

Past participial identity in periphrases – and beyond?

Dennis Wegner
University of Wuppertal

Based on the observation that past participles in passive and perfect periphrases are morphophonologically identical in (almost) all Germanic and Romance languages, the question of whether this is mirrored by a substantial syntacticosemantic identity was often raised but rarely attempted to be answered in a principled fashion (cf. Ackema 1999: 87f.). While a diachronic perspective immediately suggests that perfect and passive participles are indeed one and the same since they have the same source, this identity need not be retained in modern Germanic and Romance. Based on data like those in (1) and (2), however, it will be argued that there indeed are persuasive arguments in favour of substantial past participial identity.

- (1) a. Hundurinn hefur *bitið* manninn. / Maður var *bitinn* af hundi (Icelandic)
the.dog has bitten the.man / the.man was bite.M.SG by the.dog
b. Un amigo mío ha *escrito* una carta./Una carta fue *escrita* por un amigo mío. (Spanish)
a friend mine has written a letter / a letter was written.F.SG by a friend mine
c. La maison que les filles ont *peint* /*peinte*. (Bjorkman 2011: 155) (French)
the house that the girls have painted/painted.F.SG
- (2) a. I don't know how he found out that she belonged to that lass, but *find out he has*. /
It will never be known how Jarman was caught, but *caught he was*. (English)
b. dass er das Buch hat *lesen* müssen / dass das Buch *gelesen* werden muss / (German)
that he the book has read.INF must / that the book read.PTCP become must /
dass das Mädchen *angekommen* sein muss
that the girl arrive.PTCP be must

As observable in (1), both Romance as well as (North-)Germanic exhibit languages that make use of past participial (object-)agreement in periphrastic constructions. Although its presence may typically be predicted on the basis of whether HAVE, BE or BECOME is employed as in (1a) and (1b), it crucially is not contingent on the expression of a perfect or passive interpretation. Instead, as Belletti (2006: 495) and Bjorkman (2011: 154f.) point out, the overt expression of agreement, as shown in (1c), is a consequence of the displacement of an argument. This shows that even past participles in HAVE-contexts may occasionally exhibit agreement in a restricted set of Romance languages as long as the internal argument (IA), with which the participial agreement relation is established, undergoes displacement out of the participial domain.

In a similar vein, the more substantial phenomena in (2) differ along the lines of which auxiliary is employed – namely HAVE vs. BE/BECOME – rather than along the dimension of passive and perfect. In these contexts – commonly referred to as the Perfect Participle Paradox (PPP) (Breul 2014) and Infinitivus pro Participio (IPP) (Ørsnes 2008) – past participial morphology may be dropped under certain circumstances, viz. VP-displacement or occurring as part of a complex verbal cluster, respectively. A passive version of these phenomena is cross-linguistically not available. Furthermore, whereas the PPP may also be found with unaccusatives, since English selects for HAVE in all contexts, the IPP cannot be found with such predicates, given that German makes use of auxiliary alternation and hence employs BE in these contexts. Thus, it is suggested that the perfect is compositionally derived whenever HAVE is around (and may thus signal it), whereas a passive interpretation is solely based on the participial form.

These observations support the assumption of substantial past participial identity in periphrastic instances, as differences in behaviour may be traced back to the contribution of HAVE. Given that it is sufficient to signal a perfect interpretation in cases of impoverishment like those in (2), HAVE is argued to contain relevant information for the denotation of a perfect reading, as independently suggested for instance by Iatridou et al. (2001: 220). Assuming that BE and WERDEN lack a comparable contribution, the past participial form is taken to involve aspectual information. This is a set of (abstract) perfectivity, which renders telic events complete, but is incapable of doing the same for atelic ones. The latter thus either remain

imperfective (in the context of passives) or demand the aid of the aspectual contribution – namely posteriority – on HAVE. This shifts the (imperfective) event into the past and hence allows us to implicate completion. Additionally, given that the phenomena in (2) as well as A-movement of an IA in (1) are not licit in the presence of HAVE, the past participle arguably marks the verb's EA for existential binding. This may, however, be rendered ineffective by HAVE, which is able to retrieve the marked role and provide it for further syntactic purposes (EA realization) (see *inter alia* Toman 1986, Cowper 1989 and Ackema & Neeleman 2012 for approaches to θ -inheritance).

Both of these properties – the suppression of an EA and the presence of aktionsart-sensitive perfectivity – are also observable in bare (i.e. auxiliarilyless) instances of past participles.

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| (3) a. Das Haus ist gebaut. | (German) |
| b. The house is built. | (English) |
| (4) a. der von drei Hunden (langsam zum Berggipfel) gezogene Schlitten | (German) |
| the by three dogs slowly to.the mountaintop drawn sled | |
| b. the sled (slowly) drawn (to the mountaintop) by three dogs | (English) |
| (5) a. Defused, the bomb meant no harm anymore. | (English) |
| b. The bomb defused, the soldier returned to his comrades. | (English) |
| (6) a. das dem Mann von Peter geschenkte Buch | (German) |
| the.the.DAT man by Peter given book | |
| b. the man given the book by Peter | (English) |

Bare participial constructions are generally restricted to denoting a result, although the particular constructional embedding may more or less strongly force it. This is argued to hold regardless of the verbal or adjectival nature of the past participial form involved, as observable with the strong restrictions imposed on stative passives like those in (3) and the flexible ‘verbal’ behaviour in the pre- and postnominal distribution in (4). The former may be argued to be a copular construction forcing the sole attribution of a resultative property to a referent, whereas the latter also attribute a property to a referent, but are quite flexible in terms of retaining their verbal properties, which occasionally even allows them to give rise to a simultaneity reading (by implication). Additional evidence for the assumption that the presence of a resultative state does not stem from the adjectival vs. verbal nature of the participle stems from cases like (5a) – an adjectival instance relating to a nominal governor in the main clause – and (5b) – a verbal instance realizing an IA – which would have to be expected to elicit distinct interpretations, contrary to fact. Similarly, as observable in (6), even in a prototypically adjectival position like the attributive use in German, past participles may readily realize arguments marked with inherent case, reminiscent of English postnominal uses that realize arguments with default case. The claim that verbal properties are largely retained in adjectival forms has also been stressed in recent studies (Sleeman 2011; Lundquist 2012). Thus, the traditional distinction of adjectival and verbal past participles should more flexibly be tied to argument realization/association rather than defined along the semantic lines of eventivity and stativity.

Hence, the adjectival nature of past participles in bare instances may be reduced to the marking of an IA for λ -abstraction in the sense of Meltzer-Asscher (2012: 178). This assures that the past participial form is lexically able to combine with adjectival affixes (*un-*) and give rise to adjectival compounds (*well-deserved*), while not enforcing serious semantic consequences in terms of imposing stativity. This suffices to account for the three-fold distinction of eventive, resultative and stative past participles in bare instances (Parsons 1990; Kratzer 2000; Embick 2004). Eventive past participles are those that do not feature a lexically marked IA, resultatives are those that do so while (largely) retaining their verbal semantics (*sunk/opened*) and statives (*sunken/open*) are those that have entirely given up their verbal characteristics. While the former two thus are still deverbal forms, the latter are real adjectives.

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