Perfect twice
Form and meanings of double-perfect constructions

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Several languages in Europe can use the analytical have-perfect in a recursive way that leads to so-called double perfects as in (1).

(1) Er hat sich versteckt g'het.
He has himself hidden.participle had.participle

Most prominently among the attested readings are one that equals the past perfect (2), as well as the "superperfect", glossed in (3), see Brandner, Salzmann & Schaden ((2013)2016).

(2) Talking about a reference time R before now, (1) reports that he hid at some time before R.

(3) At some earlier time he hid, but he is no longer hidden now (the resultant state of being-hidden no longer holds true)

The analysis was criticized in Brandner & Larson (forthc.) who challenge the proposed link between loss of the preterite forms and the rise of double perfects. They draw attention to the fact that the double perfect is only available in languages that have two auxiliaries (*be*, *have*) in the perfect, and consequently their analysis of the double perfect that ties it to the availability of two versions of auxiliaries hab_1, hab_2 which differ in meaning. However, Brandner & Larson fail to provide concise semantic entries for the putative auxiliaries as well as other semantic building blocks and a semantic analysis is thus still lacking. I propose that at certain language stages, the cluster [participle + *have*] can denote a function that maps sets of time intervals to sets of later intervals as follows:

(4) $\lambda P_{<\tau,t>}\ \lambda x.\ \exists t_1\ (\ P(t_1)\ \&\ t_1 < x\ )$

This interpretation of [participle + *have*] could be dubbed as a "very simple anterior operator". Unlike richer tense/aspect paradigms with distinct semantic content for *perfect* and *preterite*, the proposed operator leaves the position of reference time R underspecified. Yet, this loss of conciseness

is counterbalanced by the option to use [participle + *have*] in a recursive manner. The steps of my analysis are as follows: In a sentence with a single application of [participle + *have*], the time variable x is instantiated with the speech time S in a final step. The semantic representation remains unspecified as to the position of R. The operator can also be applied repeatedly (both output and input share the logical type $< \tau$,t>). The talk discusses how repeated applications get pragmatically enriched to a past perfect reading or a superperfect reading. The analysis also forces us to think about possible competing constructions (notably the simple [particple + *have*] construction) and the ensuing effects on the interpretation of double perfect sentences. This will shed new light on the different stages of grammaticalization of the double perfect that are reported in Brandner & Larson (forthc.).

Brandner, E., M. Salzmann and G. Schaden. (2013)2016. Zur Syntax und Semantik des Doppelperfekts aus alemannischer Sicht. In Alexandra Lenz & Franz Patocka (eds.), *Syntaktische Variation – areallinguistische Perspektiven*. Wien: Wien University Press. (Preversion avialable online in 2013). Larson, I. & Brandner, E. (forthc.). Tense recursion, perfect doubling and the grammaticalization of auxiliaries. In Barbara Egedi & Veronika Hegedus (eds.): *Functional heads across time: syntactic reanalysis and change*. Oxford: OUP.