

Please consider submitting a proposal for the following workshop:

The Development of Progressive Constructions in Germanic and Romance Languages: Open Questions and Current Research

University of Bergen (UiB), **24 September 2021**

Organizers: Jerzy Nykiel and Alessandro Carlucci

Workshop Committee: Carolina Amador Moreno (UiB), Pier Marco Bertinetto (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa), Koenraad De Smedt (UiB), Marco Gargiulo (UiB), Dagmar Haumann (UiB), Kari Kinn (UiB), Paula Rautionaho (University of Eastern Finland), Mario Squartini (University of Turin), Lorella Viola (University of Luxembourg).

Traditionally, historical linguists considered internal development and contact with other languages as alternative explanations for phonological and grammatical change. In Romance historical linguistics, for instance, some famous debates revolved precisely around the need to choose between autonomous internal development and structural borrowing (from substrate, superstrate or adstrate languages) as alternative causes of change in different Romance varieties (Sala 2013). Arguing that language contact had supported a particular internal development often seemed to be an uneconomical and rather superficial explanation from the point of view of structural reconstruction. At least for sufficiently documented languages, however, attention to the interaction between internal and external factors has recently been boosted by the expansion of corpus-based and other empirical approaches to language change, which have set new challenges to abstract structural reasoning, and by advances in the study of contact as a cause of change (Heine and Kuteva 2005). According to Thomason (2010: 32), ‘a growing body of evidence suggests that multiple causation – often a combination of an external and one or more internal causes – is responsible for a sizable number of changes’.

In the light of these methodological and theoretical advances, the aim of this workshop is to produce an up-to-date overview of contemporary research on a topic which raises relevant questions – namely the development and use of English *be* + *V-ing*, Italian *stare* + gerund, French *être en train de* + infinitive, and a whole range of other forms expressing the progressive aspect in Germanic and Romance varieties (cf. the contributions in Dahl 2000). On the one hand, progressive constructions have emerged through long-term processes of grammaticalization, often resulting in subtle differences even among closely related varieties. On the other hand, cross-linguistic similarities between progressive constructions, together with the fact that some of these constructions would seem to have expanded in periods or situations of increased language contact, justify the question of whether – or, perhaps, to what extent – the development of progressive constructions has been influenced by the dynamics of linguistic convergence in Europe and beyond, including recent dynamics such as the hegemonic role of English as a global language (McLaughlin 2018).

We invite contributions that offer new perspectives on the emergence, spread, use, variation, and loss of progressive constructions in Germanic and Romance. Topics may include (but are not limited to): comparative and contrastive approaches to the semantic value and morphosyntactic properties of progressive forms; variation and change in the frequency or productivity of different forms; questions of grammaticalization in the history of progressives; the role of corpora in the study of grammatical change; Natural Language Processing (NLP) insights into variation and change; the form and use of progressives in particular Germanic or Romance varieties (within and outside Europe); variation in the use of progressives in situations of language contact (not only within, or between, Germanic and Romance but including contact also with other language groups); the frequency and productivity of progressive constructions in translations, or in particular genres and text-types.

References:

- Dahl, Ö. (ed.) (2000), *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (Berlin: De Gruyter).
- Heine, B. and T. Kuteva (2005), *Language Contact and Grammatical Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- McLaughlin, M. (2018), 'When Romance Meets English', in W. Ayres-Bennett and J. Carruthers (eds), *Manual of Romance Sociolinguistics* (Berlin: De Gruyter), pp. 652-81.
- Sala, M. (2013), 'Contact and Borrowing', in M. Maiden, J.C. Smith and A. Ledgeway (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), vol. 2, pp. 187-236.
- Thomason, S.G. (2010), 'Contact Explanations in Linguistics', in R. Hickey (ed.), *The Handbook of Language Contact* (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 31-47.

The workshop is sponsored by the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Bergen and builds on a previous meeting which took place online on 25 September 2020. The following scholars have been invited to speak at this second meeting: **Teresa Fanego** (University of Santiago de Compostela) and **Christopher Pountain** (Queen Mary, University of London, and University of Cambridge).

This workshop is currently being planned as an in-person event. However, arrangements will be made in order to allow online participation for those who are unable to travel to Bergen.

Language of the workshop: English.

Publication plans: This workshop is expected to result in a proposal for an edited volume or a special issue on progressive constructions, to be submitted to a suitable publisher or journal in the spring of 2022.

To propose a paper, please send an abstract of approximately 200 words, together with a short biography of the speaker(s) (no more than 100 words), to the following address: Contact_and_Change@uib.no

Deadline for submissions: 30 May 2021.