

THE SEMIOTIC AND METASEMIOTIC CHANGE WITHIN THE CONCEPTUAL CATEGORY OF ASPECT

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The English language possesses a clear-cut grammatical aspectual system expressed by the opposition of finite and non-finite continuous/non-continuous forms, supported by lexical, lexical grammatical, and prosodic means, as part of the corresponding conceptual category. In Romanian the grammatical continuous aspect is subservient, the lexical, lexical-grammatical and prosodic aspectual categorial means being prominent. The system of the finite continuous expressive forms are attested and regularly used in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian, while in Romanian they are gradually getting out of usage. In the contrasted languages one could observe the tendency of stylistic transposition.

Keywords: *continuous forms, stylistic transposition, conceptual category, categorial forms, lexical-grammatical.*

EVOLUȚIA SEMIOTICĂ ȘI METASEMIOTICĂ ÎN CADRUL CATEGORIEI CONCEPTUALE A ASPECTULUI

În limba engleză domină categoria aspectuală durativă exprimată de opoziția formelor gramaticale predicative și nepredicative continue. Celelalte mijloace aspectuale sunt gramaticale, lexical-gramaticale, lexicale, contextuale și prozodice. Aceste elemente ale categoriei conceptuale aspectuale există și în alte limbi, cu prevalarea unor sau altor mijloace, folosite în majoritatea limbilor europene cu prevalarea unor sau altor forme. Sunt analizate forme aspectuale diferite în limba engleză comparativ cu exemple din limbi apropiat și îndepărtat înrudite. În limba română aspectul continuu este în proces de ieșire din uz și este folosit preponderent în scopuri metasemiotice. Formele aspectuale lexicale, gramaticale, lexical-gramaticale, prozodice și contextuale, luate împreună, contribuie la exprimarea categoriei aspectuale conceptuale. Formele aspectuale dominante în plan diacronic pot ceda locul altor mijloace.

Cuvinte-cheie: *categorie aspectuală durativă, aspect continuu, mijloace lexicale, mijloace lexical-gramaticale, forme durative, categorie aspectuală conceptuală.*

Grammatical, lexical-grammatical, lexical categories as part of conceptual taxonomies consist of marked and unmarked forms. The perfective and imperfective aspect is attested in many languages as the main category expressing finished - unfinished actions. The aspectual opposition of the continuous/non-continuous structures appeared in Latin during the formation of the Romance languages. In English both the finite and non-finite constructions with participle I were attested in Middle English texts: *He is singende* [8, p.287]. In Modern English the continuous forms have become a dominant aspectual means of rendering durative actions expressed by both finite and non-finite forms. There also exist some minor lexical and lexical-grammatical aspectual means, which can be further intensified by prosody. In Romanian, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish the finite and non-finite continuous or durative aspectual forms have been regularly used for expressivity. Aspect is the way an action is viewed and in English it is an extremely reliable and grammatically impeccable way of expressing the opposition in question. In Romanian the category of aspect is expressed by grammatical, lexical and lexico-grammatical means. Lexical and phonological elements are used as intensifiers. Grammatical durative and unfinished actions in Romanian are expressed by imperfectul and constructions with gerunziul. In Russian the lexico-grammatical perfective and imperfective opposition is used in all the tense categorial forms, underlying the fact that the action is either finished or unfinished and extended in time. In English linguistics there are attested several aspectual oppositions, put forward by various authors: continuous/non-continuous, perfect/imperfect; perfect/continuous and many lexical aspectual units, express-ing a variety of oppositions in the field. Context, supra-segmental and suprasyntactic prosody should also be taken into consideration. Much depends on the speaker's intention, whether he wants to describe the action in development, extended or just to express an action as very short or habitual, without paying attention to the marked categorial meaning. In the first sentence of the examples *Yesterday at five o'clock I met my friends/Yesterday at five o'clock I was meeting my friends* the speaker just mentions the fact of meeting his friends, in the second it is intensified by the action developing in time. Durative or imperfective verbs can express continuous aspect both lexically and lexico-grammatically, the latter intensifies the categorial meaning. Thus, *He sat at the table / He was sitting at the table. A man stood at the door / I looked*

out of the window. A man was standing at the door are confronted with imperfect forms both in Russian and Romanian: Он сидел за столом; El ședea la masă; Человек стоял у двери; Un bărbat stătea la ușă (Am văzut un bărbat stând la ușă). In the case of He sat at the table and A man stood at the door the lexical aspectual meaning of “sat” and “stood” is durative, and it can be intensified by superimposing a grammatical aspectual meaning on the lexical one in was sitting and was standing. The Romanian and Russian equivalents belong to the imperfective aspect and express an unfinished and extended action; the grammatical duration here is supplemented by the lexical one. Terminative and point-action verbs can also be used in the continuous aspect if the action is repeated or the speaker wants to stress the fact that the action developed during a certain period of time. For example: The boy jumped over the fence / The boy was jumping round the tree. I began to read, but the teacher interrupted me / I was beginning to read when he came in. In Romanian we have the same situation: Băiatul a sărit peste gard / Băiatul sărea în jurul copacului; Vedeam un băiat sărind în sus. Eu am început să citesc, dar profesorul m-a întrerupt / Eu începeam să citesc, când el a intrat. The opposition of perfect and continuous aspect is similar to the perfective and imperfective aspectual opposition in the Slavic languages. In this case the sentence I had been working at my article for three hours before he came back would express both perfect and continuous meanings. The perfect form, depending on the context, can express either a finished or unfinished aspectual action. In I wrote a letter yesterday and I had written a letter yesterday by five o'clock both verbal forms express a perfect(ive) in the sense that they are finished, but had written also expresses the categorical meaning of anteriority or taxis. In Modern Romanian there exists a system of periphrastic (potential) or durative forms similar to the English continuous ones (also available in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian), consisting of the auxiliary verb a fi (to be) and gerunziul. In the indicative these forms are rarely used now: 1) Indicative mood: will be writing - va fi scriind, will have been writing - va fi fost scriind, is writing - este scriind, was writing - era scriind, has been writing - a fost scriind, să fie scriind, să fi fost scriind, de ar fi scriind, de ar fi fost scriind etc. In Modern Romanian the periphrastic (potential) or durative forms are rarely used in the indicative mood. In the XVII-XIX centuries they were regularly attested: Era ca oile rătăcindu [7, p.36]. Au fost avându prieteșug mare cu Pătru Vodă [7, p.123]. Erau trecând printr-o pădure mare și deasă; Au fost dormind la bisearica lui svetin Benedict [7, p.83]. Și era mergându și apropiindu-mă către Damascu [7, p.90]. Durative aspectual constructions of fi+gerunziul are used for expressivity. In the oblique moods the durative forms are still used: – Unde-i Petru? Va (o) fi lucrând în livadă. Să fie el lucrând? De ar fi el lucrând! Unde era Petru? O(aș) fi fost lucrând în livadă. Vei fi văzând tu multe, dar eu nu observ nimic [7, p.112]. The forms fi lucrând, fi fost lucrând are durative infinitives in Romanian. They are not usually considered as such in the existing grammar books. The complete list of infinitives expressing tense, voice and anteriority categorial oppositions is: a scrie - a fi scris/ă (simple future passive voice), a fi scris (future perfect active voice) - a fi fost scris/ă, a fi scriind - a fi fost scriind. Occasional use of indicative durative forms in the Romanian literary style is still attested in both written and spoken variants. Thus, in the translation from French of the book Regina Margo we find: El s-a accidentat și acum este suferind. (A.Duma) Este suferind is much more expressive than suferă in El s-a accidentat și acum suferă. In Modern Romanian such indicative forms are rarely used: El s-a accidentat și acum este suferind. In the oblique moods these grammatical forms are still attested, especially in colloquial speech. All the constructions of participle I in English usually have identical equivalents in Romanian. These constructions in English and Romanian are used both aspectually and for expressivity: I saw Andrew (him) crossing the street – Eu l-am văzut pe Andrei trecând strada; He said looking around – El a spus uitându-se în jur; He came running – El venea fugind; Walking in the park he met Helen – Plimbându-se prin parc, el a întâlnit-o pe Elena. The constructions, regularly used and confronted in both languages, are: Accusative with participle I in English and Accusative with gerunziul in Romanian: Young Francis was seeing the darkies working in the cotton fields - Tânărul Francis îi vedea pe negri muncind pe plantațiile de bumbac (J.Galsworthy); Dupin was moving quickly to the door, when we again heard him coming up - Dupin se mișca repede spre ușa, când peste o clipă îl auzirăm pe necunoscut urcând din nou (E.Po). The next construction is Nominative with Participle I and Nominative with gerunziul: He was seen running to the river – El a fost văzut fugind spre râu. Nominative absolute: The dinner being ready, he dished and served it up – Prânzul fiind gata, el a servit masa; The house door being open, she went in before Tom, requesting him to follow her (M.Twain) - Ușa casei fiind deschisă, ea a intrat înaintea lui Tom, cerându-i s-o urmeze. Absolute Participle construction and Absolute gerunziul construction: A lake with children swimming in it, appeared and disappeared – Un

lac, **cu copii scăldându-se în el, apăru și dispăru.** Double predicate: *The little maid came running down – Fetița venea fugind în jos. He walked singing – El mergea cântând.* Such sentences can be easily transformed: *He walked singing = He walked and he was singing - El mergea cântând = El mergea și cânta;.* An aspectual form, which is common to Romance languages, is the imperfect. Imperfectul in Romanian is regularly confronted with the English continuous aspect or past indefinite with a durative meaning.: *They were waiting for the judge and Mariette was thinking of all the money Don Cesare had spent (Ei așteptau judecătorul, Mariet se gândea la toți banii, pe care Don Cezare îi cheltuise).* The continuous is very often used for expressivity. Simple past in English is often used to express not only point actions, but also extended ones: *He represented for her the reality of things (El reprezenta pentru ea ralitatea vieții); Plain people were in the ascendant (Oamenii mai simpli erau în ascensiune)* [8, p.207-209]. Some words in English lexically express a durative or interminative action. All the verbs in English, including the putandi and sentiendi ones can be used in the continuous aspect. The same could be said about the habitual and repeated actions, accompanied by words possessing a certain durative meaning: *always, permanently, etc.* In Spanish, Portuguese and Italian the durative structures, in both the indicative and oblique moods, in finite and non-finite forms are still regularly used, mainly for expressivity. Thus, in the Spanish expressive style the durative forms exist in all the grammatical tense forms: *Estoy hablando. I am speaking. Eu vorbesc; Estoy mirando estas revistas. I am looking through these magazines. Privesc aceste reviste; Juan esta comendo. John is eating. Ion servește masa; Hemos estado nadando tres horas. We have been swimming for 3 hours. Înotăm de 3 ore* [2, p.223]. *The passengers are arriving at their destination. Pasagerii sosesc (ii vedem sosind) la destinație. Los pasajeros estarán llegando a su destino; Ayer estuve repasando la gramática. Yesterday I was revising grammar. Ieri repetam gramatica. ? Quantas horas estuvimos durmiendo? For how many hours were we sleeping? Câte ore dormeam/am dormim noi?* [6, p.1-16]. *Mañana estaré trabajando todo el día en la biblioteca. Tomorrow I shall be working in the library the whole day through. Mâine voi lucra toată ziua în bibliotecă* [1, p.196]. Thus, the continuous or durative forms in Spanish and English are regularly confronted. In Spanish they are mainly used for expressivity. In Romanian the contextual, lexical and lexical grammatical aspectual means prevail over the grammatical ones. In Portuguese the construction *estar+gerundio* is also regularly used: *Eu estou estudando na Universidade. I am studying/ study at the university. Studiez la universitate; Ele estava lendo quando ela me chamou. He was reading when she called me. El citea când ea m-a chemat; Amanha estaremos preparando toda a documentação. Tomorrow we shall be preparing all the documents. Mâine noi vom pregăti toată documentația* [3, p.324]. Similar constructions are used in Italian: *Marcovaldo stava portando a spasso la famiglia. Marcovaldo is getting his family out for a walk. Marcovaldo iese la plimbare cu familia sa; Pietro sta leggendo un libro. Peter is reading a book. Petru (la momentul dat) citește o carte; Egli andava dicendo delle bugie. He was telling a lie. El spunea neadevărul.* In Spanish, Portuguese and Italian there are several constructions with *gerundio* expressing durative aspectual actions. Thus, *ficar+gerundio* in Portuguese expresses an action in progress: *Fico olhando para o retrato. I have been looking at the picture. Andar a+infinitive: A Teresa anda falando da mudança de casa. Teresa is speaking of exchanging the flat. Tereza vorbește de schimbarea apartamentului* [3, p.325]. *Estar+ gerundio* can be substituted by *estar a + infinitive* with a durative meaning: *O Pedro esta a ler o novo livro.* The same is in *ficar+gerundio*, where *gerundio* is substituted by the infinitive: *Fico a estudar 3 horas.* The construction *continuar (seguir, prosseguir) +gerundio: Ele continua lendo o jornal.* They went on reading the magazine. The construction *continuar a+infinitive: Ele continua a ler o jornal.* In both examples the durative lexical meaning of *continuar* is prevailing and compensating the use of a grammatical non-continuous form. *Ficar+gerundio* express a durative action as well: *Fico olhando para o retrato. I have been looking at the picture.* *Estar+gerundio* can be substituted by *estar a+infinitive: O Pedro esta a ler o novo livro. Peter is reading (reads) a new book. Ficar+gerundio* can be substituted by infinitive: *Fico a estudar 3 horas. I have been learning for three hours. Studiez de 3 ore. Continuar (seguir, prosseguir) + gerundio* is also durative: *Ele continua lendo o jornal. He continues reading the magazine.* Here the grammatical and lexical duration are combined. *Continuar a + infinitive: Ele continua a ler o jornal. He continues reading the journal* [3, p.325]. In constructions with infinitive the grammatical aspectual durative meaning is weaker than in constructions with *gerundio*. The same is attested in English: *He continues reading the magazine* is easily substituted by *He continues to read/He goes on reading.* As to the durative lexical and grammatical aspect in French and German it is expressed by imperfect, constructions with present participle, gérondif and lexical and contextual meanings: *Ils représentaient pour elle la réalité de la vie. El reprezenta*

pentru ea realitatea vieții. Sa conscience *répétait l'écho des commentaires de Fleur à la lettre de Annie Bergfeld. Conștiința îi repeta* ecoul comentariilor lui Fleur la scrisoarea Anei Bergfeld. [8, p.206]. Confronting participle I / gerunziul we observe the corresponding equivalents: a) Participle I - participe présent - gerunziul: *Tom lay... watching the two intently. Tom était couche... les fixant des yeux tous le deux; Tom stătea culcat, scurtându-i lung cu privirea pe amândoi;* b) Participle I - gérondif - gerunziul: *Hier soir je me suis endormi en lisant. Asară am adormit citind;* c) Participle I - imparfait – imperfectul/gerunziul: *1. Tom lay thinking. Tom était couché et pensait/en pensent. Tom sta culcat și se gândea/gândindu-se* [8, p.206]. The French imparfait and the Romanian imperfectul express durative aspectual meanings. Durative combinations in German: *Wir sahen den spielenden Kindern zu. Ne-am uitat la copiii care se jucau. Er kam lachend die Treppe herunter. He came laughing down the staircase. El venea râzând înjos pe scară. Das Kind kam weinend nach Haus. The child came home crying. Copilul venea plângând acasă. Er erreichte schwimmend das andere Ufer. A ajuns înotând la celălalt mal* [12, p.75]. In German like in French the durative actions are expressed by the forms of imperfect constructions with Gerondif and Partizip Präsens (Partizip I), possessing durative aspectual meanings. In Spanish (like in Italian, Portuguese) there are other verbs combined with gerundio to express durative actions: *ir, andar, venir, seguir, continuar, quedar(se), permanecer: Las muchachas continuán charlando (went on chattering). Un hombre extraño se quedo registrandome (went on inspecting me) con la vista de arriba abajo. Ellos, los chicos, habian ido creciendo y saliendo a la vida* [2, p.222; 1, p.196]. *Ir+gerundio* is regularly used: *Recalde miraba el agujero... que iba haciendose (was getting more and more) mas grande. Hay que ir pensando (get thinking) en eso, ahora que has acabado el bachillerato. Ya voy comprendiendo (start understanding) que mi vecino tenia razon* [2, p.225]. The combination *seguir+gerundio* expresses durative actions in all the tense categorial forms: *Seguimos trabajando en la Universidad. We are working at the university. Seguiremos tomando parte en los debates. We shall be taking part in the debates* [1, p.225]. Other constructions with *gerundio* in Spanish: *Continúe andando hasta que llegue a la tercera bocacalle de la izquierda (continue walking* [1, p.196]. In Portuguese: *Enquanto tu falas, eu vou trabalhando. While you are talking I am working. În timp ce vorbești, eu lucrez. A Teresa anda falando da mudança de casa. Teresa is speaking of exchanging the flat* [3, p.325]. *Seguir+gerundio* Express a present, past or future continuous actions: *Seguimos trabajando en la Universidad. We are still working at the university. Seguiremos tomando parte en los debates. We shall be taking part in the debates* [2, p.224]. *Gerundio* is used parallel to a finite durative form of the verb: *Los niños se han quedado en la playa tomando el sol (lying in the sun, făcând băi de soare, загорая)* [2, p.224]. *Visitando monumentos, estoy cansada y tengo hambre (visiting, vizitând, noceуая)* [6, p.12]. We observe the same in Portuguese: *Maria estava sentada pensando no seu filho. Mary was sitting, thinking of her son. Maria ședea gândindu-se la feciorul său...* Participle I in English has the same aspectual functions like *gerundio* in Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and gerunziul in Romanian, expressing aspectual continuous actions in various constructions. *I saw Andrew (him) crossing the street – Eu l-am văzut pe Andrei trecând strada. He walked singing – El mergea cântând.* The same event can be described by using simple or continuous forms depending on the intention of the speaker like in: *Yesterday at five o'clock I met my friends. Yesterday at five o'clock I was meeting my friends, Ieri la ora cinci am întâlnit prietenii mei. Ieri la ora cinci întâlneam prietenii mei.* In the first sentence the speaker just mentions the fact of the meeting, while in the second it is developing in time and is more expressive. Compare: *Cuántas horas seguidas estuvimos durmiendo?* [2, p.224]: *For how many hours have we been sleeping (this night)? Câte ore am dormit noi noaptea aceasta? Сколько же часов мы спали? Cf. Câte ore dormeam noi noaptea când eram în concediu?* The verb *to sleep* has a lexical durative meaning, but grammatical duration as well. In Romanian in the last example we have an emphatic combination of both lexical and grammatical aspectual meanings. As we mentioned above the lexical durative verbs can be used emphatically in the continuous forms: *He looked out of the window. A man stood at the door / I looked out of the window a man was standing at the door. Человек стоял у двери; Un bărbat stătea la ușă (Am văzut un bărbat stând la ușă).* Even point action verbs can be used to express durative actions: *The boy was jumping round the tree. Băiatul sărea în jurul copacului.* The **putandi** and **sentiendi** verbs can also be used in continuous forms: *He was seeing them coming. He was seeing them working hard.* We have the same in case of durative adverbs: *always, often, constantly, permanently, usually, etc.: He is always doing things like this. They were always worrying. He was always promising to come.* Thus, the aspectual durative forms in Romanian and other Romance languages are mainly used metasemiotically. The continuous/non-continuous opposition in English is also in a process of transition from a simple grammatical category to a grammatical stylistic one.

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