology. This predicational structure means that the VP expresses a property (not a proposition), which is ascribed to the external argument of the VP, previously displaced out of the VP to [Spec,PredP]. This is what happens, according to Delfitto (1998) with generics. In the case of progressives, the argument that displaces to [Spec,PredP] is a null spatio-temporal argument with an indexical reading. This indexical null argument triggers an operation of existential closure at the VP level that explains the fact that progressive readings are episodic, despite their stativity (that is, despite

contains a Simple Present with a prospective reading, the interval of truth of the sentence is not the Utterance Time (as would be the case if (12) had a progressive reading), but a linguistically undelimited interval which includes the Utterance Time.

- (12) El Toni canta *Turandot* el mes que ve  
the Toni sings *Turandot* the month that comes  
'Toni sings *Turandot* next month'

Summarizing, prospectives parallel with habituais in their stative character and in the fact that the subject of predication is, roughly, the external argument of the verb. Moreover, they parallel with progressives in their static but episodic character<sup>15</sup> and in the consequent existential interpretation of the subject.

### 3.2. *The episodicity of prospectives: an analysis*

At the beginning of section 3.1 I pointed out that prospective readings are obtained only with non-stative predicates that can have a bounded reading, and that a complex predicate that can be paraphrased, roughly, as *was to* + Infinitive (see also section 2.3.1) is created, from the material in the VP, by some kind of modal operator binding the event variable of the verb. Moreover, in section 3.1 I pointed out that prospective readings can be episodic. Despite their episodicity, it seems clear that in cases like those in (5)-(6), which I repeat below, there is no statement of the kind of 'Ton sang yesterday' or 'Ton sang tomorrow', respectively.

- (5) El Ton *cantava* ahir, però li van ajornar la funció  
the Ton sang-imperf. yesterday but to-him they-postponed the performance  
'Ton was to sing yesterday, but they postponed the performance'
- (6) El Ton *cantava* demà, però li van ajornar la funció  
the Ton sang-imperf. tomorrow but to-him they-postponed the performance  
'Ton was to sing tomorrow, but they postponed the performance'

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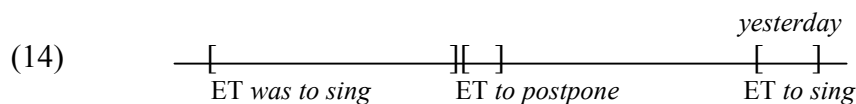
their predicational structure). The case of prospectives is another case that combines a predicational structure (that yields a stative reading) with episodicity.

<sup>15</sup> As we will see later, not all prospective readings are episodic. Nevertheless, all the examples that we have seen until now present episodic prospective readings.



the Event Time of *to sing*; in contrast, the Event Time of *was to sing* finishes exactly when the Event Time of *to sing* begins, whenever it does, because of the lexical semantics of the modal operator that binds the event variable of *to sing*, yielding the complex state *was to sing*. This is inherent to the nature of the state *was to sing*, since the lexical meaning of the event *to sing* is part of the compositional meaning of this complex state.

In the example in (5), the Event Time of the state *was to sing* does not last until the initial point of the Event Time of *to sing*, because it is bounded (interrupted) by the Event Time of the event *to postpone*. This can be seen in the diagram in (14):



However, the lexical meaning of the event *to sing* is clearly part of the compositional meaning of the complex state *was to sing*. The boundary introduced by the event *to postpone* in (5) is external to the state, because the event *to postpone* is not part of the compositional meaning of the state *was to sing*. On the contrary, the boundary introduced by the event *to sing* is inherent to the meaning of the state *was to sing*.

From now on I will leave aside cases in which an external event introduces a boundary that limits the state of prospective readings, and I will concentrate on the inherent limit introduced by the event which is part of the compositional meaning of the complex state. Given the role that the event that introduces the inherent limit plays in the compositional semantics of the complex state, this event must be seen from outside, as a whole, it must be interpreted as a bounded event, with the initial point and the end point delimited, so that it can introduce a boundary that limits the state interval. This explains the restriction that we only can obtain a prospective reading with predicates endowed with an event variable and that in addition have the property that their Event Time is or can be bounded.

It seems, then, that the fact that prospective readings are restricted to eventive predicates which can be bounded can be explained in terms of the role that the



predicate plays in the compositional semantics of the resulting state which constitutes the prospective reading. This compositional semantics is determined by the lexical semantics of the modal operator. Therefore, I assume that the restriction of prospective readings to eventive predicates that can be bounded is imposed by this operator.

As I claimed earlier, prospective readings, though stative, are episodic readings. In this sense, the complex predicate of prospective readings has an eventive reading, takes an event variable which can be existentially quantified over by a semantic operation of existential closure. This would give rise to the episodic reading.

Now I will try to reconstruct the derivation of a structure with a prospective reading. As encoded by imperfective morphology, there is a PredP projected over the VP, and the external argument of the verb displaces to the position of [Spec,PredP]. The head Pred performs a type-shifting operation which makes the VP be interpreted intensionally and the external argument in [Spec,PredP] be interpreted as a property set. This type-shifting operation makes the trace of the displaced argument be interpreted predicationally, and therefore this argument cannot be reconstructed to its original VP-internal position. Then the *prospective* modal operator binds the event variable of the verb and determines the kind of complex predicate that expresses the event in which is involved the argument in [Spec, PredP]. As this complex predicate presents an eventive reading (because the lexical semantics of the modal operator makes that the complex predicate has an inherently-bounded-event-reading), it is endowed with an event variable. Then, an operation of existential closure would take place, probably at the PredP level, and an existential quantifier would bind the event variable of the complex stative stage-level predicate. This would explain the existential interpretation of the subject.

The external argument, which occupies the position of [Spec,PredP], should be interpreted as a property set, because of its trace being interpreted as predicational as a result of the type-shifting operation performed by Pred. But, as I said in the previous paragraph, in the prospective reading this argument is interpreted existentially. This is possibly the result of an operation of existential closure applied at the PredP-level (that is, an existential operator quantifying over the event variable selected by the complex

predicate). My idea is that the argument in [Spec,PredP] is not interpreted before the operation of existential closure at the PredP-level has applied and then, in the interpretation process, it gets an existential reading. This would explain the fact that, despite occupying the [Spec,Pred] position, this argument is interpreted existentially and not as a property set<sup>16</sup>.

But then the question we face is: which is the semantic trigger for this operation of existential closure? Delfitto (1998) considers two kinds of triggers of existential closure: on the one hand, the perfective morphology, which encodes the information that the VP must be propositional; on the other hand, constructions which express a report on the passing scene (progressives) or on the present state of affairs (cases like *Firemen are available*, Delfitto (1998)'s (75)), which include a null spatio-temporal argument with an indexical reading. But in prospective readings neither of these two factors is present: we have imperfective morphology and there is no spatio-temporal argument in the sense of Delfitto (1998).

My idea is that in prospective constructions there is no trigger of existential quantification, because it seems that there is a kind of prospective reading which is not episodic (that is, in which there is no existential quantification of the event variable selected by the complex predicate). Consider the data in (15):

- (15) a. El Lluís, quan li ho preguntaves, sempre presentava la tesi  
 the Lluís, when to-him-it you-asked always presented-imp. the thesis  
 el curs següent. Al final no la va acabar mai  
 the course following in-the end not it finished never  
 ‘Lluís, when you asked him, always was to present the thesis the following  
 course. In the end he never finished it’
- b. El Lluís presentava la tesi demà, però ho ha ajornat  
 the Lluís presented-imp. the thesis tomorrow but it he-has postponed  
 ‘Lluís was to present his dissertation tomorrow, but he has postponed it’

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<sup>16</sup> I leave for further research the issue of this possible conflict between the modal operator that affects the trace within VP of the external argument and the existential operator that affects this same external argument within PredP.

It seems to me that the example in (15)a presents a habitual reading constructed from a complex predicate formed with the modal operator of prospective readings. Thus, we have a habitual-prospective reading. This example would be analysed as follows: as I said earlier, after the modal operator binding the event variable of the verb and yielding the complex stative predicate of prospective readings, this complex predicate selects an event argument, and then, in a case like that in (15)a, a Q-adverb quantifies over this variable, yielding the habitual reading.

The example in (15)b is a case of episodic prospective reading, as those that we have seen before in this paper. As I proposed earlier, in this case the event variable selected by the complex stative predicate would be closed by an existential quantifier. This would yield the episodic reading.

Now, having seen that there are cases like (15)a of habitual-prospective readings, in which there is a Q-adverb which quantifies over the event variable, I can go back to the question of the semantic trigger for the operation of existential closure in cases like (15)b. As it is possible to have a Q-adverb quantifying over the event variable selected by the complex stative predicate, there need not be and, in fact, there cannot be any semantic trigger that forces the existential closure of this variable. When there is an operation of existential closure, we will obtain the episodic prospective reading, and when there is a Q-adverb quantifying over the event variable, we will obtain the habitual prospective reading.

To summarize, according to my analysis, in prospective readings a complex predicate is created by a modal operator that binds the event variable of the verb. This explains the fact that prospective readings only appear with verbs endowed with an event variable. On the other hand, the operator imposes the restriction that the Event Time of the verb is bounded or can be interpreted as bounded, because of the role played by the semantics of this verb in the semantics of the resulting complex predicate. The resulting complex predicate is a stage-level predicate (because of its compositional semantics) and as such, it takes an event variable which can be bound by an existential operator, yielding an episodic prospective reading (see, for example, (15)b), or by a Q-adverb, yielding a habitual prospective reading (see, for example, (15)a). In episodic

prospective readings, there is an assertion of a complex event in which the subject is involved. In habitual prospective readings, a complex property is predicated of the subject.

#### 4. The role of temporal/aspectual modifiers

In section 2.3 I made a distinction between modifiers which enter the derivation in the thematic phase and modifiers which enter the derivation in the functional phase. I repeat here the examples (10)-(11):

(10) El Lluís corria la maratón demà, però l'han ajornada  
the Lluís run-imperf. the marathon tomorrow but it-they-have postponed  
'Lluís was to run the marathon tomorrow, but it was postponed'

(11) L'any que vaig compartir pis amb ell, el Lluís dinava a les dues  
the year that I-shared flat with him the Lluís had-lunch-imperf. at the  
two  
'The year I shared flat with him, Lluís had lunch at two'

In section 2.3 I suggested that the preposed modifier in (11) is part of the functional phase, and determines the interval of truth of the sentence. In contrast, the postverbal modifiers in (10) and (11) are part of the thematic phase, and contribute their meaning to the predication, not to the temporal reference of the sentence. Therefore, in (10), the event that takes part in the composition of the complex predicate of the prospective reading is not *to run*, but *to run the marathon tomorrow*; and in (11), the event that takes part in the composition of the complex property that is predicated of the external argument, yielding the habitual reading, is not *to have lunch* but *to have lunch at two*. These postverbal modifiers do not make any contribution to determine the interval of truth of the sentences in which they appear.

De Swart (1998) considers that the basic position of time adverbials and temporal clauses is the sentence final position, because they are PPs which modify the VP, and that when preposed they are often interpreted as topicalized<sup>17</sup> (see de Swart (1998): 5 for some references). For the cases when they appear in the postverbal position, de Swart (1998) studies what happens when they are focalized.

Here I am interested in the preverbal (and dislocated postverbal) and the neutral postverbal positions.

Regarding the cases when we have topicalization, it has usually been considered that modifiers in clausal onset position introduce a reference time, a frame time for the main clause (see de Swart (1998) and references therein). See the examples in (16)-(17):

- (16) *Quan jo vaig arribar, el Joan cantava al Liceu*  
when I arrived the Joan sang-imperf. at-the Liceu  
'When I arrived, Joan was singing at the Liceu'/'When I arrived, Joan sang at the Liceu (his job was to sing at the Liceu)'/When I arrived, Joan was to sing at the Liceu'
- (17) *El Joan cantava al Liceu, quan jo vaig arribar*  
the Joan sang-imperf. at-the Liceu when I arrived  
'Joan was singing at the Liceu, when I arrived'/'Joan sang at the Liceu (his job was to sing at the Liceu), when I arrived'/'John was to sing at the Liceu, when I arrived'

In (16) and (17) the modifier *quan jo vaig arribar* ('when I arrived') is dislocated and provides a reference time for the sentence. It happens to be the case that both (16) and (17) can get three readings: a progressive reading, a habitual reading and a prospective reading. Though providing a reference time in the three readings, it seems that the role of the modifier *Quan jo vaig arribar* ('when I arrived') is not exactly the same in the three cases. According to the reinterpretation of Delfitto&Bertinetto's (1995)

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<sup>17</sup> De Swart (1998) does not say anything about topicalized postverbal modifiers. In Catalan and Spanish they are very usual. I believe that everything I will say here about preposed topicalized modifiers holds for postverbal topicalized modifiers too.

arguments that I made in section 3.1, in terms of Delfitto's (1998) spatio-temporal argument, in progressive readings there is a presupposed given/familiar time which is not present in habitual readings nor, I suggest, in prospective readings.

According to Delfitto (1998), the progressive reading is a case of "observational report on the passing scene" (see Delfitto (1998): 46). This explains the presence of the null spatio-temporal argument which gets an indexical reading (it expresses the now/here of the speaker). To me, this is especially clear when imperfective morphology combines with present tense (see (18)), but the presupposition of a concrete familiar time is also present when it combines with past tense (see (19)).

- (18) a. Calleu, no feu soroll, que el Joan canta  
be quiet don't make noise that the Joan sings-imperf.  
'Be quiet, don't make noise, because Joan is singing'
- b. Calleu, no feu soroll, que *ara* el Joan canta  
be quiet don't make noise that now the Joan sings-imperf.  
'Be quiet, don't make noise, because now Joan is singing'

- (19) *Quan vam entrar* el Joan cantava  
when we-came-in the Joan sang-imperf.  
'When we came in Joan was singing'

In (19), the modifier *quan vam entrar* ('when we came in') is associated with this temporal argument, and it contributes to precise the given/familiar time that this argument expresses. In (18)a, this familiar time coincides with the Utterance Time, and this is why a modifier associated to this temporal argument is unusual, or at least gives a marked reading (see (18)b). This same argument can be made for the progressive reading of the examples in (16) and (17).

In contrast, in the habitual reading of (16) and (17), if there was no modifier, the sentences could mean, in the right context, something like, for example 'When he was alive, Joan used to sing'. So when the modifier *quan jo vaig arribar* ('when I arrived')

appears, it restricts the truth interval of the sentence, but there is no presupposition of a given/familiar time in the sense of Delfitto (1998).

In the prospective reading of (16) and (17)<sup>18</sup>, if there was no modifier, the sentences could mean something like, for example, ‘Joan was to sing at the Liceu, I think’, without any presupposition of a given/familiar time. When the modifier *quan jo vaig arribar* (‘when I arrived’) appears, it simply restricts the interval of truth of the sentence.

Summarizing, it seems clear that preposed temporal modifiers are often topicalized, and that they introduce a reference time, a frame time for the main clause. In progressive readings, this reference time corresponds to the given-familiar time that Delfitto (1998) assumes with this kind of readings. In habitual and prospective readings, this modifiers just restrict the interval of truth of the sentence.

Regarding temporal/aspectual modifiers that appear in an unmarked postverbal position, I want to suggest that they are circumstantial modifiers, in the sense that they contribute a circumstance to the predication, and that, as such, they enter the derivation in the thematic phase (see section 2.3). As part of the predication, these modifiers are associated to the event time of the event expressed by the verb. But they modify the event as an event-type, not as a specific event, as an existentially quantified event.

In habitual and prospective readings this is especially clear, because the event of which an assertion is made, and which gets temporal reference according to the temporal information in the functional phase, is not the one expressed by the verb plus its modifiers. The event of which an assertion is made is a complex one created from the material in the VP, by means of an operator (a modal operator in prospective readings and a Q-adverb in habitual readings) binding the event variable of the verb. This dissociation permits to see more clearly the difference between modifiers associated with the event expressed by the verb and those associated with the interval of truth, which is included in the Event Time of the asserted complex event.

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<sup>18</sup> This prospective reading is an episodic one, because of the modifier. Without this modifier or with other modifiers it could have both an episodic and a habitual prospective reading.

Consider the data in (20):

- (20) a. A partir del mes que ve el Joan cantava *tres vegades cada setmana*,  
from the month that comes the Joan sang-imperf. three times each week  
però al final li ho han deixat en dues  
but in-the end to-him it have left in two  
'From next month on Joan was to sing three times a week, but in the end they  
left it in two'
- b. ?A partir del mes que ve el Joan actua/actuava *més sovint*  
from the month that comes the Joan acts/acted-imperf. more often  
'From next month on Joan is going to /was to act more often'

(20)a and (20)b contain, in postverbal position, modifiers which usually go with habituais, and despite this, (20)a and (20)b do not have habitual but prospective readings. I believe that this is evidence in favour of the idea that these postverbal modifiers affect only the predication, they modify the event expressed by the verb as event-type, but do not affect directly the main event of the sentence, which is the event that can be paraphrased as *was to* + Infinitive.

Some more evidence for the idea that temporal/aspectual modifiers can affect the predication comes from the fact that the combination of predicates with these kind of modifiers is not free, there are some restrictions. I claimed that the postverbal modifiers like the one in (21), which I repeat here, affect the Event Time of the event expressed by the predicate. If this suggestion is on the right track, then we expect to find restrictions between events with a certain kind of Event Time and these modifiers.

- (21) El Lluís corria la maratón demà, però l'han ajornada  
the Lluís run-imperf. the marathon tomorrow but it-they-have postponed  
'Lluís was to run the marathon yesterday, but it was postponed'



For example, in cases in which imperfective morphology is associated with a lexical state we cannot have a postverbal non-topicalized temporal/aspectual modifier associated to the Event Time. See (22):

- (22) El Joan estava cansat ahir  
 the Joan was tired yesterday  
 ‘Joan was tired yesterday’

The only reading that can be obtained for (22) is one in which the modifier *ahir* (‘yesterday’) is focalised and it is associated with the interval of truth of the sentence, which corresponds to the Assertion Time (see footnote 12). This means that the contrastive focus is on the assertion made by the speaker: this reading could be paraphrased as “It is yesterday that, according to me, Joan was tired, not another day”. The fact that we cannot obtain a reading in which the modifier is associated with the Event Time of the event *to be tired* is easily explained if we assume, as I do, that the Event Time of a lexical state can only be bounded by the Event Time of another event that interrupts it, or by combining the verb that expresses the state with perfective morphology. Therefore, since in (22) the Event Time of *estava cansat* (‘was tired’) cannot be interpreted as bounded, there cannot be a modifier which expresses a delimited interval and which associates with this Event Time.

A related kind of evidence in favour of the hypothesis that temporal/aspectual modifiers can be circumstantials in the sense that they affect the predication, that they enter the derivation in the thematic phase, comes from the restrictions of combination between temporal/aspectual modifiers. Consider the data in (23)-(24):

- (23) a. \**La setmana passada* el Joan estava cansat *ahir*  
 last-week the Joan was-imper. tired yesterday  
 ‘Last week Joan was tired yesterday’  
 b. *Ahir* el Joan estava cansat *a la tarda*  
 yesterday the Joan was-imperf. tired in the afternoon  
 ‘Yesterday Joan was tired in the afternoon’

(24) *La setmana passada* el Joan cantava *ahir*, però abans d'ahir  
 last-week the Joan sang-imperf. yesterday but before yesterday  
 em van dir que s'havia ajornat.  
 to-me they-told that it-had-been postponed  
 'Last week Joan was to sing yesterday but the day before yesterday I was told  
 that it had been postponed'

As in (22), in (23)a and (23)b the postverbal modifier is associated to the interval of truth of the sentence. The preverbal topicalized modifiers in (23)a and (23)b are also clearly associated to the interval of truth of the sentence. This leads to the hypothesis that the contrast in grammaticality between (23)a and (23)b comes from the restriction that two modifiers associated to the same element (that is, the interval of truth or the Event Time) must point at intervals that have a relation of inclusion. This restriction is fulfilled in (23)b but not in (23)a.

In contrast, (24) is grammatical despite the fact that the two intervals pointed at by the modifiers have not a relation of inclusion. This can be explained straightforwardly if I am right in claiming that the preverbal modifier in (24) is associated to the interval of truth of the sentence and the postverbal one affects the Event Time as a circumstantial. It could be objected that this just shows that one modifier is associated to the interval of truth of the sentence and the other one to the Event Time of the verb, but not that this Event Time is not referential and that the modifier is a circumstantial. But if the Event Time was referential we would have a progressive reading of the imperfective morphology, and then the interval of truth of the sentence would be included in the Event Time, and it would be a case like the one in (23)a.

Finally, another kind of evidence that can be adduced in favour of this hypothesis is the cliticisation data. Consider the examples in (25) and (26).

(25) A: Tu *a les quatre* cantaves, oi?  
 you at the four sang-imperf. interject  
 'At four you were singing, weren't you?'

B: No, jo *a les quatre* feia la migdiada, així que devia ser  
 no I at the four made-imperf the siesta so that ought-to be  
 algú altre, qui has sentit cantar.  
 someone else who you-have heard to-sing  
 ‘No, at four I was making a siesta, so it ought to be someone else that you  
 heard singing’

(26) A: El Pere demà cantava *a les cinc*, oi?

the Pere tomorrow sang-imperf

‘Tomorrow Pere was to sing at five, wasn’t he?’

B: No ho crec, perquè el Pere no *hi* canta mai, *a les cinc*,  
 not it I-believe because the Pere not temp.-clitic sings never at the five  
 ell sempre canta a la sessió de les set  
 he always sings at the session of the seven  
 ‘I don’t think so, because Pere never sings at that time, at five, he always  
 sings at the seven performance’

In (25)A the imperfective morphology presents a progressive reading, and the modifier *a les quatre* (‘at four’) is associated with the spatio-temporal argument characteristic of progressives. Both in (25)A and in (25)B this modifier is displaced from its original postverbal position, and there is no re-assumptive clitic within the sentence. The imperfective morphology in (26)A presents a prospective reading, and the postverbal modifier *a les cinc* (‘at five’) is associated to the Event Time of the verb and is a circumstantial, it modifies the predication. The imperfective morphology in (26)B presents a habitual reading. In (26)B the modifier is also associated with the Event Time of the verb, and it is displaced out of its original postverbal position. In contrast with what happens in (26)B, there is a re-assumptive temporal clitic within the sentence.

In works like Matthews (1981), Speas (1990), Rigau (in press) and Pascual (1999) a distinction is established between two types of modifiers: in the one hand, those that contribute to the predication, which establish a narrow relation with the predicate, and those that do not establish any kind of relation with the predicate but with some

functional category (sentential tense, aspect, mood, etc.) Pascual (1999), for example, states that modifiers belonging to this last class never agree with the verb, and never cliticise nor are incorporated into the verb, while those belonging to the first class, in some languages can agree with the verb, can cliticise like an argument and can be incorporated into the verb.

The only one of these three properties that can be tested for catalan is the cliticisation property. See the example in (27), Pascual's (1999) (15):

- (27) *Amb aquest ordinador, tots hi hem escrit la tesi*  
with this-masc-sing computer all pr have-I-pl written the thesis  
'With this computer, all of us have written the thesis'

This example is parallel to that in (26), in which the temporal adjunct cliticises like the instrumental phrase in (27). To me, the fact that temporal modifiers cliticise like an argument when they seem to be associated to the Event Time of the event expressed by the verb is another argument in favour of my proposal that there are temporal modifiers which behave as circumstantials and contribute to the predication.

To summarize, in this section I have suggested that temporal/aspectual modifiers can behave as circumstantials, as modifiers of the predication, and not just as sentence modifiers that contribute to determine the temporal reference of the clause. I have pointed out that this is possible in prospective and habitual readings, because in these readings the event expressed by the verb is not asserted nor existentially quantified, and therefore it can be modified as an event-type.

## **5 Concluding remarks**

In the previous sections I pointed out that in prospective readings, like in habitual readings (see Delfitto (1998)), the event asserted is not the event expressed by the verb, but one resulting from a complex event created by an operator binding the event variable of the verb. While in habituals what is asserted is the attribution of a complex

property, created from the material in the VP (which does not include the external argument), to the external argument (see Delfitto (1998)), in prospective readings we have two possibilities. We can have episodic prospective readings and habitual prospective readings. The complex predicate created from the material in the VP (which does not include the external argument) selects, in virtue of its semantics, an event variable. This event variable can be bound by means of an operator of existential closure, yielding an episodic prospective reading, or it can be quantified over by a Q-adverb, yielding a habitual prospective reading.

In prospective readings, the operator that binds the event variable of the verb is a modal operator that contributes the meaning paraphrasable as *was to* + Infinitive. The role that the infinitive plays in this paraphrasis, in prospective readings is played by the event expressed by the verb plus its internal arguments and circumstantial modifiers (the material in the VP). Therefore, the complex predicate resulting expresses a telic event, which is intrinsically bounded at its end by the event expressed by the verb, which is part of the compositional meaning of the complex predicate. Because of this *lexical* semantics, the complex predicate selects an event variable, which can be existentially closed or quantified over by a Q-adverb.

In this paper I have also suggested that in prospective and habitual readings we can find temporal/aspectual modifiers that modify the event expressed by the verb and not the event asserted in the sentence. These modifiers are associated with the Event Time of the event expressed by the verb, but do not contribute to determine the temporal reference of the sentence. Because they do not contribute to determine the interval of truth of the sentence, which in prospective and habitual readings, that are stative, is included in the Event Time of the event asserted in the sentence. These temporal/aspectual modifiers behave as circumstantials, they contribute circumstances to the predication, and more precisely, they modify the Event Time of the event expressed by the verb as event-type, not as a token of the event-type.

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