

58th Annual Meeting of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea*
Université Bordeaux Montaigne (26-29 August 2025)

Workshop proposal

***Turn out* verbs and constructions crosslinguistically:
Properties and boundaries, synchrony and diachrony**

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Keywords

verb categories, lexical aspect, achievement, truth, strong evidence, acquisition of information, (non-)evidentiality, mirativity, lexicalization, and metaphor

1. Background

The idea for this workshop goes back to the SLE2024 talk: “‘*Turn out*’ verbs in European languages: Are they evidentials or something else?” (Dendale *et al.* 2024). ‘*Turn out* verbs’ are verbs such as *s’avérer* (French), *blijken* (Dutch), *resultar* (Spanish/Catalan), *rivelarsi*, *emergersi*, *venire/ uscire/ saltare fuori* (Italian); *ispostaviti se*, *ispasti* (Serbian) that can be translated by English *turn out*, more precisely by *it turns out that* in constructions like (1)-(5):

- (1) Après plusieurs essais, **il s’est avéré que** ce choix n’était pas judicieux. (frTenTen23)
‘After several attempts, it turned out that this choice was not wise.’
- (2) Al snel **bleek dat** er geen camping was. (nlTenTen20)
‘It quickly turned out that there was no campground.’
- (3) Y **resultó que** la semilla no era tan buena como dijeron. (spTenTen18)
‘And it turned out that the seed was not as good as they said.’
- (4) **Si è rivelato che** non era né un aereo né un velivolo conosciuto. (itTenTen20)
‘It turned out that it was neither a plane nor a known aircraft.’
- (5) Kada smo dosli tamo na lice mesta, **ispostavilo se da** ski pass za 6 dana košta [...] 145€. (MacocuSerb)
‘When we arrived there on the spot, it turned out that the ski pass cost 145 euros.’

In the mid-90s, *turn out* verbs have started to be categorized as ‘evidential markers’ (e.g. Nuyts 1994:178, Cornillie 2007, Vliegen 2010, 2011, Tobback & Lauwers 2012, Mortelmans 2022, Miecznikowski 2018): markers indicating how the speaker acquired the information in the sentence (by inference, hearsay or direct perception), viz. markers expressing “source of knowledge/information”. *Turn out* verbs have often been paired with *seem* verbs (e.g. Cornillie 2007, Aijmer 2009, Vliegen 2011, Mortelmans 2017), considered – rather uncontroversially – inferential evidentials. But are they similar to *seem* verbs (see e.g. Lampert 2020b for criticism)? Some scholars prefer to describe them as *appear* verbs (e.g. Nuyts 1994, Miecznikowski 2018, Mortelmans 2002a).

The categorization of *turn out* verbs as evidentials was challenged by Dendale (2019a, 2019b) and Dendale *et al.* (2024), in particular when used in the impersonal *that*-construction (see (1)-(5)). The

core argument was that it is not the *verbs* themselves that indicate the type of source of knowledge but the *context* in which these verbs appear or the type of *content* they qualify.

2. Main questions and focus of the workshop

If *turn out* verbs *do* not indicate how the speaker acquired the information contained in the sentence, they cannot be evidentials. But what then do they indicate? And to what category of verbs do they belong, semantically?

We expect contributions to the workshop to suggest answers to these questions for *turn out* verbs and constructions in different languages. We look forward to new semantic characterizations and/or critical assessments of existing ones, in the same vein as earlier scholarship (e.g. Vliegen 2011, Serrano-Losada 2017a/2017b, Miecznikowski 2018, Mortelmans 2022, Dendale *et al.* 2024).

According to the most recent study (Dendale *et al.* 2024), *turn out* verbs express the emergence of new knowledge, presented as verified true, retrospectively correcting or completing previous knowledge. The knowledge often appears surprising, a property that earned them the label “mirativity markers” (e.g. Serrano-Losada 2017, 2020 for *resultar*; Mortelmans 2022 for *blijken*). Semantically, *turn out* verbs – in the languages already looked at – seem to be ‘achievement’ type events (Vendler 1957). Unlike ‘discovery-verbs’ (Clark 2010, Dendale 2019) like *to find out*, *scopririsi*, they are non-agentive and primarily ‘content-centered’. They have only one thematic role, an Object, representing knowledge that is signified to have emerged, to have ‘come to light’ (Dendale *et al.* 2024), and they focus on the emergence of that knowledge, rather than on the search and discovery events that preceded (and which the achievement verb presupposes). Through these verbs, the speaker indicates that a new state of knowledge is acquired, but without mentioning the speaker’s role in that. These kinds of verbs, therefore, appear in impersonal constructions with a *that*-clause, (1)-(5), in subject-raising constructions and in parenthetical constructions (*x, as it turns out, p*).

This preliminary account of what can be called ‘*turn out* semantics’ would benefit from being documented and assessed for its usefulness in researching other languages.

3. Possible types of contributions

Contributions to the workshop can be single-language descriptive studies (e.g. corpus studies), aimed at cataloging *turn out* verbs in different languages and understanding their syntactic features as well as their lexical and pragmatic meanings.

Because of the crosslinguistic perspective adopted, we welcome typological studies or comparative studies (based on parallel corpora or direct translation equivalents).

Contributions can be both synchronic and diachronic ones.

There is also insight to be expected from sociolinguistic and language acquisition studies: How and when do children discover these verbs?

Contributors are free to work within any framework or language model: construction grammar, grammaticalization theory, semantic primes, functional or cognitive grammar, formal semantics, etc.

Finally, contributions can be theoretical, conceptual, and argumentative: arguments in favor of/against earlier categorizations of *turn out* verbs as evidentials, miratives, epistemic modals or aspectual markers.

4. Research topics and questions

- Inventory of the syntactic constructions *turn out* verbs can have in different languages.
- Meaning differences among co-existing *turn out* verbs in specific languages.

- Relations of polysemy in *turn out* verbs, distinguishing between ‘*turn out* meanings’ and other, ‘non-*turn out* meanings’.
- Boundaries and membership criteria of the ‘*turn out* category’, its general characterization, and the criteria by which ‘prototypical’ *turn out* verbs contrast with ‘periphrastic’ ones or ‘non-*turn out* verbs’ (French *Il s’avère que* versus *Il se trouve que*; Italian *si è rivelato* versus *si è scoperto*; English *wind up/end up* versus *turn out*) and the question whether *turn out* verbs can be considered a legitimate ‘category’ in linguistics.
- The most appropriate name for this ‘new’ category: ‘discovery verbs’, ‘*appear* verbs’, ‘dynamic *appear* verbs’, ‘*come to light* verbs’, ‘happencases verbs’...
- *Turn out* verbs in relation to mirativity, evidentiality, and epistemic modality.
- Divergent lexicalizations of *turn out* expressions in different languages and their motivation (metaphorical or other); the role and meaning of particles in the meaning of phrasal *turn out* verbs (*out* in English *turn out*, *fuori* in Italian *saltare fuori*, ...).
- The evolutionary processes involved in the *turn out* verb semantics, represented in mental maps.
- The aspectual properties (*Aktionsart*) of *turn out* verbs: Do these hold true across all languages?
- The restrictions on the tenses in which *turn out* can appear (progressive form, conditional, future), their respective frequencies, and the meaning differences they generate.

5. Call for abstracts:

We invite scholars to submit 500-word abstracts for 20-minute talks during the Workshop, to be held at the *58th SLE Conference*, Bordeaux, 26-29 August 2025. Deadline for submitting abstracts in *EasyChair* is **January 15, 2025**.

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