

The grammaticalization of the construction with *andar* plus gerund in spoken Rioplatense Spanish: A case of pragmatic exploitation of the auxiliary's cognitive topology.

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caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar

Antonio Machado (1940:173)

The present study deals with the meaning conveyed by the periphrasis with *andar*¹ plus gerund, as in (1), where the speaker refers to a young relative well-known for spending unwisely:²

- (1) Le **andaba** **pidiendo** la parte del terreno [La Plata 1b35]³
to him he went around asking for the part of the land
He kept asking him for his part of the land.⁴

Torres-Cacoullós (2001) contrasts two periphrastic expressions: *estar*⁵ and *andar* + gerund in Mexican Spanish, and finds that their aspectual meanings have converged. However, distinctions arise from the *persistence* (Hopper 1991) /*retention* (Bybee et. al. 1994) of old meanings that have evolved into “social rather than functional-lexical differences” (Torres-Cacoullós 2001:472): constructions with *andar* are favored in popular speech use. In Ocampo and Ocampo (2020) we address the grammaticalization path of constructions with *ser*, *ir*, and *venir* + gerund in spoken Rioplatense Spanish utilizing a cognitive approach (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987, 1993). Differences in aspectual meanings result from the persistence/retention of the cognitive topology of each of the three spatial verbs.

Here, our analysis is based on all the tokens (17) found in a corpus of 20 hours of informal conversations with 35 middle-class Rioplatense speakers from La Plata, Argentina. We utilized the Pragglejazz Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejazz Group, 2007; Steen, 2007; and Kopeč, 2012) to classify these constructions according to literal, metaphorical, or ambiguous meaning of *andar*. Regarding metaphorical constructions, speakers choose *andar* to convey a negative evaluation towards the proposition; they exploit the original cognitive topology of *andar* to convey this pragmatic meaning.

Spatial *andar* refers to the aimless motion of an animated entity with no pre-established path or goal/destination. The path is created by the motion itself. This description may be represented by a dotted line with an arrow which stands for a potential *force* vector (Johnson 1987:47,52); i.e., a potential path of motion with no intended destination. *Andar* underwent a process of grammaticalization which turned it into an auxiliary, conveying mainly aspect. There has been an “operation of cross-domain mapping” (Musolff 2016:9) from the older spatial meaning of *andar* onto temporal values. Nonetheless, features of its literal meaning have been

¹ ‘go around’; ‘to pass from place to place: go here and there’ (Merriam-Webster)

² The whole context of (1) is not shown here due to space constraints.

³ The letter and numbers indicate the location of the example in the La Plata corpus. The portion of text relevant for the analysis appears in bold characters.

⁴ The complex meaning of this auxiliary is difficult to preserve in the translation.

⁵ ‘be located’

retained because the image-schema structure of the source domain (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987, 1993; Charteris-Black, 2004) persists in the target domain. As an auxiliary, *andar* provides imperfective-continuous aspect: “a single situation is viewed as in progress” (Bybee et. al. 1994:317). In combination with telic situations (provided by the gerund and modifiers) the aspect of the periphrasis becomes iterative, as in (1).

In Rioplatense, a further step is added: the pragmatic exploitation of the cognitive topology of *andar* by which this verb crosses metaphorically onto the domain of epistemic modality. Here, recurring to cultural knowledge, the speakers make use of the aimless *force* – retained in the modal image-schema of *andar*– to negatively evaluate the proposition: in Western societies, the lack of objectives or purpose implies that something is incomplete or imperfect.

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