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Gonzalez Gonzalez, P.; Bruil, M.

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The Ecuadorian Spanish benefactive and its inherent aspect

A reconstruction

Paz González and Martine Bruil

Leiden University

The Spanish benefactive verbal periphrasis *dar* ‘give’ + gerund is unique to the Spanish spoken in Ecuador and it seems to have emerged in the historical Ecuadorian context of multilingualism. The analysis presented sheds light to the intricacies of the construction, taking into consideration the inherent aspect of the gerundial verb. Oral data was collected during two months of participant observation in Ecuador. The aspectual theoretical analysis of Verkuyl (1993), González (2003) and González and Verkuyl (2017) is applied to the data in order to determine the inherent aspectual value of the gerundial verb in the predications. The results show that there is an overwhelming use of terminative predications. Additionally, some predications that *prima facie* seem durative can be interpreted as terminative. This finding can be partially explained by particular linguistic phenomena only appearing in the Spanish in contact with Kichwa. Moreover, this study adds empirical proof of how relevant discourse is in aspectual representations.

Keywords: Kichwa, Spanish, inherent aspect, aspectual representation, *dar* ‘give’ + gerund

1. Introduction

Cross-linguistically it is not uncommon to use the verb ‘to give’ in order to construct benefactive applicatives. In African languages such as Baule, Dagaare, and Yoruba and Asian languages such as Thai, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese this verb is used in order to express that an action is carried out for the benefit of someone else (Creissels 2010). However, in European languages, such as Spanish, and in South American indigenous languages ‘to give’ is not used to introduce the benefactee of the action. That is why it is remarkable that Ecuadorian Spanish

does possess a periphrastic construction containing ‘to give’ that forms a benefactive applicative. It seems to have emerged in the historical context of multilingualism (Albor 1973; Bruil 2008; Haboud 1998; Kany 1951; Olbertz 2002, 2008; Toscano Mateus 1953).

This construction consists of an inflected form of the verb *dar* ‘to give’ and a nonfinite verb form, as illustrated in Example (1):

- (1) *¿Te doy lleva-ndo tu maleta?*
 2S.OBJ give.1SG.PRS take-GER 2SG.POS suitcase
 ‘Shall I take your suitcase for you?’ (Bruil 2007, 6)

The function of the inflected verb form *doy* ‘I give’ is to introduce the benefactee of the action of *llevando la maleta* ‘taking the suitcase.’ This benefactive construction was described first in the 1950s (Kany 1951; Toscano Mateus 1953). One of the aspects that scholars have discussed is the semantics of this construction as a whole: it is a benefactive construction that sometimes has an extension to a malefactive and it expresses that the subject of ‘to give’ (the speaker in Example (1)) carries out an action in favor of or instead of the introduced benefactee. The benefactee is expressed as the indirect object of ‘to give,’ which is the addressee in Example (1) (Bruil 2008; Haboud 1998; Olbertz 2002, 2008).

However, the aspectual semantics of the non-finite verb, the gerund, and its complements, have not been studied in detail. By studying the data collected previously by one of the authors (Bruil 2007), it appeared that the type of events expressed by the gerund shows a particular aspectual behavior different from what is expected from the so-called Plus Principle (Verkuyl 1993). This principle has been used in order to determine the inherent aspect of the predication. Given a basic aspectual division between durative and terminative predications, this principle states that a predication is terminative by combining only aspectually relevant plus- features contributed by the verbs and by its arguments into a complex sentential feature called [+terminative]. The terminative option therefore seems to be the marked one (González 2003). As soon as a minus feature is involved in combining elements into larger phrases, the predication is durative, i.e., [–terminative]. We will explain the content of the aspectual features just mentioned in more detail below. Here it is important to see that in contrast to what we may expect, the majority of the predications in our data appear to be classified in the above sense (i.e., [terminative], whereas one may expect that unmarked cases (durative) outnumber the marked ones (terminative)). This observation led us to explore and analyse the data from this perspective.

The structure of this paper is as follows: in Section 2, we briefly discuss the origin of this construction taking into account the sociolinguistic background. In Section 3, we introduce the elements of the aspectual theory that are important

for this study, and we continue by introducing our observations, research questions and hypotheses. We present the methodology used in our field study and in the data analysis in Section 4. Section 5 shows the results of our study of the inherent aspect of the gerund involved in this construction. We conclude this paper in Section 6 with a description of the gerund in this particular construction and the implications of our findings for aspectual theory.

2. Sociolinguistic background

The use of the applicative construction 'give' + gerund is widespread throughout Ecuador and the Colombian border regions. Speakers from different socio-economic and language backgrounds use this construction. It is found in the speech of both monolingual Spanish speakers and bilingual Kichwa¹-Spanish speakers.

Scholars have suggested various origins for the constructions. The earliest proposal was by Toscano Mateus (1953). He proposed that the construction is a calque from a very similar construction in Kichwa. This proposal has been repeated by various scholars even until the 2000s (Albor 1973; Heine and Kuteva 2005, 221; Hurley 1995a, 1995b).

Haboud (1998, 219) notes various problems with this loan analysis. First of all, monolingual Kichwa speakers use the construction less than Kichwa-Spanish bilinguals. This author observes, furthermore, that other languages of the Quechuan family do not possess the benefactive-applicative construction. These languages use morphological strategies to express the benefactee. Haboud, therefore, proposes that the Ecuadorian Spanish construction is not a calque from the Kichwa construction, but that it developed in Spanish expressing the meaning of the benefactive morphology in Kichwa (Haboud 1998, 219–220). Olbertz (2002, 2008) draws a similar conclusion based on Haboud's argument and additional corpus materials. The author adds that periphrastic constructions are more common in Spanish than in Quechuan languages and she states that the construction probably came into being through a complex convergence process of mutual influence (Olbertz 2002, 8).

Bruil (2008) proposes an alternative development. According to her analysis, the construction developed in the Spanish spoken by Kichwa-Spanish bilinguals. Because in Kichwa it is common to omit arguments, the direct object of *dar* 'give' was omitted in their use of Spanish as well.¹ An additional change was that the

1. Kichwa is the Ecuadorian variety of the Quechuan language family. Another spelling of this language name is <Quichua>. The spelling <Kichwa> is preferred by some speakers of the language. The term 'Quechua' is used to refer to the language family as a whole.

gerund obtained a consecutive reading. In non-Andean varieties of Spanish, the gerund expresses a simultaneous event to the event expressed by the verb it is dependent on. This is illustrated in Example (2):

- (2) *Vengo cocin-ndo.*
 come.1SG cook-GER
 Andean Sp.: 'I come after cooking.'
 Non-Andean Sp.: 'I come while cooking.'

Example (2) shows that in Andean Spanish the gerund *cocinando* 'cooking' expresses an action that occurred right before the action expressed by *vengo* 'I come'. This consecutive use of the gerund is found in other Spanish varieties in contact with Quechuan languages as well (De Granda 1995; Haboud 1997, 1998; Niño-Murcia 1992; Olbertz 2002; 2008; Toscano Mateus 1953). It deviates from non-Andean Spanish which requires an overlap between the arrival and the cooking.

If we take into account the introduction of the omission of the object and the consecutive use of the gerund, we could expect that at some earlier stage the combination of 'give' and the gerund meant something like first carrying out a transitive action and then giving the object of the transitive action to someone. This is illustrated in Example (3):

- (3) *¿Te doy compra-ndo el choclo?*
 2SG.OBJ give.1SG buy-GER ART corn.cob
 Earlier stage Ecuadorian Sp: 'Should I buy the corn cob and give to you?'
 Present-day Ecuadorian Sp: 'Should I buy the corn cob for you?'

Because there was no overt direct object of 'give', the action that was expressed by the gerund was reinterpreted as the object of giving. That is to say, the thing that was given was the action of 'buying corn cobs', as shown in Example (3). Later on, this construction was borrowed into Kichwa. This origin would also explain why *dar* 'give' + gerund shows a preference for transitive verbs as gerunds, as it was shown by Bruil (2008), Haboud (1998), Hurley (1995a), Niño-Murcia (1992) and Olbertz (2002; 2008).²

There is yet another proposal on the origin of the applicative construction. Simeon Floyd (pers. comm. 2018) postulates that this construction may be an areal feature of Ecuador. The Barbacoan language Cha'palaa, spoken in the north-west of Ecuador possesses a very similar construction consisting of the verb 'give' and a non-finite verb form. This construction also introduces a beneficiary to the

2. This omission of objects will be again described in Section 3.2 as a phenomenon related to aspectual analysis.

event. So one may hypothesize that the Kichwa construction developed under Cha'palaa influence or more generally under Barbacoan influence. Later on, Spanish calqued the construction either from Kichwa or from the other indigenous languages in the area.

In order to decide which scenario is most likely for the development of the construction in Spanish, more research into the linguistic history of Ecuador is needed. One aspect that the different hypotheses have in common is that the benefactive verbal periphrasis *dar* 'give' + gerund has developed as a contact phenomenon.

3. Aspect

3.1 Aspectual theory

Aspect is a linguistic notion which appears to be quite complex, as many authors have been trying to define, describe and explain it from different theoretical perspectives. Within theoretical linguistics it has received a lot of attention from different subdisciplines, such as morphology, syntax and semantics. Tense and aspect are two temporal notions that are often treated together. Tense provides the moment on the timeline when the eventuality that is described takes place, while aspect gives information about the eventuality itself. Some languages, among them the Romance languages, mark both aspect and tense in their verbal inflection. Despite many disagreements, scholars seem to agree on a distinction between grammatical aspect and lexical aspect. The first occurs in languages with a rich tense system where certain tenses seem to express aspectual information as visible in the verbal morphology of Romance languages. The term "lexical aspect" is used for cases where aspectual information is expressed by predication before tense is applied. Both grammatical and lexical aspect involve a sort of completion or the absence of it (González 2003). However, the notion of lexical aspect (*Aktionsart*) is misleading in the sense that it is the predication, i.e., the verb and its arguments, rather than the verb alone (as is implied by the term lexical), which expresses the aspectual information at the level of the predication. Verkuyl (1972, 1993) has shown that what has been called lexical aspect is in fact compositionally formed. Following Comrie (1976) we will call it in this study "inherent aspect," which means that it is the verb and its arguments that together inform about the tenseless aspectual information of a predication, and therefore, tense and aspect are distinguished, still strictly separated until a tense operator applies. There are several approaches to the study of inherent aspect. In this study we will follow Verkuyl (1993) and his predicational aspect approach. As Verkuyl (1993)

already pointed out, there are different aspectual levels, and a distinction between inner and outer aspect is introduced, where inner aspect concerns the relationship between a verb and its arguments. The first step is to discuss the Plus-Principle, in more detail.

Following the compositional procedure adopted in Verkuyl (1993), the verb and its internal arguments are combined into a VP.³ The basic idea is that verbs are either non-stative or stative, where non-stative verbs express dynamic progress. Nonstative verbs are marked as [+ADDTO], stative verbs as [-ADDTO]. The choice for the label ADDTO is motivated by the wish to see dynamic progress as a sort of enlarging ('adding') the interval from its start at 0, as a going on given a point zero. Verbs like 'write,' 'eat,' 'hit,' 'grow,' etc. are therefore marked as [+ADDTO] as opposed to stative [-ADDTO] verbs like 'hate,' 'love,' 'want' or 'hang,' where the features can be seen as the contribution of the verb to the predication aspect. The contribution of the NP to aspectual information can be accounted for in terms of an NP-feature [\pm SQA], where SQA stands for 'Specified Quantity of A,' where 'A' denotes the head Noun of the argument NP. Thus, NPs expressing quantification like 'a cookie,' 'three books,' 'some wine,' 'ten kilometers,' etc. are labelled [+SQA], whereas unquantified NPs like 'wine' (as in 'She drank wine'), etc. are [-SQA].

Only a combination of a [+ADDTO]-verb with [+SQA]-arguments yields a compositionally formed terminative aspect. All other cases are durative. This is what Verkuyl (1993) calls the Plus-Principle; it refers to the requirement for terminative aspect that all aspectual feature values for [ADDTO] and [SQA] involved are plus values. Terminativity involves a compositional amalgamation of lexical semantic information given by the verb and structural information given by the arguments, in particular information contributed by the determiner of an NP-argument. As can be seen from the tenseless examples in (4), terminativity shows up as the marked case, which means that in natural languages for a verb there are many more possibilities for building durative predications than for being involved in construing terminative ones.⁴

3. In Verkuyl's theory, the external argument also plays a role in the overall predication aspect value, as shown in Examples (1d) and (1e). However, the contribution of the subject is not of relevance for this paper, and therefore we left it outside our aspectual description.

4. In González (2003, 34) two aspectual tests displaying the semantic differences between durative and terminative predications are applied. These tests are the 'for an hour' and 'in an hour' tests. The tests present grammatical sentences containing 'in an hour' together with terminative predications and grammatical sentences containing 'for an hour' together with durative predications, and not the other way around.

- (4) a. Ruth eat a cookie
 [+SQA] [+ADDTO] [+SQA] => term.
 b. Ruth eat cookies
 [+SQA] [+ADDTO] [-SQA] => durative
 c. Ruth expect a cookie
 [+SQA] [-ADDTO] [+SQA] => durative
 d. No one eat a cookie
 [-SQA] [+ADDTO] [+SQA] => durative
 e. No one ate cookies
 [-SQA] [-ADDTO] [-SQA] => durative

As can be observed from Example (4) above, the Plus-Principle defines aspectual information at the level of the sentence. The extralinguistic context is not taken into account. In other words, the inherent aspect can be determined merely on the basis of the verb and its internal and external arguments according to the Plus-Principle.

Apart from a description of the elements of the aspectual theory in which the Plus-Principle has been formulated, there are two linguistic phenomena occurring in Ecuadorian Spanish that may require a reconsideration of the Plus-Principle. Both phenomena involve the omission of a particular component of a predication, and as such, they may influence the way the Plus-Principle can be applied to our data. The first phenomenon involves the omission of Internal Arguments (described in the variation literature as objects), the second phenomenon involves the omission of articles. Both phenomena derive from a language contact situation. A detailed description of these particular phenomena follows.

3.2 Andean phenomena relevant for aspectual theory

In order to apply the Plus-Principle machinery, a verb needs overt arguments. However, there are two omission phenomena that occur in Andean Spanish that have an effect on the realization of arguments. The first phenomenon is the omission of objects. Differently from some other varieties of Spanish, in Andean Spanish it is possible to omit direct objects (Campos 1999; Escobar 2013, 331; Schwenter 2006). This is illustrated in Example (5) from Suñer and Yépez (1988, 513–514):

- (5) A. *¿Cuándo quieres que te mande las tarjetas?*
 when want.2SG.PRS that 2SG.OBJ send.1SG.PRS.SUBJ ART cards'
 'When do you want me to send you the cards?'

- B. *¿Puedes mandar-me mañana?*
 can.2SG.PRS send-1SG.OBJ tomorrow
 ‘Can you send [them] to me tomorrow?’⁵

In Example (5) it can be observed that there is no overt internal argument in the utterance of speaker B. This has repercussions for our interpretation of the Plus-Principle. According to this principle, the predication in the question uttered by speaker B would be durative because of the lack of the internal argument. However, it is clear from the discourse that this predication is terminative. In the context in which speaker B utters this question is clear for both speakers that they are talking about the cards mentioned by speaker A.

The second phenomenon that affects the Plus-Principle application is the omission of articles. This phenomenon is found in the speech of bilinguals of Quechua and Spanish (Aleza Izquierdo 2010; Arboleda Torro 2000; Escobar 2013). It is a transfer effect from Quechua (Merma Molina 2007, 169), which does not possess articles (Cerrón-Palomino 1976). An example of this phenomenon from (Merma Molina 2007, 169) is given in Example (6):

- (6) *Juan, da=me Ø libru.*⁶
 Juan, give.IMP=1SG.OBJ book
 ‘Juan, give me [the] book.’

In Example (6), uttered by a bilingual speaker of Quechua and Spanish, the noun of the direct object is not preceded by an article. This may be problematic for the interpretation of the Plus-Principle, in particular the [+/-sQA] semantic feature: since the direct object *camisa* ‘shirt’ is not specified, one would have to conclude that the predicate bears a [-sQA] feature and that it is therefore durative.

These two specifically Andean Spanish phenomena, both involving an omission of a particular feature, have consequences for the application of the Plus-Principle. However, the prima facie clash between the Plus-Principle and our intuitions about the inherent aspect of predicates do not have to pose a problem for the compositionality of aspectual meaning, as it has been argued for languages without articles, such as Russian and Mandarin Chinese. According to Verkuyl (2008, 161–198), these languages make use of other aspectual markers to express the terminativity of the predication in question. The Russian morphological system allows for the derivation of different perfective verb forms from one and the same stem. According to Borik, González, and Verkuyl (2004) the difference is stated in terms of durativity and terminativity. Mandarin Chinese has aspectual

5. The glosses are adapted to our purposes.

6. The glosses and translations are ours.

markers restricted to, among other aspectual notions, states, and processes, which determine the predication aspectual value (Verkuyl 1972, 2008, 175–179). Sun (2014, 32–33) claims that Chinese verbs have their own inherent aspectual properties. A similar approach could be taken for languages in which one can omit direct objects: one could assume that there is an element in the case of *dar* ‘give’ + gerund as well that marks the inherent aspect of the predicate.

4. Methodology

In this section, we will address the methodology of this study. First, we will discuss our hypotheses, which are based on our discussion of aspectual theory in Subsection 3.1 complemented by the observations discussed in Section 2 and Subsection 3.2. Then, we proceed by presenting our method of data collection in 4.2 and we end this section, in 4.3 by describing how we coded our data.

4.1 Hypotheses

In order to understand the role of the predication aspect in this construction, the following hypotheses are proposed:

We hypothesize that the construction *dar* ‘give’ + gerund will appear above all with terminative predications. This hypothesis is based on two theoretical grounds:

- this construction has a preference for transitive verbs, as mentioned in Section 2, which are used with a direct object. Combining this information with the Plus Principle, we can expect that if that object is [+SQA], then the construction *dar* ‘give’ + gerund will appear with terminative predications.
- based on the proposal originally presented by Toscano Mateus (1953), the construction give + gerund always expresses an action that a person carries out instead of another person, which logically implies a meaning of termination of the action (there has to be an end to the action).

4.2 Data collection: Description of the corpus

The data used for this study comes from the corpus created by Bruil (2007) which consists of recordings of free production where the construction *dar* ‘give’ + gerund was used spontaneously. There were no eliciting tasks. The data was collected through participant observation within the context of the researcher’s MA thesis project. Meyerhoff (2010, 39) defines participant observation as: “The

practice of spending longer periods of time with speakers observing how they use language, [and] react to other's use of it (...)." The data was collected during her fieldwork which was carried out during two months in Ibarra and the surrounding areas in the Imbabura province of Ecuador. The data collection was conducted in all kinds of environments, since the researcher participated in many types of events, both in private and public life. Bruil stayed with an Ecuadorian Spanish-speaking family during the above mentioned period and recorded in writing all the cases in which the speakers used innovative verbal periphrases containing a gerund in Andean Spanish. In total there are 1,214 natural cases, in 927 of which the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund appeared. The researcher also provided the cases with metadata that included information about the situation and the speakers involved in each conversation.

The data was produced spontaneously as a part of natural speech. The data that were gathered were produced by about 25 people from different age categories, both female and male. Most speakers were upper-middle class and did not speak any other language than Spanish as a native language. Because the researcher was already familiar with the participants, the data gathered represented informal speech. The speakers were at forehand informed about the intentions of the researcher to study Ecuadorian Spanish in use and they were asked for permission to use these data for linguistic studies.

4.3 Coding of the data

In order to find out what sort of predications are preferred by the consultants in this particular construction, the predications in Bruil (2007)'s data, consisting of the 927 cases in which the *dar* 'give' + gerund construction appears, have been coded according to the bipartite classification of Verkuyl (1993) mentioned above (Section 3.1). Of all the 927 cases in which the construction give + gerund appears, the predications have been classified either as terminative or durative. In Figure (1) below the classification of the predications is presented.

The coding⁷ is as follows: terminative predications are classified as 1 and durative predications as 2. There is a third group (3) consisting of undetermined cases, that is, cases in which necessary information is missing in order to determine the inherent aspect of the predication. These types are exemplified in Example (7):

7. Judith van Leeuwen, student of González first digitalized the corpus and then carried out the first coding of the data.

#	A	B	C	D	E
	Corpus	"Sample"	La construcción	El predicado	El aspecto inherente
1					
2	Bruil	Dame poniendo (unas cuadras), es que yo te doy trayendo la grabadora.	da poniendo	poner unas cuadras	1
3	Bruil	Dame poniendo (unas cuadras), es que yo te doy trayendo la grabadora.	doy trayendo	traer la grabadora	1
4	Bruil	¿Me puedes dar poniendo? (huevos)	dar poniendo	poner huevos	2
5	Bruil	Que me de cambiando una botella de güitig.	de cambiando	cambiar una botella de güitig	1
6	Bruil	Te doy llevando tu maleta.	doy llevando	llevar tu maleta	1
7	Bruil	Denme viendo las llaves arriba.	den viendo	ver las llaves	1
8	Bruil	Te doy llenando la otra hoja.	doy llenando	llenar la otra hoja	1
9	Bruil	Mi mami me da comprando (tomates de arbol).	da comprando	comprar tomates de arbol	2
10	Bruil	Dame haciendo las cuadras.	da haciendo	hacer las cuadras	1
11	Bruil	Dale (yo) viendo si es que está bien. (la encuesta)	da viendo	ver la encuesta	1
12	Bruil	Que nos den imprimiendo. (la encuesta)	den imprimiendo	imprimir la encuesta	1
13	Bruil	¿Me puedes dar guardando? (el brillo)	dar guardando	guardar el brillo	1
14	Bruil	Dame imprimiendo. (la encuesta)	de imprimiendo	imprimir la encuesta	1
15	Bruil	Dame abriendo. (la puerta)	da abriendo	abrir la puerta	1
16	Bruil	Dame llamando un taxi.	da llamando	llamar un taxi	1
17	Bruil	Anda a buscar (corregiendose). Dame buscando..., por favor.	de buscando	buscar	3

Figure 1. Sample of the annotation of the cases of the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund and their inherent aspect

(7) *Da=me compra-ndo.*

Give.IMP=1SG.OBJ buy-GER

'Buy [it] for me.'

(Bruil 2007, 24)

As indicated in Section 3.1, Verkuyl's (1993) bipartition is based on two semantic feature pairs: $[\pm\text{ADDT0}]$ and $[\pm\text{SQA}]$. The verb in (7) has an $[\text{ADDT0}]$ value since it is a dynamic verb. The absence of internal argument prevents us from determining the aspectual value of the predication. Remember this is one of the omission phenomena that occur in Ecuadorian Spanish (see Section 3.2).

5. Results

In Bruil's corpus, 927 cases of free production were found in which the construction of *dar* 'give' + gerund appears. As indicated above, the theory of Verkuyl (1993) has been applied to the corpus collected by Bruil (2007). Next, the results of the analysis of the inherent aspect of the verb in the form of a gerund will be presented. Table (1) presents the frequency and the corresponding percentages of the use of *dar* 'give' + gerund, taking into consideration the inherent aspect of the verb in gerundial form:

Table 1 above shows the distribution of the cases of production of the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund between terminative predications, durative predications and undetermined cases. Of the 927 cases found, consultants used terminative predications in 851 cases, corresponding to a percentage of 92%. That is, in the vast majority of cases found, the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund appears

Table 1. Frequencies of terminative, durative, and undetermined predicates in the *dar* ‘give’+ gerund corpus (Bruil 2007)

	Frequency	Percentage
Terminative	851	92%
Durative	54	6%
Undetermined	22	2%
Total	927	100%

with terminative predications. In 54 cases our consultants used durative predications (6%), and 22 cases were analysed as undetermined (2%) because of the lack of an internal argument. As the omission of internal argument corresponds to durative predications, according to the Plus Principle, we will treat the undetermined cases as durative too.

We can say that there is an overwhelming preference for the use of terminative predications with the construction *dar* ‘give’+ gerund. An example of the construction with a terminative predication is presented in Example (8):

- (8) *Te doy llena-ndo la otra hoja.*
2SG.OBJ give.1SG fill.out-GER ART other sheet
‘I will fill out the other page for you.’
(Bruil 2007, 8)

In Example (8), the verb is [+ADDTO] and the internal object [+SQA]. Therefore, the Plus-Principle predicts that the predication is terminative.

It is remarkable that 8% of the cases appear with durative predications (both durative cases and indeterminate cases). Within this 8%, and applying the Plus Principle, we have been able to identify three types of durative predications in our data. Cases with [−SQA] with uncountable internal arguments (a) are shown in Examples (9)–(10), a case with [−SQA] with internal arguments in plural and without determiner (b) is presented in Example (11), and cases without [SQA] (without internal arguments) (c) are provided in Examples (12)–(14):

a. Cases with [−SQA] (uncountable internal arguments)

- (9) *A ver si me da-n ponie-ndo güitig.*
To see if 1SG.OBJ give-3PL put-GER brand.of.mineral.water
‘Let’s see if they serve me sparkling water.’
(Bruil 2007, 58)
- (10) *¿Ahora quién nos podrá dar compra-ndo pan?*
Now who 1PL.OBJ can.3SG.FUT give buy-GER bread
‘Who will buy now bread for us?’
(Bruil 2007, 654)

The internal arguments *güitig* 'brand of mineral water' and *pan* 'bread' are countless internal arguments (with [-SQA]), without delimitation of the object, and therefore, the predications in these examples are categorized as durative.

b. Cases with [-SQA] (internal arguments in plural and without determiner)

- (11) *Da traye-ndo salsa-s a la Martina.*
 Give.IMP bring-GER sauce-PL to ART Martine
 'Take the sauces to Martina.'
 (Bruil 2007, 266)

In this case as shown in (11), the predication is durative, as the [SQA] has a plural value without determiner (*salsas*, 'sauces').

c. Cases without [SQA], that is, without internal argument

- (12) *Di=le que te de compra-ndo en el mercado.*
 say.IMP=3SG.OBJ that 2SG.OBJ give.3SG.SUBJ buy-GER at ART market
 'Tell him to buy (it) at the market.'
 (Bruil 2007, 237)
- (13) *¿Me puede-s dar ponie-ndo? (huevos)*
 1SG.OBJ can-2SG give put-GER (eggs)
 'Can you put (eggs) for me (in the egg carton).'
 (Bruil 2007, 3)
- (14) *Ya le voy a explicar para que nos dé*
 Already 3SG.OBJ go.1SG.PRS to explain so that 1PL.OBJ give.SUBJ.3SG
llena-ndo.
 fill-GER
 'I will explain (it) to him, so that he will fill (it) for us.'
 (Bruil 2007, 438)

In these cases, the Plus Principle cannot be applied, as there is no internal value. Therefore, the predication has to be analysed as durative.

6. Discussion

Our goal in this study was to understand the role of predication aspect in the benefactive construction *dar* 'give'+ gerund. Our hypothesis predicted more terminative predications because *dar* 'give'+ gerund prefers transitive verbs and, therefore, the possibility that there is [+SQA] is greater than if the verbs are intransitive. In addition, we expected that *dar* 'give'+ gerund, being a construction that expresses an action that a person makes instead of another person, it logically

implies a termination of the action. This main hypothesis concurs with the results found in this research: 92% (n: 851) of the natural cases found in the Bruil corpus (2007) were classified as terminative predications.

The data shows therefore a clear preference for the use of terminative predications whose verb is in gerund in the construction *dar* 'give'+ gerund in Ecuadorian Spanish. Our data is sufficiently salient to be able to speak of an almost absolute preference. Accepting then that the construction *dar* 'give'+ gerund is produced mostly with terminative predications, it is striking that 8% of cases use the opposite, that is, they are durative. 8% (n: 76) of the free production cases found in Bruil's corpus (2007) were initially classified as durative predications.

In Example (13) repeated below as (15), Bruil, being present when collecting the data, recognized an intriguing fact.

- (15) *¿Me puede-s dar ponie-ndo? (huevos)*
 1SG.OBJ can-2SG give put-GER (eggs)
 'Can you put (eggs) for me (in the egg carton)?' (Bruil 2007, 3)

The eggs in this example referred to a particular group of eggs they had bought. This is the first hint as to how important context seems to be for the understanding of our data.

In Example (11) repeated here below as Example (16) a similar experience applies. Contrary to (15), there is an overt internal argument, however, it also represents a durative predication.

- (16) *Da traye-ndo salsa-s a la Martina.*
 Give.IMP bring-GER sauce-PL to ART Martine
 'Take the sauces to Martina.' (Bruil 2007, 266)

It was clear from the context which sauces they were talking about. Both cases, the first one without argument, the second one without determiner, are durative according to the Plus Principle. However, by taking contextual information of these sentences into consideration, the inherent aspect of the predication becomes terminative. The missing internal argument, 'eggs' in (15), refers to specific eggs and the internal argument, 'sauces' in (16), refers to specific sauces. The two particular omission phenomena of Ecuadorian Spanish are playing a role in our aspectual characterization of these sentences: (a) the omission of internal arguments and (b) the omission of the articles in Ecuadorian Spanish.

In other words, in those cases where the Plus-Principle predicts durative predications, it is only through the context that we understand them as terminative. The context determines the aspectual value, and it seems that either the omission of objects or the omission of articles helps us to reinterpret the durative

predications (as classified with the Plus-Principle) and allow us to interpret them as terminative.

To be able to fully understand the aspectual interpretation of the predications of these sentences, we have to be aware that the context fully possesses the information the speaker is trying to convey. In this case, we talk about a terminative case, even though the formal analysis would give us a durative predication. These findings imply that the Plus Principle needs to be refined in order to properly be applied to these types of predications, in a variety that accepts both omission of objects (therefore no SQA value possible) or omission of articles (yielding the opposite aspectual value, as no determiner means $-SQA$).

In all the cases exemplified above, where the formal classification of the predication is clearly durative (with the value of $[-SQA]$ or not present), if we take into account the context, then they are clearly terminative. Taking into account the omission phenomena in Ecuadorian Spanish we can explain the reinterpretation of the internal arguments as $[+SQA]$, and as such, they form a terminative predication. These observations do not only apply to predications classified as durative with a direct plural object, but also to durative predications with $[-SQA]$ (uncountable internal arguments) and durative predications without an internal argument.

From a more formal semantics approach, we could stipulate that, (as other languages without articles, see in Section 3.2 a reference to Russian and Chinese), the Spanish variety spoken in Ecuador makes use of aspectual markers outside the predication to express its terminativity. In the studied Spanish variety: one could suggest that an element in *dar* 'give' + gerund marks the inherent aspect of the predicate. It could be claimed that the gerund in this particular construction is an argument of *dar*, and as such the predication is terminative because a gerund is $[+SQA]$.⁸

Although we have shown that the durative cases in the gathered corpus can be reinterpreted as terminative, predications that appear with the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund are not necessarily terminative. This can be illustrated by Example (17) that was not part of our corpus, but has been thoroughly discussed by a native speaker of Ecuadorian Spanish:

- (17) *Da=me compra-ndo tomates todos los días*
 Give.IMP=1SG.OBJ buy-GER tomatoes all ART days
 'Buy tomatoes for me every day.'

8. The idea of considering the gerund as an argument of *dar* 'give' was already suggested by Bruil in 2008. In recent personal communication, Verkuyl suggested the parallelism with other languages without articles, and in this context, we could consider *dar* 'give' as the aspectual marker.

The Plus Principle tells us that we have a durative predication, as the internal argument is [-SQA]. Additionally, the context is also pointing to a durative event. According to the speaker, this sentence is perfectly grammatical. Again, this is another argument showing that *dar* 'give' + gerund is not necessarily a terminative marker. Our corpus shows that there is a clear preference for terminative predications, but Example (17) proves that it is more a tendency than a rule.

7. Conclusion

The innovative construction *dar* 'give' + gerund is a unique construction in Ecuadorian Spanish as it is not found in any other variety of Spanish. This study has focussed mainly on its semantic representation, more specifically on the role of the inherent aspect of the verb in gerundial form in the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund. This particular study contributes to both a better understanding of the construction and also provides empirical data which can help a more refined theoretical foundation of inherent aspect proposals. There are fundamentally two main conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

First, our results allow us to understand the aspectual properties of this construction. Applying the theory of Verkuyl (1993) to the data collected by Bruil (2007), it has been shown that there is a clear preference for the use of terminative predications in the innovative construction *dar* 'give' + gerund. As has been discussed in the previous section, even those cases that are durative at the predicative level have terminative values, when the context is taken into account. We account for the fact that the construction *dar* 'give' + gerund is mostly produced with terminative aspect.

Secondly, a first glimpse of our data indicates that the Plus Principle does not account for all the data. In cases where a predication is clearly classified as durative (with the value of [-SQA] or with no direct object), the predication obtains a terminative value if we take into account the context. That is, although Verkuyl (1993) argues that only the verb and its arguments are needed to determine the terminativity of a given predication, our results indicate that the context is indispensable for determining its inherent aspect. Therefore, the study of inherent aspect should not focus only on the level of the sentence but must also take the discourse into account.

However, the fact that the application of the machinery cannot represent the actual aspectual values is not a flaw of the Plus Principle. The fact that Ecuadorian Spanish allows omission of articles and internal arguments prevents the Plus Principle from being effectively applied to this type of data, at least at the level of the predication. If we consider *dar* 'give' to be a possible element that marks ter-

minativity, the Plus Principle needs to find information outside the predication. The *dar* ‘give’ + gerund construction does not fall into the realm of inner aspect. As Verkuyl (1993) already pointed out, there are different aspectual levels, where inner aspect only concerns the relationship between a verb and its arguments, so it cannot look outside the predication. This is an argument showing that *dar* ‘give’ + gerund is not necessarily a terminative marker. Therefore, the terminative interpretation that we have found in our data seems to be an implicature and not an entailment of the construction.

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List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ADDTO	add to
ART	article
FUT	future
GER	gerund
IMP	imperative
OBJ	object
PL	plural
PRS	present tense
SG	singular
SQA	Specified Quantity of Arguments
SUBJ	subjunctive

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Address for correspondence

Paz González
Leiden University
Reuvensplaats 3-4
2311 BE Leiden
The Netherlands
P.Gonzalez@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Biographical notes

Paz González (Ph.D., Utrecht University, The Netherlands) is Assistant Professor at Leiden University (The Netherlands), where she teaches Linguistics at the Departments of Latin American Studies, International Studies and Linguistics. She is a member of the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics and editor of DuJAL (Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics). Her research interests are mainly second language acquisition and language variation, viewed from a cross linguistic (micro and macro) perspective. She has published in journals such as *Modern Language Journal*, *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, *Spanish in Context* and *Isogloss*.

Martine Bruil (Ph.D., Leiden University, The Netherlands) is Assistant Professor at the Leiden University Centre of Linguistics and the Centre of Indigenous America Studies. She studies indigenous languages from Ecuador, such as Siona, Awapit, and Kichwa, and the Ecuadorian variety of Spanish. Her research interest are Language Documentation and Description, Linguistic Typology, Grammaticalization, Historical Reconstruction, and Language Contact and she has published in *Linguistic Typology*, the *Journal of Historical Linguistics*, and the *Journal of Linguistics*, amongst other venues.

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