

Bare habituals with indefinite singular objects and the perfective viewpoint aspect

The covert habitual operator HAB is often viewed as an aspectual operator associated to the imperfective *viewpoint* aspect (vp-aspect) (a.o. Rimell 2004, Hanan & Hacquart 2011). An opposite claim is made in Boneh & Doron (2008), who argue that HAB is independent of the imperfective vp-aspect, hence compatible with the perfective aspect. I will take up this discussion.

My analysis is restricted to bare habituals (free from overt adverbial quantifiers) whose VP consists of a verb and an indefinite singular (IS) object NP. The advantage of an IS over existential plurals (*Mary eats apples*) is that it makes clear in which cases HAB is licensed by the VP and in which it requires a covert adverbial quantifier. I will argue that when HAB is licensed by the VP (*non-quantificational HAB*, ex. 1), the habitual reading is compatible with the perfective vp-aspect provided that the VP is modified by an overt or covert *for-time-span* adverbial. Contrastingly, when HAB requires a covert quantificational adverbial (*quantificational HAB*, ex. 3, 4), the habitual reading under the perfective aspect obtains only if the covert quantificational adverbial is made overt. In the three cases (ex. 1, 3 and 4), the habitual reading under the perfective vp-aspect is no longer due to the modal HAB (see below), but rather to either a pragmatic inference (in (1)) or an explicit adverbial (in (3) and (4)). My analysis is based on French, where the vp-aspect is conveyed by tenses, English, where the past tense is compatible with both vp-aspects, and occasionally Russian, where the morpho-lexical imperfective aspect is compatible with both vp-aspects as well.

I will assume a definition on which HAB is a covert modal stativizing operator whose input is a plural event and the output is a state (Kratzer 2007). As a result, habituals, like statives, are true at time points (Landman & Rothstein 2010). They differ from statives in that their plural input must normally be true at intervals (dispositionals will be left aside). It follows that iterativity, which I assume to be a verbal number feature (+*pl*), is just the input, that is, a precondition required by HAB, not its output. The main job of HAB consists in stativisation, which is performed by quantifying over worlds, not over events.

The non-quantificational reading of HAB is illustrated in (1), where the sentences are supposed to have a simple informational-focus structure: [NP_{subj}]_{top} [VP]_{inf. focus}. Given that the verbal plural is scopeless (Kratzer 2007) while HAB requires a plural VP, the IS normally takes a very-wide scope referring to an individual that the speaker 'has in mind'. The resulting reading is non-quantificational. In French, that reading results from assigning the *plural*-feature to the verb. In English, that feature is associated to the present (at least by default). In (1(ii)), the *for*-adverbial provides a closure on a past interval. The choice between a habitual and a non-habitual activity-style reading (with or without pause-stages) is a matter of pragmatic inference depending on the length of the interval. The IS takes a very-wide scope on both. In both, the event is incrementally homogeneous (Landman & Rothstein 2010).

- (1)(i) a. Marie accompagne un ministre. (PROG/HAB)
a'. Mary escorts a Secretary of State.
b. Marie nettoie un bureau. (PROG/HAB)
b'. Mary cleans an office.
- (ii) a. Marie a accompagné un ministre pendant deux jours/ pendant deux ans. (ACTIVITY/HAB)
a'. Mary escorted a Secretary of State for two days/ for two years. (ACTIVITY/ HAB)

I will assume that, like any other modal operator, HAB is defined by its Modal Base (MB) (a set of worlds w' that HAB quantifies over) restricted by an Ordering Source (OS) (Kratzer 1981). I will argue that the MB of the non-quantificational HAB is epistemic, i.e. quantifies over those w' that are consistent with what the speaker (and/or the interpreter) believes in w . The contrast between (1(i)) and (2(i)) below, where the habitual reading is problematic, is accounted for by defining the OS of the non-quantificational HAB as: (i) stereotypical; (ii)

restricted to those w' that are consistent with a predefined set of categories of properties (the so-called *habits*) that are believed, within a given community, to *characterize* individuals of a certain kind, e.g. for humans: working habits, eating/drinking/(non)smoking habits, etc.

- (2) a. Marie nettoie une casserole/ lave une chemise. (PROG/^{??}HAB)
 b. ^{??}Mary cleans a pan/ ^{??}washes a shirt.

The restriction defined above for the non-quantificational HAB does not apply to the quantificational reading illustrated in (3(i)), where the sentence-final adjunct triggers a tripartite quantificational structure by taking over the informational-focus function. As a result, the middlefield is distressed (Büring 2001). This structure unrestrictedly licenses HAB under the imperfective vp-aspect. In order to create a plural input for itself, HAB triggers an underlying adverbial quantification over situations: (*always/usually*) *when Mary cleans a pan, she cleans it such and such way*. The distressed IS is mapped onto the restrictor, where it acquires quantificational variability. In (3(ii)), the position of the *for*-phrase is filled in by the adjunct. Even if the *for*-phrase is somehow forced, the reading in (3(ii)) is analogous to that of (1), not to (3(i)). A reading analogous to (3(i)) obtains only if the covert quantificational adverbial is made overt (3(iii)).

- (3) (i) a. Marie nettoie une casserole en commençant par le fond.
 b. Mary cleans a pan starting from the bottom onwards.
 (ii) a. Marie a nettoyé une casserole en commençant par le fond (^{??}pendant deux heures/
^{??}pendant deux ans).
 b. Mary cleaned a pan starting from bottom onwards (^{??}for two hours/^{??}for two years).
 (iii) a. Marie a toujours nettoyé une casserole en commençant par le fond.
 b. Mary usually cleaned a pan starting from the bottom onwards.

Structure (4) triggers a quantificational reading as well: (*always/usually*) *when Mary does something with/to a (dirty) shirt, what she does is washing it*. This structure is available if the sentence exhibits a narrow focus (A-focus) in the middlefield (Büring 2001), so that the sentence-final IS is left distressed. Combining this HAB with the perfective viewpoint aspect is subjected to the same restrictions as in (3), since in both the distressed IS is mapped onto the restrictor.

- (4) a. Marie /LAVE/_{A-foc} une chemise (elle ne la jette pas quand elle est sale).
 b. Mary /WASHES/_{A-foc} a shirt (she does not throw it away when it is dirty).

I will argue that the MB of HAB in (3) is circumstantial. The OS is defined in terms of closeness of w' to the circumstances in w (similar pan, similar cleaning conditions), which explains why this HAB easily allows for exceptions. In (4), the modality of HAB has a performative flavor: the speech act expressed in (4) (denial/ hidden deontic) is different from that of the underlying sentence. In both (3) and (4) HAB is unable to quantify over worlds under the perfective vp-aspect. The overt adverbial only quantifies over situations.

References

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