

# The evolution of Romanian gerundial periphrases with *a sta/a se afla/a umbla*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the cross-linguistic distinction between two classes of gerundial periphrases, such as proposed in Laca (2004a), can be extended to Romanian. That is, according to the level at which the finite verb is merged into the structure, we have one class with the finite verb merged directly in the functional domain, under Aspect; and the second class with the finite verb inserted at the lexical level, as the head of the VP, functioning as an eventuality modifier for the gerund. The first class is represented by structures with the auxiliary *a fi* ‘to be’; the second class, by configurations with the aspectualizers *a sta* ‘to stay’, *a se afla* ‘to be situated’ and *a umbla* ‘to walk’. The diachronic analysis proposed in this paper argues that these three aspectualizers undergo different stages of grammaticalization, although they do not reach the auxiliary status. The loss of the locative argument and the possibility of extraction from the gerundial VP are used as arguments that the verbs *a sta*, *a se afla* and *a umbla* have undergone structural changes when used as aspectualizers.

Keywords: gerundial periphrasis, non-perfective aspect, aspectualizer, auxiliary.

## 1. Introduction

This paper investigates the status of constructions that display a verb + gerund configuration, in which the verb is one of the following: *a se afla* ‘to be situated’ / *a sta* ‘to stay’ / *a umbla* ‘to walk’; for example, *stă plângând* ‘he’s in a crying state’. It will be shown that these constructions have different properties than the aspectual periphrases containing *a fi*+gerund; for example, *a fost plângând* ‘he has been crying’.

I shall argue that the relevant verbs started a process of grammaticalization in Old Romanian (OR) towards becoming aspectual operators, but they have not reached the status of Aspect heads in monoclausal structures. The process of grammaticalization led to their desemantization (Lehmann 1982), a stage that is attested in OR. In the case of *a se afla* and *a sta*, there is evidence that the gerundial VPs are no longer their adjuncts, starting, at the latest, with Modern Romanian (MR). The aspectuals *a sta* and *a se afla* take a gerundial complement. *A se afla* is compatible with an analysis as a copula, although no definite conclusions can be drawn due to lack of hard evidence. In the case of *a umbla*, there is evidence that a similar process is taking place in nowadays Romanian, that is, the gerundial adjunct becomes the complement of the verb. This study uses the data from a large corpus of 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century texts (including the data from a Google search for MR).

In formal studies, gerundial periphrases have been divided into two classes according to the level at which the finite verb is inserted into the structure: one in which the finite verb is inserted directly in the functional domain, under Aspect, and one in which it is inserted at the lexical level and functions as an eventuality modifier. In the latter case, the aspectualizer contributes its own lexical aspectual features to modify ‘the temporal structure of the eventuality’ (Laca 2004a: 425). The two types of periphrases are diachronically related, in the sense that aspectual auxiliaries develop from lexical verbs that belong to certain event types (stative or motion verbs, Squartini 1998: 17-8), in configurations in which they are modified by

adjuncts encoded as non-finite verb forms. The syntactic property underlying the grammaticalization of these structures is the obligatory control, from the matrix, of the subject in the adjunct clause.

The semantic link between the aspectual class of statives and the subcategories of the imperfective (the progressive, the habitual and the continuous) is represented by durativity and atelicity. The progressive and the habitual aspect have been analyzed as operators whose function is to stativize an eventuality. When used in the progressive, an eventuality is stripped of its initial and final boundaries, meaning that its culmination point is suspended and the focus lies on its internal structure. This makes progressive predications atelic (Parsons 1990). Verbs of motion also have the feature of durativity, which evolves into viewing the action as on-going (encoded by the progressive aspect), or as habitual, frequentative, incremental, depending on the original (non)directed character of the movement (Laca 2004a, b).

Romance languages have a wide range of gerundial periphrases encoding the non-perfective aspect. The gerund/present participles that are part of these periphrases continue the Latin *-ant/-ando* non-finite forms. The variety of these structures arises from the aspectual auxiliary. Two stative verbs function as auxiliaries: the Romance descendants of Latin *ESSE*, in Romanian, Sardinian, some Northern Italian dialects, areas of Sicilian Old Lombard, Old and Classical French, and Old Portuguese (Edelstein 1966; Jones 1993: 83ff, Vincent 2011: 433; Squartini 1998: 28-9; Rohlf 1969: 109; Fournier 1998: 254), and the continuators of Latin *STARE*, in Italian, Sardinian, Friulan, Iberian Romance, Brazilian Portuguese (Renzi, Salvi, Cardinaletti 1991: 132ff; Jones 1993: 84; Haiman, Benincà 1992: 80; Bosque Muñoz, Demonte Barreto 1999: 3394; Wheeler, Yates, Dols 1999: 363ff; Mateus et al. 2003: 146).

The motion verbs that occur in Romance gerundial periphrases are: the descendants of the Latin *VENIRE* in Italian, Spanish, Catalan, and Brazilian Portuguese (Renzi, Salvi, Cardinaletti 1991: 141; Bosque Muñoz, Demonte Barreto 1999: 3394; Wheeler, Yates, Dols 1999: 366; Squartini 1998: 28); of *AMBULARE* (conflated with *IRE* in Italian and Catalan) in Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Brazilian Portuguese, Old and Classical French (Laca 2004b; Squartini 1998: 29; Fournier 1998: 262); and of *IRE* in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese (Squartini 1998: 28-29, Ledgeway 2012: 123).

Romance gerundial periphrases expressing the non-perfective aspect are not as grammaticalized as the English *to be* + present participle structure, a fact shown by their optional character. They are in free variation with non-perfective synthetic verbal tenses, such as the imperfect and the present indicative (Comrie 1976: 33). According to Squartini (1998) and Laca (2004a,b), within Romance periphrases, different structures occupy different positions on the grammaticalization cline.

Romanian displays a narrower range of gerundial periphrastic constructions than other Romance languages, with only one auxiliary, that is, *a fi* 'to be', selecting a gerund complement. *A fi* 'to be' has an auxiliary status and forms gerundial analytic tenses and moods from the oldest Romanian texts up to the present-day language, as shown in (1) for MR and in (2) for OR. Although in OR this auxiliary is a free morpheme, as shown in (2), it has a clitic auxiliary status in MR. In (1) and (2), the auxiliary status of *fi* 'be' (clitic or non-clitic) is formally indicated by the fact that: (i) it is preceded by clitic pronouns, which are always merged in I in both OR (Alboiu, Hill, Sitaridou 2014) and MR (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994); and (ii) it is preceded by the negation *nu*, which takes the finite IP as its complement; *nu* is a free morpheme in Romanian and interferes with V-to-C (Isac & Jakab 2004). Hence, *fi* 'be' is sandwiched between I with the clitics and the gerund verb form moved out of vP (see Alboiu & Hill 2013). Furthermore, the

(1)    a.    (Nu) l-o    fi               (\*acum) căut-ând  
not CL.3SG.ACC=AUX.MOD.3SG BE.ASP now search-GER  
‘He might (not) be searching for him (now).’  
  
     b.    (Nu) l-o    fi               căut-ând (\*și găs-ind).  
not CL.3SG.ACC=AUX.MOD.3SG be.ASP search-GER and find-GER  
Intended: ‘He might (not) be searching and finding him.’

- Romanian is like other Romance languages insofar as the gerund can co-occur with the verbs *a se afla* ‘to be situated’ (3), *a sta* ‘to stay’ (4), and *a umbla* ‘to walk’ (5). The structure with *a se afla* + gerund became obsolete at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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constructions will be thoroughly analyzed and showed to involve a different derivational pattern, which relies on grammaticalization.

## 2. The *a se afla/a sta/a umbla* + gerund structures

### 2.1. *A se afla* + gerund

This periphrasis is attested from the oldest Romanian texts, up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in translations and in original texts. After the 19<sup>th</sup> century it becomes obsolete. It is rarely used, with 29 occurrences in the corpus.

- (6) Aceste cuvinte pui și la început și la sfârșit, deci și noi pururea  
these words (you)put and at beginning and at end so also we always  
**să ne aflăm zicând** așa (Neagoe Basarab.1654)  
SĂ<sub>SUBJ</sub> CL.REFL.ACC.1PL find.SUBJ.1PL say-GER this  
‘Put these words at the beginning and at the end, so that we should always say this’
- (7) până astăzi **să află păzindu-și** și limba,  
until today CL.REFL.ACC.3PL find.PRS.3PL guard-GER=CL.REFL.DAT and language.DEF  
și niște obicei ale lor. (Cantacuzino.1716: 45)  
and some habits AL their  
‘up to these days they have been guarding both their language and some of their habits’
- (8) El d-abia sosise la Giurgiu și **se afla**  
he of=just arrive.PLUPERF.3SG at Giurgiu and CL.REFL.ACC.3SG find.IMPERF.3SG  
povestind cadiului ceea ce i se  
tell-GER judge.DEF.DAT that what CL.DAT.3SG CL.REFL.ACC.3SG  
întâmplase în București (Bălcescu.1852: 45)  
happen.PLUPERF.3SG in Bucharest  
‘He had just arrived at Giurgiu and was telling the judge what had happened to him in Bucharest’
- (9) ea **se afla** gândind totdeauna la iubitul ei și  
she CL.REFL.ACC.3SG find.IMPERF.3SG think-GER always at lover.DEF her and  
închipuindu-și ziua când va îmbrăca hainele  
imagine-GER=CL.REFL.DAT.3SG day.DEF when AUX.FUT.3SG put.on.INF clothes.DEF  
de mireasă (Alexandrescu.c.1850: 256)  
of bride  
‘she was thinking about her lover all the time and was imagining the day when she would put on her wedding gown’
- (10) Într-o zi, pe când **se afla șezând** pe scaun la ușa  
In=a day while CL.REFL.ACC.3SG find.IMPERF.3SG sit-GER on chair at door.DEF  
visteriei, așteptând să-i vie ceva de lucru,  
treasury.DEF.GEN wait-GER SĂ<sub>SUBJ</sub>=CL.DAT.3SG come.SUBJ something for work

deodată se apropie de el un boier bătrân și cu fața  
 suddenly CL.REFL.ACC.3SG draw.near.SUBJ of him a boyar old and with face.DEF  
 foarte dulce (Filimon.1863: 125)  
 very sweet  
 ‘One day, while he was sitting on a chair at the treasury door, waiting for some work,  
 suddenly an old boyar, with a very sweet face, drew near him’

*A se afla* + gerund is sometimes ambiguous depending whether the verb is analyzed as:  
 (a) the *se*-passive form of the transitive *a afla* ‘to find’, which enters a regular transitive construction, as in (11); and (b) the inherently reflexive *a se afla*, which we have seen in (6-10). The latter is formed from the *se*-passive form of the transitive *a afla*. The ambiguity is shown by the example (12), which has two possible readings: (a) aspectual periphrasis which evolved from a structure containing the reflexive *a se afla* and a controlled adjunct, and (b) a raising structure containing the passive reflexive form of the verb *a afla*.

- (11) Deci, dându-să scrisoare cu carte de blăstăm și igumenului  
 so giving=CL.PASS.3SG writing with letter of curse also superior.DEF.DAT  
 de Sfeti Ioan, l-au scos de față, acel ispisoc de la Duca-Vodă  
 of Saint John CL.ACC.3SG=has taken.out in front that document from Duca=prince  
 bătrânul, din vealeat 7180, în care s-au aflat scriind toate  
 old.DEF from year 7180 in which SE.PASS=(they)have found write-GER all  
 moșiile câte au dat mănăstirii Clatiei (ISD.6.1717: 61)  
 lands.DEF how.many (he)has given monastery.DEF.DAT Clatia  
 ‘So, as a letter containing a curse had also been given to the superior of the Saint John  
 monastery, they produced that document from prince Duca from the year 7180, in which  
 all the lands that had been given to the Clatia monastery were found to be written’

- (12) de să va afla neștine din frați ținându  
 if CL.PASS=REFL.ACC AUX.FUT.3SG find one of brothers keep-GER  
 cineva deusebi  
 someone especially  
 ‘If one of the brothers is favoring someone in particular’ / ‘If one of the brothers is found  
 favoring someone in particular’ (DRH.A.XIX.1626: 147)

As far as its lexical properties are concerned, the aspectual *a se afla* mainly combines with verbs denoting activities (3), but also with states (10). Therefore, it encodes both the progressive (with dynamic verbs) and the continuous aspect (with statives). No attestation of an achievement was found, which suggests that this aspectual verb rules out momentary eventualities.

## 2.2. *A sta* + gerund

The corpus analysis has shown that this structure has a low frequency in every period in the evolution of Romanian, both in translated and in original texts (around 45 occurrences). The statistics for contemporary Romanian are based on an internet Google search.

- (13) E bărbații ceia ce mergea cu nusul, **sta** ciudindu-se  
and men.DEF those that walked with him stay.IMPERF look-GER=CL.REFL.ACC.3PL  
'And those men that were walking with him were staring' (CPr.1566-7: 38)
- (14) i-au apropiat de mijlocul oștii muntenești, unde  
CL.ACC.3PL=have drawn.close of middle.DEF army.DEF Wallachian where  
venise iara la loc Matei vodă și **sta** îndemnând  
come.PLUPERF.3SG again at place Matei prince and sit.IMPERF.3SG urge-GER  
oastea sa asupra cazacilor (CL.1675: 154)  
army.DEF his over Cossacks.DEF  
'he drew them close to the center of the Wallachian army, where prince Matei had  
returned and kept urging his army to attack the Cossacks'
- (15) Nemții încă au avut gătire bună, fiindu-le mai mare  
Germans.DEF still have had preparation good being=CL.DAT.3PL more great  
gheneral Badensis, și **sta** așteptând pă turci în Zemlin și  
general Badensis and sit.IMPERF.3PL wait-GER PE Turks in Zemlin and  
Strășovar. (Greceanu.1714: 293)  
Strășovar  
'The Germans were also well prepared, as their commander was general Badensis, and  
they were waiting for the Turks in Zemlin and in Strășovar'
- (16) Chiar atunci cei doi boieri veniseră și **sta** ascultând la  
precisely then CEL two boyars come.PLUPERF and stay.IMPERF.3PL listen-GER at  
ușă. (Negruzzi.1840: 103)  
door  
'At that very moment the two boyars had come and were listening at the door'
- (17) **stau** vorbind ([http:// www.hanuancutei.com](http://www.hanuancutei.com))  
(I)stay.PRS talk-GER  
'I am talking'
- (18) El **stătea** scriindu-și tema, iar frații lui  
he stay.IMPERF.3SG write-GER=CL.REFL.DAT homework and brothers.DEF his  
dormeau.  
sleep.IMPERF  
'He was writing his homework and his brothers were sleeping'

The reason for its low frequency is the competition with the much more frequent construction that involves the coordinating conjunction *și* 'and', as in (19). This construction is an example of pseudocoordination (see Croitor in this volume), which means that the selection relation between *sta* and the gerund is maintained at LF.

- (19) Era cu nușii Pătru, **sta** și se încălziia. (CT.1560-1: 227r)  
was with them Peter stayed and CL.REFL.ACC got.warm  
'Peter was with them, he was getting warm'



As for its aspectual value, all throughout the evolution of Romanian, the aspectual *a sta* selects the gerund of dynamic verbs: activities, as seen in (17), and accomplishments, as seen in (18). This suggests that it encodes the progressive, rather than the continuous aspect. The gerund of stative verbs is ruled out, as in (20), irrespective of whether these verbs project an event argument or not.

- (20) a. \*stătea dormind  
(s/he)stay.IMPERF sleep-GER  
b. \*stă având un creion în mână  
(s/he)stays have-GER a pencil in hand

The verbs that are selected by the aspectual *a sta* must have the feature [+durative], therefore, the gerund of verbs which encode achievements cannot occur in this configuration, see (21).

- (21) \*stau dându-mi seama de adevăr  
(I)stay realizing of truth

### 2.3. *A umbla* + gerund

The oldest attestations of this structure date from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and are illustrated in (22)-(28). The configuration is present throughout OR (mostly in original texts), as well as in modern and in contemporary texts. Its frequency is not high (33 contexts were identified), a fact that can be due to the existence of competing structures that encode the same aspectual information (frequentative). One example is the structure with the adverbial clitic *tot* ‘on and on’. The structure is in obvious regress (most occurrences are in OR).

- (22) au îmblat vânzătorii **măncându-se** și  
have.3SG walked merchants harm-GER=CL.REC.ACC.3PL and  
**părându-se** cu Nica logofăt (DIR.B.IV.1622: 159-60)  
denounce-GER= CL.REC.ACC.3PL with Nica high.official  
‘the merchants and the high official Nica kept harming and denouncing one another’
- (23) Și limba cea neînvățată numai ce **umblă tocând**, că n-are  
and tongue.DEF CEL ignorant only that walks chatter-GER because not-has  
bunătați dinlăuntru.  
goodness.PL inside  
‘And one’s ignorant tongue only keeps chattering, as no good can come from it’  
(Neagoe Basarab.1654: 106v)
- (24) Toma slujeru nu să astâmpără, ci **umblă turburând** lucrurile  
Toma boyar not CL.REFL.ACC stops but walks disturb-GER things.DEF  
împotriva mării sale (Greceanu.1714: 251)  
against majesty.DEF his  
‘Boyar Toma will not stop, but he keeps agitating spirits against his Majesty’

- (25) vom umbla scurmând și cercetând acele vechituri  
 AUX.FUT.1PL walk stir-GER and research-GER those old.books  
 ‘we shall be stirring and researching those old books’ (Cantacuzino.1716: 10)
- (26) cei mari, stăpânii noștri, **îmbla** amăgindu-să unul  
 CEL great masters.DEF our walk.IMPERF deceive-GER=CL.REC.ACC.3PL one  
 pi altul pentru lăcomie (NL.1743: 340)  
 PE another for greed  
 ‘the ones at the top, our masters, were deceiving one another because of their greed’
- (27) A nebunit aceia ce **umblă** ispitind / Puterea sufletească și  
 have.3PL gone.mad those that walk tempt-GER force.DEF spiritual and  
 marginile ei (Donici.1844: 167)  
 borders.DEF her  
 ‘Those that are tempting their spiritual force and its borders have gone mad’
- (28) Toți suntem unici, dar nu toți **umblăm lăudându-ne** cu  
 all are unique but not all walk.1PL boast-GER=CL.ACC.1PL with  
 unicitatea noastră. ([www.tpu.ro](http://www.tpu.ro))  
 uniqueness.DEF our  
 ‘We are all unique, but we are not boasting with our uniqueness’

The occurrence of a gerund that modifies the event of walking, as in (29), disambiguates the original motion meaning of the verb.

- (29) **îmbla** pribegind dintr-o țară într-alta (Budai.1800-12: 43)  
 walk.IMPERF.3SG wander-GER from=a country in=another  
 ‘he was walking, wandering from country to country’

As far as its aspectual value is concerned, *a umbla* is always atelic in this configuration, as opposed to its use as a motion verb, in which case it encodes either an activity (atelic) (30a) or an accomplishment (telic) (30b).

- (30) a. **Umblă** prin oraș **cărând** o geantă grea.  
 ‘He is walking in town while carrying a heavy bag’  
 b. Oamenii **au umblat până** în cel mai izolat sat **cărând** alimente.  
 ‘The men walked up to the most isolated village carrying food’

Generally, the aspectual verb *a umbla* selects an activity verb. The frequentative value of *a umbla* + gerund is predominant: it is actualized in almost all the occurrences of this structure (22-28). In all Romance languages the equivalent of *a umbla* is used to encode pluractionality (‘a multiplicity of actions, whether involving multiple participants, times or locations’, Lasersohn 1995: 240, apud Laca 2004b).

Rarely, *a umbla* selects a stative verb and encodes the continuous aspect (31). Verbs that encode punctual achievements are not attested with this aspectual.



- (31) Ce du-te de te odihnește, căci știu că  
 but go.IMP=CL.ACC.2SG and CL.ACC.2SG rest.IMP because (I)know that  
 vii fi ostenit și pentru acestea mai multă grijă în zădar  
 AUX.FUT.2SG be tired and for these more worry in vane  
 nu îmbla purtând (Cantemir.1705: 252<sup>v</sup>)  
 not walk.IMP carry-GER  
 ‘But go to rest, because I know that you are tired, and stop carrying any more worries for nothing.’

#### 2.4. Aspectual values of *a se afla* / *a sta* / *a umbla* vs. *a fi* + gerund

The three verbs that are investigated are more restricted as far as their aspectual values are concerned than the verb *a fi* in gerundial periphrases: none of the three eventuality modifiers can combine with the gerund of a verb denoting an achievement. Only the functional *a fi* accepts combination both with [+durative] (32a,c) and with [-durative] eventualities (32b), encoding evidentiality and epistemic modality (Irimia 2010).

- (32) a. O fi stând la geam / O fi fiind aici. (Continuous)  
 AUX.MOD.3SG be sitt-GER at window AUX.MOD.3SG be be-GER here  
 ‘He might be sitting at the window’ / ‘He might be here’  
 b. O fi ieșind din casă în momentul acesta. (Progressive)  
 AUX.MOD.3SG be come-GER from house in moment.DEF this  
 ‘He might be coming out of the house at this moment’  
 c. O fi învățând mereu. (Habitual)  
 AUX.MOD.3SG be learn-GER always  
 ‘He might study all the time’

#### 3. Disambiguation of locative/motion – aspectual use of the three verbs

Two tests can be employed to distinguish between the two uses of the stative and motion verbs in the context of a gerund.

- *Combination with a locative/path adverb (a sta, a se afla, a umbla)*

The first test is represented by the occurrence of the locative/path in the argument structure of the matrix verb. The stative verbs *a sta* and *a se afla* select a locative adverb, while the motion verb *a umbla* selects a path adverb. When the adverb is realized, these three verbs preserve their original lexical meaning. When the adverb is absent, these verbs have acquired their new aspectual value.

The position of the locative adverb can lead to ambiguities. I consider that there is no ambiguity that the locative is the complement of the finite verb as long as it is placed at the left of the gerund, in front or after the finite verb. The word order (locative adjunct +) finite verb (+ locative adjunct) + gerund occurs with the three verbs under analysis. This disambiguates the structure as containing a stative/motion verb and an IP-level gerundial adjunct.

(33) L-a patului ei margini cu fruntea-n a ei poale /  
 at=AL bed.DEF.GEN her edges with forehead=in AL her lap.PL  
 Sta în genunche dânsul privind întunecos... (Eminescu, Opere 4: 321)  
 stay.IMPERF.3SG in knees he look-GER dark  
 ‘At the edge of her bed, his forehead on her lap / He stayed on his knees with a sad look’

(34) Care fabricanți să află aici lucrând încă de când  
 which manufacturers CL.REFL.ACC.3SG find.PRS.3PL here work-GER even since  
 s-au deschis răzvrătirea (Doc.econ.1823: 282)  
 CL.REFL.ACC.3SG=has started revolt.DEF  
 ‘which manufacturers have been here working ever since the revolt started’

(35) îmbla pre pământ învățând și propoveaduind și toate  
 walk.IMPERF.3SF on land teach-GER and preach-GER and all  
 grijind (Dosoftei.1682: 166r)  
 take.care-GER  
 ‘he was walking the earth teaching and preaching and taking care of all’

- *Combination with a manner adverb (a sta, a umbla)*

The second test is represented by the possibility to insert a manner adverbial in the structure, a test that can be applied to the configurations with *a sta* (as a postural verb) and with *a umbla* (*a se afla* does not have a postural use, therefore manner adverbs are not accepted). In gerundial periphrases, the (partial) loss of the stative/motion component of the verb is suggested by the impossibility of inserting manner adverbials that modify the eventuality (36). When *a sta/a umbla* preserve their original meanings, manner adjuncts are accepted (37).

(36) a. Ei umblă (\*târâș / \*încet) amestecându-se în treburile noastre.  
 they walk crawling / slowly interfere-GER=CL.REFL.ACC in business.DEF our  
 ‘He is interfering with our business’

b. El stă (\*confortabil) gândindu-se la noi.  
 he stays comfortably thinking=CL.REFL.ACC at us  
 ‘He is thinking about us’

(37) a. El stă confortabil pe scaun gândindu-se.  
 he sits comfortably on chair thinking=CL.REFL.ACC  
 ‘He is sitting comfortably on a chair thinking’

b. Ei umblă încet discutând despre problemele lor.  
 they walk slowly talking about problems.DEF their  
 ‘They are walking slowly discussing their problems’

## 4. The lexical status of the three aspectualizers

There is both direct and indirect evidence that the three aspectualizers have preserved their lexical (versus functional) status even when semantic attrition affected the root.

### 4.1. Evidence for non-clitic status

A number of authors argue that in OR, at least up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, auxiliaries did not have clitic status (Zamfir 2007: 158-163, Giurgea 2010), while after this period, they do (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994: 46). If we agree that Romanian auxiliaries are clitics, we can take evidence for the non-clitic status of *a sta*, *a se afla* and *a umbla* to indirectly prove they do not have auxiliary status. Non-clitic status is tested by: (i) the possibility of coordinating two VPs, and (ii) the possibility of non-adjacency between the finite and the non-finite verb, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century on.

- *Coordination of two VPs*

Coordination of two VPs is attested in OR and MR for periphrases with *a sta* and *a umbla* (not for *a se afla* + gerund, probably because of its low frequency in the corpus).

In the case of the gerundial periphrases with the auxiliary *a fi*, coordination of two VPs is not attested in the OR corpus; furthermore, it is ruled out after the OR period (see (1b), above). However, coordination of two VPs in *a avea* + participle compound tenses is attested up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Based on this evidence, we can assume that it is after this date that Romanian auxiliaries become clitics and coordination of two non-finite VPs becomes ungrammatical (Zamfir 2007: 162). We notice that coordination of two VPs is possible with both *a sta* and *a umbla* not only prior, but also after the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as shown in (22)/ (38) and (25)/ (39).

- (38) Și vedeare văzu noaptea Pavel: un bărbat machedonean sta  
and vision saw at.night Paul a man Macedonian stay.IMPERF  
rugându-l pre el și zicând: Treci în Machedoniia și ne  
asking=CL.ACC.3SG PE him and saying Go in Macedonia and CL.ACC.1PL  
agiută noao. (NT.1648: 156r)  
help us  
'And Paul had a vision in the night: a Macedonian man was asking him something and  
was saying: Go to Macedonia and help us'

- (39) tot timpul stau privind în gol și plângând  
all time.DEF (I)stay looking in emptiness and crying  
'I am staring at the emptiness and I am crying all the time' (<http://www.statusuri-y.eu/tag/intreaba/2>)

- *Non-adjacency in MR*

I shall use the possibility of non-adjacency between the finite and the non-finite verb as a test for the non-clitic status of the three aspectualizers in gerundial periphrases only after the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In OR, the auxiliary – gerund non-adjacency was allowed for the same reason as coordination, because auxiliaries were not clitics, but independent heads (22 above, 40, 41). After the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the auxiliary *a fi* needed to be adjacent to the gerund, a situation still holding in contemporary Romanian (see (1b), Dragomirescu 2013).

As far as the aspectual verbs *a sta*, *a se afla*, *a umbla* are concerned, both in OR and MR, they do not need to be adjacent to the gerund (see (5) above, 42, 43).

- (40) Și cînd intra Moisi în cortul cel de afară den tabără, sta  
and when entered Moses in tent CEL of outside from camp stay.IMPERF.3SG  
[tot norodul] privind. (BB.1688: 63)  
all people.DEF watch-GER  
'An when Moses entered the tent outside the camp, all the prople were watching'
- (41) și, neauzind pe niminea într-acele cămări, pentru că să  
and not-hear-GER PE nobody in=those rooms because CL.REFL.ACC.3PL  
afla [toț] dormindu în somnul cel dintâiu, au deschisu ușa  
find.IMPERF all sleeping in sleep.DEF CEL first (he)has opened door.DEF  
încet (Bert.1774: 222)  
slowly  
'and, not hearing anybody in those rooms, because they were all sleeping their first sleep, they opened the door silently'
- (42) Au stat [dar] [cîtva timp] uitându-se unul la  
(they)have stayed therefore some time look-GER=CL.REFL.ACC.3PL one at  
altul (Slavici, Mara.1894: 166)  
the.other  
'Therefore, they looked at one another for some time'
- (43) Locurile cumperate în piața politiei nouă se sue la 340, și câteva  
places bought in square.DEF police.DEF noew CL.REFL rise at 340 and a.few  
case se află [acum] zidindu-se. (Hurmuzaki.VI.1841: 306)  
houses CL.REFL.ACC.3PL find now build-GER=CL.PASS.3PL  
'The places bought in the new police square are now 340 and a few houses are now being built'

#### 4.2. Direct evidence for non-auxiliary status

- *Absence of clitic climbing*

In all its contexts of occurrence, except for compound tenses, the clitics occur to right of the gerund (see 5 and 7 above; 44, 45 below).

- (44) Văzându-l, a strigat.  
see-GER=CL.ACC.M.3SG (he)has shouted  
'Seeing him, he shouted'
- (45) Eu stam urmărindu-i ocolul (Coșbuc.1904: 324)  
I stay.IMPERF follow-GER=CL.DAT.3SG round.DEF  
'I was following its round motion'

For Romanian, this was explained as a consequence of the fact that the gerund raises to the Complementizer domain (to Fin), leaving the clitics behind, adjoined to the T/I (Alboiu & Hill 2013). This also happens in *a sta / a se afla / a umbla* gerundial periphrases during the entire OR period. Clitic climbing to the finite inflection does not take place, showing that the structure is still biclausal (Cinque 2004).

On the other hand, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in gerundial compound forms with *a fi*, pronominal clitics do not attach to the right hand side of the gerund, but to *a fi*, proving that the former copula had become an auxiliary, as in (2), repeated for convenience.

- (2) patr-înși-l                      fusease                      purtând (CC2.1581: 54)  
 four=men= CL.3SG.ACC BE.PLUPERF.3PL carry-GER  
 ‘four men had been carrying him’

- *Sentential negation*

The impossibility of independently negating the non-finite verb is a monoclausality test for a  $V_{finite} + V_{non-finite}$  structure, as only one sentential negation can occur per clause, at the left of the finite inflection.

- (46) a.        nu o                      fi dormind  
               not AUX.MOD.3SG be sleep-GER  
               ‘he’s probably not sleeping’  
       b.        (nu) o                      fi (\*ne-)dormind  
               not AUX.MOD.3SG be not-sleep-GER

As far as the three structures under investigation are concerned, the corpus offers no examples of a negative gerund. In MR, a negative gerundial complement is possible with the aspectual *a sta*.

- (47) Mihai stătea                nefăcând                nimic                toată ziua.  
 Mihai stay.IMPERF not-do-GER nothing all day.DEF  
 ‘Mihai didn’t do anything all day long’

The gerundial complement of aspectual *a umbla* is incompatible with negation for semantic reasons: *a umbla* encodes pluractionality, therefore it needs to combine with a dynamic eventuality (a non-state), while the negation acts as a stativizer, transforming the event denoted by the gerund into a state.

- (48) \*Mihai umblă nerăspândind zvonuri despre noi.  
 Mihai walks not-spread-GER rumours about us

## 5. Structural changes of the lexical aspectuals *a sta/a se afla/a umbla*

- *Loss of locative/path complement*

When these three verbs are used as aspectuals, they do not require a locative/path adverbial any longer (see section 3).

- *Possibility of extraction from the gerundial structure*

The gerundial structures occurring with *a se afla/a sta/a umbla* are all controlled by the subject of the finite verb. They illustrate the phenomenon of adjunct control (Landau 2001: 115).

It is known that adjuncts are islands for extraction, i.e. constituents that function either as arguments or as adjuncts inside the island cannot move out of the adjunct phrase and raise across the finite verb. In minimalist analyses, it is argued that extraction is conditioned by the phasal/non-phasal character of the adjunct structure: only extraction out of a phasal adjunct is disallowed (Alboiu 2009). Alboiu & Hill (2013) show that in Romanian, gerundial adjuncts are CPs and, thus, function as strong islands.

In the contexts below, extraction of constituents from the gerundial structure in adjunct position (modifying the stative/motion verb) is not possible.

- (49) a. Merge [fredonând o melodie] - \*Ce merge fredonând?  
(he)walks humming a song what (he)walks humming  
'He is walking humming a song' – '\*What is he walking humming?'
- b. Umblă [târându-și un picior] - \*Ce umblă  
(he)walks pulling=CL.REFL.DAT.3SG a leg what (he)walks  
târându-și?  
pulling=CL.REFL.DAT.3SG  
'He is walking pulling a leg' – '\*What is he walking pulling?'

In OR, there is no evidence regarding the possibility of extraction from gerundial periphrases. No contexts were identified in which arguments or adjuncts were extracted from the gerundial structure; therefore there is no evidence for the reanalysis of the gerund from IP adjunct to argument status.

For gerundial structures with the aspectual *a se afla*, MR provides evidence for extraction.

- (50) După aceea se învoi cu cei doi frați ai săi, Constantin, despot  
after that CL.REFL.ACC agreed with CEL two brothers AL his Constantin despot  
în Epir, și Teodor, tatăl stăpânitorului din Tessalonic, [...]  
in Epirus and Teodor father.DEF ruler.DEF.GEN from Thessaloniki  
mulțămindu-se fiecare din ei cu [ceea ce] s-au  
being.content=CL.REFL.ACC each of them with what CL.REFL.ACC=(they)have  
aflat posedând (Eminescu, Opere 14: 121)  
found own-GER  
After that he reached an agreement with his two brothers, Constantin, despot in Epirus  
and Teodor, the father of Thessaloniki's ruler, each being satisfied with what they owned'

In the case of *a sta* + gerund, extraction is also attested in MR.

- (51) Dar [prin fereastra ta] eu stau privind / Cum tu te uiți  
but through window.DEF your I stay watching how you CL.ACC.2SG look  
cu ochii în lumină (Eminescu, Opere 4: 381)  
with eyes.DEF in light



‘But I am looking through your window / And see how you are watching the light’

- (52) Stâlpii            rari    de telegraf... / Stau   privind            c-un    aer tâmp...  
poles.DEF        sparse of telegraph (I)stay watching        with-an air dumb  
‘I’m watching the sparse telegraph poles in a spaced-out mood’  
(George Topârceanu, <http://www.e-scoala.ro/biblioteca/toparceanumigdale.html>)
- (53) și obsesiile mele,    demult, / răsturnate într-o lume    a    sunetelor închise /  
and obsessions.DEF long.ago fallen        in=a world AL sounds    enclosed  
pe ziduri oarbe, [la care] **să stau privind**    fără    vorbe, / și    fără    puterea  
on walls blind    at which SĂ stay watch-GER without words    and whouth power.DEF  
de a le            mai    urmări sunetele    sparte.  
DE A CL.ACC more follow sounds.DEF broken  
‘and my old obsessions, fallen into a world of enclosed sounds, on blind walls, at which  
I’m to be looking without speaking, and not having the power to follow their broken  
sounds’ (Mircea Ivănescu, <http://quasiote.wordpress.com/2011/07/21/mircea-ivanescu-1931-2011/>)

Extraction from the gerundial VP in configurations with *a umbla* is not attested. Due to the rarity of the structure, I created an acceptability test. Speakers’ judgments regarding extraction from *a umbla* structures were very different; they ranged from ungrammatical to quite acceptable. This shows that there is no unity in its analysis: some speakers analyze the gerundial VP in the context of the aspectual *a umbla* as an adjunct, while others analyze it as a complement.

- (54) ??Știm    că faptele de curaj    cu care    tot            umbli  
(we)know that acts    of courage with which continuously (you)walk  
**lăudându-te**            sunt inventate de tine.  
bragging=CL.REFL are    invented by you  
‘We know that the acts of courage that you keep bragging with are invented by you’

## 6. Are *a sta* / *a se afla* copulas in the context of a gerund VP?

In OR and MR, *a sta* and *a se afla* take a PredP complement, when used as copulas. Their copular use is attested in OR from the earliest texts, but was lost at the end of the modern period. The former secondary predication modifying the lexical stative verb becomes a subjective predicative complement of the copula (adjectives, as in (55), are attested in this position).

- (55) a.    Un vas    sta            plin de oțet. (CT.1560-1: 230v)  
a    pot    stay.IMPERF full of vinegar  
‘A pot was full of vinegar’
- b.    Că        nici    Isus Hristos n-are    întru El veselie, ce cum **stă scris**  
because neither Jesus Christ not=has in    him joy    but as    stays written  
‘Because Jesus Christ does not know joy either, but he is as it is written’  
(CPr.1566-7: 272)

- c.     Și    a mea toscană liră a     **sta**               **mută** se  
 and AL my Tuscan lyre A<sub>INF</sub> stay.IMPERF mute CL.REFL.ACC  
 deprinde (Asachi.1854: 98)  
 gets.accustomed  
 ‘And my Tuscan lyre becomes accustomed to be mute’
- d.     Și    iarăș **ne**                       **aflăm singuri si pustii**, fără de mângâierea  
 and again CL.REFL.ACC.1PL find alone and deserted without of comfort.DEF  
 nemănu (Mărgăritare.1691: 29r)  
 nobody.GEN  
 ‘And again we are alone and deserted, with no comfort from anybody’
- e.     cardinalul merse de întâlni pe Malaspina, ce **se**               **afla**  
 cardinal.DEF went and met PE Malaspina who CL.REFL.ACC find.IMPERF  
 bolnav, îi               expuse primejdia (Bălcescu.1852: 250)  
 ill CL.DAT.3SG explain danger.DEF  
 ‘the cardinal went to meet Malaspuna, who was ill, he explained him the danger’

The question is whether *a se afla* and *a sta* function as copulas in the context of a gerund, considering that they are attested with a copular use in non-gerundial contexts. This would place the two aspectual verbs a step higher on the grammaticalization scale, as they would not be fully lexical any longer; instead they would be light verbs. The evolution of lexical aspectual verbs to copulas is expected, as this is an intermediate step that verbs take in their grammaticalization process towards becoming functional (Asp) heads. This is proven in section 7 by the evolution of *a fi* + gerund.

Aspectual *a se afla* (+gerund) is compatible with a copula analysis in OR and MR. The 19<sup>th</sup> century example (50) shows it is no longer an adjunct. *A se afla* did have copula status in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (in non-gerundial contexts, 55) and it imposes no thematic restrictions on its subject, which can be agentive (6), but also non-agentive (Theme, in 50). However, no clear evidence for its copular status was found, for example, no coordination between a gerundial VP and a non-verbal category, such as an adjective. This can be due to the rarity of the structure.

Aspectual *a sta* has not evolved into a copula in the context of a gerund. Two arguments can be brought against the copula analysis of *a sta*. Firstly, *a sta* imposes thematic restrictions on the subject, which needs to be an Agent (56a vs 56b). Secondly, the coordination of the gerund with an adjective is rather unacceptable (56b). Moreover, no occurrence of gerund + AP coordination was found in the corpus.

- (56) a.     \*Frunzele **stau legănându-se**               în vânt.  
 leaves.DEF stay moving=CL.REFL.ACC in wind
- b.     ??Maria **stă rușinată și gândindu-se**               la ce a făcut.  
 Maria stays ashamed and thinking=CL.REFL.ACC at what has done

## 7. The grammaticalization of the Romanian gerundial periphrases

The common starting point in the grammaticalization of the three Romanian aspectual periphrases under analysis is represented by the IP adjunction of a gerundial secondary predication, in a configuration with subject control (33-35). The syntactic representation is given

under (57). In a parallel configuration, a gerund is adjoined to an IP headed by *a fi* (58), with the difference that *a fi* is a light verb (copula), while *a sta*, *a se afla* and *a umbla* are lexical verbs.

(57) [CP1 [IP1 [IP1 [VP lexical verb]]] [CP2 V-GER]]]

(58) E corabiia *era*<sub>Locative</sub> *în mijlocul mării* [chinuindu-se]<sub>Adjunct</sub>  
 and ship.DEF was in middle.DEF see.DEF.GEN have.trouble-GER=CL.REFL.ACC  
 de valuri. (CC2.1581: 293)  
 of waves  
 ‘And the ship was in the middle of the sea having trouble because of the waves’

In the case of aspectual periphrases with *a se afla* and *a sta*, there is no evidence for a change of syntactic status in OR, so I assume that the gerund is in adjunct position (57). In MR, the gerund changes its status, from an adjunct merged at the IP level to a complement selected by the aspectual verb. The MR configurations with the aspectualizers *a sta* and *a se afla* have the representation under (59).

(59) [CP1 [IP [VP lexical verb [CP2 V-GER ]]]]

As far as the aspectualizer *a umbla* is concerned, the status of its accompanying gerund in OR is that of an adjunct, with the representation under (57), while the same is ambiguous in MR: some speakers consider it to still be an IP adjunct; however, other speakers reanalyze it as a complement, in which case it receives the representation under (59).

If we admit that *a se afla* is a copula in MR gerundial periphrases, then this structure has gone one step further in the grammaticalization process, since the finite verb becomes a light verb; see (61). Importantly, a parallel configuration with copular *a fi* and a gerundial complement occurs in OR, confirming that a copula stage exists in the evolution towards a non-perfective aspectual (functional) head. Starting with the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *a fi* is attested with copular use, selecting a PredP complement (60). Copular *a se afla* and *a fi* + gerund have the syntactic representation under (61) (Mikkelsen 2006).

(60) *era*<sub>Copula</sub> *la ceri* [ducându-se]<sub>Subjective Predicative Complement</sub> (CC1.1567-8: 37r)  
 (he)was at heaven go-GER=CL.REFL.ACC  
 ‘he was going to heaven’

(61) [IP [VP copula [PredP Pred [AspP V-GER]]]]

The structure under (60) co-occurs with the auxiliary *a fi* + gerund structure, which represents the highest level of grammaticalization of Romanian aspectual periphrases (62a). *A fi* + gerund is the only Romanian periphrasis that reached the stage at which it features an aspectual auxiliary. I propose the syntactic representation under (62b), based on the current analysis of the Romanian IP (Cornilescu 2000 a.o.).

(62) a. *n-ați fi*<sub>AUX</sub> *având* *păcate* (CT.1560-1: 152)  
 not=AUX.COND.2PL be have-GER sins  
 ‘you would not be having sins’

- b. [NegP nu [MoodP ați [TP [Asp fi având]]]]

In those configurations in which the clitic attaches to the auxiliary and negation takes the finite inflection as its complement, while coordination with adjectives is ruled out, we are dealing with gerundial periphrases made up with the auxiliary *a fi*. On the other hand, in those constructions in which at least one of the following conditions is met: the clitic is in post-gerundial position (63, 64, 66), the gerund is coordinated with an adjective (63, 64) or a prepositional phrase (65), or the gerund projects its own negation (64), we are dealing with copular *a fi* and a gerund in predicative position. Configurations (63-66) survive until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see 66) (Edelstein 1972: 94).

- (63) mulți era goi și degerând și de răceală **înghețându-se** (CC2.1581: 405)  
many were naked and tremble-GER and of cold freeze-GER=CL.REFL.ACC.3SG  
'many were naked and trembling and freezing because they were cold'
- (64) **era** **iuți** și **mânioși** și **neaducându-și** **aminte**  
(they)were quick and angry and not-bringing=CL.REFL.ACC.3SG in.mind  
de dumnezeiescul dar (CC2.1581: 480)  
of divine.DEF gift  
'they were quick and angry and not remembering the divine gift'
- (65) Că Svinția Ta sânge **ești** **fără** **păcate** și **putând** a ierta  
because holiness your alone (you)are without sins and can-GER A forgive  
păcatele (DDL.1679: 196)  
sins.DEF  
'because you, your Holiness, are the only one without sins and capable of forgiving sins'
- (66) Eu m-aș **fi** dus cât de aproape la vreun trup  
I CL.REFL.ACC.1SG=AUX.COND.1SG be gone how.much of close at any body  
ceresc, dar un cearcăn ce **este** **învârtindu-se** și **vâjăind** înprejurul  
celestial but a halo that is rotate-GER=CL.REFL.ACC and whizz-GER around  
fiecăruia, nu mă lăsa să mă apropiu.  
each.one not CL.ACC.1SG let.IMPERF SĂ<sub>SUBJ</sub> CL.REFL.ACC.1SG draw.near  
(Gorjan 3.1837: 260)  
'I would have drawn closer to any celestial body, but a halo that was rotating and whizzing around each one did not let me come near them'

The copular/locative configurations are the basis for the grammaticalization of *a fi* gerundial periphrases. The OR gerund preserved the possibility to occur in predicative position from Latin, a possibility that is lost in MR (GR 2013: 160ff.). It is difficult to draw a conclusion regarding the time at which these periphrases first appeared in Romanian. What is certain is that they are absent from Aromanian (Capidan 1932, Nevaci 2006), Meglenoromanian (Atanasov 2002) and Istroromanian (Zegrean 2012). This could mean that they developed independently in Romanian from the copula *a fi* + gerund in predicative position (cf. Edelstein 1966).

## 8. Conclusions

There is evidence that the stative verbs *a sta* and *a se afla* (now obsolete), as well as the motion verb *a umbla*, develop an aspectual use in Romanian. They started a process of grammaticalization in structures in which their subject is controlled by the subject of the head verb. The three verbs do not become Aspectual heads, instead, they contribute with their own event-type to modify the temporal structure of the non-finite verbal form: *a sta* encodes the progressive, *a se afla*, the progressive and the continuous aspect, while *a umbla* expresses pluractionality (the frequentative aspect). They suffer a process of desemantization, by which they partly lose their original meaning. This semantic attrition has syntactic consequences: the three verbs do not select a locative/path argument any more. In the MR period, in the case of *a se afla* and *a sta*, there is evidence for the fact that the co-occurring gerundial structure changes its syntactic status, being no longer an adjunct, but the complement of the verb. This is proven by the behavior of these configurations with respect to extraction from the gerundial structure. When the gerund is an adjunct, it is a strong island and, therefore, extraction is ruled out, while in *a se afla* and *a sta* aspectual gerundial periphrases extraction is possible. As far as the status of the verb *a umbla* is concerned, contemporary Romanian speakers seem to hesitate between analyzing it as an adjunct or as a complement. Aspectual *se afla* + gerund is compatible with a copula analysis. If we admit that it has copular status, it means that it has gone one step further in the grammaticalization process than the other two aspectualizers, becoming a light verb.

The Romanian *a sta* / *a se afla* / *a umbla* + gerund periphrases are less grammaticalized than *a fi* gerundial periphrasis. The latter is the only gerundial periphrasis whose finite verb has become a non-perfective aspectual auxiliary.

A parallel was drawn between the grammaticalization of *a fi* and *a sta* / *a se afla* / *a umbla* gerundial periphrases. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the following configurations co-occur: gerunds in adjunct position modifying the locative *a fi*, gerunds in complement position of copular *a fi* and gerunds that are part of aspectual periphrases, with auxiliary *a fi*.

The new data offered by this diachronic study shows that Romanian follows the same path as the other Romance languages, employing stative and motion verbs to express different categories of non-perfectivity. However, these verbs are much less grammaticalized than their Romance counterparts.

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