
On the interpretation of proper temporal adverbs in Italian: the role of P and D

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Received: 15-03-21
Accepted: 30-09-21
Published: 22-02-22

How to cite: Ludovico Franco & Paolo Lorusso. 202x. On the interpretation of proper temporal adverbs in Italian: the role of P and D. RLLT17, eds. Ora Matushansky, Laurent Roussarie, Michela Russo, Elena Soare & Sophie Wauquier. Special issue of *Isogloss Open Journal of Romance Linguistics* 8(2)/19, 1-18.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/isogloss.136>

Abstract

In this paper, we will provide a N-to-D analysis able to account for the punctual *vs.* habitual reading of proper temporal names in Italian, focusing on names of days, which clearly signal a difference in their possible aspectual encoding at the morphosyntactic level. When these items appear as adverbials modifying an event:

- i) such event is interpreted as a habitual one if the temporal name is preceded by a definite determiner or an adpositional item;
- ii) it is interpreted as a punctual one if the temporal name is 'bare'.

Keywords: adposition, determiner, time adverb, proper name, aspect.

1. Introduction: the data

In Italian, we find a puzzling interpretive difference with a set of ‘proper’ temporal adverbials modifying verbal events, namely *days of the week* (e.g. *Lunedì*, Monday, *Martedì*, Tuesday, etc.). Consider the data provided in (1):

- (1) a. vado al cinema **di** lunedì = habitual reading
 I.go to.the cinema of Monday
 ‘I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays’
 b. vado al cinema **il** lunedì = habitual reading
 I.go to.the cinema the.sg Monday
 ‘I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays’
 c. vado al cinema lunedì = punctual reading
 I.go to.the cinema Monday
 ‘I go to the cinema next Monday’ (Italian)

Interpretively, according to our native judgements, (1a) and (1b) mean that the event is habitually iterated, namely it takes place on every temporal frame signalled by the proper temporal adverbial (*Monday*, in the present case). On the contrary, (1c) means that the event is punctual, namely it takes place only on a specific temporal target (here, next Monday). This split seems to be active in irrealis contexts only,¹ as illustrated in (2).

- (2) a. ??sono andato al cinema di lunedì

¹ This ‘split’ potentially motivates a realis/irrealis divide shaped by morphosyntax, as recently suggested by Manzini (2018). Actually, the realis/irrealis contrast has been claimed to pertain to the realm of modality (and indeed the habitual *vs.* punctual reading for proper temporals in Italian is available with imperatives, subjunctives, conditionals, etc.), but crucially include other areas that are not traditionally viewed as modal in nature (Mauri & Sansò 2012), such as, precisely, future (tense) or habitual (aspect) (cf. Bybee 1998). An anonymous reviewer wonders whether ‘past habitual’ sentences like the one in (i) can be actually considered as instances of irrealis mood.

- (i) a. Sono andato al cinema *il/di* lunedì per molti anni *habitual*
 b. ?*Sono andato al cinema lunedì per molti anni

We acknowledge that, with a temporal modifier like ‘per molti anni’ (*for many years*) providing a further time frame, in (ia) it is possible to have a habitual reading in the past triggered by the definite determiner *il* or by the adposition *di*. The habitual reading, as we have seen in (2a,b), is blocked without such an additional temporal frame of reference. Consider also the discussion around the examples in (10)-(12) in section 2. In these contexts, bare proper temporal items are impossible, as in (ib), given that they convey a punctual interpretation. As for the realis/irrealis issue, past habituals are a controversial matter in the literature. Payne (1997: 245) argues that, in the past: ‘habitual aspect clauses are less realis than perfective aspect clauses since habitual aspect describes an event type that is instantiated from time to time by actual events’. Past habitual meaning can also describe a lack of specificity of any single iteration or indicate the expression of an event without any clear-cut single realization (Elliott 2000, cf. also Lazard 1998). Other authors assume that past habituals would seem to associate with realis rather than irrealis (Bybee 1998, Cristofaro 2012). We leave a more comprehensive treatment of this topic for future works.

- I.was gone to.the cinema of Monday
 ‘I went to the cinema last Monday’ = punctual reading, if any
- b. ??sono andato al cinema il lunedì
 I.was gone to.the cinema the.sg Monday
 ‘I went to the cinema last Monday’ = punctual reading, if any
- c. sono andato al cinema lunedì
 I.was gone to.the cinema Monday
 ‘I went to the cinema last Monday’ = punctual reading
 (Italian)

To sum up, from an empirical point of view, we observe that in Italian when the temporal modifier is introduced by the (usually genitive) preposition *di* (of) (1a) or a definite determiner (1b), the event is interpreted as a habitual one, in a given timeframe, while when the proper temporal modifier is ‘bare’, the event is perceived as punctual, non-iterable (see (1c) and (2c)). In section 2 we describe the interaction of the proper temporal modifiers and the aspectual reading of the event structure of the VP. In section 3 we spell out the morphosyntactic analysis, while section 4 is devoted to the concluding remarks.

2. The aspectual behaviour of proper time adverbs

2.1 *Proper names for weekdays and their aspectual interpretation.*

We assume that the asymmetry in the aspectual interpretation of the event described is triggered by the peculiar behaviour of ‘proper’ temporal adverbs. Italian, in fact, allows for proper temporal adverbs to appear with no determiner to refer to a precise (punctual) temporal identification (3), contrary to common nouns which are preferentially found with determiners (Chierchia 1998).²

- (3) (*il) Lunedì 8 Marzo 2021 ha nevicato.
 the Monday 8 March 2021 has snowed.
 ‘On Monday the 8th of March 2021 it has snowed’
 (Italian)

The ‘proper’ status of temporal modifiers such as *days of the week* does not hold cross-linguistically. For example, in Spanish temporal modifiers referring to weekdays are common nouns (Fernandez, Leborans *apud* Bosque and Demonte, 1999):³ they are rarely found as bare nouns (4).

- (4) *(el) Lunes 8 de Marzo 2021 ha nevado.

² Remember that in Italian, bare arguments are commonly not allowed under the Nominal Mapping Parameter (Chierchia 1998). Note however that bare arguments are possible in Italian in a set of contexts, widely discussed in the theoretical literature. The interested reader may consider Delfitto and Schrotten (1991), Longobardi (2005), Delfitto (2002), among others.

³ Spanish, as Italian does not allow bare arguments under the Nominal Mapping Parameter (Chierchia 1998).

the Monday 8 of March 2021 has snowed.
 ‘On Monday the 8th of March 2021 it has snowed’
 (Spanish)

As for the use of the definite determiner with ‘proper’ weekdays to encode habitual reading, French (5) and Occitan (6) show the same pattern of Italian (1b).⁴

(5) Je vais au cinéma le lundi = habitual reading
 I go to.the cinema the.SG Monday
 ‘I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays’
 (French)

(6) Vau al cinèma lo diluns = habitual reading
 I.go to.the cinema the.SG Monday
 ‘I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays’
 (Occitan)

The use of the temporal modifier introduced by the (usually genitive) preposition *di* to express habitual reading (1a) seems not to be as widespread as the use of overt definite determiners to imply habitual reading across Romance.

As for the pattern found in (1), constructions involving the fronting of the temporal modifier in a topic position in the left periphery of the sentence seems to confirm a different aspectual interpretation for bare proper temporal modifiers and for the ones introduced by *di*/definite article. A temporal modifier simply narrows down the time at which the event described by the verbal complex took place. So, if we have a past punctual event (in the sentence we use the *passato remoto* tense which roughly identifies a punctual reading)⁵ the fronted ‘proper’ weekday has to be punctual. In (7) the bare temporal does not interact with the punctual interpretation encoded in the verbal inflectional morphology.

(7) Lunedì andai al mare
 Monday I.went to.the sea
 ‘Monday I went to the sea’ (Italian)

When the temporal modifier is introduced by the definite determiners (see 1b above) the sentence with the fronted temporal modifier is ungrammatical or semantically inappropriate (8a). However, the modification by an adposition or a

⁴ Sichel Bazin, p.c.

⁵ The Italian *Passato Remoto* is often described as having the aoristic aspect: that is, it expresses the eventuality as completely ended (Bertinetto 1986). He argues that aoristic tenses do not present in their semantics a reference moment R, contrary to perfective tenses such as the *Passato Prossimo* (I have read). While the *Passato Prossimo* can be used in temporal sentences (i.e. it allows reference to past and future) and in atemporal sentences (i.e. the omnitemporal value), the *Passato Remoto* necessarily expresses a relation of the eventuality’s anteriority with respect to the moment of speech S. Bertinetto (1986) and imposes a temporal and definite interpretation whereas the *Passato Prossimo* in example (25) allows an atemporal and indefinite interpretation.

relative clause forces the appearance of a definite determiner (8b) and makes the sentence grammatical.

- (8) a. */#Il lunedì andai al mare
The Monday I.went to.the sea
'Monday I went to the sea'
- b. *(Il) lunedì dopo/ in cui arrivasti andai al mare
The Monday after/in which you.arrived I.went to.the sea
'The Monday after/in which you arrived, I went to the sea'
(Italian)

If the fronted temporal modifier is introduced by the preposition *di* the sentence involving the punctual verb is always ungrammatical.

- (9) *Di Lunedì andai al mare
Of Monday I.went to.the sea
'Monday I went to the sea'

However, if the temporal modifier is not fronted, the two sentences (similarly to 1a and 1b) are not completely ruled out since the punctual meaning expressed within the VP is not restricted by temporal modifiers: in (10a) we interpret the temporal modifier as a recursive time (each Monday) within a time frame (i.e. *a month*) that contains (modifies) it, while (10b) presupposes a generic time before a punctual time (after or before a given moment, cf. also the discussion in fn. 1).

- (10) a. Andai al mare di lunedì durante quel mese
I.went to.the sea of Monday (during that month)
'Monday I went to the sea'
- b. Andai al mare il lunedì dopo la festa
I.went to.the sea the Monday after the party
'Monday I went to the sea'

2.2 Other temporal proper names.

In Italian, other time adverbs cannot be employed with definite determiners or preposition, independently of their realis or irrealis orientation, as illustrated in (11) and (12), respectively. Thus, they can convey only a punctual interpretation of the event, just like the 'bare' adverbials we have introduced in (1c).⁶

⁶ Cecilia Poletto (p.c.) noted the peculiar behaviour of the Italian adverb *indomani* (formed by the adposition 'in', *in* the adverb 'domani' *tomorrow*) roughly meaning 'the following day'. This adverb seems to consistently presuppose a generic time value attributed to a given (punctual event). Crucially it can appear only with the definite determiner *l'*, as shown in (i). Thus, it seems to behave just like the generic 'proper' time adverb depicted in (10b), for which see the analysis in section 3.2.

(i) Andai al cinema l'indomani/*indomani
'I went to the cinema the following day' (Italian)

- (11) sono andato al cinema ieri/*di ieri/*il ieri
I.am gone to.the cinema yesterday/of yesterday/the yesterday
'Yesterday I went to the cinema' (Italian)
- (12) vado al cinema oggi/*di oggi/*il oggi
I.go to.the cinema today/of today/the today
'Today I go to the cinema' (Italian)

Notice that some time adverbs employed in irrealis contexts allow the presence of an indefinite determiner, as shown in (13). Specifically, in (13b) the (canonical) punctual interpretation of the event in (13a) is lost and the interpretation is the one of an undefined time-span in the future, which is not linked to the proper lexical content expressed by the adverb. A similar effect is available also with names of days with an indefinite determiner (*verrò al cinema un lunedì* = I will come to the cinema in an undefined Monday in the future).⁷

- (13) a. andrò al cinema domani
I.will.go to.the cinema tomorrow
'Tomorrow I will go to the cinema'
- b. andrò al cinema un domani/*il domani
I.will.go to.the cinema a tomorrow/the tomorrow
'I'll go to the cinema an indefinite day in the future'
- (Italian)

Interestingly, other proper temporal names - when employed as adverbial items - cannot be encoded as 'bare' adverbs in Italian. Consider the case of names of months in (14). According to our native judgements, either the genitive preposition *di*, the locative preposition *in* or the dative preposition *a* are allowed in such contexts. No definite determiners can appear with names of months. Thus, a distinct punctual versus habitual interpretation is not possible on the basis on the morphosyntactic encoding provided by the different adpositions/determiners/bare temporal names involved in (14).⁸

- (14) a. Vado a Milano *Aprile/*l'Aprile/in Aprile/di Aprile/
I.go to Milan April/ the April/in April/of April/
ad Aprile
at April
'I will go to Milan next/in April' (Italian)

Things are not different with season names, as illustrated in (11).

- (15) Vado a Milano *primavera/*la primavera/di primavera/in

⁷ On the grammar of (fully) deictic/punctual time adverbs see Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria (2007).

⁸ Spanish differs with Italian with respect to weekdays (4) and season names, but names of months work like proper names as in Italian (see Fernandez, Leborans *apud* Bosque and Demonte, 1999, V1 pp. 114)

I.go to Milan spring/the spring/of spring/in
 primavera/a primavera
 spring/at spring
 ‘I go to Milan next/during the Spring’ (Italian)

The peculiar behaviour of proper temporal names has not passed unnoticed in the literature. Anderson (2003, 2007) claims that proper temporal names, or *calendrical names* (cf. Quirk & Greenbaum 1973) are hybrid, in the sense that they are deictically restricted names that can also be used as count nouns (see Anderson 2003: 367). The same ambiguity is observed by Langendonck (2007: 223). Consider the sentences in (16).

- (16) a. June is (usually) a hot month. (English)
 b. June was hot.

In (16a) we find what Langendonck labels a ‘recursive (cyclic, generic, habitual)’ interpretation of the month name June. In (16b) we have a non-recursive, hence more ‘prototypical’ deictic reading of this proper name.

This state of affair is clearly linked to the punctual vs. habitual (or bounded vs. unbounded) value that can be attributed to Italian proper temporal names based on the bare/P/D alternation we have illustrated above. As we will show in our analysis in some details, there must be a way to turn a proper name into a countable entity in order to obtain a habitual/iterative value for the event described by means of proper temporal adverbials.

In what follows we will provide an analysis able to account for the punctual vs. habitual reading of time names in Italian, focusing on names of days, which appear to clearly signal the different possible encodings mentioned above at the morphosyntactic level: with the presence of a definite determiner or an adpositional item, the event is interpreted as a habitual (unbounded) one, whereas with a ‘bare’ proper time name, the event is assumed to be punctual (bounded).

The difference in the behaviour of days vs. months and seasons in Italian illustrated above may be linked to the fact, noticed by Langendonck (2007: 229), that there are “categories that may have to be situated at the boundary between proper name and common noun [...]”⁹ A well-known case is constituted by the names of seasons. For instance, in English, they take no article in sentences in which the season name is subject. Hence, English appears to favor the proper name solution. By contrast, in Dutch the article *de* is obligatory, so the common noun strategy is favored, as illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. Summer is the warmest season. (English)
 b. **De** zomer is het warmste seizoen. (Dutch)

An important aspect of our analysis will be to determine why adpositions and definite determiners seem to bear the very same habitual/iterative meaning

⁹ Recall the Spanish data: languages may differ on which temporal modifiers are seen as proper or common nouns (ff. 4, 8).

when introducing the sub-set of proper temporal names denoting days of the week. We will assume that these are two possible strategies to turn a (deictic) name enabling the identification of her/his/its referent into a countable item.

3. A morphosyntactic analysis for the interpretive asymmetry of names of days

3.1 A N-to-D movement for individual reference

Let's start considering the data in (18) which involve adjectival modification.

- (18) a. vado al cinema il prossimo
 I.will.go to.the cinema the next
 lunedì/il lunedì prossimo
 Monday/the Monday next
 'I will go to the cinema next Monday'
- b. vado al cinema lunedì prossimo/
 I.will.go to.the cinema Monday next
 *prossimo lunedì
 next Monday
 'I will go to the cinema next Monday' (Italian)

In Italian, like 'canonical' proper names (see Longobardi 1994 and subsequent literature), also proper temporal adverbials are able to rise to D, as illustrated in (18b). Note that there are no interpretive differences between (10a) and (18b): the event is necessarily perceived as punctual, given the presence of the temporal adjective *prossimo* 'next' (cf. Larson & Cho 2003) which introduces the modification.

What is strictly relevant here is that the proper time adverb can move to a D position, as illustrated by the rough structure in (19): in (18b) the nominal item climb over the adjective and is spelt out in D.¹⁰

- (19) [IP [VP vado [1SG [PP al cinema] [DP Lunedì ... [NP Lunedì]]]]

The fact that the adverbial in (19) bears nominal features (and hence is embedded within a D structure) is ensured by the fact that it can function as the

¹⁰ An anonymous reviewer suggests that it is possible that temporal proper names do not undergo head movement and it is better to characterize such operation as an instance of NP to Spec,DP movement. Specifically, the reviewer argues that items bigger than N (complex proper names) can undergo movement as in the minimal pair *Il prossimo lunedì 31/ lunedì 31 prossimo* (both: 'next Monday 31'). One possibility is that items like *Lunedì 31* are computed as lexical compounds (hence Ns) in Italian, indicating a single referent just like *Napoleone Terzo* ('Napoleon the third') or *Italia '90* ('1990 FIFA World Cup'). Due to space limitations, we will consider this issue in more details in future works.

nominal head of a relative clause which implies a modification of the temporal proper name (20a) (cf. also the examples in (8) and (10) in Section 2). It can also be selected by an indefinite determiner (triggering a non-defined, but punctual interpretation of the event), as in (20b). Furthermore, the adverbial item agrees in phi-features with a modifier, as shown in (20c).

- (20) a. vado al cinema(il) lunedì che viene
I.go to.the cinema(the) Monday that come
'I will go to the cinema next Monday'
- b. ho visto il film un lunedì.
I.have seen the movie a Monday
'I have seen the movie one of the past Mondays'
- c. vengo lunedì prossimo/ domenica prossima
I.come Monday.m.sg next.m.sg Sunday.F.SG next.F.SG
'I will come next Monday/next Sunday' (Italian)

Notice also that the contrast between names of days *vs.* names of months/seasons is confirmed by the impossibility/clear markedness for the latter to appear determiner-less in the structures in (21), at least according to our grammatical judgements.

- (21) a. verrò il prossimo Aprile/l' Aprile
I.will.come the next April/the April
prossimo/*?Aprile prossimo
next/April next
'I will come next April'
- b. verrò il prossimo Inverno/l' Inverno
I.will.come the next winter/the winter
prossimo/*?Inverno prossimo
next/winter next
'I will come next winter' (Italian)

Given the facts roughly illustrated above, we assume that the interpretive asymmetry illustrated in (1) and repeated in (22) for ease of reference, is due to the different morphosyntactic properties of the structures involved.

- (22) a. vado al cinema di lunedì (Italian)
I.go to.the cinema of Monday
'I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays'
- b. vado al cinema il lunedì
I.go to.the cinema the.sg Monday
'I (usually) go to the cinema on Mondays'
- c. vado al cinema lunedì
I.go to.the cinema Monday
'I go to the cinema next/this Monday'

As for sentences like (22c) we have already seen that the proper temporal item rises to D, as illustrated in (10)-(11), determining a punctual and bounded interpretation. Indeed, it is arguable that the N-to-D movement/chain crucially triggers an individual-like reference, as pointed out in Longobardi (2005, 2008) (cf. also Roberts 2019), so that the event may be perceived only as punctual.

We are now faced with the puzzle regarding the presence of a preposition or a definite determiner, both triggering a habitual reading in (14b) and (14c).

3.2 Turning a name into a (countable) noun: two different morphosyntactic devices

We start by considering the case of definite determiners introducing proper temporal adverbials. As Dechaine & Wiltschko (2002) put down for French, the definite *l*-article does not have a fixed definite interpretation. In some contexts, it may be construed as a definite (23a) while in other contexts it is ambiguous between a generic and a definite construal (23b).

- (23) a. Jean a achete le vin. (French)
 Jean has bought the wine
 ‘Jean bought the wine.’
 b. Jean aime le vin.
 Jean likes the wine
 = i. ‘Jean likes wine.’
 = ii. ‘Jean likes the wine.’

We assume that the (singular) definite determiner in (1b) = (22b) introduces a generic (plural) reading for temporal names, comparable to the effect highlighted in (24) (cf. Chierchia 1998, Delfitto 2002, Storto 2003, Zamparelli 2008, Falco & Zamparelli 2019, among others).

- (24) a. Il dodo è estinto (Italian)
 the dodo is extinct
 ‘The dodo is extinct’ (=All dodos are extinct)
 b. Il cane è fedele
 The dog is loyal
 ‘The dog is loyal’ (=All dogs are loyal)

So, *l*-articles do not have an uncontroversial definite interpretation: their referential value (definite or generic interpretation) is not fixed. Longobardi (1994) accounts for the data in (23) by proposing that the definite construal reflects the presence of a null D position, as in (25a): the generic or the definite interpretation of the *l*-articles depends on the presence of a D position. When the D superstructure is present, the definite reading is possible (25a), while when the D superstructure is missing the generic reading is the only available option.

- (25) a. [_D ∅ [_φ le [NP vin]]] = ‘the wine’

- b. $[\varphi \text{ le } [\text{NP vin/dodo/cane}]] = \text{'wine' / 'dodo' / 'dog'}$

Thus, the sentence in (22b) means that the event depicted by the verbal predicates is a habitual one, namely it takes place every Monday. The determiner *il* does not encode a definite (punctual) interpretation (actually, a punctual reading would imply a N to D chain of the proper temporal adverb), but it refers to a generic time interval which has the property of being labelled as Monday(s). So, the definite construal (Longobardi, 1994, 2005) reflects the presence of a null D position: when the D superstructure is absent, as in (25b) =(22b), the ‘non punctual’ reading becomes available and consequently the overt definite determiner is an expletive, as in (26).

- (26) $[\varphi \text{ il } [\text{NP lunedì}]] = \text{'Monday'}$

Notice that also plural definite determiners are allowed with names of the days, as illustrated in (27), matching - in the contexts taken into account here - the generic value encoded by singular ones (cf. Carlson 1977 and subsequent literature). Again, what we obtain is a habitual reading, turning a definition into a countable item.

- (27) vado al cinema il lunedì = vado al cinema i
 I.go to.the cinema the.SG Monday I.go to.the cinema the.PL
 lunedì
 Monday
 ‘I go to the cinema on Mondays’ (Italian)

The same interpretive effect is obtained with another morphosyntactic tool, namely by use of the adposition *di*, as in (1a)=(14a). In this case, things are less clear-cut.

First of all, we must say that the adposition *di* is not linked in any respect to the partitive determiner *dei*, as illustrated in (28). The sentence in (28a) turns out to be fully ungrammatical if a partitive determiner is employed to introduce a temporal adverbial in irrealis contexts. It can appear (marginally) grammatical only in realis contexts, referring to an undefined set (of days) in the past, as shown in (18b). Furthermore, the adpositional value of the morpheme *di* - as we have seen above - is confirmed by the fact that (cognate) names of seasons and names of months require to be introduced by an adposition (locative *in* or dative *a*) in adverbial contexts.

- (28) a. *verrò al cinema dei lunedì
 i.will.come to.the cinema DET.INDF.PL Monday
 b. ?Sono andato al cinema dei lunedì
 I.am gone to.the cinema DET.INDF.PL Monday
 ‘I went to the cinema some Mondays (in the past) (Italian)

Following Manzini & Savoia (2011), Franco & Manzini (2017a,b), among others, we assume that the adposition *di* instantiate an ‘inclusion/sub-set’ relator (\subseteq). The same characterization is provided by these authors for the ‘dative’ adposition *a*.¹¹ Remind that in the context like the one of (10a=29) in which the temporal modifier can be found with punctual event, the preposition *di* introduces a temporal proper names which represents a time interval which includes the punctual event. However, the weekday introduced by *di* has to be interpreted itself as a subset included within a time interval which recursively contains it (all the Mondays within that month in (29)).

- (29) Andai al mare di lunedì (durante quel mese)
 I.went to.the sea of Monday (during that month)
 ‘Monday I went to the sea’

This characterization of *di*, *a* as an elementary predicate can explain the different context in which this morpheme appears and can be extended to the locative item *in* (cf. Franco and Lorusso 2019, Franco, Manzini and Savoia 2021). In the particular case of names of days, the relation between the eventive predicate and the proper temporal NP can be syntactically shaped through a sub-set relation (expressed by *di*) between the event and the set of temporal frames, which (are able to) include it.

The fact that we are on the right track is confirmed by the possible use of the prepositions *in*, *a* for proper ‘month’ modifiers of verbal predicates in Italian, as in (30) (see also the example in (14)). Remember, however, that month adverbs do not allow a ‘bare’ (i.e. punctual) encoding, as well as an accompanying singular D, possibly due to the fact that months are intrinsically interpreted as plural entities, i.e. sets (of days).

- (30) a. vado a Pantelleria in/di/a Marzo (Italian)
 I.go to Pantelleria in/of/to March
 ‘I go to Pantelleria in March’
 b. ?*Vado a Pantelleria il Marzo
 I.go to Pantelleria the March
 c. *Vado a Pantelleria Marzo
 I.go to Pantelleria March

These facts are reminiscent of the contrast that can be seen within the class of proper names of location in Italian: locative PPs introduced by *a* can be used in Italian together with DPs referring to cities, villages and small islands as in (31a), while *in* is required with DPs referring to countries, continents or big islands, as in (31b).

- (31) a. Gianni è/va a/*in Pantelleria/Conversano/Siena (Italian)

¹¹ The genitive=dative syncretism is one of the most widespread in natural languages, see Caha (2009).

- b. ‘Gianni is/goes at/in Pantelleria/Conversano/Siena’
 Gianni è/va *a/in Italia/Africa/Sicilia
 ‘Gianni is/goes at/in Italy/Africa/Sicily’

The generalization provided by Rizzi (1988: 513, cf. also Folli 2008: 210, Matushansky 2016) to account for this pattern is that “*a* is required with locations which can be conceived of as ‘pointed’ in our mental representation of their geographical nature.” Longobardi (1987, 1997) suggests that, in Italian, names of more ‘atomic’/‘unidimensional’ entities like cities and so called ‘small’ islands undergo N-to-D movement, while names of ‘bidimensional’/‘extensive’ areas, like regions and countries, use an expletive D.

The same observation can be clearly made for names of days *vs.* names of months or seasons: so, while days are seen as punctual and work like the ‘pointed’ location (cf 20a), months and seasons work more like a ‘container of days/months/temporal individuals’.

Franco & Lorusso (2019) link the different use of the preposition *a* *vs.* *in* within the class of proper names of location with a parameter on D: individual-like entities like the ones in (20a) do not allow a determiner and can raise to D, while ‘broad’ location items (20b) are obligatorily accompanied by a D, as illustrated in (32).

- (32) a. (*1a) Pantelleria ha una superficie di 83 km² (Italian)
 ‘Pantelleria has an area of 83 sq km’
 b. *(il) Portogallo ha una superficie di 92.212 km²
 ‘Portugal as an area of sq km 92.212’

The generalization that follows from the data introduced here is that only ‘punctual’ proper names of locations or periods in time can appear bare (and raise to D). Items which are perceived as set of individuals must be accompanied by a D morpheme.

At this point, the question is: where does the set (habitual) interpretation (i.e. the adpositional embedding) for the days of the week come from? Notice that the temporal item in structures like (1a)=(22a) is arguably a simple NP, devoid of any D structure above it. Indeed, Italian structures like those in (33a), where the proper adverbial embedded under the adposition takes a modifier on its left, are completely ungrammatical. If the proper adverb embedded under an adposition raises to D, as in (33b), we have again a very marked structure: it is quite difficult to assume a punctual reading if the *di* item is present. Notice that in a standard genitive structure, when temporal proper names modify an NP and not an event, the result is grammatical, as in (33c).

- (33) a. *andrò al cinema di prossimo
 I.will.go to.the cinema of next
 lunedì
 Monday
 b. ??andrò al cinema di lunedì
 I.will.go to.the cinema of Monday

- prossimo
 next
 c. andrò alla riunione di martedì prossimo/del
 I will go to the meeting of Tuesday next/of the
 prossimo martedì
 next Tuesday
 ‘I will go to next Tuesday’s meeting’

We may assume that the sub-set interpretation is triggered by the relator *di* because the temporal NP embedded under the adposition *di* does not climb up to a (Div) position high enough to ensure a countable reading, following Borer (2005), or when the D superstructure is absent, in Longobardi (1994)’s terms. In essence, the temporal (determinerless) NP in contexts like (22a) is substance/mass-like (Seppanen 1971) or are predicates (as argued in Stowell 1989, Longobardi, 1994, Moro 1997) and can be interpreted only as a whole/class/set (the set of Mondays) on which the relator *di* can apply saying that ‘there is a given event which is included (takes place) in the class of Mondays’. This fact actually forces a habitual (non-specific) interpretation. Specifically, the encoding of the class of temporal names in generic noun phrases with the aid of a definite determiner refers to the class as represented by a typical specimen, while the same encoding with the use of a part/whole relator selecting for a NP without any D superstructure, refers to the totality (maximality, exhaustivity, cf. Link 1983, Chierchia 1998) of the members of the class. In both cases, the effect can be labelled of anti-individuation, necessarily triggering a habitual/iterative reading.

Tu sum up, in (34) we provide the relevant structures for the examples in (22), showing how subtle morphosyntactic differences in the encoding of proper modifying terms can enhance different interpretive facts.¹²

- (34) a. [IP [VP vado [1SG [PP al cinema] [\subseteq di [NP Lunedì]]]]]
 b. [IP [VP vado [1SG [PP al cinema] [DP_{generic} il [NP Lunedì]]]]]
 c. [IP [VP vado [1SG [PP al cinema] [DP_{individual} Lunedì [NP ~~Lunedì~~]]]]]

Notice that the *di*/ \subseteq morphosyntactic mechanism to encode habitual reading is not as widespread as the use of *definite* article in other Romance varieties (as we have seen for French and Occitan). Further studies are needed to understand whether both the use of *definite article* and the use of the adposition *di* are part of a cluster of phenomena determined by general parametric variation along the line of the Nominal Mapping Parameter (Chierchia 1998): the +/- argumental and the +/- predicative status of nouns has a role in the interaction with the parameters on D in determining the interpretation provided at semantic interface.

¹² The mechanism is inherently syntactic, since the position in which the temporal modifiers are merged clearly matters. For instance, in the construction involving the fronting of a temporal modifier introducing a punctual event (cf. the examples in (7)-(10)) only punctual temporals are available: that is, DP involving an N-to-D chain as in.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have provided an analysis able to account for the punctual vs. habitual reading of proper temporal names in Italian, focusing on names of days, which clearly signal the a difference in their possible aspectual encoding at the morphosyntactic level: when these items appears as adverbials modifying an event, such event is interpreted as a habitual one, if the temporal name is preceded by a definite determiner or an adpositional item, while it is interpreted as a punctual one if the temporal name is ‘bare’.

We have argued, following Longobardi (2005, 2008) that with bare proper time names, a N-to-D movement/chain triggers an individual-like reference given that the event may be perceived only as punctual. An important aspect of our analysis has been to determine why adpositions and definite determiners seem to bear the very same habitual/iterative meaning when introducing the sub-set of proper temporal names denoting days of the week. We have assumed that these are two possible strategy to turn a (deictic) name enabling the identification of her/his/its referent into a iterable item: definite Ds introduce a generic reading for the temporal names, while a P ‘sub-set’ relator is used to ‘include’ a given event within a class of temporal individual (intervals).

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