1. Introduction

A hundred years ago a new term, *aktionsart*, was introduced in the linguistic literature by Brugmann, who wanted to account for certain features of verbal meaning which could simply not be explained as tense features.\(^1\) The term led to a fabulous confusion due basically to two reasons; first, it was characterized, in opposition to tense, as the manner in which the verbal action unfolds (Brugmann 1922: 493). This poses from the very beginning the problem of defining what is to be understood as "the unfolding of the verbal action"; could it be the way it is viewed? or, is it nothing but the meaning of the verb? Second, no attention is paid in this definition to the linguistic means through which this unfolding of the verbal action is expressed; that is, no language immanent criteria are provided to delimit this category with respect to the concomitant category of *aspect*. These two problems constitute in fact the Pandora's box which originated with the introduction of the term. Let us go step by step. The first problem arises because the concept is characterized in purely semantical terms, disregarding the fact that language categories are defined in terms of form and meaning. After looking at Brugmann's characterization of aktionsart in punctual, cursive, perfective, iterative and terminative, one recognizes three basic aspects involved: verb meaning, *aspect* as a grammatical category, and an implicit division of verbs in what later came to be called telicity. Since these three aspects exhibit semantic affinity,\(^2\) it is clear that under these circumstances the term was destined to an unhappy development. Symptomatic of this among other things in the literature about aktionsart and *aspect* are to mention, in accordance with Lucko (1987: 53), a. the identification of perfective aspect with terminativity of states of affairs (and consequently the identification of imperfective aspect with non-terminative states of affairs, b. lack of explicit reference to the limit of the action (terminativity and temporarity were not kept separate), and c. the use of some concepts like *objective* and *subjective* as delimitation criteria. Point a. leads to the second problem mentioned above, namely that the nature of the linguistic means through which meaning is conveyed plays a crucial role for the postulation and analysis of a linguistic category and the behavior shown by the elements belonging to it. Many works on aktionsart and *aspect* fail to recognize this important difference and because of semantic affinity either cast everything into the same box under a single label (Meyer 1917, Hermann 1927: *aktionsart*; Andersson 1982 *actionality*, Dietrich 1973, Coseriu 1976: *aspect*) or simply draw a line, labeling aktionsart as plain verb meaning and *aspect* whatever else appears in the verbal environment, which is not tense (Comrie 1976). It is clear that most of the confusion around the topic lies on a lack of clarity pertaining to what is to be understood as a grammatical and/or lexical category. Thus, in order to determine the nature of the category in question I think it appropriate to depart from a distinction between two basic components of language: grammar and the lexicon.

2. Grammar vs. lexicon

A concise representation of the major components of language appears in Lehmann (1990: 162), here reproduced in Figure 1, which places both grammar and the lexicon at the same level; however, there exists a scalar difference between them (Lehmann 1990: 161). This difference can be explained in terms of the role each

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\(^1\) This paper benefited greatly from insightful comments from Laurel Brinton and Lena Ekberg on a preliminary version; their help is highly appreciated. All shortcomings run, of course, on my account.

\(^1\) Brugmann introduced the term in 1885 (based on Curtius' distinction in *zeitstufe* and *zeitart*). I quote here the 1922 edition of his *Kurze vergleichende Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Quotations from this and other sources in German and Spanish will appear translated.

\(^2\) For instance, between imperfective aspect and iterative aktionsart, or between perfective aspect and punctual aktionsart (cf. Klein 1969: 108).
component plays in expressing meaning. One can assume that on the side of grammar linguistic meaning is conveyed in a highly compressed way, consisting (grammatical meaning) in the signaling of properties that permit to establish relations in the sentence. A high level of systematicity is therefore to be expected from grammar. The lexicon, on the other hand, acts as set of conceptual items. It is also systematic; echoing its nature, however, the systematic relations it entails involve other aspects such as conceptual compatibility between lexical items.

**Figure 1**

*Major components of language*

```
semantics
----- significatum -----

regular ← grammar lexicon idiosyncratic
----------------------- |  
 syntax phraseology     |  
 morphology            |  
 inflection word-formation  
----------------------- |  

----- significans -----

phonology
```

Concerning their organizational aspect, lexical items are arranged in lexical classes, while grammatical constructions are grouped in grammatical categories; the relation existing between the two is such that "grammatical categories are essentially fed by lexical categories" (Lehmann 1990: 180). In the field of morphology the division between grammar and lexicon has its representation in the division between flexive and derivational morphology; the former helps establish grammatical relations, while the latter is a means to create new lexical items.

The lexicon, as mentioned above, consists of idiosyncratic elements. While grammatical categories show an obligatory character, lexical items are subject to other kinds of restrictions. On the speaker's perspective this means that the lexicon offers him a wider disposition of forms and constructions than does the grammar; consequently, he feels more restrained by the rules of grammar. Regarding regularity, Lehmann (1990: 161) says, "what is only partly regular is on the borderline between grammar and lexicon. This applies, in particular, to word-formation". One may thus conclude that the lexicon and grammar are connected by a continuum ranging from least regular (idiosyncratic) to most regular and that constructions in the language can be placed along this continuum according to their degree of grammaticalization (that is, grammaticalization as essentially a diachronical process constitutes the channel through which lexical items shift to the domain of grammar; see 4.2.2.1, below).

From the preceding it follows that the function of both grammatical and lexical categories is in accordance with the properties attributed to grammar and the lexicon respectively. In this sense, grammatical categories are to be seen as categories fulfilling a relational function in language structure, its expression being executed by forms with little lexical meaning. What categories have to be regarded as valid grammatical categories of a specific language depends on the forms functioning as markers (e.g. of case, aspect, number, person, etc), which show three

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3 Notice that "grammatical" (category) is used here in the strict sense of those categories related to that component of language called grammar (as in Figure 1), as opposed to the common practice whereby "grammatical category" is used in the broad sense of "linguistic category".

4 This division has followers and adversaries; I am not going to deal with this in detail here. For a discussion about this separation see Lang (1990: 16f.)

5 A linguistic (grammatical or lexical) category can then be defined through the nature and function of the elements it contains.
basic characteristics: a. relational meaning, b. are obligatory for the well-formedness of sentences (this has nothing to do with intelligibility), and c. constitute a closed set. Binnick (1991: 34), for instance, attributes likewise two characteristics to grammaticalized categories, systematicity and obligatoriness. It is important to mention that this characterization is not build on the formal division of free vs. bound forms; it is rather a functional (semantic) definition, while the latter is a formal criterion for description. In this respect, there are lexical free (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and bound (derivational affixes) forms just as there are grammatical free (prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions) and bound (inflexional affixes) forms. Given this division, it is possible to foretell the nature of the relations the elements of each of the two components perform.

The basic nature of their functions can be summarized in the distinction between determination and denotation. Grammatical categories can be said to perform a function of determination on lexical items, since they do not alter the lexical meaning of the elements they modify. What a relational element does to 'conceptual' ones is to provide them with the necessary information to relate to one another in the construction of sentences (formal function). I will call this function of grammatical categories qualification of first degree; it determines the syntagmatic relations between items and consequently the form of utterances. Lexical items, on the other hand, construct the propositional content of utterances and are among other things characterized by contextual relations, "the full set of normality relations which a lexical item contracts with all conceivable contexts" (Cruse 1986: 84); by means of these denotative elements the speaker can represent and model the objective reality (cf. Hansen et al. 1982: 17). Besides this basic (denotative) function, lexical items can perform another specifying one, which I will call qualification of second degree; as just indicated, it consists in a complementary lexical specification of the lexical meaning (of another element acting as a base). It is basically carried out by synchronical processes of word-formation (that is, before lexicalization can take place), compounding and periphrasis. This distinction between qualification of first degree and qualification of second degree is similar to Langacker's distinction between content and grounded structure (with the difference that he regards compounds as part of the content structure). A lexical item's content constitutes a first degree of lexical meaning; this may be qualified (in Langacker's terminology 'grounded') by a grammatical element; I call this grounding qualification of first degree, it "imposes a particular image on its [the noun's] content" (Langacker 1991: 196). Now, a qualification of second degree refers to the relation lexical item + lexical item, which is similar to that between a grammatical marker and a lexical item, the difference being that in this case both items in a sequence are lexical. This specification takes place on the basis of compatibility relations; in other words, this qualification of second degree can be regarded as a lexico-semantic relation between lexical elements; an example of such a second degree qualification are prepositional compounds, e.g. amor de dios [love of god], both amor and dios denote manifestations of the cognitive world, but the prepositional phrase de dios specifies the type (function?) of the first denoted object, the love. As opposed to the qualification of first degree, that of second degree remains within the domain of the lexicon, but cannot escape the qualification of first degree: the preposition signals a grammatical

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6 Lang (1990: 47) quoting Aronoff views (derivational) affixes as having relational information as opposed to words (a problematic issue itself), which have, so Lang, categorial information. Whereas it may be true that one can characterize the information in that way, it is of major importance that the primary function of derivational affixes is the creation of new lexical items. That is, the main purpose of the speaker who attaches a derivational affix to a base is the creation of a new item, not establishing a relation between the two elements (this relation is presupposed as requirement for the affiliation but it is not the aim of it).

7cf. Fenwick (1980: 52f.) for a similar but not identical characterization.

8 See Cruse (1986: 23-45) for a discussion of syntagmatic delimitation of lexical units.

9 This is true of free grammatical forms such as prepositions. These can mark grammatical relations such as case in languages with a case system. L. Ekberg (p.c.), however, observes that prepositions pose the dilemma of a clear-cut division between what is lexical and what is grammatical, since they behave as grammatical markers (e.g. in case languages) but at the same time -in the case of spatial prepositions- as specifiers of characteristics of the located or/and reference object (e.g. Eng. In the grass vs. on the grass).

10 This applies to such categories as tense, aspect, etc. in the case of verbs.

11 In the sequence verb + tense (walk + -ed), the meaning of the verb is not altered; however, in the syntagm have verb + verb (cease (to) walk) the meaning of walk is "segmented", only one angle of the walking (the egressive phase) is focused on.

12 By cognitive I mean concepts that in the mind of the speaker exist objectively; this, however, does mean that they have an objective correlate in the external reality ("God" being the case par excellence). In this respect, it is necessary to remember that cognition as a reflection process is motivated by the material reality and that the spiritual reality emerges only on the basis of the former.
relation (possession), which in turn brings two lexical items together to express a new concept. Ergo de dios is a specification in the sense of further, not grammaticalized information. Derivations behave in the same way as compounds; that is, they are qualifications of second degree of lexical meaning, which can be of nominal meaning (pararayos) [lightning rod], of verbal meaning (reproducir) [reproduce], or of adjectival meaning (prepotente) [arrogant]. These resulting constructions can (but need not) lead to (or correspond to) the erection of linguistic categories (in this case lexico-semantic ones), which fulfill discursive functions; one such case is aktionsart. This is dealt with in the next section.

3. Aktionsart: a framework

As pointed out above, the postulation of the category in question obeys to the perception that there are nuances of verbal meaning that need to be accounted for and which play a crucial role in the lexical and grammatical relations between the elements in a sentence. Trying to account for this fact, verb classifications have been proposed (± stative), (± durative), (± telic), all of them centering on the feature of terminativity of the meaning of verbs. It is not difficult to see that the specter of the aspectual dichotomy (± perfective) is behind these distinctions; this caused that for some (Klein 1969, 1974) aktionsart came to denote verbal meaning definable in terms of telicity (and its implications by aspect selection). Nevertheless, these classifications only lead to a partial characterization of the category, which in the end exclusively account for the durative character of the particular verb meaning. In order to delimit the study of aktionsart (eventually vis à vis aspect), I think it is necessary to identify two directions of the problem. First of all, there has to be a conceptual frame within which the nature of the category can be elucidated. Second, a description of the means utilized by the language under study will indicate how this category is expressed. This last aspect has to do with the identification of the aktionsarten that the language under study (in this case Spanish) expresses.

Let us begin with the conceptual frame. I follow Lucko (1987) who defines states of affairs as "portions of objective reality". Accordingly, every state of affairs is the reproduction of a phase of the movement of objective reality; now, how the cognitive subject and his language community segment the outer reality depends on the relevance that they assign to the various dimensions -individual, class, characteristic, relation- of reality (Lucko 1987: 19). Lucko calls this reproduction of portions of the outer reality actionality. I will use Lucko’s definition only in partial agreement, though. While he calls actionality every state of affairs and its structuring, and defines aktionsart as a systematic opposition between base verb and derived verbal forms, I define actionality as the verbal essence; by that I mean the prototype of a portion of the outer reality, which the speaker perceives as a phase of the movement of it; this includes such objective situations as cause-effect relations, states, processes, etc. In accordance with this conception of actionality, the verb can be conceived as artefact, without reference to any specific movement, which is entered into the lexicon carrying the feature [+ V]; these artifacts acquire their actual form through the creation of linguistic elements in a systematized way (infinitive and/or verb markers). Such being the case, the artefact verb does not contain linguistic information; it is rather a token that is supplied with linguistic information (lexical meaning, verbal class, valence, etc.) by the specific linguistic community in the communicative process.

From the perception of reality to the uttering of the perceived one can distinguish three basic levels. In the first place there is the level of the perception, which consists in the perceiving of the phases of the outer reality (it is an innate characteristic of humans to recognize actionality in the external reality and to reproduce it by means of linguistic signs) and its codification through artifacts. Secondly, there is the linguistic level, the speaker reproduces his environment actively by assigning linguistic form to the artifacts. Thirdly, the level of utterance; the perceived state of affairs is represented linguistically in the dimension of the communicative practice. The whole process from perception (actionality) to articulation (aktionsart), is represented in Figure 2, which indicates that aktionsart, as a phenomenon of the linguistic level, occurs in two planes, the first corresponding not to verb

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\[13\] In label bracketing, verbal and nominal qualification of second degree take the following patterns, \( \{N (x) N\} \) and \( \{V (x) V\} \), where \( (x) \) stands for an optional connector. The verbal pattern will be specified below in relation to verbal periphrasis.

\[14\] This term is also used in the most divers ways (cf. Anderson 1972, Bache 1985).

\[15\] Movement also presupposes non-movement (in the case of states).
meaning but to the lexical modification that every language does of a state of affairs, and a second one
distinguishable at the sentence level and which corresponds to the final reading of the whole utterance.

Figure 2

Aktionsart in the reproduction of objective reality

![Diagram of the relationship between action and linguistic level]

**Outer reality**

**Actionality**

(phases of movement)

```
---------------------------------------------
感知

VERB [+V] (artefact)
```

**Linguistic level:** verbal lexeme

(verb meaning, valence, verb classes, telicity)

**Action**

(energy or lack thereof)

universal

**Language-specific**

(Type of action)

**Aktionsart**

(subcategories)

- phases (beginning, end)
- iterativity
- direction
- etc.

**Aktionsart** (sentence level)

The first level of aktionsart corresponds to what in 1. was defined as a *qualification of second degree* of verb
meaning and which is made up by language-specific aktionsart subcategories (iterative, direction, etc.); the second
level of aktionsart is the sentential representation of a state of affairs; the verbal action and its relations to the rest
of the sentence components constitute this level, which I will call *aktionsart of the sentence*. There is good reason
for not talking about aktionsart as verb meaning; usually this conception ends up in verb classifications, which in
the end are only useful in isolation. For when confronted with sentence context they prove unstable. Mathews
(1990: 57-8), among others, alludes to one of the inconveniences of verb classes, "the classes do not in fact
distinguish verbs, but predicates: the distinction between accomplishments/achievements and activities depends
crucially on the presence of an object. If the object is removed the 'achievements' and 'accomplishments' become
activities:

- achievements
  - win a race
  - reach the summit

- accomplishments
  - sing a song
  - build a hose

- actions
  - walk
  - cough

Thus, it seems more prudent to talk about the aktionsart of the sentences when not referring to the qualification
of second degree.\textsuperscript{16} The whole process from actionality to aktionsart of the sentence can be illustrated with an example:

- level of perception:
  \[ x \ t_1 \ [\text{SLEEP}] , \ x \ t_2 \ [\text{SLEEP}] \]

- linguistic level:
  a. [SLEEP] = \textit{dormir}
  b. [SLEEP] at \( t_1 \) and [SLEEP] at \( t_2 = \textit{seguir durmiendo} \)
  c. \( x \ \textit{siguió durmiendo} \)
  d. aktionsart (as second degree of verb meaning, represented by \textit{seguir}): continuative

- sentence level:
  a. \textit{Pedro siguió durmiendo hasta las cuatro de la tarde}
  b. aktionsart of sentence: continuative punctual.

On the grounds of the two levels of aktionsart, three possibilities emerge: a. the two levels correspond, b. they do not correspond, c. given its optionality, the second degree of verb meaning may not be realized. In this last case, where there is no "verbal" but sentencial aktionsart, the verb only expresses its basic meaning (Grundbedeutung):

- level of perception:
  \[ x \ t_1 \ [\text{EXIST}] , \ x \ t_2 \ [\text{CEASE TO EXIST}] \]

- linguistic level:
  a. [EXIST] = \textit{vivir}
  b. [CEASE TO EXIST] at \( t_2 = \textit{morir} \)
  c. aktionsart: \( \phi \)

- sentence level:
  a. \textit{La gente muere como ratas en las favelas de Río}
  b. aktionsart of sentence: consuetudinary.

The verb meaning achieves a sentencial reading (aktionsart), with no qualification of second degree. At the same time, the predicate \( x \ t_1 \ [\text{EXIST}] , x \ t_2 \ [\text{CEASE TO EXIST}] \) can be expressed alternatively, e.g. by means of periphrasis, in which case there is aktionsart as second degree of verbal meaning: \textit{dejar de vivir}; here \textit{vivir} is "modified\textsuperscript{17}" by \textit{dejar de}, expressing a cessative aktionsart.\textsuperscript{18} This alternative to already lexicalized items constitutes the essence of aktionsart as a second degree of verbal meaning and confirms its lexical nature. In the remainder of this paper, I will deal only with aktionsart as qualification of second degree.

From the preceding, it follows that verb meanings are not to be viewed as aktionsart;\textsuperscript{19} they are already

\textsuperscript{16}Brinton (1988: 31) points likewise to the deficiency of (Vendler's) verb classifications; "the general weakness reflected here is the tendency to speak in terms of 'types of verbs' rather than in terms of 'categories of verb predication'". Accordingly, she asserts that "we must recognize that aktionsart is a feature of the entire sentence and that it is difficult to specify the 'basic' aktionsart of any verb" (Brinton \textit{supra}). Yet she succumbs somewhat to the tendency of equating aktionsart with verb type.

\textsuperscript{17}Actually it should be said that \textit{dejar} governs \textit{vivir}, as will be explained in 4.2.2.3. For the moment is suffices to say that the main meaning (\textit{vivir}) is modified.

\textsuperscript{18}The influence of context obviously plays an important role here; one would not say that \textit{La gente muere como ratas en las favelas de Río} is equivalent to \textit{La gente deja de vivir como ratas en las favelas de Río}, which means quite the opposite (the expected human reindication is predicated in the second case). The difference lies basically on the fact that the "components" of the verb \textit{vivir} are different in the two cases; whereas in the former it means "exist" in the latter it means something like "living a kind of life". In other cases, however, the periphrasis holds, e.g. \textit{Murio a las diez} vs. \textit{Dejó de vivir a las diez}.

\textsuperscript{19}To equate verb meaning with aktionsart poses the problem of finding as many aktionsarten as verbs exist. Furthermore, if one conceives aktionsart as verb type and sees its importance only in terms of its behavior concerning aspect selection, further classifications become indispensable to account for "irregularities" to already proposed generalizations (e.g. that states are not compatible with the progressive). If, on the other hand, aktionsart is understood as proposed above, its importance lies on the discovery of the subcategories a language creates to
lexicalized perceptions of phases of the movement of the external reality and as such constitute independent entries. Lucko (1980: 65) defines verb meanings as the result of a historical abstraction process in whose course reproductions from characters and relations are gained, which correspond to whole classes of states of affairs. Besides, he stresses the fact that, as nuclei of verb meaning, these representations are integrated within certain formative and through these they are constitutive parts of the lexicon of the language. They are at the speaker’s disposal as retrievable lexicalized reproductions of different types of phases of movement. They are classified in lexical paradigms, e.g. movement verbs, diction verbs, perception verbs, etc., or they can be grouped in types (states, processes, actions). These properties are important for the analysis of akctionsart to the extent that they determine the compatibility relations that must exist between the verb and its modifying element.

At the linguistic level, the tokens corresponding to the perceived phases of movement of the outer reality are assigned linguistic meaning (see previous note); this concerns information pertaining their type, lexical field, telicity, valence, etc. The qualification of second degree is sensitive to that information; that is, in order to report a state of affairs as iterative, inchoative, etc., that state of affairs must suit the precondition that it can take place repeatedly, have a starting point, etc. For instance, verbs denoting death are perceived as non-recurring; these cannot be modified by iteration: morir, expirar, fenercer, perecer, fallicer are all intransitive and, related to the same patient subject, block iteration *remorir or *volver a morir.21 The same applies to verbs of killing when related to the same object: *Lo volvió a matar, while the restriction disappears in those cases in which the object are other victims of the same murderer: Ayer liquidó a tres y esta mañana volvió a matar a otros dos. In summary, akctionsart can be cross-linguistically defined only as the complementary specifying qualification of second degree with a language-specific realization, whose discursive function is to depict the various angles in the development of the verbal action. Presumably, there are subcategories which are universal, such as phase and iteration but I am not going to deal with this here. I will rather focus on the realization of this category in Spanish, that is, on the subcategories this category presents in this language.

4. Aktionsart in Spanish

In the literature of Spanish, confusion concerning the term has not been the exception. As with other languages, akctionsart has been conceived as verb meaning and, thus, classifications in [± cyclic], [± perfective], etc. have not been absent from the scene.22 As stated above, akctionsart manifests in terms of subcategories which are different from language to language. These subcategories are arrived at through linguistic description. As defined in 3., Aktionsart is both analytically and synthetically expressed in Spanish.

4.1 Synthetic akctionsart

Synthetically, certain subcategories are expressed by prefixes.23 Typical akctionsart prefixes in Spanish are: re- (iterative), a-en-+ -arse24 and a- (inchoative), con- (comitative), pre- , ante- (anterior), de(s)- (reverse), contra- (opposite). It should be noted that prefixation is but a marginal means of expressing akctionsart in Spanish. First, the akctionsarten expressed by these elements are not structured in such a way that one can construct a systematic set of them; that is, a synthetic inchoative does not have as its counterpart a synthetic terminative (or

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20] These classifications are done on the basis of a first degree of verb meaning (the primitive linguistic form assigned to a perceived movement phase of external reality).


22 Cf. Fewick (1980, Chapter 1) for an account of the confusion in Hispanic linguistics.

23 There is a couple of suffixes which also express akctionsart (e.g. -izar, latinizar, inchoative). These show the same behavior in Spanish as prefixes; see below.

24 This is a very productive case of polisynthesis in Spanish: emborracharse, empuñarse, encuevarse, arrecharse.
a continuative), so as to detect a subcategory, say, phase. Rather, these elements are residues of productive Latin prefixes such as cum-, dis-, super-, etc. Second, Spanish shows a tendency to lexicalize constructions in which these prefixes appear, reducing in such a way their productivity: cubrir [cover] is no longer opposed to descubrir [discover], just as maldecir [to damn, not *say wrong] does not oppose to decir [say]; the same is true even for the most productive of these prefixes re-: revivir has been lexicalized to "restore consciousness". Third, this tendency to lexicalize makes verbal periphrases the means par excellence to express aktionsart, which as opposed to prefixes, can be extended to the whole system (of course, under consideration of compatibility): volver a can be used with any verb, whereas re- cannot; the same applies to the former inchoative suffix -ecer (< Lat. essere) . Such being the case, it is possible to find former synthetic aktionsart constructions in periphrastic constructions expressing the subcategory they used to express: volver a revivir (iterative), comenzar a amanecer, empezar a florecer (inchoative), recomenzar de nuevo, without being a periphrasis, illustrates the point in question (the tendency to lexicalize prefixed items and, as in this case, to bleach the prefix). In conclusion, synthetic aktionsart - surrendering to lexicalization- has been overtaken by periphrastic constructions, a most notable trait in the evolution from Latin to Romance.

4.2 Periphrastic aktionsart

4.2.1 Verbal periphrasis

A vast literature has been devoted to the subject of verbal periphrasis. Common to all such studies are aspects such as definition and delimitation of verbal periphrasis, a working definition of the concept of auxiliary, the degree of grammaticalization of the assumed auxiliary (and hence of the whole construction), as well as the function of such constructions in the Spanish (and Romance) verbal system. I will briefly refer to these aspects.

4.2.1.1 Definition and delimitation

The traditional definition of verbal periphrasis originated on the grounds of the analytical tenses of Romance and Indo-European languages, where the temporal paradigms present two-member constructions in opposition to synthetic forms. From there, a definition propagated, which conceived verbal periphrasis as the formal representation of a signifié by means of two or more signifiants, with one of the signifiants being conceived as auxiliary, in which case it was assumed to be semantically empty and performing a mere grammatical function. As a result, no attention whatsoever was paid to such periphrastic constructions in which the supposed auxiliary does not suffer considerable bleachkeeping and these were, thus, thrown into the same basket.

Departing from the pattern

1) [X (n) Y],

"where Y ---+ [r, -ndo, -do], and where the presence of (n) requires a [+r] (but not the other way around)\", Lehmann & Quesada (1991: 1ff) propose a definition of verbal periphrasis which does not regard the notion "auxiliary" as necessary. They depart from the basic idea that verbal periphrasis must be defined in terms of semantic unity, suggesting accordingly that "the uttering of singular ideas should not imply that one of the members of the construction loses its meaning but rather, that it must be kept in order to produce unity" (Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 2). In this way they define verbal periphrasis as a semantic-functional unit whose protagonists participate in the production of nuances the speakers need to express in discourse. Under semantic unit Lehmann & Quesada understand content merging, and under functional unit "the representation of a particular dimension of the verbal action by transmuting the general -uttered in the neutral form [the unperphrased form]- into the specific" (Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 2-3). A corollary of this definition is that an integration of periphrastic constructions in paradigms -as had been the claim- is of second importance.

Concerning the delimitation of aktionsart periphrastic constructions, Lehmann & Quesada propose three criteria: a. subject identity; the two verbal forms must have identical subjects (this leaves causative constructions

\[Lang\ (1990\ p.103)\] overlooks this tendency of Spanish to lexicalize prefixed constructions and regards many such cases as the result of productive synchronic processes.
out); b. implication (given Se vino sabiendo que no habla nadie vs. Se puso a jugar con la navajilla, the former implies that él se vino, whereas the latter does not imply that *él se puso), there exists a periphrasis when there is no implication; and c. deletion (again, in Se vino sabiendo que no habla nadie vs. Se puso a jugar con la navajilla, one can delete the -ndo clause in the former without causing meaning disturbances, whereas in the latter meaning disturbances occur.

4.2.1.2 Auxiliary

The conception of one of the members of a periphrastic construction as auxiliary has its origin in the pattern of compound tenses. The shift of haber to tense marker due to the loss of its lexical meaning gave way to the tendency to treat those members of other non-grammaticalized periphrases analogically. As a result, the concept auxiliary came to be defined in terms of semantic emptying. This criterion motivated two divergent points of view. Those who oppose it (e.g. Benveniste 1965, Kliffer 1981) argue that the supposed auxiliary cooperates to the unitary meaning of the periphrastic construction, since it carries linguistic information (tense, aspect, mood, person) and as such should not be said to be semantically empty. Those who regard the auxiliary as empty (e.g. Schröter 1974-5, Horn-Berghorn 1983) base their view precisely on the fact that it carries exclusively grammatical information; it functions as morpheme carrier, and is thus devoid of lexical meaning. Both viewpoints are right in a certain way. Indeed, this controversy is caused once again by a lack of clarity concerning what is to be regarded as grammatical and what as lexical. If we recall the distinction made in 2. between grammatical and lexical elements, the controversy disappears. Actually, both positions have in common that both assign the auxiliary grammatical meaning; both as morpheme carrier (Horn-Berghorn) and as equal partner in the construction -carrying not only tense but also person markers- (Benveniste) the auxiliary is perceived as lacking lexical information. Therefore, we can restrict the concept 'auxiliary' to those elements that carry information pertaining grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, and no lexical information. Consequently, all other verbs occupying the X position are not to be considered as auxiliaries but as lexical units. This is the point made by Lehmann & Quesada (1991), who make a distinction between aktionsart and grammatical periphrases on the basis of the grammaticalization (semantic bleaching) of the verb in X; the latter are those formed with haber + p.p. and perform a grammatical function (tense, voice), the former include all other periphrastic constructions, in which there is no auxiliary in the above sense. The problem hitherto has been to consider aktionsart periphrases as containing an 'auxiliary' and, thus, as expressing a grammatical category (aspect).26

4.2.2 Aktionsart periphrases

Taking into consideration the above definition and delimitation criteria, a look at periphrastic constructions in Spanish yields the following aktionsart subcategories.

A. RESULT

It expresses the result of a previous event and is expressed by state verbs (quedar, estar, permanecer, salir) plus past participle. Whereas quedar focuses on the immediate result of the event, estar centers on the state deriving from it:

E (event x) \(\text{quedar + p.p.}\)

1 \(\text{estar + p.p.}\)

Salir, on the other hand, presents the result more dynamically, concentrating on the effects of the event on the subject (usually an experiencer, salió regañado, salieron pringados).27

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26 It should be born in mind that a definition of auxiliary is always subject to the idiosyncrasy of the corresponding language. For example, the syntactic criteria used to decide whether a given item "is" an auxiliary in English are not operationalizable in Spanish (cf. the so called NICE-properties). A more suitable (cross-linguistic) criterion is the semantic one, which equates auxiliary with morpheme carrier. This is the one used here.

27 See Yellin (1980: 217-19) for the types of verbs which can occupy the Y position to express this subcategory.
B. DIRECTION

It specifies the drift of the action in regards to the subject and the speech act; it is deictic in nature. It has two shades, a developing and a developed one; the former is expressed by a movement verb plus gerund, the latter by a movement verb plus a past participle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>developing:</th>
<th>andar + -ndo</th>
<th>ir + -ndo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>venir + -ndo</td>
<td>neutral$^{24}$</td>
<td>prospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retrospective</td>
<td>andar + -do</td>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venir + -do</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This subcategory is called vision by Coseriu (1976); he regards it as panromance. I disagree with his characterization for three reasons. First, it is not panromance; it is Ibero-Romance. Second and more important, calling it "vision" implies that it is actually a matter of viewing the development of the verbal action; however, these forms express the course of the action per se. One uses such forms to report the development of the action; one says viene trabajando to report the development of the action before the speech act (or a reference point in narration); likewise va trabajando reports an event extending subsequent to the reference point (cf. Hamplová 1968: 220-1); anda trabajando shows no fixed direction. Third, the possibility of detecting a drift is given by the lexical meaning of the verbs in X; for Coseriu, the verb in X is an auxiliary (thus devoid of lexical meaning). Moreover, Coseriu includes estar + -ndo as part of his vision system; however, when one realizes that this category emphasizes the direction of the verbal action, the estar + -ndo periphrasis, which displays no sign of direction at all, appears as belonging to another set of oppositions, namely with the simple form; this is confirmed by the considerable degree of grammaticalization of estar (cf. Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 11-12). Thus, including estar + -ndo in the subcategory 'direction' is a hasty decision.$^{25}$ Hamplová (1968: 216f.) ascribes to this periphrasis "simple duration", and an "actualizing" function as opposed to the simple form; Fenwick (1980: 113) remarks that it does not express punctuality; Markie (1990: 183) contradictorily assigns it punctuality and at the same time says, "it covers a wide temporal range". In short, this periphrasis can be said to be on the way to create an aspctual opposition with the simple form in terms of limited duration.$^{26}$

C. ITERATIVITY

Typically expressed by the periphrasis volver a + inf., iterativity is said to be semelfactive and frequentative (Coseriu 1976: 97). Actually, this distinction is somewhat superfluous, since for the speaker what counts the opposition once/more than once. The so called iterative verbs (toser [cough], tocar (la puerta) [knock], etc.) when perphrased with volver a are perceived as a compact unit; thus volvió a toser does not mean the number of noises made by the air forced from the lungs, but rather that the subject went through another (other) interval(s) of coughing.

D. HABITUALITY

It expresses consuetudinary inclination of the subject to perform the action expressed by the verb. Representative periphrases of this subcategory are vivir + -ndo, vivir + -do, pasar + -ndo, pasar + -do; in these constructions the difference between the forms with the gerund and those with the past participle is one of [± dynamic]. Other consuetudinary periphrases are soler + inf., estar acostumbrado a + inf., acostumbrar + inf.

E. PHASE

This is by no means an exclusive Spanish aktionsart subcategory. It has to do with the phases through which the verbal action progresses. One can divide the process in three basic points, its initiation, its continuation and its end. Spanish is rich in supplementary specifications of the ingressive phase; the following are the most

$^{24}$I am aware that the term "neutral" may not be unequivocal, since andar actually denotes movements in all directions (cf. Hamplová 1968: 221). I chose the term in order to oppose it to the other two fixed directions (retrospective and prospective); besides, I could not think of a more suitable one.

$^{25}$The Spanish Academy (1979: 448-9) as well as Gili Gayá (1973: 113-5) also fail to detect the difference and group 'direction' together with the estar + -ndo construction.

$^{26}$Hamplová (1968: 218) and Fenwick (1980: 116) coincide in saying that in the past estar + -ndo is in free variation with the imperfective and that its choice is a "stylistic" matter. On the other hand, this construction is extensive to almost any verb in the language.
common phases expressed in Spanish.\(^{31}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingressive</th>
<th>Continuative</th>
<th>Egressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ponerse a + -r</td>
<td>seguir + -ndo</td>
<td>dejar de + -r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comenzar</td>
<td>quedarse + -ndo</td>
<td>acabar de + -r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empezar a + -r</td>
<td>seguir + -do</td>
<td>parar de + -r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>llegar a + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venir a + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salir a + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salir + -ndo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estar por + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entrar a + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dar [dat] por + -r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 4.2.2.2 I will "reorganize" this inventory of phasal periphrases, showing that the meaning of the verb in X produces a phasal system structured in basic and complementary phase markers.

The above subcategories have been analyzed by other authors (Schlieben-Lange 1971, Dietrich 1973, Cosenaro 1976, R.A.E. 1979, Markic 1990) in comparable ways. Nonetheless, the difference lies in the approach they make. Most of them regard these subcategories and constructions as expressing the grammatical category of aspect. The contradiction emerges when it comes to cases (indeed the majority) in which the so called "auxiliary" shows no drastic bleaching (keeping thus its lexical traits); hence, for these authors a grammatical category, that is, a category belonging to the grammar, is expressed by lexical items. As we saw above, lexical elements exhibit a different behavior from grammatical ones, one obvious distinction being obligatoriness (that is, the required specification of the semantic feature in question in potential -adequate- contexts). I consider that the two categories, aktionsart and aspect, can be clearly identified from each other in Spanish. This language is an "aspect relevant language" (Pollak 1960: 45) with a grammaticalized aspactual opposition in the past.\(^{32}\) Aktionsart periphrases are not grammaticalized and cannot thus be regarded as being part of an aspactual system (see below, 6.1). The next sections will deal with three criteria which will help verify the lexical nature of the Spanish aktionsart periphrases.

### 4.2.2.1 Degree of grammaticalization

Grammaticalization, as process that turns lexical items into grammatical formatives, implies two basic aspects, which are relevant here. First, loss of autonomy as a result of semantic bleaching (Lehmann 1982: 121), and second, the impossibility to establish lexical and grammatical relations such as government (Lehmann 1982: 43-5, see below). As pointed out above, the traditional approach to the Spanish verbal periphrasis has created a theoretical straitjacket by regarding the element in the X position as auxiliary in the sense of lexical emptying, even in cases where it is not the case, that is, in most cases. In order to obviate incongruities, the most varied explanations have been offered, from explicit acknowledgment of the difficulties of deciding what and when one item is an auxiliary (Gutiérrez 1978: 104, Yllera 1980 *passim*) to conciliatory ones like this from Schlieben-Lange (1971: 96): "the auxiliary bears the grammatical and the main verb the lexical qualification, and the syntagm carries an additional grammatical qualification, which results from a sense of the auxiliary and the grammatical form of the main verb, not in the sense of a sum of its parts, but as a higher unit". Obertz (1991: 30) tries to distinguish between periphrastic and non-periphrastic function of the same verb, by means of the criterion of lexical emptying and concludes that "the grammatical function" of the auxiliary keeps related to its lexical

\(^{31}\)To talk about "the most common" can be dangerous, since the lexemes filling the slots for the corresponding phase are diatopically determined. This can at the same time be taken as another argument to support the viewpoint that these constructions are of lexical nature.

\(^{32}\)Among those opposing this view is Cosner (1976). To reject the view that aspect in Romance as a binary opposition, he supports his position with an extremely vague assertion from J. Holt (1943): "almost anything in the verbal environment which does not correspond to other categories already defined, is usually attributed to aspect" (Cosner 1976: 82 f.) For a severe critique on Holt, see Pollak (1960).
meaning; in other words it does not lose its meaning. Coseriu opts for a distinction between lexical and grammatical periphrases; in the latter one of the members keeps its lexical meaning, while the other(s) lose(s) it to become ‘morpheme(s)’, grammatical auxiliaries. So far so good. However, for Coseriu grammaticalization is not incompatible with lexical meaning and talks about lexical-grammatical meaning, which he defines as the lexical "disappearance" (but) with grammatical preservation (Coseriu 1976: 121); such an esoteric definition simply seeks to find a shelter for the inclusion of aktionsart periphrases in his proposed pararomance aspectual system. The subcategories listed above were established on the basis of the meaning of the verb in X (one evident case being that of direction); the various entries used to express phase also show a low degree of grammaticalization. The corollary of such a low degree of grammaticalization is that both lexical and grammatical relations can be detected between the members of a periphrastic construction.

4.2.2.2 Lexical relations

The lexical relations existing between the members of an aktionsart periphrasis are not different from those occurring between normal lexical items. Under lexical (syntactic) relations between the two members of a periphrastic construction I understand the conditions that the verb in the Y position must meet to be qualified by that in X; that is, the conditions on which a first degree of verb meaning can accept a second degree qualification (aktionsart). I wish to argue that the verb in X is sensitive to the meaning of that in Y and that this should be taken as evidence that no significant semantic bleaching occurs in aktionsart periphrases, thus, corroborating the premise that these constructions are not to be seen as expressions of a grammatical category. This, in turn, precludes referring to the verb in X as auxiliary.

I want to make a brief reference to Cruse (1986: 103f.), who talks about "grammatically controlled semantic co-occurrence restrictions"; roughly speaking, this means pressure on the potential slot fillers in a syntagm. These restrictions have directional properties which manifest differently according to whether the corresponding constructions are head-modifier (endocentric, and thus reducible) and head-complement (where the complement is obligatory). Besides, Cruse distinguishes between selector and selectee, in the first type of construction the modifier is the selector and in the second the head is the selector. Important is that "selectors may generally be identified by the fact that they presuppose one or more semantic traits of their selectees" (Cruse 1986: 104). As an example Cruse gives pregnant in a pregnant X, where X has to be taken as female. On the other hand, selectees do not presuppose traits of their selectors (Cruse supra). I believe that this characterization nicely applies to aktionsart periphrases. The pattern \( v(X \text{ n Y}) \), is an endocentric construction, a head-modifier; the verb in Y is both its head and the selectee of the construction; the verb in X has access to the semantic traits of the verb in Y. This is in fact the case in our constructions.

A few examples of lexical dissonance will suffice to illustrate this point. The ingressive construction\textsuperscript{35} dar + [dat] + por + inf. cannot be used with certain verbs where the experiencer is not an agent: *le dio por morir a las 3, *les da por nacer en la madrugada; the same restrictions hold for ponerse a + inf.: *se puso a morir, *se pone a ser felices. The egressive phase is odd also with such verbs: *¿terminaron de ser felices?, *terminó de morir; obviously the subject must be an agent, but that produces a conflict with morir. Moreover, since the difference between dejar de ser feliz and terminar de ser feliz is one of volition, one cannot expect someone to consciously conclude his/her being happy (unless he/she has masochistic inclinations); thus, instead of terminar de ser feliz, there exists dejar de ser feliz; dejar de, however, cannot modify irreversible processes once they have started: *estaba naciendo y de pronto dejó de nacer, *deja de amanecer a las 4. The continuative phase is sensitive to the animacy of the subject: siguió lloviendo is correct, but *se quedó lloviendo is not; on the other hand, one can say el cielo se quedó nublado and, alternatively, el cielo siguió nublado; the difference is marked by the past participle in the second case, which bears the feature [-dynamic] and can thus apply to [-animate]

\textsuperscript{33}An extreme case is the notion of semi-periphrases Markov (1990: 174; Gómez Torrego 1988: 169, among others) used for those cases in which the verb in X does not show high bleaching.

\textsuperscript{34}Cruse (1986: 103) defines semantic head as "the element in a construction which interacts directly with an element or elements outside the construction".

\textsuperscript{35}I call it "ingressive" at this point; later it will be redefined.
subjects. The only possible explanation for these cases is that the supposed auxiliary indeniably retains lexical weight.  

I will now briefly discuss the case of the Spanish phase markers. It is a common believe that phase marks points in the development of the verbal action. With nearly the same markers as those listed above, Coseriu (1976: 103) distinguishes six phases: imminent-ingressive, inceptive, progressive, continuative, regressive-conclusive and egressive (some of these phases include directive periphrases, e.g. ir + -ndo). Important to mention is that he structures the phase 'subsystem' as though all of the items integrating it behaved in a homogeneous manner. A more careful look at the phases in (my dialect of) Spanish shows that this subcategory is organized in three basic phases and additional gradations, and that this organization is due to the lexical meaning of the verb in X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingressive</th>
<th>Continative</th>
<th>Egressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>ponearse a [+ an]</td>
<td>seguir/continuar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>empezar/comenzar a</td>
<td>quedarse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLEM.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-recency</td>
<td>acabar de</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-immin.</td>
<td>estar a punto de</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-intens.</td>
<td>seguir + -ndo y -ndolva de + -r y de + -r</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-impuls.</td>
<td>dar [dat] por + -r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plus (+) and minus (-) indicate whether the specific gradation applies to the corresponding basic phase. In this way, imminent is not ingressive as commonly believed but a gradation of the ingressive and egressive phase: está a punto de comenzar a trabajar, está a punto de terminar de trabajar, but está a punto de seguir quedarse trabajando; this can be explained by the fact that continuation cannot be imminent; it is the manifestation of an event which is already under way. For the same reasons, recency can only modify the beginning and end phases. Intensification, on the other hand is continutive in nature: sigue trabajando y trabajando is correct but *sigue comenzando y comenzando a trabajar is not; intensifying the beginning and end phase redounds in an unnecessary repetition of these points of the verbal action (which are punctual in nature). Finally, impulsive gradation is applicable to all three basic phases, since it conveys a sudden impulse external to the subject (hence the dative clitic -le, -les) to get on to something, beginning, continuing or finishing: le dió por empezar a cantar, le dió por seguir cantando, le dió por terminar de cantar. As for the difference between the items in the ingressive phase, ponerse a and comenzar/empiezar a, it is one of animacy; these forms are in a unidirectional implication relation: whereas ponerse a implies comenzar a, the opposite does not hold; ponerse a has the component [+ VOLUNTARY], which comenzar a does not have. One can imagine a situation in which a boss, enraged, tells his subordinates to get to work; someone reporting the reaction of the employees would not say y se pusieron a trabajar but empezaron a trabajar. Actually in my dialect, another witness of the situation would correct the previous relator by saying no se pusieron, ¡los pusieron! The lexical relations just discussed are not found in grammaticalized constructions such as haber + p.p., (tense) or ser + p.p. (voice); the difference, thus, is evident.

4.2.2.3 Grammatical relations

Another argument in favor of the claim that aktionsart periphrases are lexical constructions is that of the grammatical relations existing between its members. Lehmann & Quesada (1991) propose that there are relations

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30 Although these examples exceed the relation between the two verbs in the pattern by taking into consideration other aspects such as the animacy of the subject and the knowledge of the speaker about the real world, I think they suffice to illustrate the point in question. (From another viewpoint, though, one can argue that information concerning characteristics of the subject are verbal).
of government in periphrases with infinitive and relations of modification in the remaining cases. Government and modification are both dependency relations—consisting in the opening of slots—between two constituents, A and B. In those cases in which A opens a slot for B there is government; if, on the other hand, B opens a slot for A, there is modification. The opening of a slot is regarded as the creation of the syntactic-semantic conditions for insertion (Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 8). Concerning periphrasis whose verb in Y is an infinitive, one can say that the verb in X opens a slot for the infinitive: comenzar a __, volver a __, terminar de __, dejar de __, etc. The nexus of these periphrases enables the verb in X, regardless of whether it is transitive or intransitive, to call forth an infinitive. An additional fact supporting the view of the infinitive as "governed" is its being the neutral form of the verb, which "places it [the infinitive] in a position where it can be governed" (Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 7). As for modification, the fact that both gerund and past participle are not neuter forms of the verb points to a different function as that of the infinitive within the periphrasis. These marked forms of the verb perform a modifying (adverbial) function on the verb in X; the presence of the -ndo and -do suffixes in Y in the pattern opens a slot for the conjugated form. The fact that the verbs occupying the X position in the so called cursive (with gerund) and stative (with past participle) periphrases are either state or movement verbs, creates the conditions for later periphrastic fusion. As a result, it is possible to establish a condition on the verb in X: "if it is to be modified and, thus, from a cursive and/or stative periphrasis, it must be a movement or a state verb. If it is to govern, it must be either a modal or a verb able to "take" a nexus, which not every verb can, e.g. "estudio a morir, "como a vivir" (Lehmann & Quesada 1991: 10). Neither of these two syntactic relations can be found in tense or voice periphrases: this is so because the relation between the components of those other constructions is morphological due to the fact that the element in X is completely grammaticalized and, devoid of lexical meaning, can neither exert government nor establish lexical relations.

5. A glimpse at the evolution of periphrastic forms

In this section, I will take a lightning view over the inventory of aktionsart periphrases in Medieval Spanish (MES) in order to compare it with today's aktionsart system. I will take as source Yllera's (1980) impressive work on medieval periphrases; although I disagree with her analysis of some of the constructions as well as on the inclusion of constructions that do not constitute periphrases, I believe this unprecedented work in Spanish linguistics is a useful and reliable point of departure for any analysis of the evolution of Spanish periphrastic constructions. After selecting those constructions which do not perform a grammatical function (tense, diathesis) and those expressing other categories such as modality and causativity, one arrives at the following characterization of aktionsart subcategories in MES.

A. RESULT

This subcategory is somewhat complicated in MES. The reason is that the construction ser + p.p. had a threefold function; it expressed diathesis, perfect (es dicho = ha sido dicho, [it has been said])—during the XII Century the passive voice lacked compound tenses—, and resulting state. In the XV Century, estar finally supplanted ser to express result. Seer (< sedere) + p.p. was also used until the XIV Century to express result; during this time, it competed with estar both in periphrastic and non-periphrastic constructions. Result was also expressed by verbs like fíncar, quedar, remanecer and restar + p.p. Yacer + p.p. was not used to express a resulting state as a state per se (cf. Yllera 1980: 266); this can be explained by the existence of seer. Other verbs expressing states are fallarse, trobarse, darar, permanecer.

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37 Yllera's corpus consisted of approximately one hundred Spanish texts, written between the XIII and XVI centuries.

38 Another discrepancy lies on her traditional definition of auxiliary as well as the criteria used to determine "when" a construction constitutes a periphrasis; in some cases, these can be quite arbitrary. I will obviate these aspects, though, and will make use only of the historical data.

39 The case of ser is actually more complicated; it found itself in a multilateral opposition: with aver in the compound tenses of intransitive verbs; it competed with estar + p.p to express result in the middle voice; it also competed with estar to express passive voice. Presumably, this multiplicity of uses caused ser's relegation as passive voice auxiliary, which in MOS (Modern Spanish) is also tending to be substituted for other constructions (cf. Horn-Berghorn 1983).
B. DIRECTION

Direction was not so clearly structured in MES. The retrospective direction, came into shape rather late (XV Century); Yllera remarks that venir (both in the developing and developed dimensions) was the last intransitive movement verb to be incorporated in the formation of periphrases. As for neutral direction, andar is said to form a periphrasis already in the XII Century, although it appears consolidated in the following century (in both dimensions) (Cf. Yllera 1980: 78f. and 299f.) Finally, (developing) prospective direction goes as far as the XIII Century. Yllera (1980: 70) points out that ir was also used to express retrospective direction; this explains venir's late inclusion in the direction system. Regarding the developed dimension, ir was used in El Cid mostly to indicate result (Yllera 1980: 295). This implies that a subcategory of direction like the one in Modern Spanish (MOS) is a recent creation (XV Century). In the XIII Century, it might have looked like this:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{(ir + -ndo)} & \text{developing:} & \text{neutral} \\
& - - - - - & \text{andar + -ndo} \\
\text{developed:} & \phi & \text{andar + -do} \\
& & \text{result:} \quad \text{prospective} \quad \text{(ir + p.p.} \\
\end{array}
\]

According to the preceding, direction emerged on the basis of neutral direction (that is, only movement) and evolved creating first movement from 'Ego' and later movement towards 'Ego'; this is in accordance with its deictic nature.

C. ITERATIVITY

This subcategory was expressed by the form tornar (alde) + inf., which is attested already in the XIII Century. Since it also expressed ingressive aktionsart (Yllera 1980: 197), it was replaced by volver a during the second half of the XVI Century.

D. HABITUALITY

Under the label frequentative periphrases, Yllera lists the most common constructions expressing habituality in MES. Among them were panchronic soler + inf.; other constructions were usar + inf. (like Eng. 'be used to + -ing'), acostumbrar (a-de) + inf., vesar/avesar + inf. Continuar (a-de) + inf. is said to also express habituality (Yllera 1980: 203). It should be noted that habituality in terms in [± dynamic], that is vivir (today also pasar) + -ndol/do, appeared as late as the XV Century.

E. PHASE

Phase was in MES already an established subcategory; actually, together with result, it had the largest inventory. The ingressive phase was expressed by tomarse a, acogerse a, cogerse a, meterse a, prenderse a, darse a, derrancar a, moverse a, echarse a, ponerse a, etc. The continuous phase had the peculiarity of being expressed by negating its cessation (Yllera 1980: 204f.); the following forms were preceded by non: fincar de, quedar de, dextrar de, partirse de, final de, cesar + inf., cesar + -ndo. Without negation there was the construction continuar a-de + inf., which today has the form continuar + -ndo. The egressive phase was expressed by quedars de + inf., dextrar de + inf., quitarle de + inf., cesar de + inf., cesar + inf. The complementary gradation, recency (which Yllera calls perfective periphrasis), was expressed already in the XIII Century by acabar de + inf. Immenseness was expressed in the XIII Century by estar por + inf. However, neither intensification nor impulsive gradation are registered. It is interesting to note that the nexus was not used in such a regular way as in MOS; a, de and φ alternated before the infinitive. The use of the nexus becomes regularized in MOS; while in MES it can be either de or a for all three basic phases (and gradations), in MOS its distribution becomes more uniform; a signals ingressive, de egressive and -ndo continuous phase. Another characteristic in the evolution to MOS is the disappearance of what Yllera (1980: 208ff.) calls non-realized action, which seems to have been a well established aktionsart; one can call it interruptive phase; it basically expressed fine nuances like immediate future, goal and was expressed by periphrases such as ser por, aver(se) por, estar por, fincar por-a-de + inf., fincar + inf. (the latter meaning 'lacking something'). The interruptive phase suffered a redistribution of its members into other subcategories. As for ser por, its use decreased after the XV Century as a consequence of its competition with estar. When estar substituted ser, it came to express immenseness; other forms went out of use (fincar, restar or aver(se) por, which had a "strange value" (Yllera 1980: 211)).

From this quick overview, some aspects attract attention. First, there is the constitution of the aktionsart subcategories in the evolution to MOS; one can talk about direction from the XV Century on; on the other hand,
a well established category, interruptive phase, disappeared (through a redistribution of the surviving lexical items that expressed it). Secondly, there is a regularization of the nexus; a, denoting goal, emerged as the nexus in periphrases conveying a subsequent meaning: de in its sense of source consolidated as nexus in periphrases expressing egress; (por, appears in a couple of periphrases in MOS: dar [dat] por, estar por). A third aspect concerns the lexical nature of the verb in the X position. In some cases it disappears both from periphrastic constructions and from the active lexicon of the language (as was the case with productive fincar or with seer); in other cases, it only disappears from the pattern (cf. yacer). Another peculiarity in the evolution is the replacement of the verb in X; it can be a mere substitution (tornar vs. volver), or it can be a case of elimination through competition (ser vs. estar). Parallel to that, new items are enrolled in the pattern as synonyms of already existing forms (parar de = dejar de). Indeed, the fact that for most subcategories there is permanent synonymy appears as the most clear indicator of the lexical nature of the verb in X; no one would say that, for example, the cases of comenzar/empesar, dejar/parar or continuar/seguir/proseguir are cases of polymorphy! In conclusion, the process from MES to MOS can be regarded as one tending to the consolidation of a pattern (c(X(n) Y(n)) with a clearly lexico-semantic function (aktionsart); this is borne out by the fact that the verbs in X have never achieved grammaticalization in its fullness.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Aktionsart vs. aspect

In the literature, a methodologically useful clear-cut distinction between these two concepts is more than infrequent; when the division appears it is not always satisfactory (e.g. Fenwick 1980). Brinton (1988: 52) claims for a distinction between aspect and aktionsart; "Aspect categories should be established not on the basis of formal markers existing in a certain language, but on the basis of (universal) notional distinctions. Aktionsart categories must be defined precisely in terms of relevant features". I think that these notional distinctions can only have a hypothetical nature, since they are arrived at precisely by means of language structure; for that reason, the structuring of the elements is of primary importance; to obviate them is to obviate the fact that language structure is, in a sense, the reflex of the relevant concepts of a given linguistic community (cf. Lucko, above). Aktionsart, as a category of the lexical component, has to be defined on the basis of the subcategories, which every language exhibits. Again, their formal expression is essential. For instance, Brinton (1988: 53) does not include iterativity in her aspect model for English because for her iterativity depends on the "aktionsart" of the verb (e.g. knock, hammer); however, she includes phase as aspect with the corresponding markers which she calls "aspectualizers". In Spanish, iterativity is an aktionsart subcategory (expressed, as we saw above, by a prefix re- and by the periphrasis volver a). Following Brinton's reasoning, in Spanish, recomenzar would be aktionsart and volver a comenzar would be aspect, since the latter is not entailed in the verb meaning of comenzar and, in addition, behaves as an "aspectualizer". This is obviously inconvenient (given the fact that recomenzar and volver a comenzar are synonyms). Thus, I consider that formal criteria, when not fetishized, can help bring clarity to problems such as the one in question here.41

I want to stress that the difference between aspect and aktionsart is one of membership to two distinct components of language, their affinity being due to two dimensions: a. semantic, their functions can overlap; b. formal, they are connected by a grammaticalization continuum. As such, then, both aktionsart and aspect are formal manifestations of one and the same communicative function: to depict the various angles in the development of the verbal action; what element belongs to which component of language has to be decided on the basis of the degrees of grammaticalization of each item. The point here is that a semantic category is not inherently grammatical

40The case of estar a punto de may seem to contradict what I said about de's egressive meaning; however, the role of de in this periphrasis is more of a partitive than a real nexus as in the other constructions.

41Brinton (p.c.) remarks that the formal correlation aspect-morphological/aktionsart lexical does not always hold, and therefore regarding iterativity as both aktionsart (expressed by verbs such as twinkle, stammer, and hammer) and aspect (expressed by the progressive + a punctual verb) poses no contradiction. Notwithstanding, I believe that besides being a useful criterion to tackle the problem, this usually holding correlation permits -after determining whether a periphrastic construction is grammaticalized or not- to make generalizations about its evolutive course, its discursive functions, etc.
or lexical but that it is its behavior in the language what determines its linguistic status; there are categories which are grammatical in one language and not in others (e.g. causativity in Turkish vs. Spanish) and there are categories which are not realized at all in some languages (e.g. the tenseless languages, or the so called inferential and evidential tenses in Turkish); periphrastic constructions can but need not be members of the grammatical system of a language, as in Ancient Greek (cf. Binnick 1991: 34). This implies that, as for Spanish, aspect has to be regarded as an established grammatical category with its corresponding markers and aktionsart as a non-grammaticalized category, showing lexical behavior in various respects (s. above). Spanish aktionsart periphrases find themselves in a fuzzy zone (and tend to be remain there, s. 5.) in the continuum grammar-lexicon. According to Pollak (1970: 44), one can refer to aspect as a grammatical category, whose correlates make an opposite unit. The members of the aspectual opposition are termed imperfective and perfective and both constitute the category. Paradigmatically complementary means that one and the same verbal lexeme (e.g. Fr. entrer) has basically two temporally related not separate verb forms: il entra as opposed to il entra. I see no reason why the Spanish aspected system should be considered in other ways, which ultimately lead to incongruities.

6.2 Why most aktionsart periphrases do not grammaticalize

It was said in 5. that Spanish aktionsart periphrases evolve as lexical constructions and that they have not achieved a point of complete grammaticalization. Mathews (1990: 54-5) asserts that "elements expressing aktionsart may be characterized as intermediate between lexical and grammatical states both by formal and semantic criteria". Formally, they are often not invariably bound, typically seem productive, while semantically their meanings are more abstract than those of lexical verbs but more concrete or specific than those of aspectual categories. This statement from Mathews is confirmed by the evolutive course of Spanish aktionsart periphrases. They have an in-between-status in the Spanish verbal system. They tend to behave as a closed set although they are expressed by elements belonging to an open class; on the other hand, the number of aktionsart subcategories in a language cannot be exceedingly large, since their function is to delimit the state of affairs in its various angles. This interplay between limited aktionsart distinctions and open set elements used to express them reducts to their in-between-status in the verbal system. A question arises concerning the fact that some aktionsart periphrases can eventually grammaticalize, as is the case with estar + -ndo, which is far ahead in the grammaticalization process, tending to form an aspectual opposition with the simple form. One possible explanation would be structural needs, but that would not suffice for the whole picture. Trying to answer that question can be of significance for diachronic theory since it could shed light on the conditions needed for the consumption of a necessary step toward the development of new grammatical paradigms in otherwise "symmetrical" (structurally speaking) systems.

References


