THE SIMPLE AND THE PROGRESSIVE: 'FUTURE' USE

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THE PROBLEM

This study of the expression of future events by means of the simple and progressive forms was undertaken partly to find the answer to a problem which arises in the teaching of English, but principally to confront a theory of the two forms with a use which did not seem to confirm the theory. Although the comments of various grammarians threw light on different aspects of the problem, they failed to provide a coherent view of the whole and so could not answer the crucial question concerning usage: what principle conditions whether the speaker uses the simple or the progressive to express an event to be realized in the future? The examination of a fairly extensive collection of examples (some 600 in all) permitted us to fit the piecemeal comments of grammarians together into an overall view and to discern the conditions governing usage.

A theoretical view of the two forms based on an extensive examination of numerous other uses in the light of the Psychomechanics of Language (cf. Hirtle 1967 for details) provided the starting point. According to this view, the simple form always brings to the event an impression of completeness, of something to which nothing can be added, whereas the progressive brings an impression of incompleteness, of lacking something, of a perfectible event. In grammatical terms, the meaning of the simple form is 'perfective', that of the progressive 'imperfective' (although it cannot be assumed that these terms are synonymous with those applied to aspect in Russian). That is, these two forms offer the speaker the possibility of representing an event as either perfective or imperfective, as somehow complete or incomplete, and so it is ultimately the way the speaker views the experience he wishes to represent and communicate that determines which of the two forms he will use. Of course the form combines with the other elements in the verb (especially the lexeme and the tense) and

then with other parts of the sentence to produce the message. As a consequence, we can never observe the meaning of the form in isolation, and so it is not an easy task to discern just what element of meaning the progressive or the simple contributes to the sentence. However, it is postulated that the underlying meaning of a form is present and so discernible in every one of its uses through its effect on the meaning of the verb and ultimately the sentence. It was this meaning-based theory of usage that provided the hypothesis for our investigation: that the progressive somehow evokes future events as 'imperfective', the simple as 'perfective'.

Our job was to see not just if the data could be interpreted in this fashion – this was a minimal requirement – but if the hypothesis would actually throw new light on the facts of usage and help us to observe them with more discernment. Experience has shown that a valid theory can be a valuable aid in observation and analysis. Since, however, we were not the first to examine this problem of usage, one of our first tasks was to learn what other grammarians had observed. Before turning to their comments, however, it is important to clarify what is here understood as the facts of usage since they constitute the alpha and omega of all theoretical work. These facts are those aspects of language usage accessible to direct observation. Because of this accessibility, any competent observer can attempt to observe them. The consensus of observers with regard to any facet of language usage is the best guarantee one can get that it has been correctly observed and permits us to consider it as a fact of usage, as part of the data. Since our study was carried out within the framework of a meaning-based theory, pertinent data was sought not in the physical means of expression, the spoken or written signs, but rather in the mental content expressed, the message. That is to say, it is the observable facts of meaning, the nuances and expressive effects arising from the use of a form, which provide the testing ground for the postulated meaning. Since it is not always easy to discern the nuance of meaning in a given example, it is important to take into consideration the observations of other scholars. In this respect, linguistics differs little from other sciences of observation.

The first results of consulting other studies were not very heartening because many observers saw little or no difference between

the two forms. For example, when it is remarked that the simple non-past is 'not very important' here 'as any of the other future forms can be used' (Thomson and Martinet 1960:144) there is the implication that simple and progressive (as well as other means of evoking a future event) do not differ in meaning here.

Other grammarians do describe a difference between the two forms, but the distinction is often difficult to grasp. Charleston (1960:257) points out that the simple form as in:

> We leave for England to-morrow

suggests 'a determined plan, a settled programme' in a 'rather formal tone' whereas the progressive, as in:

> We are going to America in the autumn

'suggests that the future events are part of a programme, that they have been planned beforehand', but is 'more casual, more friendly, less official sounding'. The difference between a 'settled programme' and 'a programme' is not made clear. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983: 62–3) suggest that the simple form is used 'when a scheduled event is involved', the progressive 'when an event is planned' but again one is left to ponder the difference between the two.

Such attempts to characterize the two forms are admittedly too cursory, but they do bring out a significant fact, namely that there are uses where either form may occur without any major shift of meaning. This was the first fact to be accounted for: how to explain that two forms with opposed meanings – 'perfective' and 'imperfective' – could often be used interchangeably, yet with a characteristic expressive effect separating them.

Clearly, this difference in expressive effect was the key to the problem. However, to depict this distinctive nuance is no easy task, as the following passage attests:

> The Programmed Present-Future is expressed by the Forms *be to* and by two Present Tenses in English (Simple and Progressive) . . . It is, however, necessary to distinguish two broad subdivisions of the Programmed Present–Future: Bb (INFORMAL) and Bb (FORMAL). The exponent of the informal way . . . is the *Present Progressive*. The exponents of the formal way . . . are the *Present Simple* and *be to*. As may be expected, small scale plans, arrangements and decisions *tend* to be expressed informally, large scale plans, regarded as unalterable, formally. (Smith 1978:95–6)

Other writers have tried to characterize the difference in terms of an externally verifiable programme as opposed to what the speaker has in mind:

> Here the difference between the non-progressive and the progressive is that the former refers to the future as an ascertainable programme or series of events, the latter to something settled in the speaker's mind, or to an intention. (Scheffer 1975:94)

Palmer (1974:66) also distinguishes between the two on the basis of 'a fixed decision or plan' as opposed to 'an intention'. Leech and Svartvik (1975:72), on the other hand, suggest that the distinction is based on the degree of certainty involved: the simple form evokes an event 'as absolutely certain' – not only as 'an unalterable plan' but also as 'determined in advance by calendar or timetable' – whereas the progressive evokes future events 'resulting from a present plan, programme or arrangement'.

All these comments are based on the observation of actual usage, and so do not contradict one another. And yet as a basis on which to compare the two forms they are inadequate because they are not sufficiently general to apply to all cases of usage, nor do they establish a clear-cut opposition. This is the inevitable result when one tries to distinguish between the meanings of grammatical forms only on the basis of the various senses and expressive effects they give rise to in discourse. The only alternative is to postulate an underlying or potential meaning for each form and examine the various contextual senses and expressive effects in the light of the ever-present opposition between the two. The present study attempts to do just this, on the basis of the perfective/imperfective opposition. We shall first outline how this opposition gave rise to a hypothesis specific to 'future' use.

The Hypothesis

The following citation expresses a widely accepted view:

> The main condition on the use of the simple future present is that the future event or activity must be felt to be completely determined by facts or circumstances that already exist at the moment of speaking. (Wekker 1976:82)

In the same vein, other scholars say that the simple non-past

expresses a 'scheduled event' (Calver 1946:323), a 'future event [that] forms part of an ascertainable programme' (Scheurweghs 1959:321), a 'fixed plan' (Sopher 1970:57), an 'unalterable arrangement' (Leech 1971:60), a 'timetable future' (Tregidgo 1974:103).

Equally common is the observation that some lexical indication of future time, generally an adverb, accompanies the simple form in this use. This fact, combined with the impression of a scheduled event, led us to propose initially (cf. Hirtle 1967:51 f.) that the event is represented as unfolding from beginning to end at the moment in the future indicated by the adverb. This interpretation had the advantages of evoking the event as 'perfective' and of accounting for the presence of the adverb, but it had the serious disadvantage of presuming that a moment in the future was represented with the same degree of reality as the present. When confronted with the point of view expressed by Wekker – 'facts or circumstances that *already exist* at the moment of speaking' – our interpretation had to be re-examined.

Other writers, of course, express the idea that the simple form tells us about the present rather than the future. Calver (1946:323), for example, insists that the 'constitution, order, schedule, habit of things' expressed by the simple form exists at the moment of speaking. For Close (1959:58) the speaker 'sees the event as already a reality as he speaks' and Huddleston (1979:336) treats 'the factuality as in effect already guaranteed in the present'. Such comments were supported by the fact that it is possible for a sentence like:

> I *have* an exam tomorrow

to form the protasis of a conditional sentence, as in:

> Let's go and see the time-table. If I *have* an exam tomorrow, I won't go out tonight.

Since it could hardly be argued that an event represented as occurring tomorrow influences one seen as occurring tonight – that the consequence could be seen as existing before the condition governing it – we had to abandon the view that *have* represents an event as taking place in the future. That is to say, we were led to

accept the widely held view that even in the 'future' use, the simple form evokes something in the present.

This view, however, raised other problems. Firstly, if the verb does not evoke the occurrence of the event in the future, what facet of the event does it evoke in the present? Secondly, how does the simple form differ from the progressive, which is commonly described as evoking an event going on at the moment of speech? Thirdly, what is the role of the future adverb if the event is not seen unrolling in the future? These and other problems opened several avenues of reflection.

Fortunately, the comments of other scholars provided a partial answer to the first question. It is often suggested that the simple form evokes a present schedule, programme, time-table, etc., all of which can be summarized by the proposal that the simple form evokes the conditions governing the occurrence of the event. That is to say, the verb expresses the existence in the present of what is required to ensure the future realization of the particular event. It is the prerequisite conditions fulfilled at the moment of speech that constitute the schedule, plan, programme, etc. guaranteeing the later actualization of the event.

Granted the almost unanimous observations of grammarians in this respect, this view of the simple form seemed to be well founded. However, it had the drawback of describing the simple form in much the same way as the progressive, which, as mentioned above, is also often regarded as evoking a plan or programme. This brought us back to the crucial question: what distinguishes simple from progressive? Fortunately, there was the distinctive nuance in usage which gave a clue to the answer.

Kruisinga and Erades (1960:334) had observed that with the simple form, 'the future event is represented as a certainty, something confidently expected or normally and naturally resulting from the mere lapse of time'. Leech and Svartvik, as we have already seen, describe the event 'as absolutely certain' and Lakoff (1971:339) sees it as 'one the speaker can be sure of'. The most revealing comment comes from Dowty (1977:71) when he says that the simple form 'implies both planning and certainty' whereas the progressive 'implies planning but not certainty'. What, then,

makes the difference between a sentence that suggests certainty and one that does not?

Wekker (1976:87) brings out the reason when he notes that some sentences with the 'future' use of the simple do not suggest 'certainty'. For example, the sentence:

Exams begin on Monday, I think

means something like 'I believe that it has already been determined that exams begin on Monday'. Wekker concludes: 'The important point is that it is not the notion of certainty which primarily functions as the semantic condition on the use of the simple future present, but rather that of complete predetermination'. In other words, 'certainty', as an expressive effect of the sentence, is only one of the possible consequences of using the simple form in this way. The conditioning factor giving rise to this and other expressive effects is the manner in which the event is represented here: as 'completely predetermined'.

This view suggests a way to distinguish between a plan which implies certainty and one which does not. In the first case, where there is complete predetermination, the plan quite obviously must be seen as including all the necessary conditions, as covering all the requirements for ensuring the event; in the second case one can postulate incomplete predetermination, that is, that the plan is not seen as all-inclusive but rather as leaving out some of the prior arrangements. In other words, the simple form evokes all the prerequisite conditions, the necessary and sufficient conditions, whereas the progressive evokes some but not all of these conditions. In this fashion we were able to reach an understanding of how the underlying meaning of each form, 'perfectivity' and 'imperfectivity', might well be actualized in the 'future' use of each.

This insight provided a promising hypothesis for our research but it did not produce immediate solutions for all problems of usage. It remained to be worked out just when the two forms are practically interchangeable, and when they are not. We also had to explore various traits of usage noted by different scholars: the role of the subject – personal or impersonal – with the simple form, the place of 'intention' with the progressive, the element of 'decision'

with each form, and a number of others. However, the distinction between the two views of prerequisite conditions – seen as a whole and seen in part – provided a criterion with which to approach these different expressive effects and syntactic facts, a phase of the research we shall now turn to.

The Simple Form

The results of confronting hypothesis and data can best be summarized by focusing on uses of the simple form first, the great majority of which suggest a scheduled event. This probably explains why so many grammars mistakenly consider this expressive effect to be the only condition for using the simple form here. However, the fact that there are other uses shows that this is only one among several contextual meanings, none of which can be considered the single condition, the potential meaning permitting all the others. This is why we have postulated as the conditioning factor of usage that the simple form represents the necessary and sufficient conditions to guarantee the realization of the event (the idea of sufficiency here implying that of 'all', 'perfective').

Scheduled Events

Among the various terms used to describe this use (see above), 'scheduled event' (Calver 1946:323) was chosen because a schedule implies something fully planned. Because a scheduled event is one whose preparation or predetermination phase is represented at the moment of speaking, its actualization phase is necessarily seen as subsequent to the moment of speaking, as in the future. Furthermore, because the predetermination phase is represented as complete, the future actualization is, as we saw above, felt to be certain, settled, factual.

The following example gives rise to nuances of this sort:

> The job's still open and I've got it. I *start* in ten days time. *(Christie 1976:141)*

Here, the categorical, everything-settled note of *start* suggests that the future employer has determined when the event is to be actualized. The progressive, by way of contrast, would be some-

how less categorical, as though implying 'I have agreed to start in ten days time', or something of the sort. Palmer (1974:66) gives the same interpretation of a similar use.

In the following example, all the preparations for a state visit constitute the complete predetermination of the arrival:

> Mubarak *arrives* in the U.S. for a state visit on Feb. 2, though he may in fact see Haig again in Cairo a few days earlier. *(Time 25.01.82:33)*

The progressive would be subtly out of place here, a little too casual, almost suggesting that his arrival has a contingent, accidental character.

Visser (1966:683) cites an example which brings out these nuances quite clearly:

> A new Director of the Women's Royal Air Force has been appointed . . . She *Succeeds* Air Commandant Dame Anne Stephens, who *is retiring*. The appointment *takes* effect on April 1 next.

Where the simple forms here evoke the administrative arrangements made to ensure the actualization of the events involved, the progressive evokes the intentions of the subject, with the suggestion that the retiring is her own doing rather than that of some inexorable administrative machine.

Although possible, the progressive would be unlikely in the following example:

> Montrealers *decide* tomorrow to re-elect Jean Drapeau or put an end to his career as Canada's best-known mayor. *(M.S. 9.11.74:11)*

Here *decide* has the sense of 'vote to decide', so it is not a question of whether they have reached a decision individually, but rather that Montrealers are to decide collectively, come what may. For someone, say a Montrealer, who has followed the campaign and so is aware of the build-up, the progressive would be unlikely. But it would be quite appropriate here for an outsider who has just learned of the coming election and so does not see it as the certain outcome of a long preparatory campaign.

The following example from the entertainment section of a newspaper announcing a forthcoming performance provides an interesting contrast with the progressive:

Angèle Arsenault *kicks* off a four-night series at Place des Arts, Thursday at 8:30 p.m. *(T.G. 8.12.78:22)*

All the conditions for the 'kick-off' are considered to have been fulfilled, and so the event is regarded as scheduled. The progressive might be used here to suggest certain doubts in a situation where the performer is ill, or is having some difficulty putting her act together. Again, the notion of 'is supposed to' suggested by the progressive would contrast sharply with the settled schedule implied by the simple form.

The contrast between the two forms is more subtle in the following example:

Half an hour later the pilot announced: "We *make* contact in ten minutes. Please check your seat harness." *(Clarke 1968:143)*

The reassuring crispness of the simple form with its suggestion that everything is under control would be slightly dulled by the progressive here with its overtones of 'intend to', 'are supposed to'.

It has been necessary to illustrate the nuances of meaning separating simple and progressive here at some length because in many cases the difference is so slight that it is very difficult to describe. Indeed this very similarity between them raised a problem for our interpretation of the progressive, as we shall see later. Slight though it may be, however, in each such case one can feel some distinction of expressive effect, a fact to be remembered when it is claimed that the two forms are 'interchangeable' here. There are cases of scheduled events, however, where the progressive would not be used, and these provide an even clearer manifestation of the underlying meaning of the form.

The following examples are particularly interesting in this respect:

Often the gap between what the designer had in mind and what the fashion fan decides to wear is very wide, as Gazette fashion writer Iona Monaghan *explains* tomorrow *(T.G. 5.10.81:2)*

Tomorrow's special report in the Gazette *looks* at Chinatown: a community in crisis. *(T.G. 5.10.81:2)*

Sports editor Red Fisher *takes* a look at the NHL's pleasant surprises and bitter disappointments so far this year in the Saturday Gazette's Sports Section *(T.G. 27.11.81:2)*

One has the impression here that the arrangements have reached a point where the process is quite irreversible – the articles may well be written already, and even printed. In these circumstances one cannot imagine the preparation phase as incomplete and so the progressive would not be possible.

One striking characteristic of usage is the fact that the simple form expressing a scheduled event is found quite frequently in newspaper headlines, whereas the progressive is very rare here. The following examples will help to suggest why:

Town planning *meets* tonight. *(M.T. 18.11.81:25)*

Mining inquiry *opens* Sept. 3. *(T.G. 26.08.80:2)*

Although in conversation the progressive might well be used here (*the mining inquiry is opening Sept. 3rd*), it would not be appropriate in a headline precisely because the journalist wishes to discuss the 'future as fact' (Leech 1971:60) and so must have the categorical guarantee of the simple form. One of the rare cases of a progressive in headlines bears this out:

Cabinet shuffle *is coming* soon. *(M.T. 16.11.81:25)*

The accompanying article has more to do with speculations about whether there will be a shuffle than with a future event seen as a reality.

The following example of a headline brings out the role of the simple form quite clearly because the progressive form would not be appropriate, even in conversation:

Titans, Greyhounds *battle* Saturday for title. *(M.T. 13.11.81:13)*

Curiously enough, if we were to substitute another verb such as *play* or *meet* it would be possible to use the progressive (although it would not be found in a headline, as explained above). The reason for this appears to be that arrangements can be made for two teams to play or to meet, but hardly for them to battle. As a consequence the progressive, which evokes preparations as in the making and so incomplete, would not be used in the example. On the other hand, once preparations for playing are complete, a battle may well appear as inevitable. Thus, the sense of the example is something like: 'since all arrangements for the game have been completed, a battle is inevitable, given the calibre of the two teams'.

The following sentence is similar:

> The U. of M. Blue Eagles *face* a tough schedule when they participate in the annual Inter University Cup which begins in Montreal tonight. *(M.T. 08.02.82:8)*

Arrangements were not made for the Blue Eagles to 'face a tough schedule', but rather for them to participate. Once these arrangements were complete, however, the facing of a tough schedule was seen to be inevitable. And when an event appears to be inevitable, the use of the progressive is excluded as we shall now see.

Inevitable Events

Wekker (1976:85) has pointed out that it is abusive to consider examples like the following as expressing a scheduled event:

> The sun *rises* at 5 o'clock tomorrow. *(Leech 1971:59)*

Certainly the event is represented as completely predetermined but no planning or scheduling is involved here in the sense that nobody made arrangements for the future actualization of the event. Not only was there no human influence involved in bringing about the necessary and sufficient conditions to guarantee the event's actualization, but one has difficulty imagining when these conditions were brought into existence. The impression that the prerequisite conditions for the event have always existed exclude the use of the progressive here because the progressive evokes incomplete predetermination, that is, a preparation phase which has not yet been fully realized. As Leech remarks (1971:59), the above sentence with the progressive would be 'absurd' since it would suggest 'that the rising of the sun could be deliberately planned instead of being determined by natural law'. Of course this does not enclude the possibility of a sentence such as *since (the weatherman says) the sun is rising at 5 tomorrow, we'd better get up at 4:30*, where the suggestion of 'is supposed to rise' can be felt. Again, one feels that the progressive brings in a suggestion of incomplete predetermination.

Other examples of this use are:

> Yom Kippur, the day of atonement in the Jewish religion, *begins* Sunday at

sundown and *lasts* until seventy-two minutes after sundown Monday. *(T.G. 29.09.79:34)*

Next Christmas *falls* on a Thursday. *(Leech 1971:60)*

There is a temptation here to limit this use to non-personal subjects, so an example like the following is pertinent:

Pierre Trudeau, who once grabbed international attention as a swinging bachelor prime minister, *turns* sixty tomorrow. *(T.G. 17.0.79:19)*

Although the subject is personal, the realization of the event is not seen as a consequence of scheduling by human agency.

The verb *to be* is not uncommon in this use:

I *am* fifty-one next year and the only thing I ever had happen to me was seeing a man stop a runaway horse. *(Erades 1975:5)*

Erades (1975:6) makes an interesting comment here: 'in sentences with *to be* stating the age a person will attain at a certain date, the birthday referred to is invariably the next.' Certainly, one of the necessary conditions for becoming fifty-one is to be fifty already. The completeness of the predetermination is further emphasized when Erades (loc. cit.) remarks:

If the attainment of the age of fifty-one were represented as dependent on some contingency, the use of the present tense would be impossible. The interpolation of *God willing, if my health keeps*, or some such expression would necessitate the use of *shall be*.

If some contingent condition remains to be met, then one cannot represent the subject as already fulfilling at the moment of speech the necessary and sufficient conditions of the event. On the other hand, where the sentence supposes the realization of such a condition the simple form is used, as we shall see below.

A number of examples have come to hand where one gets the impression of an 'inevitable' event even though it is the consequence of human scheduling. As a result, one hesitates between the two expressive effects. Thus in:

You *come* into your money when you are twenty-five *(Erades 1975:5)*

the coming into the money might be looked upon as scheduled by the person who made up the will, or it may simply be seen as the inevitable outcome of some present legal situation. In any case, '*come* is used to denote the arrangement as it stands at present',

according to Erades, a clear indication that it is the 'perfective' meaning of the simple form which gives rise to whichever nuance the speaker wished to express.

In the following example, the simple form evokes an event whose realization is guaranteed by legal arrangements:

> The plan *matures* January 31, 1982. *(T.G. 11.11.81:61)*

Here the notion is not that of a long process of maturation but rather its final moment, so the verb has the sense of 'reaches maturity'. Again, the use of the progressive would evoke a contingent or accidental note, as in:

> He says the plan *is maturing* January 31.

A similar distinction can be discerned in the following:

> The resolution *expires* on Friday, when it is supposed to be superseded by regular appropriation bills. *(Time 23.11.81:22)*

The simple form implies legal stipulations whose coming into force is represented as unavoidable. The progressive might be used here where there is a possibility of extending the date of expiration and so would suggest 'is supposed to expire'.

Finally, the following example might be interpreted as a scheduled event:

> Rizzo, who under the city charter could not seek another term, *leaves* office in January. *(T.G. 31.10.79:97)*

In all likelihood, however, it is the city charter which imposes on the subject all the conditions that make the event appear inevitable in the eyes of the writer. The progressive here would not evoke the same nuance, but rather something like 'he intends to leave office in January rather than await the end of his term', where the intention of the subject would be seen as conditioning the event. In any case, the possible ambiguity of the simple form in legal contexts brings out the point that both 'scheduled' and 'inevitable' nuances are derived from its underlying meaning. The same will now be shown for a third expressive effect occasionally found with the simple form, one which has not been brought out in the literature.

Decision

In the following example, the simple form evokes neither a previously scheduled nor an inevitable event:

> It's the best news I have had since midsummer. Tomorrow we *celebrate! (Tolkien 1977: page reference lost)*

Here it is the receiving of good news which prompts the speaker to proclaim a celebration, so there has been no prior planning. And yet, according to our hypothesis, the simple form evokes the prior conditions as complete. Consequently, one gets the impression that the decision of the speaker here completely predetermines the event's actualization, that he is in command of the situation.

This comes out clearly in the following exchange:

> "What is more," Lady Tressilian swept on regardless of his protest, "Audrey *leaves* this house tomorrow." "You can't do that! I won't stand for it." *(Christie 1947:122)*

It is the authoritarian position of Lady T. in her own home which permits her to see her decision as sufficient to ensure the future actualization of the event regardless of opposition from others.

The following example is similar; a British aristocrat has just made a decision and speaks to his manservant:

> I have done my business, Sam. We *return* to Lyme tomorrow. The ten o'clock train. You will see to the tickets and take those two messages on my desk to the telegraph office. *(Fowles 1980:256)*

Even though the particulars of the arrangement for returning have yet to be worked out, the simple form can still evoke the actualization as certain since the speaker's decision is seen (in his own eyes) as authoritative, categorical, conclusive.

In the following example, a father has just shown his family an old dismantled rocket which he plans to repair in order to take them to Mars.

> Now go to the house, all of you. I have phone calls to make, work to do. Tomorrow we *leave*. Tell no one, understand? It is a secret. *(Bradbury 1969:183)*

Here one feels that despite the need for material preparations, the speaker's decision to leave, made on the spur of the moment, is enough, in his own eyes, to guarantee the future actualization of

the event because of his self-confidence and enthusiasm (which are not shared by his wife).

The following example involving the verb *to be* is particularly striking. It is cited from Kruisinga (1931:135) with a description of its context:

> Two immaculately dressed young men in the stalls are talking about the clothes worn by the actors, which strike them as wonderful creations. All at once one of them says, "What's the name of the man who supplies the clothin'? Here we are, Snipe and Snipe. Bridge Street. Bertie I'*m* there tomorrow, and you must come too, dear old boy." *(Punch 19.03.1902, p. 206)*. What he means is that he is going there tomorrow to order some clothes.

Again, a decision made at the very moment is felt to provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for the event's future actualization.

The impression of a decision providing all that is required to predetermine an event would seem to be what permits the following type of example:

> Well, my dear girl, that's settled. Don't make any more objections. You *go* up to town tomorrow. I'll say I'm running over to Ipswich to stay with a pal for a night or two. You *wire* from London that you can't get back. And who's to know of that charming little dinner at my flat? *(Christie 1976:108)*

The expression *that's settled* evokes the moment of decision. The events *go* and *wire* are, as a consequence represented by the speaker as certain, completely predetermined. In the following example, it is the expression *right.* which denotes the decision:

> Right! we *meet* at Victoria at nine o'clock, *catch* the fast train to Dover, *have* lunch at the Castle Restaurant, then *walk* across the cliffs to Deal. *(Leech 1971:61)*

As Palmer (1974:67) points out, it is not a matter of a schedule in such uses, but rather 'an agreed arrangement', the simple form being used 'to confirm future arrangements'.

The effect of predetermining an event by means of a unilateral decision may be to suggest overtones of determination or even threat, depending upon the circumstances of a particular situation. Thus in

> He never *comes* into this house again *(Milne 1929:157)*

the suggestion that the speaker's decision is opposed by others

brings out a note of determination. One has the impression that he is laying down the law. Here he ensures the future non-actualization of the event by refusing it a place in time (*never*), one of the necessary conditions for anything to take place, as we shall see. With the progressive in this sentence, the categorical tone of laying down the law would be lost and one would get a suggestion of intention (cf. *He's never coming into this house again if I have anything to say about it*).

'*Future*' *Use and Habit*

A number of grammarians point out that there is a link between 'future' and 'habitual' uses of the simple non-past. For Visser (1966:679), an example like:

> The session *commences* on the 1st of October

would be ambiguous without further context to indicate whether the speaker is thinking of next October first, or every October first.

There are a number of similarly ambiguous expressions of time, as in the following, which might be interpreted as either a 'future' or a 'habitual' use:

> The baker *calls* on Saturday. *(Palmer 1974:67)*

There is, however, no ambiguity in the following since the lexical expressions of time are quite clear:

> The garbage truck *comes* the day after tomorrow, and you musn't forget that it only *comes* on Wednesdays. *(B.W. 20.06.81)*

The first *comes* expresses a 'future' event, the second a recurrent, 'habitual' event, because *Wednesdays* can be understood only as evoking a series of moments in time for the event to be actualized. In the following example, on the other hand, the expressions of time are open to a double interpretation:

> After all, this year's movies *are* next year's television shows. *(B.U.C.: 110E1A32)*

If *this year* evokes only the year containing the present of speech, then *are* is a 'future' use, not far in sense from *will be*. But if *this*

year has a more general sense, the sentence might express a habit: 'one year's movies are the following year's television shows'.

Such examples suggest that these two uses have something in common, and yet have some distinguishing characteristic. An example like the following brings this out:

> School *starts* the Tuesday after Labor Day, as usual. *(Conversation)*

Here the speaker, representing the event as completely predetermined for the following 'Tuesday after Labor Day', qualifies this view lexically (*as usual*) by indicating that it is just one realization of a regularly recurring happening. Even clearer is the following:

> Julia *is going* abroad this summer . . . Sally, as usual *goes* to the Adirondacks. *(Poutsma 1926:336)*

Goes evokes all the preconditions for realizing the event *this summer* whereas *as usual* tells us that this will be only one realization of something habitual. (The progressive *is going* here suggests the intention of the subject or something unusual rather than a fully predetermined event.)

These examples all suggest that what distinguishes 'future' uses from 'habit' is the place in time provided for the event. In the case of a 'future' event, a single place in time is always foreseen, as we noted in the preceding section; in the case of a 'habitual' event, on the other hand, an unlimited number of places in time must be provided for. Other than this distinction, the representation of a 'habitual' event appears to resemble that suggested here for a 'future' event, if one can judge by a study based on the same approach to the simple form as that adopted here:

> It is therefore the prerequisite conditions for realizing certain actions, a disposition to act, which constitutes the context, at the moment of speech, of a habitual event; thus it refers to something the subject has, not what he does. *(Gordon 1982:56)*

That is to say, where the 'future' use has as its underlying meaning the conditions governing a single realization in the future, the 'habitual' use has the conditions governing a series of occurrences which is 'open-ended' (ibid.). Because both uses involve a representation of conditions of potentiality rather than actual realizations an affinity is felt between them and ambiguity can arise if their distinguishing characteristic is not made clear.

'Future' Use and Adverbs

Most grammarians have remarked that the simple form must be accompanied by an adverbial expression of future time. This may be an adverb expressing a stretch of time which includes the present, as in:

> Manitobans *cast* their ballots today in a provincial general election. *(M.T. 17.11.81:3)*

Here a future stretch of time within the period *today* is evoked, a stretch beyond the moment of speech. In cases like this, the progressive can be ambiguous between a 'future' and a 'present' reading, a problem we shall return to later.

The adverbial expression may well be in another sentence, or even in the heading of a schedule or time-table. Wekker (1976:82) has noted usage at the beginning of a radio or television broadcast where no adverb is present:

> Sweeping changes in the teaching of English in schools are recommended after an official enquiry. We *look* at that.

What provides a clue to the future interpretation is, Wekker points out, the situation, that is, the speaker's awareness (shared by the listener) that he is at the beginning of the, say, half-hour period foreseen for the broadcast which, no doubt, has just been named.

This requirement of some indication of futurity, whether explicit or implicit, has led Crystal (1966:6) to the following conclusion:

> Labels such as 'future' or 'habitual' then, should not be given to the verb form above, but to the combination of the two forms, verb and adverbial, the adverbial reinforcing the verb's potential for referring in the general direction of a particular temporal aspect.

This view, which is shared by other grammarians, coincides with that adopted here, so that 'future' use is seen as a particular contextual meaning. Moreover, our whole aim is to specify more precisely 'the verb's potential' which permits it to join with other elements of the sentence in the expression of 'future' events. It is our contention that the simple form here situates something in the present, that it attributes the necessary and sufficient conditions of the event to the subject at the moment of speech.

In this respect, the requirement for indicating the moment in the

future when the event is to be actualized provides an element of confirmation for the hypothesis being explored here. If, as we have argued, the simple form is 'perfective' and so evokes as fulfilled all the conditions necessary for the future actualization, then it is only to be expected that the event's place in time should figure among them. After all, one necessary condition for any event is to have a place in time in which to take place. The need to express it in this use is a reflection of the fact that this essential condition has already been determined at the moment of speaking.

Conditional Predetermination

Visser (1966:686) mentions another 'future' use of the simple form:

> The futural present is frequently used in a hypothetical ulterance when the apodosis mentions the inevitable, quasi-automatic, consequence of the fulfilment of the action expressed in the protasis.

He gives the following example:

> If I refuse to marry, I *am* lost.

The interesting point here is that *am* evokes a conditioned inevitability, that is, it represents all the conditions required to produce the state of being lost including one whose existence is hypothetical, the refusal. That is to say, *if* in the adverbial clause incident to *am* gives rise to the sense of 'suppose that I refuse' and so provides the final factor required to make the event in the apodosis fully predetermined.

Palmer (1974:66) gives a similar example which, he says, might be interpreted in two ways:

> If he does that again, he *goes* to prison.

Like the example from Visser, this one might suggest either something inevitable, as where the action 'constituted contempt of court', or 'it could be said by a judge as a firm threat'. The latter expressive effect corresponds to the examples discussed above with the nuance of 'authoritative decision', just as the suggestion of 'inevitability' here corresponds to that found in other examples discussed above. Nor would it be difficult to imagine an example

with the third expressive effect discussed above, 'scheduled' event:

If they accept, I *start* work tomorrow.

None of these, however, are 'distinct meanings', as Palmer points out with regard to his example; rather they are expressions of the one underlying meaning, complete predetermination, seen as arising from different sets of circumstances in the experience of the speaker.

Conditioned predetermination is usually expressed by means of an adverbial clause of condition (*if, suppose that*, etc.) but there are other ways:

Another two moves and you *are* checkmate. *(Visser 1966:687)*

Speak one word, and you *are* a dead man. *(Ibid.:686)*

It would seem that the mere fact of *and* evoking a relation of subsequence here is enough to imply the condition/consequence relationship suggested by the sentence.

The following example (cited in Gordon 1982) provides an interesting means of expressing the hypothetical condition:

Any vulture caught sitting on my snowman *gets* clobbered. *(Schultz 1970)*

Any evokes *vulture* as hypothetical (cf. Hirtle forthcoming) by suggesting that there may or may not be one caught. The sense thus is 'If a vulture is caught. . .' It is the 'authoritative decision' use of the simple form here which gives rise to the nuance of a threat.

It is noteworthy than in most of these cases there is no expression of a future moment by means of a temporal adverb. This is not required because it is the realization of the hypothetical element which will trigger – and so situate in time – the actualization phase of the predetermined event.

Immediate Future

An intriguing problem is posed by the following use:

Do I *leave* this fellow tied like that? *(Visser 1966:683)*

Dick, I have come! I am at your service! . . . what *do* I *do*? Instruct me. *(Wekker 1976:149)*

Wekker considers these to be 'future' uses 'without temporal

modification'. In this respect, these examples are to be contrasted with the following:

But what *do* I *do* the next time he wakes up? *(Visser 1966:684)*

Here the speaker is enquiring about present conditions governing realization at some distance in the future and so this is a typical 'scheduled' event with adverbial expression of future time. The first two examples, on the other hand, are concerned with present conditions governing an immediate realization. That is to say, the distance between the actualization phase and the predetermination phase is seen as reduced to a minimum, the width of a limit. Since the actualization phase is necessarily seen beyond the predetermination phase, and since the latter is situated in the present by means of the question, this is a 'future' use without explicit temporal specification.

This is brought out by the following example:

Who *begins*?

which Visser (1966:678) interprets as 'who *is* the man whose turn it (now) *is* to begin?' Indeed, the answer to the question might well be:

John *begins*

thereby evoking the pre-established order, the schedule, determining John's behaviour in the immediate future. By way of contrast, the progressive form here (*Who is beginning*?) would be taken as evoking intention or simply as an invitation – 'who would like to begin?' – but certainly not as evoking an already established order or schedule.

In each of these cases, then, the verb questions or (in the last) affirms the existence at the moment of speaking of the conditions predetermining the actualization of the event in the immediate future. Because the speaker views the situation as involving immediate actualization, just beyond the present, he considers that by representing the prior conditions in the present he has situated what comes immediately after it, and so uses no adverbial specification. In this respect, the 'immediate future' use resembles the use in conditional sentences discussed above.

Problem cases

A more problematic case is that of giving directions, as in:

> You *take* the first on the left and then . . .

According to Palmer (1974:67), in such sentences

> There is futurity, but not prediction. Rather there is just the one possible inevitable course of action, if you want to arrive at your destination.

Indeed, one might consider such examples in the same light as the apodosis of a conditional sentence, the protasis being implied by the question: *How do I get to . . .* ? In this case, it would be another example of 'conditioned predetermination' discussed above. On the other hand, the nuance of inevitability is not felt here as strongly as elsewhere, and in fact 'in meaning, this construction comes very close to being a command or an instruction' according to Wekker (1976:150). Until more convincing evidence is forthcoming, no definitive solution can be proposed for this use.

The last use of the simple form that has come to hand is typified by the following:

> Either that alligator *goes* or I *go*.

Close (1959:57) points out that 'the notion of scheduling is not necessary to ensure *will*-deletion' in such cases. Palmer (1974: 66–7) sees 'total commitment by the speaker' here as well as 'inevitability'. Wekker (1976:86) also considers 'that the future is presented as fixed and inevitable' in this type of sentence. This description certainly depicts the expressive effect here and in the following:

> We either *go* without him or not at all. *(Aarts 1969:575)*
> Alright, whoever wrote that sign *takes* it back or I *clean* their clocks. *(Hart n.d.)*

It would seem, then, that these 'fall under the heading of complete predetermination' (Wekker 1976:86) and can be considered to be examples of 'future' use.

Certain details, however, suggest that such sentences are not straightforward examples of 'future' use. They contain no adverbial indication of the place in time for the realization of the event, like the conditional sentences discussed above. Indeed, the whole

message of the sentence is that of a double conditional: each event is seen as inevitable only on the condition that the other event does not take place. On the other hand, unlike conditionals, this construction can be used with verbs not otherwise found in the 'future' use (a problem to be discussed later). One can easily imagine, for example, the following remark during a discussion of plans for a picnic:

Either it rains or it doesn't.

Are we justified in proposing that verbs like this provide a representation of the necessary and sufficient conditions ensuring the actualization of the event? A solution to the problem will perhaps have to await analysis of the key elements here, *either* and *or*.

This completes our examination of examples of the simple form. The general hypothesis of 'perfectivity' as the potential meaning of the simple form proved heuristically valuable since it provided a basis for the notion of 'complete predetermination', an impression which various scholars have found inherent in this use. Understood as the existence at the moment of speech of the necessary and sufficient conditions guaranteeing the realization of the event, this impression can give rise to different expressive effects: a scheduled event, an inevitable event, and an event predetermined by authoritative decision. Because it is an expression of prior conditions, the 'future' use has obvious affinities with the expression of habit. Furthermore, it requires some indication of the time when the event is to be actualized because this is a necessary condition for actualization to take place. This is normally provided by some adverbial expression, but may be evoked by some conditioning factor to be fulfilled, or even expressively as an immediate future. Thus, outside of two cases requiring further investigation, all the data can be accounted for.

The Progressive Form

At the beginning of this study, we saw that a number of scholars characterize the 'future' use of the progressive in terms of 'arrangement', 'plan', 'programme' and the like, terms which

differ little from those used to describe the simple form. They then differentiate between the two according to the degree of formality or certainty noted in the context. Other writers attempt to give a clearer contrast with the simple form by proposing that the progressive expresses 'intention'. A third approach is suggested by Poutsma (1926:335). Although he recognizes that often 'the Expanded Form is not clearly distinguished from the unexpanded with a future meaning', he does maintain that when the progressive is used 'the preparations for the action are then thought of as in progress'. Ota (1963:64) expresses a similar point of view.

Other aspects of usage suggesting a difference between simple and progressive are mentioned in the literature. For some scholars, the progressive usually evokes a near future (cf. Thomson and Martinet 1960:145; Scheffer 1975:93). Leech and others have pointed out that the use of future adverbials is often optional with the progressive. Finally Wekker (1976:108) observes that, unlike the simple form:

> the progressive can be used only when the future is felt to be one that has been planned or prearranged by some human agent.

In our view, all these comments must somehow reflect the underlying meaning of the form. Could our 'imperfective' hypothesis account for them? On first examining the data (between two and three hundred attested examples) a curious fact of usage was noticed: in slightly less than half the examples the simple form might have replaced the progressive with little change in meaning. In the other examples, either the simple form would not have been possible, or the change of meaning would be quite noticeable. This grouping helped us to sort out the examples but its significance did not become clear until both groups had been examined. Only then did a third, numerically small group of examples come to our attention. We shall begin here by examining examples where progressive and simple might both be used.

Programmed Events

A typical example of this group is the following:

> "I'*m going* up to town tomorrow", said Frankie as Bobby teed up his ball.

"Tomorrow. Oh – and I was going to suggest you should come for a picnic."
"I'd have liked to. However, it's arranged." *(Christie 1982:35)*

The speaker might well have used the simple form here (*I go*), but the expressive effect would not have been quite the same. Where the simple form would suggest 'the future as fact', 'a plan as unalterable', the progressive evokes 'a present plan which may, conceivably, be altered later', as Leech (1971:60–61) puts it. As mentioned above, the term 'scheduled event' was adopted to suggest the impression evoked by the simple form here; by contrast, events expressed by the progressive with their lesser degree of certainty will be called 'programmed events' since a programme is generally felt to be less binding than a schedule.

Just as the 'categoric manner' (Millington-Ward 1955:9) of expressing a future can be explained by the hypothesis that the simple form is a 'perfective' – it evokes all the necessary conditions for actualizing the event – so the hypothesis that the progressive form is an 'imperfective' can explain the fact that it expresses a future less categorically: because it evokes the existence of some, but not all, of the conditions governing the realization of the event. That is to say, the progressive indicates that certain arrangements have been made (cf. 'it's arranged' in the above example), and so the event is felt to be partly predetermined, hence programmed, whereas with the simple form the event would have been evoked as completely predetermined, hence scheduled.

The following example illustrates the same difference of expressive effect:

Mr. Simms, we appreciate your loneliness, but we're tired. We'*re leaving* for Acapulco tomorrow. *(Bradbury, 1967:118)*

The simple form here would be cold, almost impolite, suggesting that Mr. Simms' loneliness in no way influences our schedule. The progressive, on the other hand, evokes the present programme with final arrangements to be completed and so it is less abrupt. As mentioned above, these two ways of expressing such events have been described as 'informal' and 'formal', expressive effects which can be seen to arise from representing the planning phase as either almost completely or completely realized.

Wekker (1976:109) evokes a similar distinction of expressive

effect as between 'official plan or decision and plan or arrangement involving initiation or agreement by human agent'. Thus, the following would be normal for someone on holiday:

We *are attempting* the Jungfraujoch tomorrow. *(Cooper 1959:144)*

The simple form here, on the other hand, would suggest something like a team's training schedule. Likewise, in:

I've always had a dread of New York critics, but they can't close me because I'*m closing* in two weeks anyway. *(Time 23.11.81:56)*

The subject appears to be involved in the arrangements, whereas the simple form would be used if 'some un-named authority' (Leech 1971:61) were responsible for the closing. A similar distinction of expressive effects arising with the simple form in legal contexts was discussed above. Again, the simple form corresponds to an impression of total, unalterable predetermination, the progressive to predetermination which is not quite complete and so, at least theoretically, open to change.

In the following case, where the simple might replace the progressive, the difference of expressive nuance is revealing:

I'*m catching* a train in fifty minutes. *(Visser 1973:1949)*

Such a sentence might arise where the speaker is in a hurry and wishes to excuse himself, with the suggestion that he does not want to miss the train. The simple form here would suggest the highly organized executive consulting his timetable. In many cases, however, the distinction of nuance between the two forms is less striking and indeed may be so slight that it is hard to describe, as in:

I'm *flying* to Australia Tuesday week. *(Christie 1970:189)*

The Newcastle Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society *is holding* its annual meeting Tuesday, Feb. 16th *(M.T. 6.02.82:3)*

We *are meeting* Max at 3 o'clock. *(Huddleston 1977:733)*

In such cases, the speaker seems to be depicting a situation where the predetermination is to all intents and purposes complete, and the progressive, at the limit of the 'imperfective', permits him to represent this impression. To bring out this nuance of 'practically complete predetermination', the last example might be contrasted

with the following (which will be discussed in the next section because the simple form would hardly be appropriate here):

> The board of directors *is meeting* tomorrow for a quick consultation. *(Smith 1978:83)*

Here the suggestion is that of an unexpected meeting which is just being organized; indeed a secretary might well use this form when phoning directors to inform them of the meeting. In this way, the various examples allowing either form with little change of nuance can be analysed in the light of the imperfective/perfective opposition. If the progressive is considered to express 'nearly complete pre-determination' we can account for the various comments of grammarians distinguishing the expressive nuance of each form. Even the suggestion of some writers that there is no difference of meaning here can be understood in cases where the nuance is so slight it defies description.

This discussion of 'programmed' vs. 'scheduled' events provides an excellent illustration of the fact that a contextual meaning arises as a consequence of using certain forms and therefore cannot be used to explain the use of the forms. Rather, the grammarian must appeal to the permanent, potential meaning of a form if he wishes to account for the contextual meanings and expressive effects it gives rise to.

The following example of the simple form evoking an official plan will serve as a basis to illustrate these remarks:

> Her case *comes* before the magistrate next week.

One might use the progressive here to 'weaken the force' of the sentence, as Leech (1971:61) says, that is, to soften the impact of an unpleasant fact by presenting its realization as theoretically not unavoidable. In the following example, however, although the same situation of official arrangements is involved, the simple form would hardly be acceptable:

> "The matter *is coming* up later before the Supreme Court," said Blum. *(T.G. 19.11.79:6)*

To bring out the reason for this, we shall now turn to 'future' uses of the progressive where the simple form cannot be substituted.

Intention

Cases of the 'future' progressive where the simple form cannot be substituted are, if anything, even more frequent than those of the use just discussed. Although a few examples may be difficult to interpret, most are clearly different in expressive effect from those expressing a 'programmed' event. Thus in:

". . . But it's a home" Harris said. "I'll have to share it, but it's a home."
"Who's sharing it with you?"
"I'*m asking* Wilson, but he's gone away – to Lagos for a week or two." *(Charleston 1960:231)*

the main impression is one of intention, of what the subject proposes to do.

Why would the simple form not be possible here? The fact that there is no 'future time' adverbial is the contextual clue suggesting the reason. As mentioned above, one of the necessary conditions for any event to take place is to have a moment in time for its realization. That is to say, far from being completed, or nearly so, the arranging for the event has not even reached the point of determining when it is to take place. What has been determined, however, is the subject's intention to carry out the event. Thus it seems that the arrangements for the future realization are less advanced than in the case of 'programmed' events, but since both cases involve an impression of incompleteness the progressive is the appropriate form for each.

Most of the examples of this type have no future adverbial. The following are typical:

"Now you must tell me why you're leaving."
"I'*m leaving* because I am sure that I shall never again have anything like this part in *My Fair Lady*." *(Bellauri 1969:250)*

Organized crime *is coming* to TV. *(Headline in T.G. 12.08.80:85)*

I'*m giving* up painting and becoming a businessman. *(Visser 1975:1951)*

I'*m having* a big party, Charlie Brown, and I'm going to invite everyone in the neighborhood except you. *(Schultz 1957)*

Examples like the following are of interest because they show that the speaker or writer was aware of the future time:

"Oh, by the way, I'*m going* up to London."
"Tomorrow? Saturday?"
"Yes." *(Milne 1929:98)*

Moore and McLeod Ltd., whose red brick department store on Queen St. became a city landmark . . . *is closing* its doors . . . He intends to sell of existing stock and close up next month. *(M.T. 1.12.81:23)*

In such cases, where the speaker could have included the adverbial specification and represented the event as perfective (*I go, closes*), it is clearly his aim to evoke the event merely as an intention of the subject, not as something fully arranged or scheduled.

Thus the progressive is required when there is no 'future' adverbial because the arrangements for the event are represented as incomplete insofar as the moment of actualization is concerned. How about the far less frequent examples where there is a 'future' adverbial, and yet the simple form would be unsuitable? Just such a case is seen in the following sentence:

I took a degree in it at Cambridge. Not a very good degree, but a degree. It's a very interesting subject, and one day I'*m going* back to it. *(Christie 1966:40)*

One gets the impression here that the subject has the intention of taking up the subject again but that the moment for this has not been fixed yet. That is, the adverbial *one day* evokes the future but without sufficient specification to situate the *going back*, and so the progressive is required. The following example is similar:

He said, "We'*re opening* an agency in Cuba soon". *(Visser 1973:1950)*

as is an example already cited:

"The matter *is coming* up later before the Supreme Court," said Blum.

In most cases with an adverbial, however, the specification of future time is just as precise as in examples with 'programmed' events, and yet the simple form would not be suitable. In certain cases this seems to be occasioned by the nature of the event itself. Thus in:

Astral *is* also *producing* a $4 million feature film called "the Power Barons" in July. *(T.G. 16.12.78:50)*

the very notion of producing a film seems to be fraught with so many unforeseeable circumstances that the planning cannot be carried beyond the intention stage. The same would seem to apply to the following example:

"Have you made your New Year's resolutions this year Jake?"

"Yep! I'*m quitting* all my vices! drinking, smoking, cheating."
"So you're going to give up cheating on me." *(Hart, n.d.)*

The quitting of vices is not something whose realization can be viewed as completely predetermined.

A clear case of an event which is only partially planned arises in the following example:

It is noted in Lagos with regret that despite additional inducements offered to British civil servants to stay on in Nigeria, more of them *are resigning* on Independence Day than did in Ghana. *(Visser 1973:1950)*

The very notion of the verb involves one person offering his resignation and another accepting it. Since only the first part of this procedure is evoked in the context, the progressive is required. However if a situation were imagined where the resignation as a whole is arranged ahead of time through some agreement, then the perfective would be quite possible:

On Independence Day the governor *resigns* and the new president takes up his functions.

In some cases, a lack of programming is implied by some element other than the lexeme of the verb. Thus in:

Christ Church Cathedral *is holding* a festival – a gala open house – next Saturday from 9.20 a.m. to 5 p.m. *(T.G. 22.09.79:13)*

the notion of 'holding a festival' involves many elements other than determining a time, and one gets the impression that these are being organized. However, had the sentence read *holding its festival*, the suggestion of an annual event would bring with it the assurance that things are going according to plan and thus permit the use of the simple form. On the other hand, in:

We *hold* a tourney here tomorrow morning *(Reference lost)*

one gets the impression that the event is viewed from the point of view of the scheduled use of the facilities rather than that of organizing the tourney.

A sentence like *I go to Australia in about a fortnight* would be a common example of a scheduled event, and yet the simple form would not be possible in the following context:

> Well, I've been getting gradually disillusioned with my profession in this country. In fact, I'm giving up my practice here and I'*m going* to Australia in about a fortnight. *(Christie 1976:80)*

It would appear that the going to Australia can be seen as only partially planned because it is dependent on the prior giving up of the practice, which is represented as incomplete. (The ambiguity of examples like *am giving* here – it could be understood as a 'future' or a 'present' use – will be discussed below.)

Something similar is suggested in an example already cited:

> The board of directors *is meeting* tomorrow for a quick consultation.

As mentioned above, a secretary calling directors to inform them of the unexpected meeting might well use this form because she sees the arrangements as far from complete.

Even in these cases, where an expression of specific future time indicates that the planning has actually got beyond the stage of mere intentions, there are a number of examples where the expressive effect is simply the intent of the subject. An example of this is:

> Aubrey, well, she's going to town, Cayley says here, and his visit is at an end. He's *coming* over this morning to call on you. *(Fries 1956:131)*

Any other arrangements are simply ignored here. Although grammatically possible, the simple form here would be quite out of context, suggesting something like a doctor's pre-arranged visit. This comes out even more clearly in the following:

> The NHL takes its annual all-star game into Washington for the first time ever Tuesday night, and even President Reagan *is getting* into the act. *(T.J. 6.02.82:23)*

Granted the situation, the other arrangements had certainly been made at the time of writing but the journalist wishes to bring out the subject's willing involvement in the event. Indeed, the simple form (*gets*) would not be impossible here but it would emphasize the organisers' part in scheduling the proceedings – a very different expressive effect.

Likewise, in each of the following the event is presented as dependent on the will of the subject, regardless of any further arrangements:

> Tomorrow I'*m bringing* my teacher a birthday card. *(Schultz 1964)*
>
> On Valentine's Day, many wives *are giving* their husbands ties with "taken" written on the silk. *(P.I. 21.11.77:38)*
>
> I'm happy to report that next year, for the first time, we *are doing* something about the problem! We'*re following* the lead of cigarette manufacturers! *M.M.#34080:23)*

There are also cases which do not bring out the intention of the subject:

> By the way, you'*re coming* with us in the VW and Christie can go in the Fiat with Mary. *(Wekker 1976:109)*

Here the sentence informs of arrangements that have been made. Although these arrangements imply the intention of someone else, it is the planning which is attributed to the subject, with, perhaps, an appeal for the subject's adhesion to the plan (cf. '. . . if you don't mind'). Leech (1971:58) brings out this distinction quite clearly:

> An intention is part of one's present state of mind, while an arrangement is something already predetermined in the past, regardless of how the speaker feels now.

Thus the sentence:

> I'*m taking Mary out for dinner* . . . could conceivably be uttered with some reluctance by someone who now regrets the arrangement – and it could very readily be used as an excuse: *I'm sorry, I'd like to have a game of billiards with you, but I'm taking Mary out to dinner.*

A good illustration of Leech's point is provided by the following passage where the speaker/subject is concerned with recalling an arrangement already made:

> I'm quite sure I'*m lunching* with someone very important today, and I can't remember who it was or where the luncheon was to be. Only, of course, it may be tomorrow. If so, I'*m lunching* with someone else quite different. Oh, dear. *(Christie 1970:52)*

Although this is not, strictly speaking, a case of intention of the subject, one should keep in mind Wekker's observation (1976:109): 'the subject is in some way involved in the planning, in the sense that he agrees with the arrangement or acquiesces in it'. The following example also evokes the arrangements as under way:

"Oh no," the child replied and her eyes lit up with happy anticipation of a rare treat, "we *aren't having* turkey, we *are having* sausages." *(Scheurweghs 1959:320)*

Although infrequent, such examples are valuable since they show that 'intention of the subject' is merely an expressive effect in discourse, not the underlying meaning of the progressive here. By the same token, one cannot, strictly speaking, take 'present arrangement or plan' for the underlying meaning either, as Leech seems to (1971:57) suggest, if only because we sometimes find intention expressed when no arrangements have been made:

When I grow up, I'*m joining* the police force. *(Leech 1971:58)*

Whether the main impression be one of intention of the subject or of present arrangements, both are prior conditions and so part of the predetermination phase of the event. When this phase is seen as incomplete the progressive is used.

As might be expected, there are a few examples which might be classified either in this group or as a 'programmed' event:

"She's *staying* here tonight," said Boyd Carrington. *(Christie 1976:151)*

This simply emphasizes the fact that the impressions involved here, far from providing water-tight categories, shade off into one another by imperceptible degrees. In the main, however, there is a clear distinction between uses that reflect partial predetermination and those reflecting nearly total predetermination. Because these two uses account for almost all the uses of the progressive in the corpus, it would be easy to overlook the occasional example whose expressive effect sets it off from both. It is time to turn to these.

Decision

"That is the fever, darling. Listen, I'*m coming* up to you! I'*m leaving* now, at once. No don't protest."
"All right, I'm glad you'*re coming*, Mark. I dare say – I'm not so brave as I thought." *(Christie 1969:159)*

The first progressive in this passage certainly does not evoke a 'programmed' event, nor does it suggest 'intention' in the way examples in the preceding section do. The whole point here is that the subject decides at that very instant; he conceives the intention and expresses it immediately. That is to say, the verb evokes the

first instant of the predetermination phase. This is to be contrasted with the third progressive, an ordinary 'intention' use which might be paraphrased 'I'm glad you are intending to come', a paraphrase which would not fit the first verb. As for *I'm leaving*, it could be taken as evoking either a 'decision' nuance or 'intention' (in which case it would simply make explicit what is involved in the prior decision to 'come up to you').

A similar situation occurs in the following passage, where Martin decides to leave the space-ship rather than return to Earth:

> "I overlook your petty insubordination."
> "I don't overlook your petty tyranny," replied Martin. "I'*m stepping* out. I'*m staying* here."
> "You can't do that!"
> "Try and stop me." *(Bradbury 1969:47)*

The suggestion of a sudden decision to step out is the result of the progressive situating the subject at the very beginning of the preparation phase where the intention itself comes into being. *I'm staying here*, on the other hand, spoken a moment later, implies an already established intention.

Here, then, one gets the impression that the initiation of the predetermination phase is evoked. Although he does not follow it up, Dowty (1977:66–7) makes exactly this point with regard to the notion of decision when he speaks of a psychological tendency of humans to extend

> the temporal 'duration' of an accomplishment (in Vendler's sense) backward in time to include the preparations for the accomplishment proper, i.e. the direct bringing about of a result. At its extreme, this 'temporal extension' will go all the way back to the agent's decision (if there is an agent) to attempt to bring about the result. Thus, there is a certain sense in which the composition of a symphony 'begins' with the composer's decision to undertake the project.

The following two examples further illustrate this point:

> Oh, no you don't. You'*re not playing* with that! *(Schultz 1964)*
>
> That yew'*s coming* down. It shades the windows, and it's coming down now – right away. *(Buyssens 1968:232)*

An ambiguous example like the following is probably to be included here as evoking the 'decision on the spur of the moment' sense:

> I'*m closing* this hotel as soon as I can – tomorrow if it's possible. *(Buyssens 1968:232)*

It might, however, be taken in the sense of 'I'm intending to close'. This very ambiguity, which could only be cleared up by consulting a wider context, gives a clear illustration of the difference between the two senses. The following example is similar:

I'*m* not *staying* here to be insulted. *(Visser 1973:1951)*

And the next example could be interpreted in any of the three expressive effects discussed here – 'decision', 'intention', or 'programmed event':

I'*m taking* the midnight train to Moncton. *(Conversation)*

Without more context, one cannot know how much of the preparation phase the speaker actually represented as realized.

In most of the examples of this use there is no temporal specification and so, the predetermination phase being incomplete, only the progressive can be used. However, one can imagine a sentence like:

That settles it! We'*re leaving* tomorrow

where the decision involves both the fact of leaving and the time. Here, the simple form might be used:

That settles it. We *leave* tomorrow.

There is a slight difference of expressive nuance between the two, the latter having a more definitive, perhaps more authoritative note because the decision is represented as completely predetermining the actualization of the event, whereas a less categorical note is felt in the former because the decision is represented as only part of the predetermination phase.

Problem Cases

Among the examples whose interpretation remains questionable, there is one case of ambiguity between 'present' and 'future' interpretations where no adverb is involved:

. . . but after going through $300,000 and facing 34 charges of fraud, Rev. Pius Emmanuel Finnin finally *is going* to jail. *(M.T. 4.11.81:2)*

Nothing in the context helps the reader to determine which interpretation the writer had in mind.

Several examples, which at first sight appeared to evoke a 'future' event, were finally considered as ordinary 'present' uses:

> I *am having* some roses planted here. *(Krusinga and Erades 1953:258)*

Although it evokes the preparation phase of the planting, *am having* has a 'causative' sense and so depicts its own event as being actualized at the moment of speaking. In the following, *is starting* (= 'is organizing') can probably be treated in the same way:

> The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism *is starting* a series of lectures to be given Wednesday evenings starting Oct. 10. *(T.G. 6.10.79:33)*

Indeed, the very fact that *starting* is repeated suggests that the writer has the 'organizing' sense in mind in the first case, and the 'future actualization' sense in the second.

Also to be excluded from examples of 'future' use in spite of first appearances is the following:

> Next time you'*re heading* for Los Angeles or San Francisco, call your travel agent or American Airlines. *(T.G. 25.09.79:11)*

Like *if* and *when* clauses, *next time* here evokes the event's possibility, but does not designate a place in time as a prior condition fulfilled at the moment of speaking. For this reason, it is found with verbs like *to rain*, not found in the 'future' use.

Finally, a case of the 'future' use which is particularly difficult to classify:

> To tell you the truth, I haven't made any plans for the future. I don't know what I'*m doing* tomorrow. *(Radio interview)*

Although the speaker denies the existence of any preparation, he does take for granted that he will be doing something. It is as though the idea that 'life goes on' provides a minimal condition in the present to permit the use of the progressive to evoke a future event.

This completes our examination of examples in the progressive. Since it has permitted us to account for the various expressive effects found in the data, it was felt to provide support for the 'imperfective' hypothesis. It remains to examine certain questions concerning constraints on usage.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE 'FUTURE' USE

Grammarians have raised three questions concerning restrictions on usage. The first has been evoked by Erades (1975:5–6) as follows: 'Why can we not say: *I write you a letter tomorrow . . . *I light a cigar when the ladies have left?' In view of our foregoing analysis, the reason appears to be that these are not events which are normally scheduled. On the other hand, they may be the object of an intention and so the progressive would not be impossible in either case. Similarly, **It rains tomorrow* would not be acceptable because it would be hard to imagine a situation where rain is seen as inevitable – hard but not impossible as was pointed out in a former study (Hirtle 1967:42 n.). Indeed, one could imagine situations – involving scheduled events – where both of Erades' examples would be acceptable. Again it seems clear that only when the necessary and sufficient conditions for an event's realization are felt to exist can the simple form be used. Furthermore, it is significant that 'there appears to be no such limitation on the type of verb used in subordinate clauses' according to Wekker (1976:77), a clear indication that a very different use is found in conditional and temporal clauses (cf. Hirtle 1980).

This leads us to a second question: although rain cannot normally be seen as inevitable, why can it not be seen as partially preconditioned? Why is **It is raining tomorrow* unacceptable? This is to be linked with Wekker's remark (1976:103) that 'the progressive construction can only be used to refer to future events or actions which can be planned by a human being'. Thus, our question becomes more general: why is an 'imperfective' view of the prior conditions compatible only where human agency is involved? That is, why, as Leech remarks (1971:59), would we not say:

*The sun is rising at 5 o'clock tomorrow.

The reason for this must be in the impressions associated with the type of programming involved. It may be that human programming, even when practically complete, is often felt to be open to change and development, and so is often seen as not quite completely predetermined and perhaps never will be. On the other

hand, foreseeable cosmic events like the sun rising give the impression of an inexorable chain of cause and effect which cannot not occur and so can be seen only as completely predetermined no matter what link in the chain is evoked. In any case, usage here as elsewhere is certainly the outcome of confronting the two forms and their underlying meanings with the individual experience to be represented and expressed.

The third question concerns the fact that few verbs expressing a state-like event are found in the 'future' use. In fact *to be* is the only one mentioned in the grammars, as in the following:

> There *is* a solar eclipse next week. *(Close 1959:57)*
>
> I *am* busy all day tomorrow. *(Wekker 1976:86)*

which suggest 'inevitable' and 'scheduled' events respectively. Only one example of another verb expressing a 'future stative' event has come to hand:

> Sports commentators will be exceptionally busy this week, for Monday *sees* the opening of the Wimbledon Tennis Championship and on Thursday the Second Test Match begins at Lord's. *(Buyssens 1968:231)*

The sense of *see* here is something like 'is the (temporal) setting for' (cf. *OED*, *s.v.* 10e). Why are verbs like *to know* and *to seem* which commonly express 'stative' events not found in the 'future' use?

The reason appears to be that once all the conditioning factors ensuring the existence of the state of knowing or seeming have been actualized, the state itself exists *ipso facto*. That is to say, for such stative events it is hard to imagine a normal situation where they would be completely predetermined some time prior to their coming into existence: for example, once the process of discovering or learning something is complete, knowing is the immediate result. On the other hand, as in the above examples, one can schedule well ahead of time the setting for some happening or the activities which will make a person busy, just as one can see well in advance the conditions determining an inevitable solar event.

At first sight, a typical sentence like:

> I *have* an appointment with the dentist tomorrow.

appears to provide another such example. However, *have* here

denotes rather present possession; it is the notion of *appointment* which implies a view of the future. Similarly, in the following the subject already has his message in mind:

> Tonight L.F. *has* something to say about a second chance. Hear him in person at 7:30 at the Moncton Colliseum. *(M.T. 24.09.81:19)*

It is the saying which is foreseen. The next example, however, is ambiguous:

> I *have* a game of D. and D. tomorrow night with Steve and Carl. *(Conversation)*

If the intended sense is 'I have on my schedule', suggesting the actuality of a present commitment, this is not a 'future' use. On the other hand, if the speaker thought *have* in the 'dynamic' sense of 'play', then it is a 'scheduled' event, and the progressive would also be possible.

The dynamic/stative opposition also helps to clarify a minor point of usage concerning adverbs like *this afternoon, today* and *this week*, which can be understood as evoking either the present or a future moment. Thus, without more context a sentence like the following could be understood as either an 'action going on at the moment of speaking' use or a 'programmed event' use of the progressive:

> Manitobans *are casting* their ballots today in a provincial general election.

It would depend on whether the speaker is envisaging the casting of ballots in its actualization phase and *today* as including the moment of speech, or in its prior-condition phase and *today* as evoking a future moment.

On the other hand, the simple form here:

> Manitobans *cast* their ballots today in a provincial general election. *(M.T. 17.11.81:3)*

admits of only one interpretation, a scheduled event, since for the most part dynamic events cannot be represented as perfective within the narrow confines of the moment of speech (cf. Hirtle 1967:35 ff.). With most 'stative' events, the situation is just the opposite since a state is seen as perfective in an instant. Thus a sentence like:

> He *seems* quite busy this afternoon.

can have only a 'present state' interpretation. The verb *to be* can, as we saw above, evoke a future event and so would give rise to an ambiguous sentence here:

He *is* quite busy this afternoon.

Although unimportant in themselves, such details of usage do throw light on the meanings involved here.

Conclusion

Outside of the relatively few problem cases already mentioned, all the examples collected clearly express 'present predetermination', that is, the existence at the moment of speaking of conditions governing the subsequent realization of the event. When the necessary and sufficient conditions of the event are seen to exist the speaker uses the simple form to express 'complete predetermination', as Wekker points out. When the prior conditions are felt to be only partially actualized, the progressive is used to express 'incomplete predetermination'. The different expressive effects and syntactic constraints observed in the data lend weight to this interpretation, which in turn provides further confirmation of the general thesis that the simple form is always called on to evoke an impression of something 'perfective', the progressive something 'imperfective'.

This view of the 'future' use throws an interesting light on the manner in which the lexeme of many verbs can be represented – as a potential rather than an actual realization. Another avenue of reflection suggested by this study is the relation between verb and subject: when seen as completely predetermining the event's realization the subject would appear to have more control over the event than when predetermination is seen as incomplete. A distinction of this nature is curiously reminiscent of the system of voice and should perhaps be explored in this light.

Of more immediate interest to us here, however, is the type of explanation on which this study is based. Unlike rule-based analyses, usage here has been justified in terms of meaning: the form observed in any sentence is there because of the meaning it brings to the verb and so to the sentence. That is, the expressive effect of

a sentence can be explained only in terms of the underlying, potential meaning of the forms involved. Implicit in this approach is the claim that each of the forms constituting our language exists as a subconscious potential ready to be actualized when the speaker undertakes an act of language (cf. Guillaume 1984:79–99), a claim which entails viewing language not as rule-governed behaviour but as meaning-motivated activity. In fact it is only on this basis that language usage can be made understandable and language users can be understood.

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