

**Claus D. Pusch, Andreas Wesch (eds.):**

*Verbalperiphrasen in den (ibero-)romanischen Sprachen · Perifrasis verbals en les llengües (ibero-)romàniques · Perifrasis verbales en las lenguas (ibero-)románicas*  
 Hamburg: Buske Verlag, 2003 (Romanistik in Geschichte und Gegenwart; Beiheft 9), ISBN 3-87548-319-7, 250 pp.

The topic of periphrastic verbal constructions in Romance has become particularly popular during the last few years as can be seen by several recently published books in this field (Squartini, 1998; Olbertz, 1998; Fernández de Castro, 1999). The volume considered here is a further indication of this trend treating a wide range of different periphrastic constructions and languages. The primary focus of this book are verbal periphrastic constructions in Spanish and Catalan, but Brazilian, Galician, Italian, French, Rhaetoromance and Rumanian are also considered. Two papers even contrast Romance languages with non-European languages: the two being Bantu and Quichua (the Quechua spoken in Ecuador).

The book consists of an introduction by the editors, 18 papers that were originally presented at the 18th German-Catalan Colloquium which formed part of the 27th Conference on Romance Languages held in Munich from 7th to 10th October 2001, and an index of the different verbal constructions treated.

As the publication is not divided into sections according to subject language or linguistic theory but follows an onomasiological scheme of the periphrases I will follow this scheme and thus describe the different papers in order of appearance.

The book starts out with a good introduction chapter by Claus D. Pusch and Andreas Wesch elaborating on the notoriously heterogeneous

semantic and distributional properties of verbal periphrases, mentioning the main themes of inquiry, and also presenting a good synopsis of the difficulties with respect to definitions of and limitations as to what is / can be discussed under the topic of verbal periphrasis.

The article by Félix Fernández de Castro (“El lugar de las perífrasis verbales en la descripción de las lenguas: los verbos auxiliares y la determinación del verbo”) looks into Spanish periphrases arguing that these occupy a specific area, “which is neither grammar nor lexicon but ‘determination’” (p. 11). His main point is that verbal periphrases contribute to a general determination of the verbal and the nominal domain depending on the epistemic stance of the speaker.

Mario Squartini’s article (“La grammaticalizzazione di <venire + participio> in italiano: anticausativo o risultativo?”) argues that in contrast to recent claims one has to see the major role in the grammaticalisation path of the *venire*-passive in resultativity and not in anticausativity. It is a comparative article that draws its arguments from comparing Italian *venire*-passive to Rhaetoromance (*ve*)*gnir*-passive and Iberoromance *venir* + participle.

The article by Hortènsia Curell (“El perfet en català”) is a corpus based article providing a wide range of data from present day Catalan perfective. It is a descriptive article classifying the different instances of present perfect into different types depending on their use and aspectual meanings.

Manuel Pérez Saldanya and José Ignacio Hualde (“On the origin and evolution of the Catalan periphrastic preterit”) present a convincing explanation of why the Catalan “to go” construction developed a perfective past meaning in contrast to English and most Romance “to go” constructions. Their data clearly indicate that the reason for this grammaticalisation path has to be seen in the textual contexts, i.e. the first attestations of the <*vado* + infinitive> construction are found in narrative contexts where the infinitive is a verb of accomplishment and where the subsequent action is expressed in the past tense. In these contexts the interference is such that the action expressed by the infinitive was interpreted as being accomplished.

Hans-Ingo Radatz (“La perífrasis <*vado* + infinitivo> en castellano, francés y catalán: por la misma senda – pero a paso distinto”) discusses the same construction; however, he shows that in Modern Catalan the construction is used with a future tense meaning. The difference between the perfective past and the future tense is due to the appearance of the preposition *a*: *vaig cantar* (I sang) vs. *vaig a cantar* (I’m going to sing).

Odete Pereira da Silva Menon (“Perífrases com o verbo *ir*: variação e gramaticalização”) shows in her article that in Brazilian Portuguese the “to go” construction is even about to replace the synthetic future tense.

The article by Hella Olbertz (“<*venir* + gerundio> en el español andino ecuatoriano – un producto de contacto lingüístico”) identifies in the <*venir* + gerundio> construction a recent past reading, next to the “lexical” and “the perfect of persistent situation” readings. According to her argumentation this is a result of a language contact situation between Quichua and the Spanish spoken in the Andes of Ecuador.

Daniel Burgos (“<*Acabar de* + infinitive> and <*recién* + Past>: Free variation or complementary distribution?”) investigates in which contexts the above structures are used in order to encode “very recent or immediate past” in Argentinean Spanish. It is a corpus based study according to whose data <*recién* + Past> is never used in written language.

Camelia Dragomir’s article (“Le rôle de l’aspect dans le glissement d’une classe processuelle à une autre: Les opérateurs aspectuels de phase en roumain”) investigates aspectual meaning with respect to different verb-classes in Romanian. Drawing data from 5 different texts she shows that these verbs have to be classified according to procedural classes and that in the course of time they might shift into another class.

Luis García Fernández and María Martínez-Atienza (“El aspecto continuativo”) study the different morphological expressions of continuative aspect in Castilian and show why the continuative aspect – even though often expressed by perfective periphrases – is more similar to the imperfective than to the perfective aspect.

Ana Bravo (“Properties of the Prospective Aspect”) continues in her article the investigation of aspect. She examines the “to go” construction in Castilian showing how temporal, aspectual and modal meaning interact within periphrastic verbal constructions.

Sandra Montserrat’s article (“<*venir a* + substantiu> / <*venir a* + infinitiu> en català: el límit del concepte de perífrasi”) is a corpus based diachronic study investigating the above verbal periphrasis in Catalan highlighting convincingly the limits of the concept periphrasis.

The article by Sabine Heinemann (“*Stare*-Periphrasen im Altitalienischen”) starts out by general observations concerning the grammaticalisation of verbal periphrases and then continues to contrast Modern and Old Italian *stare*-periphrases with respect to their occurrence and distribution.

Claus D. Pusch – building on a theory on the interaction of focus and progressive aspect in the Bantu languages – investigates in his article (“As-

pectuality and Focality”) the relevance of focus in progressive aspect constructions in French. He points out that even though predication focus is generally not marked morphologically by a grammaticalized expression in the Romance languages (“with the notable exception of Gascony Occitan”, p. 181) it is an inherent feature of the progressive aspect.

Carsten Sinner’s article (“Valores y usos de <*haber (de) + infinitivo*> y <*tener que + infinitivo*> en diferentes variedades del castellano”) presents the results of a quantitative analysis of the different meanings and uses of a series of Spanish obligative verbal periphrases in bilingual communities in Catalonia and Galicia. He is mainly interested in the interferences between monolingual Spanish and bilingual speakers.

Carme Colominas’ article (“La representació semàntica de les construccions de suport en català”) deals with a special case of light verb constructions for which she proposes a semantic interpretation within HPSG.

The article by Aina Torrent-Lenzen (“La función pragmático-emotiva de las perífrasis verbales en castellano y en otras lenguas románicas”) analyses the pragmatic-contextual aspects of verbal periphrases in Spanish. Using a huge corpus of various sources she shows that there seems to be a connection between the use of certain constructions and the communication of emotive states of mind.

Anna Gavarró’s article (“Modals and aspectuals as functional projections: implications for acquisition and agrammatism”) clearly shows that modals and auxiliaries can be identified both in language acquisition and agrammatism. Using a generative model she takes this as clear evidence for their being functional projections.

The nature of this publication, a collection of works in different frameworks – HPSG (Colominas), Minimalism (Gavarró), Communication Theory (Burgos), Topological Theory (Bravo), Semantic-Functional Theory (Curell) etc. – renders a systematic evaluation rather difficult. I limit myself therefore to general comments applicable to the publication as a whole, and to commentaries regarding the defects and merits of the edition.

The papers of this edition are mostly of high quality and well edited. Many of the works present not only new data but also innovative applications of well-known theories. The publication clearly follows popular topics in current linguistic investigation by contributing to the body of literature pertinent to the semantic and distributional properties of Romance verbal periphrases and by giving insights into the grammaticalisation paths of these constructions.

Due to the different frameworks in which the articles are couched, the book's strength clearly lies in the range and subtlety of the examples cited in developing argumentation. A lot of the articles draw their examples from huge compilations of data which is especially interesting with respect to the non-standard and / or lesser studied Romance languages.

Unfortunately, the linguistic community as a whole will not be able to profit from the abundance of data, since the data is often not translated. Furthermore, the various articles are written in English, German, Italian, French, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese and the abstracts range from 4 lines to 16 lines also written in the many above mentioned languages. Firstly, an abstract of 4 lines is superfluous. Secondly, it would have been very helpful for those who are not familiar with all Romance languages to get at least an abstract of half a page in English (assuming that agreeing on one widely spoken Romance language would be politically incorrect) in order to decide whether an article is worth the trouble of translating.

#### Literature

- Fernández de Castro, Félix (1999): *Las perífrasis verbales en el español actual*. Madrid: Gredos.
- Olbertz, Hella (1998): *Verbal periphrases in a Functional Grammar of Spanish* (Functional Grammar Series; 22). Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Squartini, Mario (1998): *Verbal periphrases in Romance: Aspect, actionality, and grammaticalisation* (Empirical approaches to language typology; 21). Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

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