

ness, as in (2). The common thread I draw between the temporal and spatial forms is as follows: like the spatial intervals introduced by their spatial counterparts, proximate futures in English and Turkish introduce a temporal interval whose boundaries are restricted to be close in time to the reference time (RT) from tense.

- (2) a. Glass was scattered **about** the room.
 b. Zarf masa-nın **üzerinde**-ydi
 envelope table-GEN **on**-PST
 ‘The envelope was on the table.’

A formal analysis of proximate futures is given in Section 4. I argue that the temporal interval introduced by proximate futures serves as its own RT and is thus a parallel of the perfect time span (PTS) (McCoard 1978, Dowty 1979, Iatridou et al. 2001). Rather than stretching into the past, however, proximate futures “extend the now” into the future. In this way, the analysis I put forth positions proximate futures as a mirror of the “hot news” perfect (McCawley 1971), as in (3).

- (3) The *Mona Lisa* has (just) been stolen!

Therefore, under the current proposal, proximate futures and “hot news” perfects are similar in that they come with an additional restriction of proximity to the RT from tense. However, they differ in their directionality, with “hot news” perfects situating eventualities in the recent past and proximate futures in the near future.² In Section 5, I discuss the status of proximate futures as (non-)modal operators. Section 6 concludes.

2. Temporal properties of proximate futures in English and Turkish

Proximate futures in English and Turkish are realized via an infinitival form of a verb appearing beneath the morpheme *about* or *üzere*, respectively. In English (4a), this verb can either be aspectually bare or marked with progressive morphology. In Turkish (4b), imperfective marking is unavailable under *üzere*.

- (4) a. Daphne **is about to** sit/be sitting.
 b. Defne {otur-mak} / {#otur-uyor ol-mak} **üzere**
 Defne {sit-INF} / {sit-IMPF be-INF} PROX
 ‘Defne **is about to** sit.’

As previously stated, these proximate futures require the upcoming eventuality to hold at a future time that is close to the RT from tense. What counts as temporally close is context-dependent (Hill 2025). For instance, in (5), a six year time interval is sufficiently close across a timeline of historical events to render *be about to* felicitous.

²I note that despite their temporal likeness, proximate futures differ from “hot news” perfects in that they lack an added pragmatic component of the eventuality being noteworthy (e.g., Portner 2003).

- (5) When the American Revolution ended in 1783, France **was about to** undergo their own revolution, which began in 1789.

Beyond temporal closeness, proximate futures in English and Turkish share several semantic properties that differentiate them from other future expressions. In Section 2.1, I show that both English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere* are infelicitous if the described eventuality has already begun. I argue that this is the source of other behaviors of *be about to / üzere*, such as their unacceptability with subjective and objective individual-level predicates (ILPs). In Section 2.2, I then argue that proximate futures are a type of high aspect, as has been claimed for the perfect and prospective aspects.

2.1 The start of the eventuality

Like English *be about to* (Hill 2025), the felicity of Turkish *üzere* requires the eventuality in question to have not started yet, as seen via (6). Under the context in (6), the proximate futures can only be used if the speaker has not yet begun working. In contrast, WOLL, *be going to*, and *-AcAK* are all acceptable. In English, where contrastive aspectual morphology is possible under *be about to*, this judgment holds both when the infinitival form is an aspectually bare infinitive (6a) and when it is marked with the progressive *-ing* (6b).

- (6) *Context: It's almost noon, and you've been tirelessly working at your desk all day. You plan to continue doing so throughout the afternoon. Your colleague asks what you'll do when it hits 12PM.*
- a. I will/am going to/**#am about to** work.
- b. I will/am going to/**#am about to** be working.
- c. (Ben) {çalış-acağ-ım} / {**#çalış-mak üzere-yim**}
1.SG {work-FUT-1.SG} / {work-INF PROX-1.SG}
'I will/**#am about to** work.'

I will argue that this requirement for a 'not-yet-started' eventuality is also the source of infelicity in two other environments where proximate futures are unacceptable: (i) predicates of personal taste (PPTs), and (ii) objective ILPs (see Hill 2025). Starting with PPTs, speakers of English and Turkish vary in whether they accept such subjective predicates under proximate futures, as in (7), with many judging them as outright infelicitous.

- (7) a. The bread will/is going to/**%is about to** be tasty.
- b. Ekmek lezzetli {ol-acak} / {**%ol-mak üzere**}
bread tasty {be-FUT} / {be-INF PROX}
'The bread will/**%is about to** be tasty.'

For speakers that do allow PPTs under proximate futures, it is necessary for the sentence to be uttered in a context where a future change of state is expected. In (7), this could be a scenario in which a new ingredient will be added to the bread dough to improve its taste.

Other future expressions like *WOLL / be going to / -AcAk* are not only acceptable with PPTs, but additionally obviate the PPTs' acquaintance inference (e.g., Pearson 2013, Klecha 2014, Ninan 2014, Anand and Korotkova 2018). This inference appears in non-modal environments (e.g., with the 'simple' present), where hearers infer that the speaker has first-hand knowledge of the described object (8a, 8b). Under the futures in (8c, 8d), though, such an inference no longer arises.

- (8) *Context: Your friend just gave you a loaf of bread. You've never tried their baking before, but you're confident the bread will taste delicious when you try it.*
- | | |
|---|--|
| a. #This bread is tasty. | c. This bread will/is going to be tasty. |
| b. #Bu ekmek lezzetli \emptyset
DEM bread tasty be.PRS
Intended: 'This bread is tasty.' | d. Bu ekmek lezzetli ol-acak
DEM bread tasty be-FUT
'This bread will be tasty.' |

Because other modal expressions (e.g., English *must*) are likewise known to obviate the acquaintance inference, examples like (8) have been used to argue in favor of a modal analysis of the future, as opposed to a purely temporal alternative (Klecha 2014). Recall, though, that proximate futures are infelicitous with PPTs (see 7). If modal operators are predicted to uniformly act as obviators, then the behavior of proximate futures in (7) is perhaps unexpected. For this reason, the infelicity of English *be about to* with PPTs has been taken as evidence that *be about to* is non-modal (Hill 2025).

However, I point out that (non-)modality alone cannot capture this pattern: if the source of the infelicity in (7) were the non-modality of *be about to*, PPTs would still be expected to be felicitous, but would instead generate an acquaintance inference, similar to the simple present sentences in (3, 2). Given that this prediction is not borne out, the infelicity of PPTs with proximate futures must have a separate source.

What leads to their infelicity, then? I note that complex PPTs in English, which have been argued to be stage-level (S-level) rather than I-level (Pearson 2022), are not degraded under *be about to* (9). Further, as with other future expressions, the acquaintance inference is obviated with *be about to* in (9a), as indicated by the felicity of the continuation. I propose that due to proximate futures' requirement that the eventuality cannot have started yet, ILPs are rendered infelicitous by virtue of their denoting permanent properties (e.g., Carlson 1977). Because these properties are permanent, they therefore must hold at the RT from tense if the object being described exists, which is incompatible with the 'not-yet-started' requirement of proximate futures.

- (9) a. Her tattoo **is about to** look beautiful, but she hasn't gotten it yet.
b. %Her tattoo **is about to** be beautiful, but she hasn't gotten it yet.

Beyond PPTs, proximate futures are also infelicitous with objective ILPs (10). Like the PPT examples in (7), the ILPs in (10) are only accepted under proximate futures when they are accommodated as S-level (see Hill 2025). Like their subjective counterparts, I trace the infelicity of objective ILPs to their violating the ‘not-yet-started’ requirement: ILPs describe permanent properties and must therefore hold of the object at the RT from tense.

- (10) a. The bread will/is going to/%is **about to** be organic.
 b. Ekmek organik {ol-acak} / {%**ol-mak üzere**}
 bread organic {be-FUT} / {be-INF PROX}
 ‘The bread will/%is **about to** be organic.’

2.2 Future shifting as high aspect

In recent work on the semantics of the future, its temporal contribution has been traced to the prospective aspect, a type of high aspect (e.g., Mucha 2016, Pancheva and Zubizarreta 2023). While viewpoint aspect relates an RT to the time of the eventuality (e.g., Klein 1994), high aspect instead relates an RT to another RT. This can be seen via the semantics for PROSP in (11). (11) introduces a time t' which temporally succeeds a reference time t that is supplied by tense.

$$(11) \quad \llbracket \text{PROSP} \rrbracket = \lambda p. \lambda t. \lambda w. \exists t' [t < t' \ \& \ p(t')(w)]$$

Even though the prospective in (11) and the perfect are both high aspects, PROSP does not specify any information about the boundaries of t' . This differs from XN-theoretic analyses of the perfect (12), whereby the right boundary of the PTS is specified as the RT from tense (e.g., McCoard 1978, Dowty 1979, Iatridou et al. 2001, Pancheva 2003). Put differently, while (11) imposes temporal succession between t and a non-overlapping t' , (12) requires overlap between t and t' , by virtue of t' being the final subinterval of t .

- (12) a. XN(t, t') =: t is the final subinterval of t'
 b. $\llbracket \text{PERF} \rrbracket^{\text{g.c}} = \lambda p. \lambda t. \exists t' [\text{XN}(t, t') \ \& \ p(t')]$

With this background in mind, I will now motivate a treatment of proximate futures as a high aspect, like the prospective / perfect. In Section 2.2.1, I demonstrate that for both the perfect aspect and (proximate) future expressions, certain adverbials (e.g., *for*-adverbials) are ambiguous with regard to the syntactic height at which they attach, resulting in interpretive differences. In Section 2.2.2, I then show that in English, where imperfective and perfective morphology are both available under proximate futures and the perfect, different readings may arise (e.g., universal, existential, etc.).

From these findings, I propose that the left boundary (LB) of the time span introduced by proximate futures is specified as the RT from tense. In this way, the current account combines insights from prior work on the semantics of the prospective and XN-theoretic analyses of the perfect, treating proximate futures as “extending the now” into the future.

2.2.1 Eventuality-level versus high aspect-level adverbials

A semantic ambiguity obtains with the perfect aspect based on where certain adverbials (e.g., *for*-adverbials) attach, either being perfect-level or eventuality-level (e.g., Dowty 1979, Iatridou et al. 2001). The structure associated with a perfect-level reading of the *for*-adverbial in (13a) is given in (13b). Under this reading, it is the PTS that spans five years, rather than the eventuality. Stated more concretely, the PTS is an interval spanning from 5 years ago until now, and throughout the PTS, Maggie lives in California.

- (13) a. Maggie has lived in California for five years.
 b. [TP PRS [PerfP PERF *for five years* [AspP IMPF [vP Maggie live in California]]]]
 c. [TP PRS [PerfP PERF [AspP PRFV [vP Maggie live in California *for five years*]]]]

For the eventuality-level structure in (13c), the *for*-adverbial modifies the duration of the eventuality itself. In this case, the PTS is an interval spanning from a past time until now, and within the PTS, there is a 5-year-long eventuality of Maggie living in California.

Proximate futures show a similar ambiguity between eventuality-level and high aspect-level readings. In (14-15), the *for*-adverbial can either modify a time interval introduced by the proximate future (henceforth FTS, or future time span) or the time of the relevant eventuality. The examples in (14) show the *for*-adverbial attaching at the level of high aspect. In this case, the *for*-adverbial modifies the FTS such that it spans five minutes.

- (14) *Context: Ali was holding in his laughter for 5 minutes. Suddenly, he remembered something depressing, and his mood soured.*
 a. Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.
 b. Ali beş dakika boyunca gül-mek **üzere-ydi**
 Ali five minute throughout laugh-INF PROX-PST
 ‘Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.’

(15) instead shows an eventuality-level interpretation of the *for*-adverbial with a proximate future. The duration of the impending eventuality, rather than the FTS, is five minutes.

- (15) *Context: You are a clairvoyant comedian and know how long people will laugh at your jokes. You almost told Ali a joke that would’ve made him laugh for 5 minutes, but you were suddenly interrupted.*
 a. Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.
 b. Ali beş dakika boyunca gül-mek **üzere-ydi**
 Ali five minute throughout laugh-INF PROX-PST
 ‘Ali **was about to** laugh for five minutes.’

The adverbial data presented above supports a characterization of proximate futures as a type of high aspect because it reveals that in addition to the time of the eventuality, prox-

imate futures must introduce a separate temporal interval for the *for*-adverbial to modify. Otherwise, the described ambiguity would not be predicted to arise.

2.2.2 Universal and existential readings across high aspects

It is also well-known that the perfect can give rise to different readings, modulated by temporal adverbials and viewpoint aspect (e.g., Iatridou et al. 2001, Pancheva 2003). A universal (U) reading of the perfect entails that the eventuality holds at the RT introduced by tense. In (16a), an imperfective aspect (plus an *ever since*-adverbial) results in a U-perfect, shown by the infelicity of a continuation expressing that the eventuality has ended.

Experiential (E) readings of the perfect, on the other hand, do not entail that the eventuality holds at the RT introduced by tense, unlike their universal counterparts. This is illustrated in (16b), where a perfective viewpoint aspect results in an E-perfect.³

- (16) a. It has been raining ever since 5PM, #but it isn't anymore. (Universal)
b. It has rained since 5PM, but it isn't anymore. (Experiential)

I propose that in English, where both imperfective and perfective marking are available under (proximate) future expressions, a similar difference in readings can emerge. Under WOLL, imperfective versus perfective marking can result in different entailments about whether the eventuality holds at the RT from tense (17), utilizing an *until*-adverbial as a mirror of *since* (Iatridou and Zeijlstra 2021).⁴

- (17) A: *What is the weather forecast for today?*
a. B: **It'll be raining** until 5PM, #but it isn't raining yet.
b. B: **It'll rain** until 5PM, but it isn't raining yet.

Can the observation from (17) be extended to proximate futures? As discussed in Section 2.1, proximate futures typically do not allow the eventuality to overlap with the RT, even with imperfective morphology (18a), due to their 'not-yet-started' requirement. Even under the perfect, the imperfective on its own doesn't always result in a U-perfect (e.g., Iatridou et al. 2001, Pancheva 2003), like in (18b), further complicating the distribution of readings.

- (18) a. **It is about to** be raining until 5pm, but it isn't raining yet.
b. It has been raining since Monday, but it finally stopped.

³Unlike *ever since*-adverbials, *since*-adverbials like in (16b) do not enforce a particular perfect reading (Iatridou et al. 2001).

⁴It is worth pointing out that whether the contrast in (17) arises is context-sensitive. In (i), for instance, the infelicity of B's response is remedied. This is because the LB of the interval introduced by *until*-adverbials is not inherited from tense, but is instead contextually-determined (Iatridou and Zeijlstra 2021): in (i), the time *tomorrow* is accessible from the context via A's question, serving as the LB for the until time span.

- (i) A: *What is the weather forecast for tomorrow?*
B: It'll be raining until 5PM, but it isn't raining yet.

Despite these complications, a similar contrast in entailments can still be seen with *be about to* in specific contexts that involve impending verification of the prejacent proposition.⁵ A context of this sort is given in (19), where the speaker possesses knowledge of Delilah’s sleeping habits. The speaker makes a prediction about Delilah’s sleep and expects this prediction to soon be confirmed, as signaled by “watch this”. When the speaker is confident that Delilah is asleep at the RT from tense, the imperfective is felicitous and the perfective is not (19), patterning like a U-perfect. In Section 4, I will discuss further the interaction between the ‘not-yet-started’ requirement of proximate futures and these contexts.

- (19) *Context: You are bringing your friend over to your apartment at 10pm. You know that every night, your roommate Delilah is already fast asleep well before this time. Right before entering the apartment, you make a prediction to your friend:*
 Watch this — Delilah’s **about to** {#sleep / be sleeping}.

When the speaker instead is confident that Delilah is not asleep at the RT from tense, the imperfective is infelicitous, and the perfective is rendered felicitous (20). Because the eventuality need not hold at the UT, (20) behaves similarly to an E-perfect.

- (20) *Context: You are bringing your friend over to your apartment at 10pm. You know that every night, your roommate Delilah goes to sleep just after this time. Right before entering the apartment, you make a prediction to your friend:*
 Watch this — Delilah’s **about to** {sleep / #be sleeping}.

Taken together, the “watch this” contexts support an analysis of proximate futures as high aspect by highlighting their interactions with viewpoint aspect. (19–20) suggest that the LB of the FTS introduced by proximate futures is given by tense, akin to the RB of a PTS.

3. An analogy between temporal and spatial proximity

Thus far, I have discussed the following temporal properties of proximate futures: they entail temporal closeness, impose a ‘not-yet-started’ requirement on the relevant eventuality, and behave similarly to a mirrored perfect aspect. I take these properties to be necessary phenomena for any semantic account of proximate futures to capture.

To shed light on the nature of these properties, I will make an analogy to *non*-temporal uses of the forms *about* and *üzere*. In addition to expressing proximity in time, these forms also appear as locative prepositions in other sentential contexts (see 2). Proximate future

⁵These “watch this” contexts also interact with the evidential restrictions of future expressions. Though English WOLL has been claimed to have an anti-abductive requirement (Winans 2016), in a “watch this” context where an abductive inference is triggered (ii), the infelicity of WOLL is seemingly ameliorated. In (ii), the smelling of paint leads to an inference about its cause, yet WOLL remains acceptable regardless.

- (ii) *Context: Your neighbor, Frida, often paints in her studio with the window open, producing a strong scent of paint. You and your friend smell paint nearby. Before looking inside Frida’s window, you say:*
 Watch this — Frida will/is going to/is about to {#paint / be painting}.

forms in other languages similarly lead spatial double lives: e.g., Spanish *a punto de* (lit., “at the point of”), Japanese *suru tokoro da* (lit., “be at the place of doing”), etc. A common semantic core between the prepositions in (2) is that both *about* and *üzerinde* “on” entail that the relevant objects are (spatially) close to the entity scoping beneath the preposition. To illustrate, a semantics for English *on*, an equivalent of Turkish *üzerinde*, is in (21).

$$(21) \quad \llbracket \text{on} \rrbracket = \lambda A. \lambda v. \text{EXT}(v, A) \ \& \ |v| < r_0$$

where r_0 is a small positive number s.t. $r_0 \approx 0$ (from Zwarts and Winter 2000)

Under a vector-based semantics for spatial reference (e.g., Zwarts and Winter 2000), spatial proximity for prepositions is encoded by restricting the length of the relevant vector. $\text{EXT}(v, A)$ denotes a vector v that extends outward from the boundary of a set of points A . $|v|$ (i.e., the length of v) is restricted by a contextually-dependent resource variable r , resulting in spatial closeness.

I draw an analogy between temporal and spatial proximity as follows: proximate futures introduce a future time interval whose boundaries are contextually restricted, resulting in temporal closeness. This is akin to their prepositional analogues, which restrict the boundaries of v to achieve spatial closeness. I will build on this observation when formalizing the semantics of PROX in Section 4.

This analogy establishes yet another parallel between proximate futures and the perfect aspect, as a similar comparison between times and space has been made for the perfect by Iatridou (2014). This is demonstrated by the data in (22). Both (22a) and (22b) introduce a (temporal or spatial) interval i and assert the absence of an object within i : either a seizure-having event, or a painting by Vermeer.

- (22) Adapted from Iatridou (2014):
- a. In the last five years, she hasn’t had a seizure.
 - b. In her living room, she doesn’t have a Vermeer.

I hypothesize that the relationship between the spatial and temporal uses of these forms is diachronic, wherein forms that denote spatial proximity can be recruited for temporal proximity during the process of grammaticalization. Note, however, that this isn’t the only possible diachronic trajectory for proximate futures: in languages like Jakartan Indonesian, proximate futures like *mau* don’t exhibit a relationship with a spatial form, but are instead ambiguous with a desiderative meaning like “want” (Tsilia 2025).

4. A formal analysis of proximate futures and their temporal meaning

In (23), I give my proposed semantics for the temporal meaning of PROX, setting aside discussion of their (non-)modality until Section 5. Under (23), proximate futures introduce a future time interval t (or, the FTS) whose LB is the RT from tense. This temporal relation mirrors the perfect in (12): rather than introducing a PTS that extends into the past from its right boundary, the FTS instead extends into the future. A contextual resource variable

r_{CLOSE} restricts the FTS such that it is proximal, similarly to (21). In other words, like the “hot news” perfect in (3), the FTS cannot extend far beyond the RT from tense.

- (23) a. $\text{LB}(t, t') =: t$ is the initial subinterval of t'
 b. $[\text{PROX}]^{\text{g:c}} = \lambda p. \lambda t'. \exists t'' [\text{LB}(t', t'') \ \& \ t'' \subset r_{\text{CLOSE}} \ \& \ p(t'')]$
 where r_{CLOSE} is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

To illustrate the current proposal, I will now walk through how this semantics derives the expected truth conditions for aspectually bare infinitives under proximate futures, followed by imperfective-marked infinitives. Referring back to (1), both the English and Turkish examples include a bare infinitive beneath a proximate future. Following Wurmbrand (2014), I treat the infinitive *to sit / oturmak* as perfective, the semantics of which are given in (24).⁶

- (24) $[\text{PRFV}]^{\text{g}} = \lambda P. \lambda t. \exists e [\tau(e) \subseteq t \ \& \ P(e)]$

The predicted truth conditions for (1) are given in (25). Under this account, the ‘not-yet-started’ requirement that is imposed by proximate futures stems from the containment relation expressed by PRFV. In other words, because $\tau(e)$ in (25) must fall within the interval t'' , it cannot have started at a time preceding it.

- (25) $[\text{Daphne is about to sit}]^{\text{g:c}} = \exists t' [t' = t_c \ \& \ \exists t'' [\text{LB}(t', t'') \ \& \ t'' \subset r_{\text{CLOSE}} \ \& \ \exists e [\tau(e) \subseteq t'' \ \& \ \text{sit}(e, \text{Daphne})]]]$
 where r_{CLOSE} is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

Now, let’s consider a case where the infinitive beneath the proximate future has imperfective morphology, as is possible for English *be about to* sentences like (26).

- (26) Delilah **is about to** be crying.

Under *be about to*, imperfective-marked infinitives also typically require the eventuality to have not yet started, like their perfective counterparts (see 6b). With this in mind, I treat infinitives with progressive morphology as having a “neutral” imperfective aspect, defined in (27).⁷ Originally proposed by Smith (1991), “neutral” imperfectives have been adopted for experiential readings of the perfect with statives and progressive-marked participles like in (18b) to account for why they do not entail that the eventuality holds at the RT from tense Pancheva (2003). The consequence of stipulating (27) under *be about to* is that, similarly, overlap between the LB of the interval introduced by PROX (i.e., the RT) and the eventuality is disallowed.

⁶Though I assume that the relevant examples in Turkish include the perfective, see Demirok and Sağ (2023) for an alternative view on Turkish’s aspectual system.

⁷While a “neutral” imperfective is not unproblematic (for an alternative to “neutral” aspects, see Altshuler 2014), the availability of experiential-like readings for imperfective-marked eventives and statives is a problem also faced by existing accounts of the perfect.

- (27) $\llbracket \text{IMPF}_{\text{NEUT}} \rrbracket^g = \lambda P. \lambda t. \exists e [t \cap \tau(e) \neq \emptyset \ \& \ P(e) \ \& \ \exists t' [t' \in t \ \& \ t' \notin \tau(e) \ \& \ \forall t'' [t'' \in \tau(e) \rightarrow t' < t'']]]$
 $\tau(e)$ overlaps with t , and there is an initial subinterval of t where $\tau(e)$ doesn't hold.

The relevant truth conditions are given in (28). For (28) to be rendered true, there must be an initial subinterval of the FTS in which Delilah is not crying. Per the semantics of PROX, the initial subinterval of the FTS is specified as the RT supplied by the present tense (namely, the UT). As a result, (28) entails that Delilah's crying has not started at the UT.

- (28) $\llbracket \text{Delilah is about to be crying} \rrbracket^{g,c} = \exists t' [t' = t_c \ \& \ \exists t'' [\text{LB}(t', t'') \ \& \ t'' \subset r_{\text{CLOSE}} \ \& \ \exists e [t'' \cap \tau(e) \neq \emptyset \ \& \ \text{cry}(e, \text{Delilah}) \ \& \ \exists t''' [t''' \in t'' \ \& \ t''' \notin \tau(e) \ \& \ \forall t'''' [t'''' \in \tau(e) \rightarrow t''' < t'''']]]]]$
 where r_{CLOSE} is a temporal interval whose duration is short within the context

I end this section with a comment on the “watch this” contexts from (19–20). While I do not pursue a detailed account of these cases in the current paper, one possible avenue to account for their universal-like readings would be to assume an ambiguity between $\text{IMPF}_{\text{NEUT}}$ and IMPF. A semantics for IMPF is provided in (29). IMPF below the proximate future would entail overlap between the RT and $\tau(e)$, predicting the distribution of viewpoint aspect morphology in (19–20). In fact, such an ambiguity between $\text{IMPF}_{\text{NEUT}}$ and IMPF has been claimed for imperfective eventives and statives under the perfect (Pancheva 2003).

- (29) $\llbracket \text{IMPF} \rrbracket^g = \lambda P. \lambda t. \exists e [t \subset \tau(e) \ \& \ P(e)]$

Yet, if an ambiguity between $\text{IMPF}_{\text{NEUT}}$ and IMPF is indeed present in these contexts, why do certain contexts lead to the availability of one interpretation versus the other for imperfective-marked verbs? I leave the task of answering this question to future work.

5. On the (non-)modality of proximate futures

Up until this point, I have set aside the (non-)modality of proximate futures and focused on their temporal semantic contribution. While their ability to obviate the acquaintance inference of complex PPTs (see 9) suggests modality, their behavior across other diagnostics is not uniform. In light of this, I discuss the (in)felicity of proximate futures under modal subordination, as well as their non-veridical uses (Klecha 2014, Hill 2025).

Modal subordination occurs when the domain of a modal is restricted anaphorically by a preceding modal operator (Roberts, 1989; 1996). English *WOLL* / *be going to* can both trigger modal subordination, only differing in whether they do so obligatorily (Klecha 2011, Matthewson et al. 2022). This has been taken as evidence that both are modal operators. Despite both English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere* expressing proximate futurity, they contrast in whether they trigger modal subordination. (30a) illustrates that in a context with the appropriate temporal configuration to license a proximate future, English *be about to* can trigger modal subordination (*pace* Hill 2025). This seems to indicate that it, too, is a modal operator, differing from the similar yet infelicitous *be on the verge/brink of* (30c).

Knick

- (30) *Context: Your friend's roommate, Eylül, is traveling today. Her flight is boarding soon, but neither of you know when she left for the airport. You have an in-depth geographical knowledge of the route she's taking.*

If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now...

- a. She's **about to** take an exit off the highway.
- b. #She took an exit off the highway.
- c. #She's **on the verge/brink of** taking an exit off the highway.

Unlike *be about to*, however, Turkish *üzere* is infelicitous in this context.⁸ To remedy (31a), it's necessary to include another modal element, like the epistemic *olmalı* "must be". Thus, while English *be about to* can trigger modal subordination, Turkish *üzere* cannot, patterning with elements like English *be on the verge/brink of* or the non-modal past tense *-di* (31b).

- (31) *Context: See (30).*

Eylül ev-den 30 dakika önce ayrıl-dı-ysa, neredeyse havaalanı-nda şu
Eylül home-ABL 30 minute ago leave-PST-COND almost airport-LOC this
an...
moment

'If Eylül left the house 30 minutes ago, then she's almost at the airport now...'

- a. #Otoyol'-dan çık-mak **üzere**.
highway-ABL exit-INF PROX
Intended: 'She's **about to** take an exit off the highway.'
- b. #Otoyol'-dan çık-tı.
highway-ABL exit-PST
Intended: 'She took an exit off the highway.'

In spite of (31), suggestive evidence that *be about to / üzere* are modal is the availability of non-veridical interpretations under the past (32). Such interpretations involve displacement, where evaluation is shifted away from the actual world. More specifically, in (32), PROX(ϕ) does not entail ϕ , as both *be about to / üzere* remain felicitous even when the laughing eventuality didn't occur. Similar displacement is shown by the past tense forms of futures like WOLL / *be going to* (Klecha 2014), as well as the imperfective paradox (Dowty 1979).

- (32) *Context: After hearing a funny joke, you almost let out a chuckle. However, you suddenly remembered something depressing, and you didn't end up laughing.*

- a. I **was about to** laugh.
- b. (Ben) gül-mek **üzere-ydi-m**
1.SG laugh-INF PROX-PST-1.SG
'I **was about to** laugh.'

⁸Despite marking (31a) with a #, one of the Turkish speakers consulted found this example acceptable. Therefore, it's possible that (31a) is available in some speakers' grammars.

Given (32), I believe that a modal analysis of both proximate future expressions is warranted. But why, then, is Turkish *üzere* unable to trigger modal subordination? Further research is necessary to determine why these expressions differ in their ability to license modal subordination, as well as whether that difference indexes a genuine contrast between a modal operator (*be about to*) vs. a non-modal, temporal operator (*üzere*).

6. Conclusion

The current proposal contributes to our understanding of the semantics of proximate futures by deriving shared temporal properties of English *be about to* and Turkish *üzere*, while also formally differentiating them from other futures like WOLL, *be going to*, and *-AcAk*. In this paper, I have motivated an analysis of proximate futures as a high aspect that, mirroring a “hot news” perfect, introduces an interval whose LB is the RT from tense and whose RB is restricted to the near future.

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