

BACKGROUND: Auxiliary insertion approaches to verbal periphrasis (Bjorkman 2011) name increased inflectional complexity as the main motivation for the appearance of an additional verb – the auxiliary – in particular clauses. To exemplify, it is the inability of the English *ing*-participle to spell out tense which such approaches argue to trigger the insertion of a dummy inflection-carrying verb, *be*. Depending on the approach, the insertion can happen in the syntax or postsyntactically.

The present paper presents evidence from verbal periphrasis in the East Caucasian language Avar that casts doubt on the validity of this correlation and the analysis based on it.

THE AVAR PROGRESSIVE: Like its English counterpart, the Avar progressive is a periphrastic construction consisting of a lexical verb in the form of a participle and an auxiliary verb, BE, as in (1). Avar being an ergative language, both the lexical verb and the auxiliary agree with the closest absolutive argument.

- (1) *jasal t'ex c'al-ul-e-b b-ugo*
 girl.ERG(F) book.ABS(N) read-PRS-PTCP-N N-AUX.PRS
 'The girl was reading a book.'

Unlike the English *ing*-participle that is incapable of expressing tense, the participle in (1) does realise tense morphologically, since *-ul-* is the marker of simple present tense that is carried by verbs in finite clauses without periphrasis. That the morphology on the Avar participle is indeed that of tense is evidenced by the morphosyntax of Avar relative clauses, which are headed by the same verbal form. Rudnev (2015a) argues that participial relative clauses in Avar are full CPs so that *-ul-* in (2) spells out T and *-e/-ra-* spells out C, *-b* being an agreement/concord marker obligatory for attributive modifiers:

- (2) *jasal __ c'al-ul-e-b / c'al-il-e-b / c'al-a-ra-b t'ex*
 girl.ERG read-PRS-PTCP-N read-FUT-PTCP-N read-PST-PTCP-N book
 'a/the book that the girl reads/will read/(has) read'

Avar participles in periphrastic constructions like (1) and 'independent' uses like (2) present the following paradox: in the former, one and the same form expresses aspect (jointly with the auxiliary) but does not express tense, whereas in the latter, it expresses tense but crucially does not express aspect. Moreover, the periphrastic construction uses tense morphology to express something other than tense. Finally, an additional challenge for late-insertion approaches to morphology lies in the difficulty to state vocabulary insertion rules, since the features spelling out the verb in relative clauses make no reference to progressive aspect and the features spelling out the progressive aspect make no reference to either T or C.

EXPLANANDA: There are a number of systematic differences between participles in periphrastic constructions and relative clauses that a successful account of verbal periphrasis ought to capture. The first difference concerns the *value* of the tense feature on the participle, which can be [PRS], [FUT] or [PST] in relative clauses but must be [PRS] in the periphrastic progressive. The second difference regards the availability of independent temporal reference in relative clauses and its unavailability in the periphrastic progressive despite the presence of overt present-tense morphology. The third difference concerns interactions with clausal negation: while participles in relative clauses can carry sentential negation (suffix *-r-* in 3a), they are incompatible with negation when they appear in the periphrastic progressive, as in (3b).

- (3) a. *jasal __ c'al-ula-r-e-b t'ex*
 girl.ERG read-PRS-NEG-PTCP-N book
 'a/the book that the girl does not read'
- b. **jasal t'ex c'al-ula-r-e-b b-ugo*
 girl.ERG book.ABS read-PRS-NEG-PTCP-N N-AUX.PRS
 ('The girl is not reading the book.')

ANALYSIS: Adopting the broadly selectional approach to verbal periphrasis (Ross 1967) and taking incompatibility with negation as a hallmark of restructuring (Wurmbrand 2001), I propose that the Avar progressive

consists of a participial vP that is selected by the auxiliary. I follow Rudnev (2015a) in analysing the Avar relative clause as a full CP. To account for the appearance of participial morphology (normally associated with the presence of high functional heads T and C) inside a vP, I propose that complex heads can be built in the syntax prior to being merged into their dedicated positions in the clause, along the lines of Shimada (2007), Zwart (2009), Bruening (2017).

Let us consider the derivation of a relative CP for example (2) above. First, V merges with the nominal internal argument (4a). A complex v-T-C head is then created by head adjunction that is subsequently inserted into the clause; I assume that T adjoins to v, and C adjoins to v-T so that the complex head is merged as v (4b). The heads can now be copied one by one into the clause, and the order of this copying follows from their selectional requirements: because v selects a vP/VP, its selectional requirement has already been satisfied in (4b); T is copied and merges with vP, satisfying its selectional requirement, followed by C being copied and merged with TP, which also satisfies its selectional requirement, as shown in (4c). I assume that functional heads get their values in the clausal spine as opposed to doing so upon forming the complex head.

- (4) a. [V NP]
 b. [v-T-C [V NP]]
 c. [C [T [v-T-C [V NP]]]]

The derivation of the periphrastic progressive follows the same steps as (4a–b) above, whereupon another v head, *viz.* the auxiliary combines with the lexical vP containing the complex v-T-C head. I propose that this additional verbal head intervenes and prevents T and C from being copied into the clause. Because the T head has not been copied into the clause, it is unable to receive a value. I follow Preminger (2014) in viewing failed valuation as giving rise to default morphology, which in the temporal domain is equivalent to present-tense morphology. The absence of a value on T also entails the absence of independent temporal reference.

What remains is the incompatibility of the participle in the periphrastic progressive with negation. I propose that Neg also forms a complex head with v, T and C, adjoining above T but below C. I also propose that Neg c-selects a TP and so must be copied into the clause to satisfy this selectional requirement, which is what happens in relative clauses in the absence of an intervening verbal head. In the progressive, however, the auxiliary intervenes and prevents Neg from being copied into the clause. Because the pronunciation of negation is subject to tense-based contextual allomorphy, there being an exponent for nonpast tenses and a different one for the past tense (Rudnev 2015b), and Neg has failed to combine with a TP, neither exponent can be pronounced.

The resulting analysis derives the three systematic differences between participles in relative clauses and the periphrastic progressive by using little more than syntactic selection and is conceptually close to approaches seeking to explain head-movement effects in terms of a version of the copy theory of movement in which either the high or the low copies can be pronounced (see Arregi & Pietraszko 2020 for a recent implementation).

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