

# The aspectual distribution of gerunds in Apulian varieties

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper we describe and analyze the distribution of embedded gerunds in the Apulian varieties, namely the Romance varieties spoken in the area of Bari. In these varieties gerunds are not found embedded under the *be/stay* auxiliary to express the progressive aspect as in the Italian/English periphrases for progressives (*sto scrivendo/I am writing*). Gerunds are only found embedded under the verb *go* in periphrases to express a reiterative meaning or embedded under the negated forms of *be* to express prohibition (the *negative imperative*). The different distribution of gerunds between standard Italian and Apulian varieties is then analyzed as a difference of the aspectual entailment encoded through the gerund morphology: while standard Italian encodes a general imperfective reading, Apulian varieties encode a more specific aspectual entailment, namely continuative aspect. Since Gerunds imply the syntactic embedding of the verb under a preposition, we propose that standard Italian and Apulian varieties differ on the covert preposition incorporated in the gerund inflectional morphology that imply a different aspectual reading.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gerunds are used in periphrases that encode progressives in many languages including Italian, Spanish or English (see Cinque 2017, Manzini – Lorusso 2022 for a crosslinguistic analysis on the expression of progressive), where the gerund is used for the lexical verb embedded under a *be/stay* matrix auxiliary (1-3).

- |     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| (1) | Maria sta mangiando<br>Maria stays eating<br>'Maria is eating' | Italian |
| (2) | Maria está comiendo<br>Maria stays eating<br>'Maria is eating' | Spanish |
| (3) | Maria is eating  | English |

Although this *be/stay* + *V* gerunds is present in different Italo Romance varieties, such as Neapolitan (4) or Calabrian (5), it is not found in Apulian varieties of the area of Bari such as the one of Conversano in (6).

- |     |   |                        |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| (4) | steva            jucanns<br>stay3sgIMP    playing<br>'he/she was playing' | Neapolitan             |
|     |   | (Rohlf's 1969, 3: 108) |
| (5) | staju            perdèndu<br>stay1sg        loosing<br>'I am loosing'     | Calabrian              |
|     |   | (Rohlf's 1969, 3: 108) |
| (6) | *Mari stè mandzennò<br>Mari stays eating<br>'Mari is eating'              | Conversano             |

These Apulian varieties<sup>1</sup>, in fact, express progressive aspect through a periphrasis involving the verb *stay* the preposition *a* and an embedded

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper we use the label Apulian varieties to refer to the Romance varieties spoken in the northern part of Apulia in opposition to Salentinian varieties spoken in the southern part of Apulia: Italian varieties, which are not dialect of Italian, form coherent groups of Romance varieties, whose specific linguistic characteristics (phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical) are comparable to those of any other Romance language/natural language, such as Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese,

lexical verb. As for the embedded verb they can be either inflected (7) (Manzini – Savoia 2005; Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia 2017; Lorusso 2019, 2020) or infinitive (8)<sup>2</sup>. Different southern Italian varieties use a similar strategy to encode the progressive aspect (see Manzini – Savoia 2005 for a complete description).

- (7) Maria ste (a) 'mandʒə i 'kəttʂə Conversano  
 Maria stays (to) eats the mussels  
 'Maria is eating mussels'
- (8) Maria ste a man'dʒɛ i 'kəttʂə  
 Maria stays to eat<sub>INF</sub> the mussels  
 'Maria is eating mussels'

However, in the Apulian varieties under analysis gerunds are allowed only in periphrases where the matrix verb is *go*. These periphrases encode durative/continuative aspect and are incompatible, for example, with adverbs encoding punctual aspect such as *mu'mo* (immediately) in (9).

- (9) Mari ve mandʒennə i 'kəttʂə crotə (\*mu'mo)  
 Ma'ri goes eating the mussels raw right now  
 'Mari is eating eats raw mussels right now'

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Romanian, French (see Loporcaro 2009). Conversely, the term Italian is used to refer to standard Italian without any reference to the regional variety (dialects) of Italian.

<sup>2</sup> The finite/non-finite embedding in progressives are generally described as equivalent. However, there are some differences across varieties in the person and number of the inflectional paradigm that allow/do not allow the inflected embedding (Manzini – Savoia 2005; Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia 2017; Lorusso 2020 and also Cardinaletti – Giusti 2003, 2020). Inflected vs infinitive embedding may imply some small difference in the aspectual interpretation, for a discussion on this see Lorusso (2019).

Gerunds are also found embedded under the negated form of the *be* auxiliary to express prohibition namely in negative imperative constructions.

- (10) Mari, non zi mandzennə i 'kəttəsə crotə  
 Ma'ri, not be2sg eating the mussels raw  
 'Mari, don't eat raw mussels'

Gerunds seem to be incompatible with progressives but can be used for other periphrases encoding different aspectual entailment. The aim of this paper is to describe how these varieties crucially differ from Italian in the aspectual value encoded by the gerund.

In syntactic terms gerunds are usually analysed as inflected infinitives incorporating a non-overt preposition (Gallego 2010; Casalicchio 2013, 2019; Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016) that denotes a marked aspectual reading attributed to the verbs (Hale – Keyser 2002). As for the Italian use in (1) the gerund encodes an imperfective reading, as proposed by Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016: progressive implies a point within an event structure (see section 3) where no initial/end or culmination points are identified, as imperfective aspect guarantees. But what about Apulian varieties? If gerunds encoded imperfective aspect we would expect to find it in the progressive periphrases, but this is not the case (6). Furthermore, gerunds is found in two apparently unrelated periphrases the continuative/durative periphrases (*go+Ving*) and in the negative imperative (*neg+be + Ving*). The puzzle is about which aspectual value is encoded in the two descriptively different constructions. Since aspectual value is the one shared by both the durative and the negative imperative periphrases: we propose that it has to be linked to a (re)iterative aspect, a subset of a general imperfective aspect. The microvariation between Italian and Apulian consists in the different aspectual value encoded in the gerunds: while Italian gerunds encode a general imperfective aspect, Apulian gerunds encode a subset of imperfective aspect which we define as iterative aspect. In this paper we will try to support this general descriptive hypothesis showing some data on the asymmetries between progressive and the other periphrases

where gerunds appear. We will then rely on the syntactic analysis by Manzini *et al.* (2017) of progressives to derive an analysis of the syntactic-semantics interface relations encoded in the distribution of gerunds in Apulian varieties: we will propose a biclausal structure involving a matrix auxiliary imposing some aspectual restrictions on the embedded gerunds, the resulting aspectual meaning will be derived by the interaction between the matrix auxiliary and the *Aktionsart* of the embedded gerunds and given at semantic interface.

The paper is organized as follows: in section 2 we will present a general background on clausal embedding involving gerunds, in section 3 will focus on the progressive periphrases found in Italian and in the Apulian varieties and we will account for them relying on the analysis of Manzini *et al.* 2017. In section 4 we will then present the data about the gerund periphrases in Apulian varieties focusing on the aspectual features shared by all of them. In section 5 we present the syntactic analysis and some considerations on the use of non-embedded gerunds. Section 6 will be then devoted to the concluding remarks.

## 2. GERUNDS AND CLAUSAL EMBEDDING

In Generative Grammar gerunds have been a key topic for their role in clausal embedding: they are verb forms with a particular morphological marking (*-ing* in English, *-ndo* in Italian) that allows them to function as nouns and consequently to be involved in the creation of complex syntactic structures by serving as the heads of (oblique) embedded clauses. This hybrid nature of gerunds is compatible with recent analyses on the lexicon-syntax interface (see Hale – Keyser 1993; Marantz 1997; Mateu 2003; Ramchand 2008, among others) for which category labels are not inherent property of a lexical item but a lexical root can be combined with other functional categories and its meaning can be determined by the syntactic configuration in which it appears. For instances, verb project VP shells that may contain/incorporate preposition, as in *I shelved the books* = *I put the books on the shelf*, nominals, as in the unergative verbs *I jump* = *make a jump*, or adjectives, the *sky*

*darkened* = *the sky became dark*. The incorporation of different functional categories affects the internal timing of the event denoted by the verbs.

As for gerunds, in English they imply a V/N hybrid form since they encode a verb which can be used as a nominal in sentence like ‘*reading a book is fun*’: the gerund morphology allows a lexical verbal root to be used as a nominal with the projection of a reduced verbal inflectional layer<sup>3</sup>. In a recent work on clausal complementation, Wurmbrand – Lohninger (2019) use a synthesis model in which syntactic computation is free and «the semantic output is determined jointly by the specifications imposed by the matrix complement and the predicate» (Lohninger – Wurmbrand 2020: 38). When the influence of the matrix agent on the embedded agent is high, the complement tends to be mapped to a defective syntactic configuration. Embedded Gerunds are, in their approach, *events* (opposed to *propositions* and *situations*) in which the matrix verb determines the tense and controls exhaustively the embedded verb (event in Wurmbrand – Lohninger 2019) implying a defective reduced structure as in the case of *I liked playing guitar* where the matrix verb regulates the tense of the embedded predicate *playing* and the subject of *like* is also the subject of *play*. However, in many Romance varieties such as Italian and Spanish, gerund forms cannot be used as proper nominals, whereas infinitives are permitted (11).

- (11) a. leggere/\*leggendo un libro è divertente  
 read<sub>INF</sub>/\*reading a book is fun  
 b. leer/\*leyendo un libro es divertido  
 read<sub>INF</sub>/\*reading a book is fun

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<sup>3</sup> We will not address the issue on the size of the inflectional layer of gerunds and/or infinitives, but we refer to the idea that the non-finite forms are defective (see Belletti 1990; Chomsky 2001; Gallego 2010 and references therein) in the sense that they lack some projection within the CP/TP layer but they still imply an inflectional layer richer than pure (non-deverbal) nominals.

Furthermore, even in clausal embedding, Romance gerunds, contrary to infinitives, resist to occupy the position of verbal complements (12). They introduce a sort of oblique complementation and are not mere substitutes of infinitives.

- (12) a. Mi piace leggere / \*leggendo  
Me<sub>(dat clit)</sub> likes read<sub>INF</sub> / \*reading  
b. Me gusta leer / \*leyendo  
Me<sub>(dat clit)</sub> likes read<sub>INF</sub> / \*reading  
'I like reading'

The reason is linked to the fact that specularly subordinate gerunds are never found in Spanish or Italian after a preposition (13a-14a), contrary to what happens to infinitives (13b-14b).

- (13) Spanish  
a. (\*Por) habiendo demostrado el domador su valentía  
for having show-PPART the tamer his bravery  
'The tamer having shown his bravery'  
(from Hernanz 1994: 392, apud Gallego 2010: 86)  
b. Applaudieron al domador por haber demostrado  
Applauded<sub>3PL</sub> to the tamer for have shown  
su valentía  
his bravery  
'They applauded the tamer for having shown his bravery'
- (14) Italian  
a. (\*Per) avendo dimostrato il domatore il suo coraggio,  
for have-GER show-PPART the tamer his bravery,  
lo applaudirono.  
him applauded<sub>3PL</sub>  
'The tamer having shown his bravery, they applauded him'

- b. Applaudirono il domatore per aver dimostrato il suo  
 Applauded<sub>3PL</sub> the tamer for have shown the his  
 coraggio  
 bravery  
 ‘They applauded the tamer for having shown his bravery’

This type of evidence allowed different scholars to suggest that gerunds are infinitive plus a preposition (Gallego 2010; Casalicchio 2013, 2019; Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016). Casalicchio (2013, 2019) in his work proposes that predicative gerunds (in alternance with infinitive in Prepositional infinitives) imply an embedding under a preposition which is merged in an Asp head. He shows that predicative gerunds alternate with prepositional infinitive across Romance in constructions where the non-finite forms can substitute a pseudo-relative: both constructions imply a prepositional Asp head which is overt for prepositional infinitive (16) and covert in gerunds (16) where the lexical verbs move to the Asp head and incorporate the preposition through the gerund inflection<sup>4</sup>. He observed that while in languages like Spanish, Sardinian and Old Venetian embedded predicative gerunds are found (15), in European Portuguese and (most) Modern Italian varieties including Piedmontese we find prepositional infinitives.

- (15) a. Vi a Juan *comiendo* una manzana Spanish  
 I.saw to Juan eating an apple  
 ‘I saw Juan eating an apple’
- b. Eris t’appo intesu *cantande* Sardinian  
 yesterday you.CL have heard singing  
 ‘Yesterday I heard you singing’  
 (Pittau 1984: 139)

<sup>4</sup> Casalicchio in his dissertation (2013) analyzes the structural correspondences between pseudorelatives, predicative gerunds and prepositional infinitives. For the present purpose we will refer to him for the variation he describes in the distribution of prepositional infinitives and predicative gerunds but for the syntactic analysis of the variation we refer to Casalicchio (2013, 2019).



- c. Old Venetian  
 ... et ello vete una bellitissima verzene *stagando*  
 ... and he sees a wonderful virgin staying  
 sopra un altare  
 on an altar  
 'He/she sees a wonderful virgining staying on an altar'

- (16) a. Vi o Jorge *a comer* a maçã Portuguese  
 I.saw the Jorge to eat the apple  
 'I saw Jorge eating an apple'
- b. E l'æ višt Giórz *a mangé* 'r mæ Piedmontese -Viola  
 I<sub>CL</sub> have seen Giorgio to eat the apple  
 'I have seen Giórz eating the apple'
- c. Ho sorpreso Maria *a rubare* Standard Italian  
 I.have caught Maria to steal  
 'I have caught Maria while she was stealing'  
 (Casalicchio 2015: 1)

For the purpose of the present work the variation described by Casalicchio (2013, 2015, 2019) can be resumed in the terms of overt/covert realization of an aspectual preposition, where the covert preposition is incorporated to gerund inflection. This alternance found across Romance is crucial in our respect because a similar alternance is found also in the Apulian periphrases under analysis.

As for the aspectual value of the preposition, Mateu (2002) in his analysis of progressives suggests that gerunds incorporate a preposition of central coincidence relation (Hale 1986)<sup>5</sup>, which accounts for a locative/progressive interpretation of the gerund. This central coincidence

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<sup>5</sup> The term central coincidence originates with Hale (1986), in which the terminal coincidence - central coincidence contrast parallels a basic semantic opposition that exists throughout language: the opposition between the dynamic, the change (terminal coincidence) and the stative, the static (central coincidence).

(i) a. terminal coincidence: The person ran to the hill.  
 b. central coincidence: The person stood on the hill.

preposition indicates the relationship between the embedded verb and the matrix subject: the subject is centrally located within the event described by the gerund. Similar analyses have been proposed by Fábregas (2008), Gallego (2010), and Fábregas and Jiménez-Fernández (2016), among others. In our description of the Apulian periphrases, we will also make reference to a central coincidence relation, but we will need to refer to a more specific aspectual flavor expressed by the preposition to account for the intralinguistic variation, that is, the incompatibility with progressive forms and the availability of gerunds for other periphrases.

However, in gerund embedding, as clearly described in Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández (2016), we need to differentiate between periphrases and adjuncts, only in the former case the gerund complements are obligatory while when gerund is selected by a lexical verb the embedded clause is an adjunct and is optional as in the Spanish examples in (17-18).

- |      |  |                    |
|------|--|--------------------|
| (17) | Juan está *(fregando los platos).<br>Juan is-3SG washing the dishes<br>'Juan is washing the dishes'  | <i>Periphrasis</i> |
| (18) | María llegó (silbando una canción).<br>María arrived-3SG whistling a song<br>'María arrived whistling a song'<br>(Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016: 1311) | <i>Adjunct</i>     |

In the present work we will refer mainly to periphrases where the gerund is lexically selected by the matrix auxiliary (in section 3/4). As for adjuncts, Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández (2016) describe case in Spanish in which *wh*-extraction from gerund adjuncts under lexical

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«The spatial coincidence is 'central coincidence' in that, to the extent that it is physically and practically possible, given the nature of the figure and place and the specific stance or movement of the figure, the center of the figure coincides with the center of the place» (Hale 1986: 239).

verb is possible (19), against Huang's (1982) *Condition on Extraction Domains* for which adjuncts are island and do not allow *wh*-extraction.

- (19) ¿Qué llegó silbando María?  
What arrived-3SG whistling María  
'What did María arrive whistling?'  
(Fábregas – Jiménez Fernández 2016: 1312)

But depending on the aspectual properties of the verb, referring to the classification of verbs of Vendler (1967), while extraction is possible with achievement main verbs (19), it is not found with accomplishments and activities (20-21).

- (20) Accomplishment
- a. Juan adelgazó comiendo arroz blanco.  
Juan slimmed-3SG eating rice white  
'Juan lost three kilos of weight eating plain rice'
- b. \*¿Qué adelgazó [comiendo qué] Juan?  
what slimmed-3SG eating Juan  
'What did Juan lose three kilos eating?'
- (21) Activities
- a. El tonel rodaba por el monte perdiendo aceite.  
The barrel rolled-3SG by the mount losing oil  
'The barrel rolled down the hill losing oil'
- b. \*¿Qué rodaba [perdiendo qué] el tonel?  
what rolled-3SG losing the barrel?  
'What was the barrel rolling down the hill losing?'

These data suggest two interconnected considerations relevant for the present work. First, gerund complements are *l*-selected by the matrix verb, and they can be considered part of its eventive structure and only in this case they become transparent to syntactic operations such as the *wh*-extraction. Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández (2016), on the line of the model of the First Phase Syntax put forward by Ramchand (2008), account for this arguing that gerunds embedding under lexical verbs are

PathP/RhemeP selected by a ProcP (the unfolding of the event represented by the achievement matrix verb achievements, see 19): roughly, in the decomposition of the *Aktionsart* of the verbs proposed by Ramchand (2008), while ProcP (Process Projection) represents the dynamic unfolding of the event, the PathP and the RhemeP add respectively to the ProcP the manner-related details to the action (RhemeP) and the spatial trajectory of the action (PathP). Second the ‘imperfective’ marking of gerunds is compatible only with lexical verbs such as achievements since in their lexical aspectual entailment they do not imply a period of time (as accomplishments and activities) which can then be conveyed through the gerunds (RhemeP/PathP in Fábregas and Jiménez-Fernández 2016): gerunds can be part of the event structure of the matrix verbs (be *l*-selected) only when they are achievement.

In our respect, since we will be dealing mainly with periphrases with stative matrix verb (*be/stay*), the constraints on gerund embedding under lexical verbs become enlightening. Although the meaning of the matrix verb is not totally transparent, the restrictions on the embedded gerunds will be used to describe the aspectual properties of the embedded predicate and consequently of the entire periphrastic construction. Furthermore, we will see that the claim about the imperfective value of gerunds is sufficient to describe the distribution of gerunds in Italian, but it is not adequate *per se* to account for Apulian varieties. In Apulian periphrases the aspectual value of the gerunds seems to be linked to reiterative aspect marking, which is similar to a property or, in the terms of Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández, to a general RhemeP introduced by a covert preposition denoting a particular flavor of a central coincidence relation. Next section will be devoted to the analysis of the expression of the embedded predicate of progressive periphrases in Italian and Apulian.

## 3. THE PROGRESSIVE PERIPHRASES IN ITALIAN AND APULIAN

Both Italian and Apulian varieties express progressive through a periphrasis involving a matrix *stay* auxiliary and an embedded predicates. However, while Italian allows embedded gerunds (22a), Apulian varieties such as the one of Conversano do not (22b).

- |      |    |                            |             |            |
|------|----|----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| (22) | a. | Maria sta <i>mangiando</i> | le cozze    | Italian    |
|      |    | Maria stays eating         | the mussels |            |
|      | b. | *Mari ste <i>mandzennə</i> | i'kəttəsə   | Conversano |
|      |    | Maria stays eating         | the mussels |            |
|      |    | 'Maria is eating mussels'  |             |            |

The embedded predicates in Apulian varieties are introduced by an *a* preposition and the embedded predicates can be either an infinitive or an inflected verb<sup>6</sup> (23). This periphrasis is also found in Italian to convey progressive aspect (24). The main difference is that Apulian varieties allow finite embedding.

- |      |                              |             |            |
|------|------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| (23) | Maria ste a man'dʒe /'mandʒə | i'kəttəsə   | Conversano |
|      | Maria stays to eat / eats    | the mussels |            |
|      | 'Maria is eating mussels'    |             |            |
|      |                              |             |            |
| (24) | Maria è/sta a mangiare       | le cozze    | Italian    |
|      | Maria stays to eat           | the mussels |            |
|      | 'Maria is eating mussels'    |             |            |

<sup>6</sup> We will not address here the issue of double inflection in aspectual constructions which is widespread across southern Italian varieties. The main idea is that the double inflection is due to a copy operation such as an expletive replacement between matrix and embedded inflection, for a description of the issue including the distribution of the double inflection across different inflectional paradigms among different Southern Italian varieties see Manzini – Savoia (2005), Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017) and Manzini – Lorusso (2022).

Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017) (updating the analysis of Manzini – Savoia 2005) account for the progressive structure in (23) which imply an aspectual (inflected stay + inflected lexical verb) in terms of a bi-clausal finite control structure that instantiates a inclusion/possession/part whole relation, which was originally proposed by Belvin – den Dikken (1997) for the (various instances of the) verb *have* (we notate it as  $\subseteq$  for ease of reference), between the matrix auxiliary and the embedded event.

The inclusion relation in these progressive periphrases is between the utterance time, expressed by the tense morphology of the *stay* auxiliary, and the embedded event as suggested by in Landman's (1992) semantics for PROG (cf. also Franco – Lorusso 2020). Landman (1992)'s proposal for progressive, which he summarizes as the *Part-of Proposal*, can be sketched as follows: «E, the set of events, is ordered by two relations: a relation of 'part-of' and a relation of 'stage-of' [...] a stage of an event is a special sort of part of that event" (Landman 1992:22). For example, 'Mary is crossing the street is true iff some actual event realizes sufficiently much of the type of events of Mary's crossing the street» (Landman 1992: 22).

So, in the Apulian progressive, as proposed by Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017) the inclusion ('part-of') relation is instantiated by means of the adposition *a* which is a subordinator (as in 24 which is the syntactic representation of the finite version of 23) determining a biclausal syntax including a matrix verb and an embedded defective CP introduced by the part-whole preposition *a*. The syntactic proposal of Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017) differs from the cartographic monoclausal analysis proposed by Cinque (2006), Cardinaletti – Giusti (2001, 2003, 2020), Di Caro – Giusti (2015) where *go*, *come*, *be/stay* are functional projections (PROG functional head in the terms of Cinque 2017) of the extended vP of the lexical verb and *a* is a meaningless functional element. The biclausality of (24) is derived through simple syntactic relations involving few lexical items without relying on semantic covert functional categories in syntax. This analysis falls under the framework of Manzini – Savoia (2005 and subsequent works)

for which syntax simply restricts meaning and does not determine it and the aspectual semantic interpretation is not derived by covert functional categories at work in syntax but as a matter of semantic interface. The advantage of this syntactic proposal is that we can account unitary for different periphrases that share the same syntax but depending on the element involved may determine difference in the semantic interpretation without homomorphism between syntax and semantics.

(24) [IP [VP *stek* [ $\subseteq$ P a [IP *pro* 'mandʒə]]]]

In our respect semantic representation of Landman is particularly suited to the bi-clausal syntax that we are proposing in (24) since the *part of* implies a subevent which is a part of a general event type. Crucially the same syntactic representation is available also in Italian although the embedded predicate is gerund and the preposition is expressed through the gerund morphology.

(25) [IP [VP *sta* [ [... PP [VP *pro* *mangia*]  $\subseteq$ P -ndo]]]]

For the purposes of the present work the syntactic representation is the template we will use also to describe the other periphrases involving a gerund. The idea is that similar few syntactic representations can have different semantic representations. But why embedded gerunds are not found in the progressive periphrases? There is no lack of gerund in Apulian varieties, so the answer has to do with the periphrastic cases in which the gerund appears. Next sections will be devoted to understanding how to implement the structure of the progressives in the derivation of the other periphrases found in the Apulian varieties, namely the *go* + gerunds and the NEG+*be*+ gerund, and which peculiar aspect of gerunds determines its appearance only in some periphrases but not in the progressive one.

#### 4. THE PERIPHRASES WITH GERUNDS IN APULIAN VARIETIES

This section is devoted to describing and characterizing the distribution of gerunds in Apulian varieties. Rohlfs (1969) reports that the construction with *stare stay* + gerund of the lexical verb to express progressive is not common in Northern Italian, not well attested in Tuscany but it is widespread across southern varieties such as Neapolitan or Calabrian. Only in Salentinian and some Apulian varieties of the area of Bari it is not attested since there are other constructions involving the preposition *a* and finite/infinite embedding (as described in section 3). In Rohlfs' description of the distribution of gerunds (Rohlfs 1969, III 720), the other periphrases in which gerund is found are the ones involving the *go* auxiliary which Rohlfs define as variant of the durative/progressive with *stay*, we will see that they are not exactly the same in 4.1. The last use of gerunds that Rohlfs describe only for Southern varieties is the use of gerunds as imperative (Rohlfs 1969, III 722) after a negative operator (in the varieties of Trani or San Giovanni Rotondo in the North of Apulia) or in periphrases involving a neg + *be* auxiliary +gerunds. Although in some varieties the auxiliary used for this form of negative imperative is *go* (Taranto) there are some Apulian varieties that clearly use a *be* auxiliary, as found in the corpus of Manzini – Savoia (2005), in section 4.2. we will describe the range of variation of these negative imperative forms and we propose a definition of the aspectual reading of the gerunds used in these constructions.

##### 4.1. *The go + Gerunds periphrases*

The *go* auxiliary in many Apulian varieties (Manzini – Savoia 2005) is found as a substitute of *stay* and it is also found with a finite/infinite embedding after the preposition *a* (26-27) as the progressive forms described in section 3. Manzini – Savoia (2005) and Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017) reported a high degree of variation across southern varieties for the distribution of double inflection/infinite embedding across the verbal morphological inflectional paradigm (see ff. 5) for



both the *stay* and the *go* periphrases. However, for the present purpose it is important to notice that finite/infinite alternate within the inflectional morphological paradigm with no interpretative differences<sup>7</sup> in both *go* (27) and *stay* (26) periphrases.

- (26) Periphrasis with *stay*  
 Stek a fattsə / fe u p3n Conversano  
 Stay<sub>1s</sub> to make<sub>1s</sub> / make<sub>INF</sub> the bread  
 ‘I am making the bread’

- (27) Periphrasis with *go*  
 Vek a fattsə / fe u p3n  
 Go<sub>1s</sub> to make<sub>1s</sub> / make<sub>INF</sub> the bread  
 ‘I am going to make the bread’  
 (Lorusso 2019: 204)

However, *stay* and *go* differ on gerund embedding. While the finite embedded verbs can be substituted by a gerund under *go* (29), we never find a gerund embedded under *stay* (28).

- (28) \*Stek fajennə u p3n Conversano  
 Stay<sub>-1s</sub> make<sub>1s</sub> the bread  
 ‘I am making the bread’

- (29) Vek fajennə u p3n  
 Go<sub>-1s</sub> make Pres, ind 1s the bread  
 ‘I am continuously making the bread’

The contrast in (28-29) suggests that the gerunds might encode an aspectual value which is incompatible with the *stay* auxiliary, but it is allowed with constructions involving the *go* auxiliary.

<sup>7</sup> Lorusso (2019) proposes a small difference in the semantic interpretation of the finite/infinite embedding under *stay* relying on the fact that in some varieties, as the one of Conversano, the first and second plural person allow only infinite embedding, see Lorusso (2019) for a detailed discussion.

As Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández (2016) noted for Spanish gerund adjuncts, not all class of verbs (Vendler’s 1967 class) can be selected in the periphrases. Neither *stay* nor *go* allow the embedding of state predicates like *know* (30).

- (30) a. \*Mari ste a kanəfə<sup>8</sup>  
 Mari stays to knows  
 ‘Mary is knowing’
- b. \*Mari ve kanəfennə  
 Mari stays knowing  
 ‘Mary (always) knows’

We find a difference between *stay* and *go* periphrases as for the embedding of the achievements: while *stay* allows them (obviously in constructions where no gerund is available) *go* does not (31).

- (31) a. Mari ste a arrəvə / arrə've  
 Mari stays to arrives / arrive<sub>INF</sub>  
 ‘Mary is arriving’
- b. \*Mari ve arrəvennə  
 Mari goes arriving  
 ‘Mary arrives (every day)’

So while data like (30) are expected in general for progressive forms, since state predicate cannot be divided in parts or stage (Landman 1992) that coincide with the utterance time (as proposed in section 2 for progressives), data like the ones in (31) confirm that although *go* periphrases are often used as synonyms of progressive constructions (as also claimed by Rohlfs 1969) at least in the varieties under investigation they do not overlap the progressives in all respect since they express an aspectual reading that is incompatible both states and achievements.

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<sup>8</sup> We do not differentiate between the finite and the infinitive of *to know*, since in the variety of Conversano they are syncretic.

The first reason of this asymmetry is linked to the lexical aspectual differences between *stay* and *go*. Although their lexical meaning is opaque in the periphrases under analysis their lexical counterpart differs in one respect: while *go* is a change of location verb itself (achievement) *stay* is a state. Achievements are punctual transitions and, as such, they do not contain internal topological properties that require identification with another entity. Neither state nor achievement imply a period of time, but achievement implies a change of location which is not given in state. Roughly, while *stay* as a state is incompatible with other stative predicates, *go* as achievement is incompatible with other achievements and with states and selects for predicates which imply a period of time.

The second reason is the interpretation that we find just for the *go*+gerund. The aspectual interpretation of *go* periphrases has an habitual/continuative reading as in (32).

- (32) Mari ve dɔʃennə ʃəmətəriə tott i dɔ  
 Mari goes telling stupid thing every day  
 ‘Mary tells stupid thing every day (repeatedly)’

In these varieties the gerunds, selected by *go* (see 32), do not represent events that can be divided into stages or parts to assure the progressive interpretation as it happens for progressives (Manzini *et al.* 2017, Landman 2002). This fact that the subevent selected by the verb *go* has aspectual implications linked to the *continuativity/iterativity*, is confirmed by the fact that also in Standard Italian the periphrasis *andare* (*go*) + gerund expresses continuous/iterative aspect (Cinque 1999; Giacalone Ramat 2000).

- (33) Le cose andarono veramente sempre peggiorando. Standard  
 Italian  
 ‘Things were (lit. went) constantly getting worse’

One more proof of the continuative/iterative aspectual interpretation of gerunds under *go* is linked to the different interpretation available in the alternance between gerunds and infinitive/finite introduced by a

preposition. While with an embedded gerunds the reading is *continuative* (34 is like 33) since the embedded predicates have an internal duration which selected is selected by the achievement auxiliary *go* implying a continuative interpretation at semantic interface, with P+infinite embedding we have a general future interpretation (35).

(34) (Da do jorə)      Vek    fajennə      u pɜn      Conversano  
 (From two hours) Go-1s to making    the bread  
 ‘It’s two hours that I am making the bread’

(35) (\*Da do jorə)      Vek      a fe      u pɜn  
 (From two hours) Go-1s to    to make    the bread  
 ‘It’s two hours that I am going to do the bread’

To sum up the *go* periphrases differ from *stay* progressive periphrases in different respects. On the one side, in progressives the overt preposition (in Apulian) implies an inclusion (‘part-of’) relation between the utterance time (*part*) and a stage a point (*whole*) of the event encode by the embedded verb. On the other side in *go* periphrases the embedded verb is the event which is iterative and is selected by a matrix achievement (*go*) auxiliary which does not imply a period of time. We propose that also in this case the covert preposition (or complex preposition) incorporated in gerunds instantiates a *part-whole* relation between a change of location represented by *go* and an event seen as an abstract location which is not terminal, as in the periphrases with embedded infinitive in (35), but include the change expressed by the matrix auxiliary iteratively. Roughly the periphrasis in (35) means there are two (or simply more than one) point (part of) *making the bread* that are selected by the change of state. The aspect expressed by the gerunds is still imperfective, «this head selects the event denoted by the base verb and focuses on a time interval that excludes the initial and (when available) the culmination point of the event» (Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016: 1333), but the event has to include a plurality (at least two) of event points that are selected by the matrix change of location auxiliary *go*: the gerunds, in fact, express an iterative aspect. In (36) we

give the syntactic representation of the periphrases with *go* which share the same structure with the *stay* periphrases, the only difference is the covert preposition expressed by the gerund that imply an iterative reading.

- (36) Vek mandzennə  
 Go<sub>1s</sub> eating  
 ‘I eat continuously’

[IP [VP vek [ [... PP [VP pro mandzɛ] ⊆P -nnə]]]]

However, for iterative aspect we intend (on the line of Lenci – Bertinetto 1996) a denotation of an event that can be decomposed in multiple atoms, so for example an occurrence of *eating* can be composed of different biting, each corresponding to atoms of eating. Languages differ on the way multiple events are represented. Various devices can be used to express the repetition of events in time, such as adverbials, morphological markers or syntactic constructions, Lasersohn (1995) refers to all these devices as *pluractional markers*. For example, in Italian iterative adverbs such as ‘many times’ are used to represent iterative aspect (37)<sup>9</sup>.

- (37) Gianni ha visto Blade Runner molte volte.  
 John has watched Blade Runner many times  
 ‘John has watched many times’

<sup>9</sup> An anonymous reviewer correctly points out that we could have also referred, instead of ‘iterative aspect’, to an instantiation some form of low pluractionality, low in the sense that it operates over the internal phases of the event and not over the whole event. The present description of iterative aspect is, in fact, closer to a partition of the event into identical subevents that happen one after the other (almost as if you unpacked a single event into a pluractional sequence of smaller events).

Nevertheless the iterative quantification of ‘*molte volte*’ is incompatible with the imperfective morphology (38)<sup>10</sup> since while iterative aspect (temporal modifiers in this case) implies a group of event units/atoms of watching, in the imperfective there is a single event of watching (which can be divided in different *stage of* the event selected for the progressive periphrases).

- (38) \*Gianni vedeva Blade Runner molte volte.  
 Gianni watched<sub>IMP</sub> Blade Runner many times.  
 ‘Gianni watched Blade Runner many times’  
 (Lenci & Bertinetto 2000: 247)

While Italian express iterative aspects through temporal modifiers Apulian varieties express it through the gerund which, as ‘*molte volte*’ in (38), is not compatible with the imperfective interpretations normally attributed to gerunds. For this reason we do not find gerunds in the progressive constructions where the embedded element has to encode imperfective aspect (28).

Correlated evidence that we are on the right is the appearance of absolute forms of gerunds in temporal/causal subordinates: in these constructions (39) the gerunds is often reduplicated confirming a continuative interpretation of a manner (or a property) of how the matrix predicate is achieved/developed.

- (39) Mangennə (mangennə), so arrvatə a kesə Conversano  
 Eating (eating) be<sub>1sg</sub> arrived at home  
 ‘I have arrived home while I was (repeatedly) eating’

<sup>10</sup> We will not go into the detail of the incompatibility of iterative and perfective aspect but see Lenci – Bertinetto (2000) for a detailed account in which the decomposition in atoms of the eventive structure of the verbs allows different level of granularity necessary for accounting for the differences between imperfective, habituals and iterative (semelfactive) verbs.

The reduplication of other verb form is not possible and essentially does not imply an iterative reading (40).

- |      |    |                    |                    |              |
|------|----|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (40) | a. | *'mandʒə           | 'mandʒə            | (infinitive) |
|      |    | eat <sub>INF</sub> | eat <sub>INF</sub> |              |
|      | b. | *man'dʒɛ           | man'dʒɛ            | (indicative) |
|      |    | eats               | eats               |              |

When gerund is available under the *go* constructions, it encodes iterative aspectual reading which is selected by the achievement matrix auxiliary to encode a general reiterative/continuative reading, but how is then iterative aspect encoded in gerunds compatible with the other construction in which is found? Next section is devoted to the analysis of the negative imperative periphrases which also imply an embedded gerund.

#### 4.2. Negative imperative periphrases

In many Apulian dialects we find a gerundive periphrasis for negative imperatives, of the type negation + inflected *be* auxiliary + *gerund*, as illustrated in (42). Rohlfs (1969, III: 110) reports the existence of constructions involving a negation and gerund to express prohibition in different Southern varieties in Apulia, in Basilicata and in Northern Calabria (but see also Ledgeway – Schifano – Silvestro 2021 for a recent description of different Southern Italian varieties). In the variety of Conversano, while imperatives are inflected and are syncretic with the indicative 3<sup>rd</sup> person (41), negative imperative are expressed by the periphrasis in (41).

- |      |                        |            |
|------|------------------------|------------|
| (41) | Mandʒə                 | Conversano |
|      | Eat <sub>IMP.2SG</sub> |            |
|      | 'Eat!'                 |            |

- (42) Non           zi/zit/zim                   man'dzennə  
Neg             be.2SG/2PL/1PL         eating  
'Don't eat!'

The periphrasis (42) is found only for 2nd persons (singular and plural) and 1st plural person. For the remaining person is available the periphrasis used to express 'must' namely an *have* + *a* + infinitive (43).

- (43) Non     agghiə/av/ann             a     man'dʒɜ  
NEG   have 1SG/3SG/3PL   to   eat.INF  
'I/she/they must eat'

The presence of *have* auxiliary plus the preposition *a* (as the one found in *stay* progressive constructions) may be revealing that also in negative imperative we are dealing with an inclusion/possession predicate of the *addressee* within the event expressed by gerunds/p + infinitive.

As reported by Rohlf's (1969) there are Apulian varieties in which the gerund directly follows the negative morpheme, as in (44) in which the *be* auxiliary is optional (45). These facts show that the expression of the auxiliary can be covert in these varieties (the data are from Manzini – Savoia 2005).

- (44) Nə-llu       camənnə                               Monte S. Angelo  
Neg-him   call.GER  
'Don't call him'
- (45) Na   la   (si)    camənnə                               Minervino Murge  
Neg her  be.2sg  call.GER  
'Don't call her'

Both Rohlf's (1969) and Manzini – Savoia (2005) acknowledge that in some varieties (e.g. Taranto, Martina Franca) the auxiliary employed in such periphrasis is not *be* but the motion verb for *go*, as illustrated in (46).



- (46) n    ɔ:    ʃə:tə    camannə    Taranto  
 Neg him go.2pl call.GER  
 ‘Don’t call him’

The fact that *be* auxiliary can be substituted by the *go* auxiliary as in the continuative constructions we analysed in section 3.1 suggests a tight relation with the *go* + gerunds periphrases. However, it is now interesting to understand which is the aspectual value of the gerund that cannot be simply iterative as the one identified for gerunds in the *go* periphrases. How can an aspectual iterative value be recruited from the lexicon to encode the illocutionary force of a prohibition (i.e. a negative imperative)?

To answer to this question, we see the availability of the periphrases depending on the *Aktionsart* of the embedded predicate. While with progressive and with the *go* periphrases we found some lexical restriction, in the negative imperative constructions they do not always hold: we find embedded achievements (47) (contrary to what happens with *go* periphrasis 31b) and embedded state (such as locative states in 48). Some states (such as *know* 49) are unavailable with negative imperatives, showing that Imperatives/Prohibitions are compatible only with stage level predicates and not individual level predicates.

- (47) Non    zi            vənennə  
 Neg    be.2SG        coming  
 ‘Don’t come’
- (48) Non    zi            stennə (de)  
 Neg    be.2SG        staying (there)  
 ‘Don’t stay there’
- (49) \*Non    zi            sapennə  
 Neg    be.2SG        knowing  
 ‘Don’t know’

To understand the aspectual entailment involved in the gerund embedding of the negative imperative we need to sketch some considerations on the semantics of imperative/prohibition. In his account Portner (2004) tries to define Imperatives/Prohibitions proposing that the *force* of imperative is determined only indirectly and not by an overt syntactic functional projection. For instance, in tab. 1 we report the differences between the force of declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives. The sentential force of a declarative sentence is assertion, which is to say that they are conventionally used to add the proposition that they denote to the *Common Ground* of the hearer. The interrogatives, which include the set of possible answers, are described by Portman as a set of propositions that are added to the question set. The conventional force of imperatives, what Portner calls Requiring, is to add the property denoted by the imperative to the addressee's To-Do List: «to be more precise, the force of Requiring must be indexed to the addressee, so that Requiring is the addition of the imperative's denotation to the To-Do List associated with A by the To-Do List Function» (Portner 2004: 237).

Type	Denotation	Discourse Component	Force
Declaratives	proposition (p)	Common Ground set of propositions	Assertion $CG \cup \{p\}$
Interrogatives	set of propositions (q)	Question Set set of sets of propositions	Asking $QS \cup \{q\}$
Imperatives	property (P)	To-Do List Function function from individuals to sets of properties	Requiring <sub>A</sub> $TDL(A) \cup \{P\}$

Table 1. Summary of the force for different sentence typed (adapted from Portner 2004: 238).

Imperatives/prohibitions denote properties, and so are added to or excluded from the addressee's To-Do List, which is a set of properties. In the constructions under investigation, a covert variable-binding operator high in the clausal structure converts the imperative clause into a property-denoting expression «Perhaps Universal Grammar provides

an operator which can bind an addressee-oriented element. This operator allows the generation of properties whose argument is restricted to the addressee, i.e. imperatives» (Portner 2004: 244). So, in the Apulian negative imperative (42) the operator can be either the negative operator<sup>11</sup> and the addressee-oriented element is the embedded gerund which denotes a property. We assume that the negation (and the imperative) in C (Zanutini 1997; Han 2001; Zeijlstra 2004) triggers a modal interpretation, which selects for an event which is obliquized through a gerund and/or a preposition. As for the auxiliary *be/go* which is overt in *Conversano*, but can be absent in other Apulian varieties, it is a morphosyntactic inflected device used to identify the addressee of the command/prohibition. The preposition (overt or incorporated in the gerund) is a relation involving the operation of add/delete a property to the to-do-list of the addressee<sup>12</sup>. Finally, the embedded verb is the property that addressee should include/exclude to her/his to-do-list.

This operation of inclusion of a property into the to-do-list of the addressee is once more encoded in syntax through the instantiation of a part-whole  $\subseteq$  relation between the addressee (and its *to-do-list*), identified through the morphology of the auxiliary and the property denoted by the embedded verb.

(50) [CP[imp] [Neg non [IP zi [ [VP pro man'dʒe]  $\subseteq$ P -nnə]]]

<sup>11</sup> We will not address the issue on the status of the negative operator, different authors have argued that it is not a proper negation, but a modal operator see for example Iatridou (2021).

<sup>12</sup> As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, the negation does not imply merely the deletion of a property since by telling someone 'Don't speak', we are not removing from his list of things to do 'speak', but we are adding to that list the negative event of 'not speaking', that is, of being silent: negation in negative imperative does not operate over the command (not have to speak) but over the event that is contained in the command (have to not speak). The negation is then a low-scope negation, as suggested for negative eventualities by Fábregas – González Rodríguez (2020).

Similar periphrases are also found in Northern Italian varieties, where the embedded verb is an infinitive which can/cannot be introduced by a covert/overt preposition<sup>13</sup>: as in the examples from Padova (51) where we have a neg+stay+ infinite, from Revere (52) where the negation is postverbal (auxiliary) and from Udine (53) where we have a preposition introducing the embedded verb.

- |      |   |   |                                    |
|------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| (51) | No stá<br>Neg aux <sub>2sg</sub><br>'Don't talk!'   | parlare<br>talking                                  | Padova<br><br>(cf. Kayne 1992: 17) |
| (52) | Sta mia<br>Stay NEG<br>'Don't call him'             | tʃamar-əl<br>call <sub>inf</sub> .him <sub>cl</sub> | Revere                             |
| (53) | No sta<br>NEG stay <sub>2nd sg</sub><br>'Don't die' | a muri<br>to die                                    | Udine                              |

The fact that these periphrases are based on the instantiation of an inclusion relation is confirmed by overt preposition found in non-periphrastic constructions in Southern Italian varieties (54-55): the verb denoting the property is introduced by the preposition 'senza' (= without) instead of the negation, *senza* is in fact a preposition expressing exclusion, negation of inclusion.

- |      |  |                              |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| (54) | Senza che guardi<br>Without that see 2.SG<br>'Don't see' | Italian (Southern varieties) |
|------|--|------------------------------|

<sup>13</sup> The fact that the preposition can be omitted does not change the instantiation of a part-whole between the matrix auxiliary and the embedded verb, for a discussion on about the optionality of *a* in the progressive constructions of the southern Italian varieties see Manzini – Savoia (2005) and Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia (2017).

- (55) Senza ca fai [ar]accussí Western Sicilian  
 Without that do2sg Iso  
 ‘Don’t do like that’

As for the use of gerunds as verbal forms incorporating a preposition to express an inclusion relation there are some interesting data from Spanish (Etxepare, p.c.) in which in non-embedded context gerunds are used to express a strong imperative instantiating a relation between a generic addressee and a property (in this case generic addressee not identified by overt elements).

- (56) ¡Andando! Spanish  
 Walking  
 ‘Walk!’

Also Spanish allow *estar* (stay) + gerunds construction to express command (56)<sup>14</sup>.

- (57) Ya te estás callando  
 Already you<sub>OBJ</sub> stay<sub>2sg</sub> hush  
 ‘Shut up!’

As for the aspectual entailment of gerunds we can further argue that we are dealing with imperfective/iterative aspectual meaning, as in the construction with *go* auxiliary. The embedded verb in (41) is imperfective since the eventuality denoted by the verb is not already completed (or even started): remind imperatives are action-guiding with respect to future actions of a given addressee (Portner 2004). However, once more the event cannot be divided into stage/part of (as in the progressives),

<sup>14</sup> As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, these occurrences of gerunds allow to sketch a crosslinguistic comparison between Spanish and Apulian. Spanish never allows gerunds after negation to express a command. It is probably linked to the fact that while in Spanish gerunds still represent a path (in the terms of Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016) and negation implies the suspension of such path, Apulian gerunds represent the decomposition in different atoms of the event which are compatible with negation which denies the existence of the different n-atoms that compose the event.

but the event can be repeated many times as a future acts of the participants (as the Lasersohn's 1995 plural markers) being the event a non-punctual and indivisible property (set of future events) that has to be included/excluded into the to-do-list of the addressee. In the Apulian negative imperatives, the gerunds express iterative aspect which is recruited to denote an atemporal (iterative) property.

Next section is devoted to outline the syntactic considerations presented in the sections above into a unitary syntactic account of the described periphrases.

## 5. SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

In the present paper we have introduced a description of the Apulian periphrases involving the embedding of the gerunds, we have focused on the continuative periphrases with *go* and the negative imperative with *NEG+be*. This section is devoted to proposing an account on the syntax of these constructions. The main assumptions we have being put forward is that all the described construction are the instantiation of part-whole ( $\subseteq$ ) relation between two clauses. In sentences like the Italian progressive in (1) the preposition *a* 'to' instantiates a relation whose content is taken by Manzini – Franco (2016) to be part/whole, akin to what Belvin – den Dikken (1997: 170) call zonal inclusion. In other words, in sentence like *I gave the pen to Paul*, *to* introduces a relation between its object *Paul* and the theme of the verb *the pen* such that *Paul* includes *the book*, i.e. possesses it. This relation is the one contained in the syntactic structure proposed by Manzini *et al.* (2017) to account for progressive involving either gerund embedding, as in Italian (58a) or finite embedding (58b)<sup>15</sup>: a biclausal structure in which the *stay* auxiliaries represent the information about the subject and the utterance

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<sup>15</sup> We note just the finite version of the progressives in Apulian, for the infinite version see section 2. we are using the verb *man'dʒɛ* (to eat) in all the syntactic representation wince it was the verb used in the examples in section 2 and 3.

times which coincides with a *part of* the event represented by the embedded predicate. The subject of the embedded predicate is controlled by the matrix subject being the embedded clause a defective CP (an *event* in the terms of Loring and Wurmbrand 2019). As for the gerund in (58a) we represent it with a covert PP (as in Gallego 2010; Casalicchio 2013, 2015, 2019; Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2021) that selects for the lexical verbal root.

- (58) a. *Stay* periphrases (progressives) in Italian  
 [CP...[IP [VP sta [CP<sub>def</sub> [...PP [VP pro V<sub>root</sub>] ⊆P -ndo]]]]]  
 b. *Stay* + finite V periphrases (progressives) in Apulian  
 [CP...[[IP [VP sta [CP<sub>def</sub> [...PP [⊆P a [IP pro 'mandʒə]]]]]]]]]

On the line of progressives in Manzini *et al.* 2007 represented above we propose a bi-clausal structure in which the embedded gerund is a tenseless lexical VP (the event) selected by the *go* auxiliary under a covert preposition which imply an inclusion relation between an abstract change of location and *n* (more than one) different points included in the time interval denoted by the embedded predicate.

- (59) *Go* periphrases in Apulian  
 [CP...[IP [VP vek [CP<sub>def</sub> [PP [VP pro [V mangie]] P -nnə]]]]]

Similarly, we propose for the negative imperatives a biclausal structure in which a matrix sentence introduced by a negative/modal operator and an auxiliary selects as a complement the gerund. The inclusion relation is instantiated between the addressee of the command identified through the morphology of the auxiliary and a property denoted by the embedded predicate.

- (60) Negative imperative (*Be* periphrasis) in Apulian  
 [CP[imp] [Neg non [IP zi [CP<sub>def</sub> [PP[VP pro [Vmangie]] P nnə]]]]]

The present biclausal analysis allow to account for different aspectual periphrases using very similar syntactic representations and few

syntactic tools with no reference to functional categories in the extended projection of the CP or of the VP as predicted by cartographic explanations (like the ones Cardinaletti – Giusti 2003, 2010 or Cinque 2017 for progressives). While cartographic approaches propose a monoclausal structure with different aspectual functional categories to accommodate the interpretative differences in the spirit of the «syntacticization of semantics» (Cinque – Rizzi 2009) namely that to the same atoms meaning correspond the same syntactic unit.

The present biclausal analysis goes under the framework of Manzini – Savoia (2005 ff.) for which syntax simply restricts meaning and does not determine it – which applied to the data at hand means that few syntactic operation on a reduced inventory of morphosyntactic categories can converge to different aspectual interpretation: «The advantage of holding such a position is that it becomes possible to maintain a more transparent relation between the syntax and the lexicon/morphology» (Manzini – Lorusso – Savoia 2017: 56).

However, analysis implying lexical decomposition of the vP, such as the one of Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández (2016) (implementing the framework of Ramchand 2008) can adequately account for the phenomena described. As for gerunds embedded under achievement (18-19), also for the periphrases under analysis (59-60) the gerund implies a covert aspectual preposition which realizes PhatP or RhemeP within the vP. On the one hand, gerunds found in the *go* periphrasis can be analyzed as the lexicalization of PathP since they give details about the abstract spatial trajectory expressed by the change of location auxiliary within different points included in the eventive structure denoted by the embedded predicate. On the other hand, gerunds found in the negative imperatives may simply lexicalize RhemeP since they encode manner-related (property) details that must be included in the addressee to-do-list. In the present proposal we contend that the different interpretation of the periphrases is linked to the representation at semantic interface, syntax simply reduces and conveys the possible semantic interpretations using a small set of lexical categories and rules. The advantage of the present proposal is the minimal syntactic machinery which allow



multiple semantic interpretations without inserting in syntax semantic categories. However, the lexical decomposition approaches have the advantage to account more accurately for the regularities in the mapping between syntax and semantics but they may have disadvantage of involving a high degree of complexity in syntax.

It is out of the scope of the present work to disentangle between the prediction of the lexical decompositional approach (Ramchand 2008) and the morphosyntactic categorial approach (Manzini – Savoia) but the possibility to account for the distribution of gerunds making reference to a simple and non-redundant syntactic structure may have the advantage of a unitary treatment of the same morpho-syntactic categorial item although the semantic interpretation implies a higher degree of granularity.

So, since we are dealing with the very similar syntactic templates (58-59-60) we can account for the variation in the distribution of gerunds between Italian and Apulian as a matter of the aspectual interpretation required for each syntactic periphrasis. In table 2 we resume the crucial characteristics of the variation.

	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Go</i> (continuative)	Negative Imperative (properties)
Italian	+	+	-
Apulian	-	+	+

Table 2. Variation in the distribution of gerunds in Italian and Apulian variety.

While Italian use the same morphosyntactic realization (gerunds) for the embedded verb under progressive (*stay*) and continuative periphrases, Apulian varieties use gerunds for the periphrases under *go* and for the negative imperative. In Italian gerunds simply imply an imperfective aspectual reading and can be selected under progressive and continuative periphrases. In Apulian varieties the general imperfective aspectual interpretation is unavailable. Gerunds imply a more specialized aspectual reading: namely Apulian gerunds imply an iterative aspectual

interpretation which is compatible with the continuative reading of *go* periphrases (section 4.1) and the property denoting embedding in the periphrasis used for the negative imperative (section 4.2). The aspectual interpretation, with the consequent restrictions, is given by the mere instantiation in syntax of a part-whole relation between an aspectual auxiliary (achievement *go* or state *be*) and the event structure of the embedded lexical verb.

Last but not least, gerunds imply an oblique embedding since (as in Gallego 2010; Casalicchio 2013, 2015, 2019; Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández, 2021) it incorporates a covert preposition which determine its aspectual reading or, in the terms of the present analysis, the instantiation of a primitive (part-whole) relation between a matrix and an embedded verb. For the Apulian periphrases, since iterative aspect is a subset of imperfective aspect because no starting, culmination or endpoint is given, the flavor of the preposition instantiating the part-whole is a central coincidence relation (Hale 1986; Fábregas 2008; Gallego 2010; Fábregas – Jiménez-Fernández 2016) since no terminal point is compatible with the periphrases analyzed. Further data and analysis are needed to understand the characteristics of the covert preposition incorporated in Apulian gerunds, since, as suggested by Poletto (p.c.), we might be dealing with a cluster of complex prepositions that in composition may influence the specialized aspectual reading encoded in the Apulian gerunds.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper we sketched a proposal to account for the distribution of the gerunds in Italian and in the northern Apulian varieties. In Italian gerunds are found in progressive periphrases and in *go* periphrases involving a continuative/future reading. In Apulian gerunds are not found in progressive but in continuative periphrases and negative imperatives. The two languages differ in the aspectual entailment of gerunds. To account for the variation in the aspect encoded by the gerunds we described the selectional restrictions found in the different constructions:

we have been describing the interaction with verb classes (Vendler's 1967 verb classes) and the cooccurrence with aspectual temporal modifiers. The description of the variation across closely related varieties, mainly Italo Romance but also Spanish, has been put forward to understand the limit of variation in a comparative view. The main result is that we proposed that Italian gerunds encode imperfective aspect, required in the progressive periphrases, while Apulian gerunds encode iterative aspect, which is a subset of imperfective aspect. The aspectual entailment of Apulian gerunds as iterative is confirmed by its presence in the continuative periphrasis and as a denotation of a property in the periphrastic negative imperative. The iterative aspectual encoding is also confirmed by the fact that gerund can be found in reduplicated structures (39).

In our description of the gerund periphrases, we considered two main factors: the syntax of the constructions in which the gerunds was selected and the role of the preposition incorporated in the gerund morphology. As for the syntactic template we mainly analysed cases of gerund embedding under matrix auxiliaries whose lexical meaning was opaque. These configurations allowed us to propose a biclausal structure with the embedding of a defective CP in which the gerund appears. The main point is that gerunds are strictly related to the matrix auxiliary which determines tense features and control the embedded subject. This defective status of the embedded CP can be easily accounted for by monoclausal analysis in which gerunds are the lexicalization of an aspectual head (Casalicchio 2013) or as part of the content of the lexical decomposition of the vP. We preferred a biclausal analysis to maintain a unitary syntactic proposal for clausal embedding, leaving the differences to the aspectual interpretation at semantic interface.

As for the role of the preposition incorporated in gerunds, we proposed that in the configurations under investigation there is an instantiation of a part-whole relation between the matrix auxiliary and the embedded predicate. We coincide with previous account (Mateu 2002; Fábregas 2008; Gallego 2010) on the fact that the incorporated preposition tendentially encodes a central coincidence relation (Hale 1986),

however further studies are needed to understand whether gerunds can be used to encode a terminal coincidence relation in some constructions and to describe the other characteristics of the prepositional content encoded, such as the fact that it encodes a simple or a complex preposition.

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