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## 68. Periphrasis

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### 1. Defining periphrasis

The term *periphrasis* (from Greek *períphrasis* ‘paraphrase, circumlocution’), in its most general sense, refers to the use of longer, multi-word expressions in place of single words, or “circumlocution” (this Latin term is simply a loan translation of the Greek term). In a narrower philological context, pe-

Periphrasis is one of the canonical literary rhetorical figures (cf. Lausberg 1963: 69), e.g. English *to be hit with Cupid's arrow* 'to fall in love', or German *Elbflorenz* 'Florence on the Elbe [Dresden]'. For the purposes of this handbook, a still narrower, grammatical sense of the term is relevant. *Periphrasis* refers to a situation in which a multi-word expression is used in place of a single word in an inflectional paradigm: "When a form in a paradigm consists of two or more words it is periphrastic" (Matthews 1981: 55), e.g. *more beautiful* instead of *\*beautifuller* (cf. (b) below). But unlike concepts such as 'morpheme' or 'auxiliary', the concept of 'periphrasis' has never been an important issue in linguistics, and it has not been used as a crucial ingredient in any formal grammatical framework. In general, the term is used in descriptive and typological work in an intuitive sense, and attempts at clarifying the conceptual content of the term have remained the exception (cf. Zawadowski 1959; Thümmel 1966: 157–164; Rosén 1992). Historically, the abstract noun *periphrasis* in its grammatical sense is a back-formation from the adjective *periphrastic*. In traditional Latin grammar, the term *conjugatio periphrastica* was used to refer to infrequent combinations of participial forms with the copula, e.g. *facturus sit* 'is going to do [subjunctive]' (cf. Kühner & Stegmann 1914: 180). This usage seems to have been the starting point of the contemporary use of the term *periphrastic*. Moreover, in current usage the term *periphrastic* is almost always applied to verbal constructions although there is nothing in its definition that would require such a restriction. (Thus, it would be perfectly coherent but distinctly unusual to say that German has a periphrastic instrumental case, using the preposition *mit*.) This restriction seems to be a historical accident, reflecting the origin of the term in the Latin *conjugatio periphrastica*. It is shared by the related term *auxiliary* (which always refers to verbs, although "auxiliary nouns" or "auxiliary adverbs" certainly exist; cf. Art. 78), but not by the quasi-synonym *analytic*. This latter term has its origin in morphological typology (cf. Art. 115) and is contrasted with *synthetic*. It appears that *analytic* is more common in Europe and particularly in Russian linguistics, whereas *periphrastic* is more common in English.

There are three types of cases in which periphrastic forms may be included in inflectional paradigms:

(a) Latin verbs are inflected for different tenses and moods, but not all combinations

are expressed by single-word forms. Thus, there is no form with the features 'future' and 'subjunctive'. The future participle in *-urus* with the copula in the present subjunctive (e.g. *facturus sit* lit. 'he be going to do') fills this gap, as illustrated by the array of 3rd person singular forms of *facere* 'do' in (1); the periphrastic form is given in square brackets.

	indicative	subjunctive
present	<i>facit</i>	<i>faciat</i>
imperfect	<i>faciebat</i>	<i>faceret</i>
perfect	<i>fecit</i>	<i>fecerit</i>
future	<i>faciet</i>	[ <i>facturus sit</i> ]

The future subjunctive is required in certain subordinate clauses that are subject to a sequence-of-tense rule, so that there is a real need to fill the gap in the paradigm.

(b) In English, many adjectives have an inflected comparative formed by adding the suffix *-er* to the base form (e.g. *warm* ~ *warm-er*), but other adjectives lack such a form, and comparison is conveyed by a multi-word (or phrasal) expression containing the adverb *more* (e.g. *beautiful* ~ *more beautiful*). In some intuitive sense, the phrasal expression serves the same function as the inflected form with other adjectives, and linguists have often felt the need to assimilate such "periphrastic expressions" to the single-word forms, so that it becomes possible to say that *more beautiful* is the "comparative form" of *beautiful*, just as *warmer* is the comparative form of *warm* (cf. Matthews 1981: 54f.).

(c) The French construction with the auxiliary *aller* 'go' as in *je vais le faire* 'I'm going to do it' is commonly referred to as *futur périphrastique*. Apparently, the reason for including it in the inflectional paradigm of the French verb is that it expresses a grammatical meaning (cf. Art. 27). This sense of *periphrastic* is reflected, for instance, in the definition: "periphrastic: denoting a construction, especially one involving a verb, in which one or more auxiliary words are used to express grammatical distinctions, as opposed to the direct inflection of the lexical item involved" (Trask 1993 s.v.).

However, it is not self-evident what should count as an inflectional meaning, and the practice of grammarians is rarely rigorous and consistent. For instance, few would describe the French construction *je veux le faire* 'I want to do it' as a *désidératif périphrastique*, although it is quite similar to the "periphrastic future" *je vais le faire*. The reason for restricting *periphrastic* to the construction expressing future time reference may be

mainly the expectation that the future “should be” an inflectional category, whereas no such expectation exists for the desiderative. In many cases such expectations are obviously influenced by the model of Latin grammar, for instance if English is said to have a “future tense” (cf. Huddleston 1995) or German a “vocative case” (cf. Häckl Buhofer 1987 on older grammars; see also Ch. II).

Types (a) and (b) can be regarded as periphrasis in the narrower sense, which “can be recognized only where there is a clear gap in the inflectional patterns, which the phrases serve to fill” (Hockett 1958: 212; cf. Smirnickij 1956; Mel'čuk 1993: 355). In (a), the gap is filled in order to create **paradigm symmetry** in the forms of a lexeme (cf. 2); in (b), it achieves **inflectional generality** across different subclasses of lexemes (cf. 3). Type (c), where a multi-word combination expresses some additional semantic distinction, is less directly relevant to morphology, but it must be taken into consideration here because neither the boundaries between the different kinds of periphrasis nor that between periphrasis and inflection are very sharp (cf. 4). For similar reasons, the notion of periphrasis need not be confined to inflection (cf. 5).

There are no established terms for the three subtypes of periphrasis. In this article, *suppletive periphrasis* will be used for types (a) and (b), and *categorial periphrasis* for type (c); (cf. Aerts 1967: 3; Rosén 1992: 18f. for somewhat similar terminological proposals). Suppletive periphrasis shares with true suppletion (cf. Art. 52) the function of supplying forms for the inflectional paradigms that are not formed in the regular way (cf. Vincent 1987: 242; Börjars et al. 1997), but it is of course a very different mechanism. For want of a better alternative, the rather old-fashioned term *monolectic form* will be used as the opposite of *periphrastic form* (cf. Aerts 1967: 3; Rosén 1992: 11); an equivalent distinction applicable to grammatical meanings is that between *bound expression* and *periphrastic expression* (cf. Bybee & Dahl 1989: 51). The term *periphrasis form* will be employed for inflectional forms which appear only in periphrastic constructions (cf. 6).

## 2. Suppletive periphrasis I: paradigm symmetry

Gaps which are filled by periphrastic forms for the purpose of paradigm symmetry can only arise in inflectional systems in which

more than one morphological category is combined, e.g. tense and mood in Latin (1). Thus, a language in which verbs inflect only for tense or nouns only for number could not have this kind of periphrasis. Another example from Latin involves the interaction of voice and aspect. Latin has monolectic forms for the passive voice only in the *infectum aspect* (e.g. in the present and imperfect “tenses”), but not in the *perfectum aspect* (e.g. in the perfect and pluperfect). In the latter case, a periphrasis involving the perfect passive participle and the copula is used, as the 3rd person singular forms of *capere* ‘take’ in (2) show.

	active	passive
present	<i>capit</i>	<i>capitur</i>
imperfect	<i>capiebat</i>	<i>capiebatur</i>
perfect	<i>cepit</i>	[ <i>captum est</i> ]
pluperfect	<i>ceperat</i>	[ <i>captum erat</i> ]

The situation in Russian is quite similar. The 3rd person singular forms of (*s*)*delat'* ‘do’ in (3) show that only the imperfective aspect has bound expression in the passive, while the perfective passive is periphrastic:

	active	passive
imperf. past	<i>delal</i>	<i>delalo-s'</i>
present	<i>delaet</i>	<i>delaet-sja</i>
perf. past	<i>s-delal</i>	[ <i>bylo s-delano</i> ]
perf. future	<i>s-delaet</i>	[ <i>budet s-delano</i> ]

Another example, again from Russian, involves the interaction of tense and aspect. Only perfective verbs have monolectic forms in the future, while the imperfective future is periphrastic:

	perfective	imperfective
present	—	<i>delaet</i>
past	<i>s-delal</i>	<i>delal</i>
future	<i>s-delaet</i>	[ <i>budet delat'</i> ]

This Russian paradigm is perhaps not a good example of a gap in terms of paradigm symmetry, because it is not very symmetrical to begin with. An alternative analysis would regard the perfective future form *s delaet* as present, thus restoring the formal symmetry. The future meaning could be attributed to the interaction between the aspectual and the temporal interpretation (a perfective situation is not easily construed as simultaneous with the moment of speech). On this analysis, there would be no gap in the paradigm. But it is more likely that although this alternative analysis is diachronically accurate, synchronically (4) is a realistic description of Russian grammar. The diachronic scenario for the rise

of the asymmetry thus helps to explain the need for a periphrastic gap filler.

So far all examples have been from verbal inflection, but it is easy to imagine a similar situation in nominal inflection: A language might have a monolectic form of the instrumental case in the singular, but not in the plural, so that a periphrasis involving an instrumental adposition must be used. No example of this kind has come to my attention, but this may be purely accidental.

In these cases of gaps filled by suppletive periphrasis to restore paradigm symmetry, it is clear that a good case can be made that the periphrastic forms belong to the inflectional paradigm. However, this does not necessarily mean that they are considered as morphological entities. A classical structuralist textbook states this explicitly in discussing Latin periphrastic passives (cf. 2):

“These phrases are not part of the inflectional morphology of the Latin verb, because the structure of phrases is syntax, not morphology”. (Hockett 1958: 212)

Similarly, a standard introduction to morphology comes to the conclusion that seman-

(5) subject/object	1st singular	
1st singular	—	
2nd singular	[engem kér-sz]	
3rd singular	[engem kér-o]	
1st plural	—	
2nd plural	[engem kér-tek]	
3rd plural	[engem kér-nek]	

Only *kér-lek* ‘ask-1.SG.SUBJ&2.SG.OBJ (I ask you)’ is a monolectic form, all other combinations involving a 1st or 2nd person object are “periphrastic” (though this term is never used in Hungarian linguistics for these cases), using the accusative forms of the personal pronouns. It is debatable whether the existence of a single monolectic form is sufficient to set up a morphological paradigm that consists largely of gaps filled by periphrasis. Perhaps more naturally, one might conversely regard (5) as a syntactic paradigm with a single gap, which is filled by the “anti-periphrastic”, “compacted” form *kérlek* (cf. 3 for further instances of this problem).

### 3. Suppletive periphrasis II: inflectional generality

Almost by definition, inflectional forms are highly general, i.e. they apply to all or almost all members of a word class (cf. Bybee

tically, periphrastic forms should be analyzed like monolectic forms, whereas formally they should be regarded as syntactic phrases (Matthews 1974: 171). Periphrasis can thus be used as an argument for “separationist” approaches to morphology (cf. Aronoff 1994; Beard 1995), which stress the mutual independence of the formal expression of a morphological element and the semantic contribution it makes (cf. Börjars et al. 1997).

An empirical problem with the gap-filling view of periphrasis is that it may not always be clear whether there are enough monolectic forms to constitute a paradigm that can be said to have gaps. In (1)–(4), the gaps are a distinct minority of the paradigm cells, but what if there are more gaps than filled cells? An example of this comes from Hungarian, which has a monolectic form expressing ‘1st person singular subject – 2nd person object’, but no others that express both subject and non-3rd person object. The paradigm thus looks as in (5), where only singular object forms are given for the sake of simplicity (*kér-* ‘ask’; *engem* ‘me’, *téged* ‘you’):

2nd singular	3rd singular
<i>kér-lek</i>	<i>kér-em</i>
—	<i>kér-ed</i>
[ <i>téged</i> <i>kér-o</i> ]	<i>kér-i</i>
[ <i>téged</i> <i>kér-ünk</i> ]	<i>kér-jük</i>
—	<i>kér-itek</i>
[ <i>téged</i> <i>kér-nek</i> ]	<i>kér-ik</i>

1985: 5). If a certain inflectional pattern is not applicable to some members of the word class, a periphrasis may fill this gap. An example of this type is the English periphrastic comparative (cf. 1), which allows adjectives that lack the bound comparative (\**beautifuller*) to have a comparative form (*more beautiful*).

#### 3.1. Examples

A further example comes from Romanian, where most nouns have a bound oblique case form, but masculine proper nouns lack it. The auxiliary word *lui* (originally ‘his, to him’) is used to allow these proper names to occur in the oblique case form:

	base form	oblique case
masc. common	<i>prieten-ul</i> ‘the friend’	<i>prieten-ul-ui</i>
fem. proper	<i>Ana</i> ‘Anna’	<i>Anei</i>
masc. proper	<i>Petre</i> ‘Peter’	[ <i>lui Petre</i> ]

A periphrastic gap-filler may achieve both paradigm symmetry and lexical generality simultaneously. In Classical Greek, the 3rd person plural form of the middle perfect of a verb like *grápho* ‘write’ does not have a bound expression and can only be expressed peripherastically, using the middle perfect participle and the copula:

	singular	plural
1st	<i>gégram-mai</i>	<i>gegrám-metha</i>
2nd	<i>gérap-sai</i>	<i>géraph-the</i>
3rd	<i>gérap-tai</i>	[ <i>gegram-ménoi eisf</i> ]

Taken in isolation, the paradigm in (7) seems to involve periphrasis for paradigm symmetry (cf. 2). But in this case, the form in question is not lacking in all Greek verbs. Many verbs whose stem ends in a vowel do have a monolectic form for this paradigm cell, so the periphrasis here also serves to ensure inflectional generality:

(8)	3rd singular	3rd plural
	<i>pepaídeu-tai</i>	<i>pepaídeu-ntai</i>
	<i>tetímē-tai</i>	<i>tetímē-ntai</i>
	<i>gérap-tai</i>	[ <i>gegram-ménoi eisf</i> ]

‘educate’  
‘honor’  
‘write’

In (6)–(8), the lexemes that lack a particular monolectic form are the clear minority, and there may be very specific reasons why these forms are impossible (thus, in Classical Greek the regular form \**gégraph-ntai* is simply phonotactically ill-formed). But in the case of the English comparative, matters are more complicated. Forms like \**negativer* ‘more negative’ or \**beautifuller* seem to be phonologically well-formed, and the periphrastic comparatives are actually the majority (at least in terms of lexical types). Moreover, the periphrastic forms are not restricted to those lexemes that lack a monolectic form: In many cases, both forms may be used side by side, e.g. *likelier* or *more likely*. Thus, filling a gap in certain lexemes is probably not the only motivation for the existence of these forms.

Gap-filling as the motivation for periphrasis becomes even more difficult to maintain when only a small minority of lexemes in the word class allow the monolectic form. For instance, in Lezgian only eighteen verbs allow negation by means of a prefix in non-finite forms (e.g. the verbal-noun form). All other verbs require a periphrastic form using the auxiliary *t-awun* ‘NEG-doing’, and all verbs but two optionally allow this periphrastic form (cf. Haspelmath 1993: 133). Some examples are given in (9).

(9)	affirmative	negative
	<i>awun</i>	<i>t-awun</i>
	<i>χun</i>	<i>ta-χun</i>
	<i>gun</i>	<i>ta-gun</i>
	<i>čüxtün</i>	[ <i>čüxtün t-awun</i> ]

‘do’  
‘become’  
‘give’  
‘wash’

Similarly, in Maltese only a small class of (mostly inalienable) nouns allow the use of possessive person-number suffixes, e.g. *dar* ‘house’, *id* ‘hand’, but the large majority of nouns require a periphrastic construction with *ta’/tiegh* ‘of’ (this has been called “analytic genitive”; cf. Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1996):

(10)	base form	possessive form	1st singular
	<i>dar</i>	<i>dar-i</i>	‘house’
	<i>id</i>	<i>id-i</i>	‘hand’
	<i>ktieb</i>	[ <i>ktieb tiegh-i</i> ]	‘book’

The existence of a paradigm whose gaps are filled becomes even more questionable when the monolectic forms are not only very few, but also quite irregular. Thus, in Afrikaans only a handful of verbs have a bound past tense, and all of these are irregular (cf. Donaldson 1993: 222):

(11)	present	past
	<i>is</i>	<i>was</i>
	<i>weet</i>	<i>wis</i>
	<i>an</i>	<i>kon</i>
	<i>werk</i>	[ <i>het gewerk</i> ]
	<i>begin</i>	[ <i>het begin</i> ]

‘be’  
‘know’  
‘can’  
‘work’  
‘begin’

Similarly, in the Romance languages only four adjectives have bound comparative forms, and these are all suppletive. All regular forms are periphrastic, e.g. in Spanish:

(12)	positive	comparative
	<i>bueno</i>	<i>mejor</i>
	<i>pequeño</i>	<i>menor</i>
	<i>oscuro</i>	[ <i>más oscuro</i> ]
	<i>caliente</i>	[ <i>más caliente</i> ]

‘good’  
‘little’  
‘dark’  
‘warm’

In the extreme case, only a single lexeme has a monolectic form of a certain category. An example comes again from Hungarian, where only the verb *lenni* ‘be’ has a bound expression for future tense, whereas all other verbs only have a periphrastic future (*fog* ‘take’ plus infinitive; the forms given are 3rd person singular):

(13)	infinitive	future
	<i>lenni</i>	<i>lesz</i>
	<i>írni</i>	[ <i>fog írni</i> ]
	<i>felelni</i>	[ <i>fog felelni</i> ]

‘be’  
‘write’  
‘answer’

As in (5), one has to ask whether so few non-periphrastic forms justify calling all the other forms (suppletively) periphrastic. One might

just as well call these few monolectic forms “anti-periphrastic” or “compacted”.

Another doubtful case is that of the German hypothetical mood. Theoretically, every German verb has a monolectic hypothetical-mood form, but in the regular (weak) verbs, this form is homonymous with the past tense.

(14)	infinitive	past	hypothetical
	<i>kommen</i>	<i>kam</i>	<i>käme</i>
	‘come’		
	<i>sein</i>	<i>war</i>	<i>wäre</i>
	‘be’		
	<i>loben</i>	<i>lobte</i>	[ <i>würde loben</i> ] (‘ <i>lobte</i> )
	‘praise’		
	<i>schwimmen</i>	<i>schwamm</i>	[ <i>würde schwimmen</i> ] (‘ <i>schwämme</i> )
	‘swim’		

Thus, in some sense the German *würde*-periphrasis is tied to gap-filling contexts, but this link is fairly weak – the forms in parentheses in (14) are not outright impossible, they are just awkward. Conversely, the *würde*-periphrasis is not impossible with strong verbs like *kommen*, though it often sounds very colloquial.

### 3.2. Grammaticalization

Since speakers are generally guided by a maxim of economy, there is a certain tendency that favors complementary distribution: When a monolectic form exists, this will tend to block the periphrastic form, and when a periphrastic form becomes the usual one, the monolectic form will tend to disappear. But this principle is only a tendency, because there are deviations in both directions. Moreover, in the long run periphrastic constructions tend to replace monolectic forms quite independently of whether the latter have a defective distribution or not. The Afrikaans example (11), for instance, shows the result of a change that has been going on in a similar form in varieties of German for many centuries. Standard German still has bound past tense forms for every verb, but in the colloquial language (and particularly in many southern dialects) only the *haben*-past is used with most verbs. This replacement had nothing to do with any kind of difficulty in forming the bound past tense form. It resulted from the continued grammaticalization of the *haben/sein+participle* construction, which originally had a special perfect meaning, but generally came to be basically equivalent to the simple past tense (cf. Bybee et al. 1994: 51–105). The functional equivalence of the new periphrastic past and the old past tense then leads to the loss of the old past tense, except in the case of very common verbs, where high frequency helps to preserve the old forms.

As a result, the semantically equivalent *würde*-periphrasis is much more common with these verbs in contemporary German, and in practice the old hypothetical mood (the “past subjunctive”) survives only in strong verbs (and even some of these sound awkward in this form):

lence of the new periphrastic past and the old past tense then leads to the loss of the old past tense, except in the case of very common verbs, where high frequency helps to preserve the old forms.

Such a process of gradual grammaticalization is ultimately responsible for most of the patterns examined in 3.1. Grammaticalization is a continuous, unidirectional, cyclic change that turns periphrastic expressions (i.e. categorial peripherasis; cf. 4) into synthetic forms, which are further reduced until they are again replaced by new roundabout expressions (cf. Art. 145). Such grammaticalization processes may at some point result in a kind of complementary distribution which creates the impression that the periphrastic expressions exist in order to fill a gap, but that is by no means necessary. For instance, colloquial French has gone through a process of extension of the ‘have’-perfect to the perfective past function (similar to the cases of Afrikaans and colloquial German), and the old perfective past form (the *passé simple*) has been lost from this register of French. But unlike the cases of Afrikaans and German, the *passé simple* does not even survive in a few isolated cases, and there was apparently never anything resembling a complementary distribution over different verb types.

Even if there is a clear phonological reason for the nonexistence of certain inflected forms, the periphrasis need not owe its existence to its gap-filling function. For instance, Latin comparatives are formed by a suffix *-ior*, which cannot, however, be attached to vowel-final stems for phonological reasons.

For these stems, a periphrasis with *magis* is used:

(15) positive	comparative	
<i>longus</i>	<i>longior</i>	'long'
<i>felix</i>	<i>felicior</i>	'happy'
<i>arduus</i>	[ <i>magis arduus</i> ]	'steep'
<i>idoneus</i>	[ <i>magis idoneus</i> ]	'suitable'

Could it be that the periphrastic comparative, which became prevalent in the Romance languages (cf. (12)), began its existence as a filler of phonologically conditioned gaps? Perhaps, but another scenario is at least as likely: At the time of Classical Latin, from which the data in (15) are taken, the *magis*-periphrasis was already widely used in the colloquial language. The written norm still required the comparative in *-ior* for most adjectives, but where this was difficult to form, the colloquial periphrasis was admitted into the written language. If so, suppletive periphrasis is not as different from categorial periphrasis as it might have seemed. From a strictly structural and descriptive point of view, it might be desirable to restrict the incursion of phrasal forms into the domain of inflection as tightly as possible, but this hardly does justice to the reality of languages and their speakers.

#### 4. Categorial periphrasis

Examples of categorial periphrasis are the English *have*-perfect (explicitly excluded from the inflectional paradigm by some authors, e.g. Wallis 1765: xxv–xxvii, 102–111; Hockett 1958: 212; cf. Art. 62), the French *aller*-future (*je vais chanter* 'I am going to sing'), and the Spanish *estar*-progressive (*estoy cantando* 'I am singing'). There exist no monolectic forms of any of these categories in the languages in which they occur, so these periphrastic forms do not fill a gap defined by a system of monolectic forms, i.e. "real" inflectional forms. Hence, these constructions cannot be properly said to be "circumlocutions" for anything, i.e. if they are periphrases, this can be understood only in an extended sense of the term, e.g. relative to the monolectic forms of another language. However, the use of the term *periphrasis* for such constructions is widespread in the literature. Statements such as the following are typical: "[Go] occurs in periphrastic futures in English and various Romance languages" (Lehmann 1995: 29); "New periphrases develop to express

meanings that are more specific than the meanings already expressed grammatically in the language at the time" (Bybee et al. 1994: 133). These authors do not link the use of *periphrasis* in any way to inflectional paradigms. A periphrastic expression is simply one which expresses a grammatical meaning in a multi-word construction. A periphrasis can be identified if there is a conventional construction in a language which expresses a grammatical meaning, and where there is a particular lexical item (an auxiliary word) that regularly combines with all members of a word class to express this meaning.

The question, of course, is: What is a grammatical meaning (cf. Art. 27)? In the worst case, all and only the meanings that are clearly grammaticalized in a language that linguists happen to know well (e.g. Latin or English) are counted as grammatical. Grammarians rarely justify their descriptive decisions explicitly. For instance, in one description of Welsh, two methods for forming verbs are presented, the "inflected" method (by adding endings to a verb stem) and the "periphrastic" method (by using an auxiliary verb in combination with the verbal noun to form a compound tense), without any discussion (cf. King 1993). Similarly, in a grammar of Lezgian, the chapter on verbal inflection includes a section on "periphrastic tense-aspect categories" (Haspelmath 1993: 146–148), in which the Periphrastic Habitual, the Periphrastic Future, and the Hearsay Evidential are described. However, no justification is given for this particular choice of categories. This does not necessarily mean that such justification is not possible, but grammatical descriptions usually assume that their choice of periphrastic constructions is unproblematic. Three specific criteria and one more general criterion for recognizing categorial periphrases are worth considering (cf. Bertinetto 1990 for a longer list of possible criteria).

The first specific criterion asks whether the kind of meaning expressed by the periphrasis is expressed by monolectic forms elsewhere in the language. Thus, if a language has bound tense forms, then a complex construction expressing tense (e.g. the English *will*-future) will count as a periphrastic form (cf. Smirnickij 1956; Mel'čuk 1993: 355 on "analytic forms"). The problem here is that assigning specific grammatical meanings to broader grammatical categories is often not at all straightforward. For instance, is the Spanish *estar*-progressive an aspectual category on a

par with the imperfective/perfective past distinction? Is the English *have*-perfect a tense?

The second specific criterion is semantic non-compositionality (cf. also Art. 82). Ordinary phrases must be interpretable compositionally, but periphrastic constructions are often non-compositional. For instance, while the meaning of *I want to break it* can be derived from the component parts *want* and *to break*, the meaning of *I have broken it* cannot be derived from the components *have* and *broken*. Non-compositionality is always present when the main verb is in a periphrasis form (cf. 6). This criterion is perhaps easier to apply than the first, but it is only a sufficient, not a necessary condition for periphrastic status.

The third specific criterion concerns the range of forms of the auxiliary element that occur in the periphrasis. In an ordinary combination of a finite and a non-finite verb, there are no restrictions on the forms of the finite verb, but in a periphrasis sometimes only a subset of the forms are allowed. For instance, in the German *werden*-future only present indicative (and perhaps subjunctive) forms of *werden* are allowed, but not past tense forms (e.g. *wird kommen* [lit. becomes come] ‘will come’, but not \**wurde kommen* [lit. became come]; cf. Vincent 1987 for discussion of a similar constraint on the Italian *venire*-passive).

More generally, we need a comprehensive theory of grammaticalization in order to understand periphrasis. Grammaticalization is a very complex, multi-faceted phenomenon, and there are indefinitely many possible degrees of grammaticalization (cf. Lehmann 1995 for a systematic treatment of the various parameters of grammaticalization). Once we have such a theory, the definition of *periphrastic construction* is easy: The more grammaticalized a construction is, the more it can claim to have periphrastic status (unless grammaticalization has proceeded far enough to turn it into a monolectic form, of course). If we recognize this, it does not necessarily become easier in practice to identify a periphrastic construction, but we have reduced this problem to another, independent problem for which solutions have to be proposed (cf. Bertinetto 1990 for a similar conclusion).

The grammaticalization perspective also helps us to solve the problem of delimiting periphrastic forms against monolectic forms. In some cases, this is not an easy task, because the boundaries between free words and

affixes are not always clear-cut. For instance, the Polish past tense *czytałem* ‘I read’ looks like an ordinary monolectic form *czyta-l-em* ‘read-PAST-1.SG’, but occasionally the 1st person singular marker *-(e)m* may occur elsewhere in the clause, e.g. *co-m czyta-l?* ‘what-1.SG read-PAST (what did I read?)’. This shows that at least in these cases the form is not completely bound yet, although grammaticalization is advancing and these split forms are becoming rarer in the modern language. It is impossible to draw clear lines between the various stages of grammaticalization processes; there are often cases that are indeterminate not just for linguists, but also for the speakers.

Finally, grammaticalization helps us to understand why certain grammatical categories are very often expressed peripherastically in the world’s languages, while others strongly tend to be expressed as monolectic forms. For instance, “perfect and progressive usually have periphrastic expression, while past, and perfective and imperfective usually have bound expression” (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 56; cf. also Dahl 1985; Bybee et al. 1994: 104–124). In the nominal domain, it has been noted for temporal markers that anterior-durative (‘until’) and posterior-durative (‘since’) markers tend to be bound, whereas anterior (‘before’) and posterior (‘after’) are almost always periphrastic, i.e. expressed adpositionally, in the world’s languages (cf. Haspelmath 1997: 145). The explanation for these form-meaning correlations is that the meanings of the bound categories arise only after a longer process of grammaticalization, so by this time the elements have also undergone a significant amount of formal reduction and agglutination. The periphrastic categories usually express younger, less grammaticalized meanings.

## 5. Periphrasis in inflection, derivation, and syntax

Inflection is the prototypical domain for suppletive periphrasis (as it is for suppletion), because only inflection is organized in tight, symmetrical paradigms in which gaps can become salient. But insofar as derivation may also be regular, periphrasis within derivation is certainly not unimaginable, even though it is not normally called periphrasis (cf. also Art. 52 on suppletion in derivation). The

English derivational suffix *-ology*, for example, productively forms nouns denoting a science from nouns denoting a possible subject matter for a science, e.g. *climate* ~ *climatology*, *Egypt* ~ *Egyptology*, *volcano* ~ *volcanology*. However, the Latinate suffix *-ology* does not combine felicitously with nouns like *computer*, so for the science of computers the “periphrastic” term *computer science* must be used. Another possible example are multiplicative numerals in English, e.g. *on-ce*, *twi-ce*, *thri-ce*. For higher numbers, “periphrastic” numerals are required (*four times*, *five times*, etc.).

(16) decl., affirm.	interrogative	
<i>You are here</i>	<i>Are you here?</i>	negative
<i>You saw her</i>	<i>[Did you see her?]</i>	<i>You are not here</i>
	<i>(*Saw you her?)</i>	<i>[You did not see her]</i>

		negative
		<i>You are not here</i>
		<i>[You did not see her]</i>

*(\*You saw not her)*

Clearly, “periphrastic *do*” is periphrastic in much the same way as the cases of morphological periphrasis, but the filled gaps in (16) are not morphological monolectic forms. *Did you see* is a syntactic phrase which replaces the impossible syntactic phrase *\*saw you*. What this case shares with the cases of morphological suppletive periphrasis is the restriction of the non-periphrastic forms to certain high-frequency verbs. In French, too, inverted interrogative clauses (e.g. *viens-tu?* ‘are you coming?’) tend to be superseded by circumlocutions with *est-ce que* (lit. ‘is it that’, e.g. *est-ce que tu viens?*), and these are often called “periphrastic questions” (cf. Behnstedt 1973). Thus, the general principles of periphrasis remain the same in syntax, inflection and derivation (which is in accordance with the notion of a syntax-inflection-derivation continuum; cf. Bybee 1985: 81–110).

Finally, lexical substitution, i.e. the use of a different lexeme, may make up for missing inflectional forms. For instance, English modal auxiliaries like *must* and *can* lack non-finite forms, and when these are required by the syntactic environment, they are usually replaced by the quasi-synonyms *have to* and *be able to*. This has been described as periphrasis (cf. Westney 1995), but in other respects it is more like suppletion. Unlike standard suppletion, however, the “periphrastic modals” *have to* and *be able to* are not old remnant forms, but they have full paradigms and can occur also in finite forms (e.g. *she can = she is able to*; cf. also Vincent 1987: 242; Börjars et al. 1997: 168).

Somewhat more interesting are cases of periphrasis in syntax: At first it might seem that this is an incoherent notion, because there are no “syntactic paradigms”. However, it is not difficult to find syntactic phenomena that provide a striking analog of inflectional paradigms, gaps, and periphrasis in morphology. Again, a good example comes from English, where only a small subclass of verbs can occur without complications in interrogative and negative clauses. In (16), this well-known pattern is represented in such a way that the similarities with morphological suppletive periphrasis become apparent.

## 6. Periphrasis forms

The term *periphrasis form* is introduced here for inflectional forms of lexemes which combine with auxiliary elements to form periphrases and which have no other function in the language. An example of a periphrasis form is the Modern Greek form in *-i* (derived from the aorist stem) that combines with the auxiliary *éxo* ('have') to form a perfect periphrasis (e.g. *dhéno* 'I tie', periphrasis form *dhé-s-i*, periphrastic perfect *éxo dhési* 'I have tied'). In Swedish, the perfect periphrasis consists of *ha* ('have') plus a periphrasis form (called “supine” in Scandinavian linguists) in *-tl/-ttl/-it* (e.g. *skriva* 'write', periphrasis form *skrivit*, periphrastic perfect *jag har skrivit* 'I have written').

The concept of periphrasis form is not yet generally recognized in theoretical linguistics, but it is necessary for a complete theory of grammar. It appears that in the majority of periphrases, the form of the lexeme is identical to some inflectional form that occurs independently in the language, e.g. an infinitive or a participle (cf. (1)–(4), (7)–(8), (13)–(14)). This reflects the diachronic origin of periphrases in ordinary combinations of a main verb plus a subordinate verb. But as the periphrasis is grammaticalized, the connection between the non-finite form in the periphrasis and in other parts of the grammar may be severed. This separate development may concern only the semantics (as in English *a broken heart* vs. *I have broken*), or it may concern the morphological form as well (as in Swedish *skrivit*, contrasting with the

past participle *skrivet*; originally the two forms were identical), or the non-periphrastic use of the non-finite form may disappear entirely from the language (as in Modern Greek *dhési*, going back to the old infinitive, which has fallen into disuse elsewhere). In the latter two cases, the result is a special periphrasis form. And even the first case (English *broken*) could be described as a periphrasis form, which (for diachronic reasons) happens to be homonymous with the adjectival past participle.

Like the non-finite verb forms from which they develop, periphrasis forms may be variable. For instance, the Lezgian negative periphrasis illustrated in (9) consists of a negative auxiliary plus a preceding periphrasis form whose shape depends on the aspectual stem of the auxiliary, e.g. *rax-un tawuna* ‘not having talked’, but *rax-an tijiz* ‘not to talk’ (Haspelmath 1993: 134). Synchronously this looks like an unusual kind of agreement, and nothing is known about the diachronic origin of the construction.

An analog of these verbal periphrasis forms can be found in the nominal domain: Russian has a nominal case form that occurs only in combination with certain prepositions (sometimes called “prepositive case”, sometimes called “locative”, reflecting its origin), e.g. *v Rim-e* ‘in Rome’ (\**Rim-e* alone does not occur). One could say for the sake of consistency that *v Rime* is the periphrastic inessive case of *Rim* ‘Rome’, and that *Rime* is its periphrasis form.

## 7. Conclusion

Periphrasis (in the narrower sense of suppletive periphrasis) presents an important challenge to theories of inflection in that it shows that there are potentially two distinct notions of an inflectional paradigm (cf. Art. 62) which need not coincide: The paradigm may be construed

- (a) as the set of all word-forms belonging to a lexeme, or
- (b) as the set of all elements filling the cells defined by the inflectional categories that can be expressed for the lexeme.

On the second interpretation, periphrastic forms are admitted as members of the paradigm, but at the price that the paradigm is no longer a purely morphological notion. But arguments were provided in this article for

the view that it is not possible to separate morphology and syntax neatly anyway: The two are linked inextricably through the continuous and ubiquitous process of grammaticalization. In fact, most inflectional formatives arise through grammaticalization in the first place, so periphrasis is in a sense the basis of inflection. In this perspective, it appears legitimate to extend the notion of periphrasis even further to semantic categories which are never expressed by monolectic forms, but which show a sufficiently high degree of grammaticalization to be described as part of the verbal paradigm rather than only in the syntax (i.e., to categorial periphrasis).

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