

Aspectual distinctions under direct perception predicates

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In this paper we investigate the syntax and semantics of non-finite complements under direct perception predicates in Old and Middle Irish, Greek and Latin. These three languages are particular revealing in this domain since they exploit different forms to encode the [+/- perfectivity] distinction of the dependent event: prepositions plus infinitives (usually labeled verbal nouns (VNs)) in Irish; participial complements in Greek and Latin; accusative plus infinitive in Latin. We show how the syntax of the non-finite complements is governed by the aspectual distinction [+/- perfectivity] of the dependent event. This distinction can be grammaticized either via temporal stems as in Greek and Latin, or via specific lexical items, namely prepositions as in Old and Middle Irish.

We demonstrate that:

(i) a [+perfective] dependent event is encoded by the the aorist/perfect temporal stems in Greek (1) and if passive, in Latin (2), and by the preposition *do* 'to' plus VN in Old and Middle Irish (3);

(1) Ἔκτωρ δ' ὡς εἶδεν Τεύκρου **βλαφθέντα** βέλεμνα [Il. 15.484]

(2) quod ubi Hannibal accepit **laxatam** que pugnam et recessum a castris vidit [Liv. lib. 21, cap. 59, § 6, p. 59, lin. 33]

(3) uair cia itconnairc a secht maccu **do marbad i n-oen lo in-a fiadnaise**

'Although she saw her seven sons killed in one single day in her presence [...].' [PH 6610-6611]

(ii) viceversa, the [+imperfective] dependent event is encoded by present temporal stems Greek (4) and Latin (5) and by the preposition *oc* 'at' plus VN in Old and Middle Irish (6);

(4) ὡς εἶδεν δύο φῶτε παρ' ἀλλήλοισι **μένοντε**. [Il.5.572]

(5) Deiotarum saltantem quisquam aut ebrium vidit umquam? [Cic. Deiot. § 26, p. 112, lin. 15]

(6) O 'tchualaig tra Ipsifile scret in mic **ac-a marbad** roerich da iarraid ocus robai 'g-a gairm.

'When Hypsipyle heard the scream of the dying boy, she aroise to seek him and continued to call him.' [TTebe 2075-2076]

Two further structures, namely the Latin accusative plus infinitive and the Irish bare VNs, display a more complex pattern and will be discussed during the talk.

In conclusion, the comparison of the three languages suggests that the syntactic structure of direct perception complements affects the way the dependent event is perceived. This means that direct perception predicates describe a direct sensory perception of ongoing situation (as in Cristofaro 2003: 105), as well as [+perfective] situation.

Cristofaro, Sonia. 2003. *Subordination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.