

‘Turn out verbs’ or ‘emergence-of-knowledge’ verbs crosslinguistically: properties and category boundaries

Workshop proposal for the 59th Annual Meeting of SLE
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Convenors

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Keywords

verb semantics, emergence of information / knowledge, mirativity, lexical aspect, achievement, truth, lexicalization strategies, metaphor, metonymy

Call for abstracts

We invite scholars to submit provisional abstracts treating one of the topics or questions below **not longer than 300 words**, examples included (the small reference list falls outside the 300-word count). The deadline for submission is **15 November 2025**. Please send the abstracts to both convenors: ana.stulic@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr and patrick.dendale@uantwerpen.be.

1. Research Background

This workshop proposal builds on the achievements of the SLE2025 workshop “*Turn out verbs and constructions cross-linguistically: Properties and boundaries, synchrony and diachrony*” (Dendale & Stulic 2025). It examined verbs, in a variety of languages (Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greenlandic, Italian, Latin, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, East Caucasian languages), translatable rather literally by English *turn out* in sentences like in (1)-(6) for *s’avérer* (French), *blijken* (Dutch), *resultar* (Spanish/Catalan), *rivelarsi* (Italian), and *ispostaviti se* (Serbian):

- (1) Ayant mystérieusement recouvré ses esprits, il regarda, horrifié, si le bébé était intact, ce qui **s’avéra** être le cas. (ftt23) *‘Having mysteriously regained consciousness, he looked around in horror to see if the baby was unharmed, which **turned out** to be the case.’*
- (2) De storm was ruim van tevoren voorspeld en **bleek** zelfs iets minder hevig dan was verwacht. (nlft20) *‘The storm had been forecast well in advance and **turned out** to be even less severe than expected.’*
- (3) Ahí te quiero yo ver cuando **resulte que** sale con otra persona y tú todavía no lo hayas superado. (estt23) *‘I want to see how you handle it when **it turns out** he’s with someone else and you’re still not over him.’*
- (4) L'uomo, **è emerso**, era in realtà uno spacciatore di cocaina collegato al 51enne di Seregno. (ittt20) *‘It emerged that the man was actually a cocaine dealer linked to the 51-year-old from Seregno.’*
- (5) U tom trenutku **ispostavilo se** da je ćutanje pravo zlato. (MaCoCu21-22) *‘At that moment, **it turned out** that silence was truly golden.’*
- (6) **It is turning out** that our universe has lots of black holes. (entt20)

These verbs have been categorized, fairly consistently, from 1994 onwards, as evidential markers (Nuyts 1994, Cornillie 2007, Vliegen 2010, 2011, Tobback & Lauwers 2012, Miecznikowski 2018, Trbojević Milošević 2018, Mortelmans 2022, Pisciotta 2025). This means that the contribution of these verbs to the meaning of the sentence was seen as indicating how the information in the sentence was acquired by the speaker (by inference, hearsay or direct perception). After it was first shown that they are not

evidentials (Dendale, Izquierdo & Stulic, SLE2024), it became clear next that they indicate the emergence of a piece of knowledge, remaining vague as for the manner in which the knowledge had been acquired (Dendale & Stulic SLE2025). We, therefore, propose to call them, alternatively, *emergence-of-knowledge verbs*, a term that accounts better for the semantics of these verbs than ‘*turn out verbs*’.

Among the outcomes of the SLE2025 WS was the establishment of a set of necessary conditions for membership in the category of emergence-of-knowledge verbs:

1. They are verbs or verbal phrases
2. They are monovalent
3. Their sole argument consists in the semantic role of Theme (Gruber 1965, Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005: 83-84) or Object (Fillmore 1971:376), never that of Agent, Experiencer, or Patient
4. This theme has the ontological status of "third-order entity" (Lyons 1977): ‘proposition’ (P) and ‘knowledge / information’
5. The proposition P has the alethic status of a ‘verified truth’
6. Semantically, the verbs denote an emergence-of-knowledge event
7. This event is taken as the automatic result of two types of ‘preparatory events’: events of collecting knowledge and events of verifying and validating it
8. Aspectually, emergence-of-knowledge verbs are achievements: dynamic, telic and punctual
9. Depending on the tense, emergence-of-knowledge verbs refer to a past, a recent past, a future or a hypothetical event, but never to an event that takes place at the moment of speech.

The following properties of their context were identified:

The context can specify:

10. the moment at which the knowledge emerges
11. the stretch of time during which the preparatory events took place
12. the type of preparatory event that took place
13. the type of initial state of knowledge involved
14. the epistemic modality of the emergence-of-knowledge verb

Research presented at the WS has shown that there are many alternatives to the *turn out* verbs. These verbs could be objects of further study in the WS.

- Besides *emergere* and *rivelarsi* – well-known emergence-of-knowledge verbs in Italian (Miecznikowski 2018) – the SLE2025 WS brought to the fore the phrasal verbs *saltare fuori*, *venire fuori*, *uscire fuori*, *spuntare fuori*, and *sbucare fuori*, frequently used with emergence-of-knowledge meaning (see also Pisciotta 2025).
- Several verbal phrases presented at the SLE2025 WS as alternatives for more prototypical *turn out* verbs were equivalents of “become clear”: Latin *apparere*, Turkish *belli olmak*, Finnish *selvitä* and Estonian *selguma*. This phrasal verb exists in many more languages: besides English itself, e.g. Dutch *duidelijk worden*, French *devenir clair*, *devenir evident*, etc. It poses the questions what the precise meaning is in those languages of the adjectives corresponding to *clear* and whether the expressions fulfil the necessary conditions of membership of the class.
- More generally, it became clear that the number of potential emergence-of-knowledge verbs is much higher than expected until now. Besides the well-known and well-analyzed verbs *s’avérer* and *se révéler*, French for instance has phrasal verbs like: *apparaître (au grand jour) que*, *transparaître que*, *émerger que*, *se dégager que*, *se faire jour que*, *se dévoiler que*, *se confirmer que*, *se vérifier que*, *se démontrer que*, whose full membership of the class of emergence-of-knowledge verbs is worth examining more closely. The same holds true for Dutch, which does not only have a stand-alone verb *blijken* but also verbal phrases like: *naar voren komen dat*, *aan het licht komen dat*, *aan de oppervlakte komen dat*, *boven water komen dat*, *uitlekken dat*, *bekend worden dat*, etc. Also Spanish has alternatives to *resultar*, such as: *descubrirse que*, *revelarse que*, *salir que*, *salir a (la) luz que*, *demostrarse que*, *confirmarse que*, *corroborarse que*, *verificarse que*, *hacerse claro que*, *surgir que*, *filtrarse que*, etc.

2. Research topics and questions

2.1. Inventory of emergence-of-knowledge verbs and their meaning differences

1. Identification of alternative verbs that meet the criteria of emergence-of-knowledge verbs
2. Comparison of the semantics of 'emergence-of-knowledge synonyms' in individual languages, or across languages
3. Description of possible meaning differences between the various constructions in which appear emergence-of-knowledge verbs
4. Description of the links between the "emergence-of-knowledge" use of *turn out* verbs and the other uses of these verbs in their verbal polysemy

2.2. Membership issues

5. Critical assessment of the features of emergence-of-knowledge verbs listed above and consequences of the omission of certain features for the coherence of the category (e.g. the non-agentivity feature)
6. Structuration of the category of emergence-of-knowledge verbs in terms of prototypical and less prototypical members
7. Should transitive verbs in the passive form (e.g. in French, Spanish, Italian: *Il se degage que, si è scoperto, se descubrió que, ...*), without agent (*il a été découvert que, it was found that*) be considered to belong to emergence-of-knowledge verbs or not? Does this violate the condition of absence of an Agent, Patient or Experiencer role?
8. Are verbal phrases that translate *become clear* into other languages to be considered emergence-of-knowledge verbs and what the adjective means in those languages?

2.3. Properties of these verbs

9. Critical analysis of the necessary features listed above and on the consequences of the omission
10. Description of the aspectual properties (*Aktionsart*) of the different emergence-of-knowledge verbs (the question is whether they are the same for all the lexemes across different languages)
11. Study of the presence of modal/evidential markers in the subordinate clause of an emergence-of-knowledge verb in the light of the truth requirement of P

2.4. Diachrony

12. Mapping of the diachronic processes involved in the semantics of emergence-of-knowledge verbs (semantic maps, mental maps)
13. The different strategies involved in the choice of new lexemes or the development of uses of verbs with "emergence of knowledge" meaning (metaphorical transfer, metonymic extension, extension from the spatial to the abstract domain, subjectivation, grammaticalization, constructionalization,...) and the type of prepositions/particles (*out, naar voren, naar boven, fuori...*) involved in these strategies
14. The differences in how certain emergence-of-knowledge verbs profile specific aspects of their meaning (e.g. the main event, the preparatory events, the final state of knowledge) through the choice of the certain lexical items.

2.5. Theoretical and methodological issues

15. The relationships between the emergence-of-knowledge verbs and the phenomena of mirativity or epistemic modality
16. The differences between the defining notions of *knowledge* and *information* in relation to the semantics of these verbs
17. Methodological issues in the study of emergence-of-knowledge verbs

2.6. Pragmatics

18. The 'raison d'être' of emergence-of-knowledge verbs and their pragmatic uses
19. The rise, development and uses of discourse markers based on emergence-of knowledge verbs

We expect contributions to the workshop to address these topics and to suggest answers to the questions. We look forward to new analyses and/or critical assessments of existing ones.

3. Possible types of contributions

Contributions to the workshop can be single-language descriptive studies (e.g. corpus studies) or comparative studies (based on parallel corpora or direct translation equivalents). We especially welcome studies of emergence-of-knowledge verbs in languages not yet studied in the previous SLE2025 Workshop.

Contributions can be both synchronic and diachronic.

There is also interesting insight to be expected from sociolinguistic and language acquisition studies (how and when do children acquire these verbs?)

Contributions can also be theoretical, conceptual, and argumentative: arguments in favor of/against earlier categorizations of emergence-of-knowledge verbs as evidentials, miratives, epistemic modals or aspectual markers.

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