

THE AUXILIARIES OF THE SPANISH PROGRESSIVE: EVIDENCE FROM THE MIDDLE AGES

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Scholars generally agree that the modern Spanish progressive is an analytic verbal construction, consisting of one of a number of verbs of state or motion in periphrasis with the gerund, a verbal derivative with the suffix *-ndo*.¹ In addition, scholars generally agree that the progressive construction conveys aspectual meaning, normally that of developing, lasting, or ongoing activity. Thus, a construction such as *José está cantando* is interpreted as “José is singing.” Not all constructions containing one of these verbs in conjunction with a gerund are examples of the progressive, however. For example, *José está en la cocina cantando* is primarily a locative construction. It signifies that “José is in the kitchen.” The action expressed by the gerund *cantando* ‘singing’ is secondary, or subordinate, to that of *está en la cocina* ‘is in the kitchen,’ indicating that “José also happens to be singing.” As a result, the latter is not considered an example of the progressive construction.

Scholars do not agree, however, as to which verbs of state or motion may serve as auxiliaries of the progressive construction. While most find that *estar* ‘to be’ should be considered an auxiliary of the progressive, scholars mention more than twenty different verbs as possible auxiliaries. Furthermore, while one author may call a certain verb an auxiliary of the progressive, another author will state specifically that it is not an auxiliary. A few scholars argue that auxiliaries don’t even exist, that they are only main verbs.

Heine finds that auxiliaries cannot be completely distinguished from main verbs, but that a continuum, or “gradient,” exists between them. This gradient is a reflection of the diachronic relationship between auxiliaries and main verbs. Auxiliaries evolve from main verbs through a process of grammaticalization. Over a long period of time, certain main verbs, often in specific contexts, may lose their lexical meaning and come to express a more abstract grammatical concept, such as tense, aspect, or mood. In addition to this shift in

meaning, or “semantic bleaching,” these main verbs may undergo other linguistic changes, including increased frequency, fixed word order, fusion, phonetic erosion, and decategorialization, or the loss of verbal characteristics. In addition, Heine argues that certain types of verbs tend to evolve into auxiliaries, among them verbs of location, posture, motion, and activity.

In this study I examine gerundial constructions in Spanish texts from the twelfth through fifteenth centuries with respect to these features of grammaticalization in order better to determine which of the verbs of state or motion mentioned by scholars may be considered auxiliaries of the progressive and when each of these verbs came to express grammatical rather than lexical meaning in the development of Spanish. I find that a handful of these verbs were already being used to express grammatical meaning in the earliest Spanish texts. The use of the other verbs of state or motion in this type of construction in the modern language may be by analogy with constructions with the older, more grammaticalized auxiliaries.

1. Verbs of Location and Posture

According to Heine, verbs of location and posture are often the source material for auxiliaries in languages around the world. Heine finds that verbs of location, such as *be at*, *stay at*, *live at*, *remain at*, and verbs of posture, including *sit*, *stand*, and *lie*, come to express progressive, ingressive, or continuous meaning. Scholars mention a number of verbs of location and posture as auxiliaries of the progressive in modern Spanish: *estar* ‘to be’ (from Latin *stare* ‘to stand’), *quedar(se)* ‘to stay/remain,’ *permanecer* ‘to stay/remain,’ *hallarse* ‘to find oneself/be found,’ and *encontrarse* ‘to find oneself/be found.’ In addition, Álvarez finds examples of *ser* ‘to be’ (from Latin *esse* ‘to be’ and *sedere* ‘to sit’) in periphrasis with the gerund in the Spanish spoken in Caracas.

Of these six verbs of location and posture, three are found in gerundial constructions in the earliest Spanish texts. In fact, Spaulding finds an example of *stare* + gerund already in Latin, although he states that *stare* probably maintained its lexical meaning of ‘to stand.’ I find 52 examples of *estar* + gerund in the medieval texts, 17 examples of

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ser + gerund, and only 2 examples of *quedar(se)* + gerund. Clearly, *estar* occurs in gerundial constructions much more frequently than the other two verbs, and *ser* considerably more frequently than *quedar(se)*.

In numerous examples of *estar* + gerund *estar* retains its original lexical meaning, 'to stand,' or is used to express location without any indication of an upright posture, and it is often difficult to know which of these meanings is intended by the author:

- (1) Y **estaba** doña Ximena con cinco dueñas...
rogando a San Pero e al Criador.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 25)
And doña Jimena stood/was with five ladies...
Begging Saint Peter and the Creator....

It is not clear from the context whether or not doña Jimena was standing. At the very least, *estar* is locative in meaning here and does not display the type of semantic bleaching associated with the grammaticalization of auxiliaries. Nonetheless, in numerous examples of *estar* + gerund even this locative meaning is absent, and *estar* seems to add grammatical rather than lexical meaning:

- (2) ...essora mio Çid posó,
los çiento quel aguardan posan aderedor.
Catando están a mio Çid quantos ha en la cort.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 143)
...my Cid then sat down,
The hundred that awaited him sat down around [him].
Everyone in the court was looking at my Cid....
- (3) ...con todo el cuerpo ynclinado en tierra, **estubo** luengamente
orando, e lebantándose besóla.... (*Primera crónica* 52)
...with all of his body stretched out on the ground, he was
praying for a long time, and getting up he kissed her....
- (4) Como ladrón viniste, por la noche, en lo oscuro,
estando Nos **durmiendo** en descanso seguro.... (Ruiz 176)
You came like a thief, at night, in the dark,
While we were sleeping in secure sleep....

In these examples *estar* cannot mean 'to stand' because the subjects were either sitting or lying down. Furthermore, *estar* is not used to express spatial location in these examples. Instead, it adds grammatical meaning, that of progressive aspect. In (3), the adverb *luengamente* 'for a long time' seems to emphasize the aspectual meaning of *estar*.

In addition to a relatively high frequency of occurrence in gerundial constructions and evidence of semantic bleaching, *estar* shows other signs of grammaticalization as well. Only two of the 52 examples of *estar* + gerund show the alternate word order gerund + *estar*, and these in verse texts from the twelfth century (see [2] above). Thus, the word order of the construction appears to be fixed early on. However, only in 27 examples were *estar* and the gerund immediately next to one another. In the other 25 examples some other element intervened, most often a subject noun or pronoun (see [4] above), an adverbial phrase (see [3] above), or a direct object noun or pronoun. As a result, the constructions with *estar* + gerund do not demonstrate a high degree of fusion in the medieval texts. On the other hand, evidence from clitic pronouns does indicate some degree of fusion. Of the eleven examples with direct or indirect object pronouns, the pronoun occurs before *estar* + gerund in six of them, indicating that *estar* and the gerund are considered one unit in these examples:

- (5) E don Rodrigo quando los vio, saliólos a resçebir e díxoles que tres días avía que los **estava atendiendo**.... (*Crónica de 1344* 213)
 And don Rodrigo when he saw them, went out to receive them and he told them that he had been waiting for them for three days....

Estar + gerund occurs in several different tenses, including the present, the preterit, the imperfect, and the pluperfect, as well as in infinitival and gerundial form. Thus, *estar* maintains a strong verbal morphology despite adding grammatical meaning. There is no evidence of phonetic erosion of *estar* + gerund (or of any of the verbs of location, posture, motion, and activity). In summary, *estar* shows some of the features of grammaticalization already in these medieval texts. Its occurrence in gerundial constructions is relatively frequent, it undergoes semantic

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bleaching, the word order is fixed, and there is some degree of fusion between *estar* and the gerund as evidenced by the placement of clitic pronouns.

Ser 'to be' also occurs with some frequency in gerundial constructions in the texts studied. In numerous examples of *ser* + gerund *ser* retains its original lexical meaning 'to sit' or is used to express location without any indication of a seated posture, and it is often difficult to know which of these meanings is intended by the author:

- (6) ...el obispo don Jerome vistiós tan privado,
a la puerta de la eclesia **sediellos sperando**.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 109)
...the bishop don Jerome got dressed so quickly,
At the door of the church he sat/was waiting for them....

In other examples, it is unclear whether the lexical meaning 'to sit' or grammatical aspectual meaning is intended:

- (7) **Alabándose sedían** infantes de Carrión.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 133)
The infantes of Carrión sat/were praising one another....

The context does not rule out either the lexical or the grammatical reading of this example. Only in one example is it clear that *ser* is adding grammatical rather than lexical meaning:

- (8) E en **siendo dormiendo**, a la oreja le fablo el gapho....
(*Cantar de Rodrigo* 274)
While he was sleeping, the leper spoke into his ear....

Ser does not mean 'to sit' here, and there is no mention of a location. *Ser* appears to add only grammatical meaning to the construction.

Thus, while *ser* + gerund does occur fairly frequently in the texts studied, there is only slight evidence of semantic bleaching. In terms of word order, of the 17 examples of *ser* + gerund only 2 of them occur in the unexpected word order gerund + *ser* (see [7]), both of them from a

verse text. Thus, the word order is fairly fixed. However, other elements intervene between *ser* and the gerund in every example except one (see [8]). These elements include subject nouns and pronouns, direct and indirect object pronouns (see [6]), reflexive pronouns (see [7]), and adverbial phrases. As a result, the constructions with *ser* + gerund do not demonstrate fusion in the medieval texts. Evidence from clitic pronouns corroborates this. Clitic pronouns do not precede *ser* + gerund in any of the examples, indicating that *ser* and the gerund are not necessarily conceived of as a unit in these texts. *Ser* + gerund occurs in several tenses, including the present, the imperfect, the imperative, and the present subjunctive, and also in infinitival and gerundial form. Thus, *ser* maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, despite the modest frequency of *ser* + gerund in the texts studied, evidence of grammaticalization is minimal.

Quedar(se) appears only in two gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied. In the first example, the original lexical meaning 'to stay/remain' is apparent:

- (9) Pero el rei **quedó** en Galiçia **façiendo** grandes crueldades e despoblando las villas, rovando los monasterios.... (*Primera crónica* 33)
 But the king stayed in Galicia doing great cruelties and depopulating the villages, robbing the monasteries....

The meaning of *quedar* is clearly locative in this example. The other example of *quedar* + gerund is more ambiguous:

- (10) E entonces hovieron amos su acuerdo que el conde Morante **quedasse** **acabdillando** su gente.... (*Gran conquista de Ultramar* 372)
 And then they both agreed that count Morante should stay/continue leading his people....

It is unclear if the meaning of *quedar* is primarily locative or aspectual in this example. Thus, evidence of semantic bleaching is inconclusive. Both examples of *quedar* + gerund do occur in the expected word order. In the first example an adverbial expression separates the two

elements and in the other example they are contiguous. In addition, these examples do not contain clitic pronouns, so there is no evidence of fusion between *quedar* and the gerund. *Quedar* occurs in the preterit in one example and the imperfect subjunctive in the other, so it maintains its verbal morphology. As a result, while two examples of *quedar* + gerund do occur in the medieval texts studied, *quedar* does not demonstrate strong evidence of grammaticalization.

Three of the verbs of location and posture mentioned as auxiliaries of the progressive in the modern language do not appear in gerundial constructions in the data: *permanecer* 'to stay/remain,' *hallarse* 'to find oneself/be found,' and *encontrarse* 'to find oneself/be found.' It is possible that they did occur in gerundial constructions in the medieval period, but my data do not show any evidence of this.

2. Verbs of Motion

According to Heine, verbs of motion are also a source of auxiliaries in languages of the world. He argues that verbs of motion, for example, *go*, *come*, *move*, and *pass*, develop into expressions of ingressive, future, perfect, or past meaning. Scholars mention a number of verbs of motion as auxiliaries of the progressive in modern Spanish: *ir* 'to go,' *venir* 'to come,' *andar* 'to walk/go about,' *salir* 'to leave,' *saltar* 'to jump,' *pasar* 'to pass,' and *llevar* 'to carry.' In addition, Kany, Albor, and Cotton and Sharp find several other verbs of motion in gerundial constructions in the Spanish spoken in the Andes, but these constructions do not have progressive meaning and are, thus, outside the scope of this investigation.

Of the seven verbs of motion mentioned by authors as auxiliaries of the modern progressive, five are found in gerundial constructions in the earliest Spanish texts. In fact, Spaulding finds several examples of *ir* + gerund and one example of *venire* + gerund already in Latin, although he again states that these verbs maintained their original meanings, 'to go' and 'to come' respectively. I find 146 examples of *ir* + gerund in the medieval texts (with 65 examples from the *Poema de Mio Cid* alone), 24 examples of *andar* + gerund, 19 examples of *venir* + gerund, nine examples of *salir* + gerund, and only one example of *pasar* + gerund. Clearly, *ir* occurs in gerundial constructions much

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more frequently than any of the other verbs of motion, and much more frequently than any of the verbs of location, posture, or activity for that matter. *Andar* and *venir*, and even *salir*, occur fairly frequently as well.

In the majority of constructions with *ir* + gerund *ir* retains its original lexical meaning, 'to go,' and the gerund tells how the subject goes or some other circumstance related to the going:

- (11) ...ayuntáronse los nobles e condes de la tierra e **fuéronse** para la dicha doña Urraca...**diciéndole** así.... (*Primera crónica* 26)
...the nobles and counts of the land got together and went to the aforementioned doña Urraca...telling her thus....

These examples usually contain an adverbial phrase or other contextual indication of physical motion (as in [11]). The gerund *diciendo* 'telling' is not the main verb of (11), but instead expresses an idea secondary to that of *fuéronse* 'they went.' Nonetheless, example after example show signs of semantic bleaching, beginning in the twelfth century:

- (12) Las coplas deste cantar aquis **van acabando**. (*Poema de Mio Cid* 110)
The verses of this song are (*go) ending here.
- (13) Quando esto oyó el comde, yas **iva alegrando**.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 60)
When the count heard this, he was getting (*going) happier....
- (14) ...et por mostrar la nobleza de los godos et como **fueron viniendo** de tierra en tierra, venciendo muchas batallas et conquiriendo muchas tierras.... (Alfonso X el Sabio 35)
...and to show the nobility of the Goths and how they were (*went) coming from land to land, winning many battles and conquering many lands....
- (15) Compañero, ahora
creo que **voy entendiendo**. (Ruiz 150)

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Friend, now

I believe that I am beginning to understand (*go understanding).

- (16) E de allí adelante siempre trabajó ella en hazer haver a Carlos el tesoro de su padre; e **ivagelo dando** poco a poco, porque lo pudiesse levar más en salvo a Francia. (*Gran conquista de Ultramar* 375)

And from then on she always worked to ensure that Carlos would have the treasure of his father; and she was (*went) giving it to him little by little, so that he could carry it more safely to France.

The lexical meaning of *ir*, 'to go,' is incompatible with the gerunds in each of these examples. This is clear evidence of semantic bleaching. Of the 146 examples, only 31 occur in the unexpected word order gerund + *ir*, 28 of those in verse texts. Thus, the word order *ir* + gerund is fairly fixed. Nonetheless, 55 of the examples contain intervening elements, including subject nouns and pronouns, direct and indirect object pronouns (see [16]), direct object nouns, reflexive pronouns, and adverbial phrases (see [11]). Thus, there is no great degree of fusion between *ir* and the gerund in the data. On the other hand, of the 30 examples with clitic pronouns the clitic precedes *ir* + gerund 13 times, indicating that in some cases *ir* and the gerund may be considered as one unit:

- (17) ...los pendones e las lanças tan bien las **van empleando**,
a los unos firiendo e a los otros derrocando. (*Poema de Mio Cid* 58)
...the banners and the lances so well they are using them,
Wounding some and demolishing others.

Thus, evidence from clitic pronouns does suggest some degree of fusion. *Ir* occurs in many tenses, including the present, the preterit, the imperfect, the future, the imperative, and the imperfect subjunctive as well as in infinitival form. Consequently *ir* maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, *ir* shows signs of grammaticalization from

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the earliest Spanish texts. It occurs much more frequently in gerundial constructions than any other verb, it shows clear signs of semantic bleaching, the word order in prose texts is nearly fixed, and the placement of clitic pronouns indicates some degree of fusion between *ir* and the gerund.

Andar 'to walk/go about' occurs in 24 gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied. In nearly every case it retains its original lexical meaning:

- (18) E por los mercados e villas **andavan** los pregoneros **pregonando** a grandes voces.... (*Primera crónica* 36)
And through the markets and villages the town criers
walked/went about proclaiming in loud voices....

Almost every example contains an adverbial phrase or other contextual indication of motion (as in [18]). In a few examples, however, there is no overt indication of motion, and a progressive reading may be possible:

- (19) Ellos son muy leydos, et **andarvos** han **engañando**. (*Cantar de Rodrigo* 294)
They are very learned, and they will go about/keep deceiving
you.
- (20) Patronio, a mí dicen que unos mis vezinos, que son más poderosos que yo, se **andan ayuntando** et faziendo muchas maestrías et artes con que me puedan engañar.... (*Manuel* 81)
Patronio, they tell me that some of my neighbors, who are more powerful than I, go about/are meeting and making many artifices and arts with which to deceive me....

It is not clear which meaning is intended in these examples. This ambiguity may be an indication of the beginnings of semantic bleaching. Every single example occurs in the expected order *andar* + gerund. Thus, the word order is already fixed. Nonetheless, intervening elements occur in 13 of the examples, including subject nouns and pronouns (see [18]), direct object pronouns (see [19]), and adverbial

phrases. As a result, there is no great degree of fusion between *andar* and the gerund in the data. Clitic pronouns occur in only three examples and they intervene between *andar* and the gerund in two of those cases. In the third example, however, the reflexive pronoun precedes *andar* + gerund, indicating that *andar* and the gerund are considered one unit in this example (see [20]). *Andar* + gerund occurs in many tenses, including the present, the preterit, the imperfect, the future, and the present subjunctive, and also in infinitival and gerundial form. Thus, *andar* maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, *andar* + gerund constructions appear with some frequency in the data and begin to show signs of grammaticalization in terms of semantic bleaching, fixed word order, and evidence of clitic placement.

Venir 'to come' occurs in 19 gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied. In nearly every case it retains its original lexical meaning:

- (21) ...yo soñava cómo vós e yo estávamos en una muy alta sierra, e descuenta Córdoba veía **venir volando** un açor.... (*Crónica de 1344* 231)
I dreamed that you and I were on a very high ridge, and from Córdoba I saw a hawk come flying....

Venir is the main verb 'to come' in this example, and the gerund is an adverbial expression indicating how the hawk came, flying and not by train, for example. In fact, *venir* expresses motion in nearly every example found in the data. The only indications of semantic bleaching are an example in which *venir* expresses motion in time rather than motion in space and an example in which the meaning of *venir* is ambiguous:

- (22) **Acercándose viene** un tiempo de Dios, santo.... (Ruiz 163)
A holy time of God comes approaching....
- (23) El conde quando esto oyo, fue mucho sañado et irado:
<<Español, fi de enemiga ya vos **viene amenazando**>>. (*Cantar de Rodrigo* 288)
The count, when he heard this, was very furious and angry:

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“Spaniard, the enemy already comes/has been threatening you.”

The extension from movement in space to movement in time in (22) may be a sign of the beginnings of semantic bleaching. In (23) *venir* may indicate motion, but the adverb *ya* ‘already’ suggests the aspectual reading ‘has been threatening.’ Only three examples of *venir* + gerund occur in the unexpected order gerund + *venir*, twice in verse texts (see [22]) and once in a prose text, although in the latter *venir* is the main verb and the gerund is clearly part of a subordinate clause:

- (24) E la reina, **beyendo** que sus querellas non aprobechavan
açerca d’él, **vínose** para Burgos. (*Primera crónica* 59)
And the queen, seeing that her complaints did not make any
progress with him, came to Burgos.

In twelve of the examples *venir* and the gerund are separated by other elements, including subject nouns and pronouns, reflexive pronouns (see [22]), and adverbial phrases. Thus, there is no high degree of fusion between *venir* and the gerund. However, there is one example in which a clitic pronoun precedes the *venir* + gerund construction (see [23]). The placement of the direct object pronoun in this example indicates some degree of fusion between *venir* and the gerund. *Venir* + gerund occurs in many different tenses, including the present, the preterit, the imperfect, and the future subjunctive, as well as in infinitival and gerundial form. Thus, *venir* maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, *venir* + gerund constructions appear with some frequency in the data and begin to show signs of grammaticalization in terms of semantic bleaching and evidence of clitic placement.

Salir ‘to leave’ occurs in nine gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied and it retains its original lexical meaning in every example:

- (25) Díag Gonçalvez por la puerta **salió**,
diziendo de la boca: <<non veré Carrión!>> (*Poema de Mio Cid* 111)

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Diego Gonzalez left through the door,
Saying from his mouth, "I will not see Carrión!"

There is no evidence of semantic bleaching of *salir* + gerund in the data. Three of the examples occur in the unexpected order gerund + *salir*, twice in a verse text and once in a prose text, although in the latter *salir* is the main verb and the gerund is clearly part of a subordinate clause:

- (26) Mas la reina en aquel tiempo non savía cosa d'estas, mas a las palabras d'ellos e fee **encomendándose**, **salíó** de Carrión y fue para Aragón. (*Primera crónica* 51)
But the queen at that time did not know a thing about it, but on their words and committing herself to faith, she left Carrión and headed toward Aragón.

In six of the examples other elements intervene between *salir* and the gerund, including subject nouns and pronouns, reflexive pronouns (see (26)), and adverbial phrases. Furthermore, there are no examples of clitic pronouns preceding *salir* + gerund constructions. Thus, there is no evidence of fusion between *salir* and the gerund. *Salir* occurs in two tenses, the preterit and the imperfect, so *salir* maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, although there are a handful of examples of *salir* + gerund in the medieval texts studied, there is no evidence of grammaticalization.

Pasar 'to pass' occurs in only one gerundial construction in the medieval texts studied, and it retains its original lexical meaning in this example:

- (27) Assí **razonando** la puerta **passamos**.... (Mena 16)
Thus reasoning we passed the door....

There is no evidence of semantic bleaching in this example. *Passamos* 'we passed' has its own direct object, *la puerta* 'the door,' and is the main verb of this sentence. The meaning of *passamos* is clearly that of physical motion. The gerund *razonando* 'reasoning' is a subordinate clause, indicating the circumstances surrounding the subject's passing

the door. This example occurs in the unexpected order gerund + *pasar*, although again in a verse text. The direct object intervenes between the gerund and *pasar*, so there is no evidence of fusion between *pasar* and the gerund. *Pasar* occurs in the preterit in this example, so it maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, although a single construction of *pasar* + gerund is found in the data, there is no evidence of grammaticalization.

Two of the verbs of motion mentioned as auxiliaries of the progressive in the modern language do not appear in gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied, *saltar* 'to jump' and *llevar* 'to carry.' It is possible that they did occur in the medieval period, but my data do not show any evidence of this.

3. Verbs of Activity

Heine states that verbs of activity may also develop into auxiliaries. He finds that verbs such as *do*, *continue*, *begin*, and *finish* often come to express progressive, continuous, ingressive, completive, or perfective meaning. Scholars mention a number of verbs of activity as auxiliaries of the progressive in modern Spanish: *seguir* 'to follow/continue,' *continuar* 'to continue,' *proseguir* 'to proceed/continue,' *comenzar* 'to begin,' *empezar* 'to begin,' *principiar* 'to begin,' *soltarse* 'to break loose/start,' *acabar* 'to finish/end,' *concluir* 'to conclude/finish,' and *terminar* 'to finish/end.'

Of these ten verbs of activity, which may be further broken down into verbs of continuation, inception, and termination, four are found in gerundial constructions in the earliest Spanish texts. I find 26 examples of *comenzar* + gerund in the data, 2 examples of *seguir* + gerund, and 1 example each of *proseguir* + gerund and *concluir* + gerund. Clearly, *comenzar* occurs in gerundial constructions much more frequently than the other verbs of activity, which occur only sporadically in the texts studied.

Of the verbs of continuation two appear in gerundial constructions in the medieval texts studied, *seguir* and *proseguir*. In one example *seguir* is clearly the main verb with its own direct object:

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- (28) ...e quiso su propia voluntad **seguir, diciendo**.... (Martínez de Toledo 73)
...and he tried to follow his own will, saying....

The gerund *diziendo* is an adverbial phrase indicating how he tried to follow his own will. In the other two examples, however, the gerund seems to be the main verb:

- (29) ...et cuando yo non te quisiere rresponder **sygue me preguntando** fasta que telo diga. (*L'ancienne version espagnole de Kalila et Digna* 9)
...and when I don't want to answer you, keep asking me until I tell it to you.

- (30) **Prosigue dando** razones porque se mouio á acabar esta obra. (Rojas 12)
He continues giving reasons why he was persuaded to finish this work.

In these examples the gerund does not describe how the subjects continue, but rather what they continue/keep doing. Thus, there appears to be some kind of semantic shift. The latter two examples occur in the expected word order, although in (29) a clitic pronoun separates *seguir* and the gerund. Thus, there is no great degree of fusion. *Seguir* and *proseguir* maintain their verbal morphology, occurring in both the present and the imperative as well as in infinitival form. In summary, these few examples show some signs of grammaticalization in terms of semantic bleaching and fixed word order.

Of the verbs of inception only *comenzar* occurs in gerundial constructions in the medieval texts, 26 times. In one example *comenzar* is the main verb with its own direct object:

- (31) Esto **diziendo, conpieçan** la razón.... (*Poema de Mio Cid* 97)
Saying this, they begin the account....

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The gerund is an adverbial phrase indicating how they begin the account. In almost every other example the gerund occurs with a *comenzar a/de* + infinitive construction:

- (32) ...e **començo** a ganar la tierra e conquerir la, **venciendo** muchas batallas, tomando villas e castiellos por fuerça.
(Alfonso X el Sabio 55)
...and he began to win the land and conquer it, winning many battles, taking villages and castles by force.

The gerund in this construction again is an adverbial phrase indicating how the subject began to win and conquer the land. In fact, in every example of *comenzar* + gerund in the data the gerund functions adverbially, and thus there is no sign of semantic bleaching. Only four examples occur in the unexpected word order gerund + *comenzar*. However, intervening elements occur in 24 of the 26 examples. Furthermore, there are no examples of the placement of clitic pronouns before *comenzar* + gerund. Thus, there is no evidence of fusion between *comenzar* and the gerund. *Comenzar* occurs in two tenses, the present and the preterit, so it maintains its verbal morphology. In summary, despite the relatively high frequency of occurrence of *comenzar* + gerund in the texts studied, there is no evidence of grammaticalization.

Of the verbs of termination only *concluir* appears with the gerund in the texts studied, and only once:

- (33) ...en la quarta **concluyré rreprobando** la común manera de fablar de los fados.... (Martínez de Toledo 50)
...in the fourth [part] I will conclude by condemning the common manner of speaking of the fates....

The gerund is clearly acting as an adverb in this example, indicating how the narrator will conclude the fourth part. There is no evidence of semantic bleaching. *Concluir* and the gerund do occur in the expected order without intervening elements, but there is no evidence of fusion in the form of clitic placement. This example occurs in the future tense, so *concluir* maintains its verbal morphology. In short, there is no

evidence of grammaticalization of *concluir* + gerund in the texts studied.

The other six verbs of activity mentioned as auxiliaries of the progressive in the modern language do not appear in gerundial constructions in the medieval texts: *continuar* 'to continue,' *empezar* 'to begin,' *principiar* 'to begin,' *soltarse* 'to break loose/start,' *acabar* 'to finish/end,' and *terminar* 'to finish/end.' It is possible that they did occur in the medieval period, but my data do not show any evidence of this.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, of the 23 verbs of location, posture, motion, and activity mentioned by scholars as auxiliaries of the progressive in modern Spanish, 12 of them occur in gerundial constructions in the earliest Spanish texts. Furthermore, several of these verbs already show evidence of grammaticalization in terms of frequency, semantic bleaching, fixed word order, and fusion. Of the verbs of location and posture *estar* is clearly the most grammaticalized in the texts studied. *Ser* and *quedar(se)* show only minimal signs of grammaticalization by comparison. Of the verbs of motion *ir* is clearly the most grammaticalized in the texts studied. *Venir* and *andar* also show evidence of grammaticalization, although not nearly to the extent of *ir*. *Salir* and *pasar* show no signs of grammaticalization at all. The verbs of continuation *seguir* and *proseguir* show the beginnings of grammaticalization, although they occur very rarely in the texts studied. The verb of inception *comenzar*, on the other hand, shows no evidence of grammaticalization despite its relatively frequent occurrence in the texts studied. Finally, the verb of termination *concluir*, which occurs only once in the data, shows no sign of grammaticalization either.

It is noteworthy that the six verbs most commonly accepted by scholars as auxiliaries of the progressive in the modern language, *estar*, *quedar*, *ir*, *venir*, *andar*, and *seguir*, are precisely the verbs that show the most evidence of grammaticalization in the medieval texts studied. Because these verbs began the process of grammaticalization earlier in the development of Spanish, they behave more like auxiliaries in the modern language and may be said to be further along Heine's

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continuum between main verbs and auxiliaries. The use of other verbs of location, posture, motion, and activity in gerundial constructions may be by analogy with constructions containing these older, more grammaticalized auxiliaries.

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Note

¹ The terminology regarding the modern Spanish *-ndo* forms is somewhat confusing. Most scholars refer to these forms in *-ndo* as *gerunds*, while a few scholars call them *present participles*, possibly by analogy with English grammar, wherein *-ing* forms are known as *present participles*. The modern Spanish forms in *-ndo* are derived from the ablative form of the Latin gerund, also ending in *-ndo*. The Latin present participle in *-nt-* does not survive as a productive form in modern Spanish. In fact, nearly all of the functions of the Latin present participle are taken over by the gerund in the development of Spanish. The present participle in modern Spanish exists only in a number of lexicalized adjectives (e.g., *interesante* 'interesting' and *ocurrente* 'witty,'), nouns (e.g., *teniente* 'lieutenant,' *estante* 'shelf,' and *poniente* 'west'), and prepositions (e.g., *durante* 'during'), whose meaning is often very far removed semantically from the verbs from which they are derived (Whitley 95). For the sake of consistency, I use the term *gerund* to refer to the Spanish forms in *-ndo* and *present participle* to refer to the Spanish forms in *-nte*.

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