

## Constructions at the intersection of lexicalization and grammaticalization.

### Some convergences and divergences between Spanish and French gerund constructions.

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Aspectually imperfective, the gerund zooms in on a specific facet of a scene, abstracting away from its temporal limits. Denoting a co-event, it is particularly suited to function as satellite, in particular with motion and communication verbs, as Spanish and French are both verb-framed languages (cf. Talmy 2000: Ch. 3) (1). Its structural position is not the same in the two languages, however. On the one hand, the French gerund (*en V-ant*) can alternate with the present participle (*V-ant*), while in present-day Spanish there is no such form to compete with (2). On the other hand, the ‘progressive’, periphrastic gerund is very common in Spanish, whereas its French counterpart is lexically very restricted and hardly used anymore (3). In addition to its broader functional range, the Spanish gerund is also linearly more mobile than the French gerund.

- (1) Aún estaba a distancia, había cruzado la calle *sorteando* los pocos coches sin buscar un semáforo [...] [CTBL 24]  
Elle était encore assez loin, elle avait traversé la rue *en évitant* les rares voitures sans prendre par les feux [...] [CTBL\_T 28]  
‘She was still at some distance, she had crossed the street *avoiding* the rare cars without looking for traffic lights [...]
- (2) Lo [= el sobre] recogió y con él en la mano paseó al azar por las calles *buscando* siempre la acera donde daba el sol. [LSEE 35]  
Elle la [= l’enveloppe] ramassa et, la lettre à la main, se promena au hasard dans les rues, *choisissant* toujours le trottoir ensoleillé. [LSEE\_T 39]  
‘She picked it [= the envelop] up and with it in the hand walked haphazardly through the streets looking always for the sidewalk where the sun shined.’
- (3) Sigue trabajando en la universidad  
Elle [travaille toujours / continue à travailler / \*travaillant/ \*en travaillant] à l’université  
‘She keeps working at the university’

This suggests a different conceptualization of the basic co-extensiveness relation, traditionally defined in terms of ‘simultaneity’. Drawing on reference grammars and on insights presented in individual studies such as those mentioned below, it is possible to formulate as working hypothesis that in French the present participle (*V-ant*) signals that the conceptualization exceeds the limits of ‘simultaneity’ in a broad sense, whereas the gerund (*en V-ant*) marks the relevance of the accompanying action for comprehending the central one, maintaining a holistic view on the scene and fulfilling an anchoring function by virtue of the containment metaphor (*en* ~ ‘in’). By contrast, the present participle has a more limited scope, denoting casual, participant-oriented, unbounded side-events. The Spanish gerund, for its part, participates in an array of constructional patterns, is highly productive, and operates at a highly schematic level, with few combinatorial constraints and a broad interpretive latitude regarding the chosen perspective, the modal relation and the conceptual continuity it introduces at discourse level.

On the basis of the empirical evidence offered by a double parallel corpus of French and Spanish novels with their published translations, the aim is to explore the language preferences, progressively widening the scope, from periphrases, over quasi periphrases and non-periphrastic yet still conceptually integrated constructions, to gerunds yielding a larger discourse perspective.

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