

**Verbal periphrases in Romance:  
new theoretical, empirical, and methodological challenges**

Workshop conveners:

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**Keywords:** Romance verbal periphrases, grammaticalization, constructionalization, language change, language contact

**Description of the topic and research questions**

Recent decades have seen a growing interest in the study of verbal periphrases in Romance languages such as Fr. *aller* ‘go’ + INF, Gal. *levar* ‘carry’ + GER, It. *venire* ‘come’ + GER, Port. *ficar a* ‘remain at’ + INF (Squartini 1998; Pusch and Wesch 2003; Olbertz 2008; Garachana 2017; Bres and Labeau 2018; Garachana, Montserrat, and Pusch 2022, a.o.). At the synchronic level, the study of these constructions has been carried out mainly from a descriptive perspective to establish their meanings more precisely. Likewise, focus has been put on the very concept of verbal periphrasis itself and on the limits that can be drawn with respect to other linguistic phenomena such as causative constructions and serial verbs (García Fernández et al. 2006; Carrasco Gutiérrez 2008, a.o.). Against this background this workshop addresses the general question of what the basic (formal and semantic) characteristics of the verbal periphrasis in Romance are that determine the inclusion of a combination of verb forms in this category.

In diachrony, the study of periphrases has been strongly marked by two theoretical models: grammaticalization and constructionalization (and, to a lesser extent, lexicalization). The theoretical advance implied by discovering the cognitive foundations of grammatical change, which allows not only to describe the evolution of grammatical constructions, but also to understand underlying motivations of processes of change, has determined the success of grammaticalization. More recently, studies on the diachronic evolution of verbal periphrases have experienced a turn towards constructionalization. The very form of the periphrases, as complex expressions formed by the union of two verbal forms with a procedural meaning, favours a constructional approach (see Comer, Enghels, and Vanderschueren 2015; Garachana 2020). Interestingly, the historical study of periphrases also covers recent periods, including changes that occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some even typical of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, showing the vitality of periphrases as constructions that express fundamental grammatical and discursive values (Amaral 2013; Garachana and Sansiñena 2020, a.o.).

Despite the undoubted added value of grammaticalization and constructionalization theories for the historical study of verb periphrases, it is important not to ignore discourse traditions (see Kabatek 2005[2018]; Octavio de Toledo y Huerta 2018; López Serena 2021). Indeed, the evolution of certain verbal periphrases can only be explained by looking into the effects of language contact or the discourse traditions to which they are frequently associated. Hence this workshop seeks to reinforce the synergies between the theoretical contributions of

grammaticalization, constructionalization, and the study of texts in their philological sense more properly. In this line, the comparison among Romance languages can allow to determine common patterns in the evolution of periphrases, because of (mutual) influence between related languages.

From a methodological point of view, the increase in availability of both historical and synchronic corpora has made it possible to handle large volumes of information providing relevant data about the frequency of use of periphrases over time. Likewise, as large amounts of information are available, the progressive incorporation of various statistical methods such as collocational overlap estimation, collocation analysis or distinctive collexeme analysis, and semantic vector space modelling is being facilitated and allows us to measure the realized and potential productivity of verbal periphrases over time.

Despite these recent advances in the field of study of verbal periphrases, several theoretical and methodological questions remain unanswered. The aim of the workshop is to bring together linguists working on different types of periphrastic constructions in a range of Romance languages, to understand how different types of structures relate to each other, and whether they can all be considered instances of the same phenomenon. The theme of the workshop will encompass the following aspects and research questions:

- The definition and delimitation of the concept VERBAL PERIPHRAISIS, with a focus on multi-verb constructions whose inclusion in the category has been discussed in the literature (e.g. Cat. *semblar* + INF, Fr. *paraître* + INF, Sp. *haber que* + INF).
- The methodological challenges that come out of different theoretical approaches. Can the evolution of verbal periphrases be accounted for from the perspective of grammaticalization and constructionalization or is it also necessary to consider texts, their context of production and discourse traditions? Are these different diachronic hypotheses mutually exclusive? What are the motivations for proposing different hypotheses and how should we proceed to falsify any of these through diachronic corpus research?
- Do periphrases in different languages encompass different evolutionary paths, or are there recurrent evolutionary paths common among Romance Languages?
- The diachronic study of periphrases: origin and evolution of specific constructions, changes in their productivity and motivations for change, linguistic contact as a trigger for their evolution. How does the productivity of verbal periphrases relate to changing token frequency of each of the types of each of the periphrases? How does changing productivity relate to semantic extensions of the periphrases' meaning?
- Which is the importance of Latin in the rise of verbal periphrases in the Romance Languages? Apart from a few examples (e.g. periphrases created from Latin modal verbs *debere* or *velle*), most of the Romance verbal periphrases are considered to have arisen in the Romance Period. However, the role of Medieval Latin in the rise of Romance verbal periphrases such as Cat. *Esser tingut a/de* + INF or Fr. *Être tenu de* + INF is yet to be explained.
- How do the grammatical and lexical items surrounding verbal periphrases condition their evolution (e.g. in the evolution of Sp. *llevar* + GER the presence of a temporal complement cannot be ignored)?

- The interrelations between (quasi)synonymous periphrases, and between periphrases and non-periphrastic 'homonyms'. What is the functional distribution between near-synonymous periphrases both in synchrony and throughout time? What semantic areas do they cover? Do they follow a parallel evolution in terms of collostructional patterns (see Gries & Stefanowitsch 2004)?
- What is the relationship between verbal periphrases and marginal multi-verb constructions associated with the category of periphrasis, such as causatives (Fr. *faire emprisonner le coupable*, It. *far imprigionare il colpevole*, Port. *mandar prender o culpado*) and serial verbs (Cat. *anar i V*, It. *pigliare e V*, Port. *pegar e + V*, Rum. *a se lua i + V*)?
- What motivates the recursivity of verbal periphrases (e.g. Cat. *Hauràs de començar a deixar d'anar al cinema cada dia*, Sp. *Vas a tener que empezar a dejar de ir al cine todos los días*, Fr. *Je vais commencer à manger*)?

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