English phrasal verbs or German verbs with separable particles constitute good examples of a marked tendency in Germanic languages towards both the use of analytic devices directly attached to the verb and the distribution of content. These constructions, which contrast sharply with what we can find in Spanish or in any other Romance language, are certainly not isolated within Germanic grammatical structures. On the contrary, they are framed within a constructional philosophy that fosters the direct attachment of constituents to one head, without linking or indirect devices, and should therefore be considered as part of a wider class that could be named ‘direct constructions’. Both ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ constructional tendencies, followed by Germanic and Latin-derived languages, respectively, ultimately stem from the way Indo-European specifying adverbs were grammaticalised in each family.

The present paper aims to briefly describe the main features and exponents of these Germanic direct constructions, as well as to point out their differences with the Spanish way of conveying the same information.

1. Adverbs, particles and prefixes

1.1 As is widely known, in Proto-Indo-European and in the oldest documented Indo-European languages, such as Sanskrit, there were no prepositions or conjunctions as we know them now. Only two elements had a clear conjunctive nature: ca (‘and’) and vā (‘or’), probably because of their basic connective nature. Connections between linguistic elements were mostly contextually inferred and, when they were linguistically specified, adverbs were often used as specifiers. Adverbs were free forms, specialised in specifying other free forms, which had already undergone a (first) process of grammaticalisation, for they were the result of previous nouns fossilized in one of the oblique cases (Cfr. Lehmann, 1974, 232-235; 1993, 227; Mendoza, 1998, 19-20).

Adverbs adopted the role of specifiers, which often caused their further specialisation and grammaticalisation. As specifiers, adverbs progressively turned into new analytic and dependent forms. These grammaticalised forms usually kept the meaning (mostly spatial) they had had as free lexical adverbs and could function either as nominal or as verb specifiers. Nominal specifiers became adpositions, initially postpositions and, later, prepositions in most cases. The expectable evolution of verbal specifiers was their conversion into dependent particles, the aforementioned separable particles in German, and simply verbal particles in English, which constitute a parallel development to that of nominal adpositions. A further step in this process would be the full integration of these analytic particles into the structure of the word specified. Table

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1 The conversion of full lexical words (adverbs) into particles is a complex process which involves a change of function, status and accent in the preceding adverb. Obviously we cannot go into details of this process (Delbück, 1893-1900, Wackernagel, 1926, 589-620; Curme 1914).
Below shows the different possible steps to be taken from free adverbs towards morphological constituents:

![Diagram of grammaticalisation path]

Languages can follow grammaticalisation all the way through or stop the process before the final step. In practice, the two main solutions actually taken by language families were (a) to fully use the analytic particles (step 2) as the main device to modify meanings and to increase vocabulary, or (b) to leave aside this step as verbal specifiers and go straight to prefixes.

1.2 Latin, with its marked tendency towards synthetic forms, chose prefixation exclusively. The path chosen by Latin in its treatment of verbal particles was that of their integration into the verb, for this synthetic solution probably was considered smarter. In order to specify verbs, Latin merged particles (prepositions) such as *sub*, *ex*, *in*, *inter*, *de*, *cum*, among many others, into verbs, as prefixes, creating compound verbs such as *subire*, *excedere*, *insistire*, *interponere*, *deponere*, *cumpone*, etc. The generalisation of prefixes as a mechanism of verb formation swept away any possibility of using anything like English verbal particles or German separable particles. Consequently, in Latin we find either (nominal) adpositions —almost exclusively prepositions— or (mostly verbal) prefixes.

1.3 Germanic languages were, in this sense, more conservative. They had developed a rich prepositional system after adverbs and used the same particles to modify verbs’ meaning, giving rise to a triple system: adverbs, ‘nominal’ adpositions and verbal particles, all parallel to Latin. But whereas Latin tended to merge the particles into the verb (which meant their conversion in prefixes and their disappearance as analytic elements), Germanic languages follow the opposite tendency, that is, the maintenance of particles as separable units. In Germanic languages, however, prefixation was not nonexistent in earlier stages, though it became of secondary importance after the strength of analytic verbal particles. It seems that the use of prefixation instead of (or in addition to) verbal particles had a lot to do with the influence of Latin patterns in the Middle Ages.

1.4 Latin was a language of prestige because of the economic and political power of the empire that spoke and spread it. It also had a very rich literature, and before the end of the Middle Ages it was virtually the only language of culture in Europe. Therefore, it was extremely influential as a model of good writing and speaking. Actually, while Latin was the model for all vernacular languages (not only for Latin-derived languages), prefixation was relatively common, at least in cultivated registers. Verbs like *forgive, understand, overtake*, or the Germanic *verstehen, bedeuten, erklären* were synthetic constructions parallel to the Latin *explicare, reducere or desistire*, and were formed before 16th century (Kennedy, 1920, 11-18). These forms, however, were learned and of foreign influence, in contrast with the vernacularly preferred verb-adverb combinations, which initially had full adverbs, and later, after a change of accent and a
certain grammaticalisation of the adverb, particles. This is why, when the influence of Latin in these Germanic languages declined, the use of more popular analytic forms prevailed and spread, even among cultivated circles, turning the use of these analytic particles (separable in German) into the regular mechanism to create new verbs, in clear contrast with the prefixation adopted by Latin and inherited by Roman languages.

The result was that English and German developed structures like (1)-(4), with verbal particles, together with those seen in the less prototypical (5)-(8), with prefixes, whereas Spanish lacked the former and developed only the latter pattern, as (9)-(10) illustrate:

(1) He called me up yesterday.
(2) Only two or three boxers succeeded in knocking Mohammed Ali down.
(3) Sie schaltet den Computer an / aus
(4) Sie drückte die Tür auf / zu
(5) No one should underestimate these problems.
(6) The accused alleged that he could not foresee the harm he would do.
(7) Der Wagen überfuhr eine Passantin.
(8) Die Terroristen wurden erschossen.
(9) Intentábamos así impedir la ilegalidad que se iba a perpetrar.
(10) Otra voz se interpuso en su conciencia.

Table 2 summarizes the result of the processes described above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREE ADVERBS</th>
<th>LATIN</th>
<th>SPANISH</th>
<th>ENGLISH / GERMAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANALYTIC ITEMS</td>
<td>PREPOSITIONS</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(+) (No preposition coincides with any adverb in present Spanish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL PARTICLES</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(+) (The productivity of Germanic prefixes is limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFIXES</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>(+) (The coincidences with present-day prepositions are few, and with adverbs are none)</td>
<td>(+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Use of former adverbs as different grammatical units**

2. **Direct and indirect constructions**

The tendency of these Germanic languages to use particles in order to express certain pieces of verbal content, whether results, states, aims or paths, has existed in connection with the use of certain constructions whose basic structure was similar or close to that of verbal particles. The expansion of verbal particles no doubt encouraged the use of these other constructions which had in common with the former their direct way of attaching non-accusative constituents to the structure of the clause.

2.1 If we want to define these direct constructions in a broad and concise way that captures the common features of all their variants we might do so in the following way: direct constructions are structures in which one of the structure’s constituents expresses a non-accusative relationship through no linking devices. Full lexical adverbs or subordinate verbal constructions are excluded as part of direct constructions.

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2 The actual text was The acussed alleged that he could not foresee the harm he would do. We have corrected the spelling mistakes found therein.
The scheme followed by these direct constructions is that summarized in Tables 3 and 4, depending on the mono- or bi-argumental character of the sequence, respectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject (gets)</td>
<td>a result/state/aim/path</td>
<td>through a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(expressed by verbal particle / Adj. / NP)</td>
<td>(Matrix verb)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>got up solid</td>
<td>froze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mono-argumental direct constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject (causes)</td>
<td>Object (to get)</td>
<td>a result/state/aim/path</td>
<td>through a process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(expressed by verbal particle / Adj. / NP)</td>
<td>(Matrix verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>the light</td>
<td>on clean</td>
<td>switched ate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>his plate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Bi-argumental direct constructions

The examples (11)-(18) are mono-argumental direct sequences, whereas (19)-(25) illustrate bi-argumental direct sequences. Italics show the entity receiving the process or, occasionally, causing it (as in 14), as well as the word identifying what this entity gets (or does) (Z):

(11)  *The situation does not fit in.*
(12)  *The wounded animal managed to crawl away.*
(13)  *The pond froze solid.*
(14)  *The baby waved bye bye.*
(15)  *An der Endstation steigen Sie aus.*
(16)  *Er arbeitet sich tot.*
(17)  *Die Wunde brach wieder auf.*
(18)  *Er hat sich eine Blase gelaufen.*
(19)  *She always lets me down.*
(20)  *He licked his plate clean.*
(21)  *The police drove the demonstrators back.*
(22)  *He kissed the children goodnight.*
(23)  *Er aß sein Essen auf.*
(24)  *Er aß seinen Teller leer.*
(25)  *Ein Arbeiter rollte das Fass hinein.*

In contrast with this way of building up the different components of the verbal sequence, Spanish often uses verbs in which the content analytically expressed in English and German is comprised within the verb meaning, such as *subir(se) (= go up, aufsteigen)*, *bajar(se) (= get off, aussteigen)*, etc., but most of the time chooses indirect devices, either prepositional phrases, adverbs or gerund constructions.

In this paper we cannot deal with a detailed description of these Germanic direct constructions, so we will focus on the way direct devices, as those shown in (11-25), are either turned into indirect devices or not turned into devices at all.

2.1.1 In order to express the contents of (11-25), Spanish shows a few cases in which the verb itself holds the whole information: in (11) the particle *in*, which conveys a crucial part of the verb’s meaning, was in its Spanish counterpart formerly a prefix that
has now lost its prefixal condition (encajó); in (27) the meaning of off/aus is integrated into the verb itself. The case of (28) differs slightly from that of (26)-(27): the verb now comprises only the meaning of Z, leaving aside that of the matrix verb of Germanic examples as the context makes its explicit expression unnecessary. (29) illustrates a third possibility: the verb in the direct resultative constructions seen in (20) and (24) is now changed to a ‘properly resultative verb’, that is, a verb with a permanent resultative meaning as in dejar (≈ ’turn (into)’, in this context). As Spanish does not allow for resultative constructions in non-resultative verbs, the verb is changed to preserve the original sequence’s most relevant meaning. This way, in face of the impossibility of something like (30) (a literal translation of (20) / (24)), Spanish uses (29) instead.

(26) La situación no encaja.
(27) En la última parada bájense ustedes. (≈ 17)
(28) Se terminó su comida. (≈23)
(29) Dejó el plato limpio / vacío. (≈ 20, 24)³
(30) *Lamió/Comió su plato limpio / vacío.

2.2 The Spanish counterpart of (11) - (25), however, uses indirect devices (prepositional phrases, adverbs or gerunds) more frequently for the expression of Z. The example (31) is an example of a PP / adverb translation of Z. (32)-(33) are clear cases of probable translation through a PP. In the latter case, the complement of the preposition can be a NP or an infinitive, among other possible choices (hasta la extenuación / hasta quedar agotado …):

(31) El estanque se heló hasta solidificarse. (≈ 13)
(32) La policía empujó a los manifestantes hacia atrás. (≈21)
(33) (él) trabajó hasta la extenuación. (≈ 16)

The example (34) shows a frequent way in which gerunds are used in Spanish to express what in the Germanic example is expressed by the verb. Germanic Z would be in the Spanish counterpart the main meaning of the verb.

(34) El animal herido se las arregló para salir (arrastrándose). (≈ 12)

The English matrix verb (crawl) is optionally expressed in Spanish through an indirect adjunct (arrastrándose), whereas the content of Z is the main meaning of the Spanish matrix verb (salir)⁴.

In (35)-(37) we find examples of an extremely frequent double possibility of translating Germanic direct constructions into Spanish. In mono-argumental sequences, such as (13), we often find two possibilities:

(a) Moving the English Z content to the matrix verb (+ direct object): dijo adiós, and expressing the verb content as an indirect adjunct: con la mano.
(b) Keeping the same matrix verb as in English: movió la mano⁵ and expressing the aim (Z) with a PP (para decir adiós).

³ A similar example, in this case with a verbal particle, is Berdych fights off Kudla, where the choices in Spanish would be either the integration of Z into the verb, with a slight loss of strength in its meaning (Berdych eliminó a Kudla), or the use of a ‘resultative’ verb, with an adverb expressing the Z content (Berdych echó fuera a Kudla). The literal translation (*Berdych luchó fuera a Kudla) is excluded.
⁴ For details on the expression of manner contents by Spanish, see well known works like Talmy (2000) or Slobin (2004).
⁵ Actually, the Spanish translation of wave is a construction ‘verb + object’ (= move + the hand), as Spanish does not have an equivalent to wave. Interestingly, Galician language almost has an equivalent to wave: azanar.
The results are:

(35) (a)  *El niño dijo adiós con la mano.*  
(b)  *El niño movió la mano para decir adiós.*  

The same pattern can be seen in (36), though here the gerund is chosen for the option (a) mentioned above. This time Z expresses a ‘result’, rather than an ‘aim’:

(36) (a)  *(Él) se hizo una ampolla corriendo.*  
(b)  *(Él) corrió hasta hacerse una ampolla.*

Bi-argumental sequences only differ from mono-argumental in that the affected by the process is the object, not the subject. Two suitable Spanish translations of (25) are the following:

(a)  Keeping the same matrix verb as in English (*hizo rodar*) and expressing the aim-content (Z) with a PP (*hacia dentro*).
(b)  Expressing the Z content inside the verb (*metió*) and the verb content through an indirect expression, namely a gerund (*haciéndolo rodar*).

The results are:

(37) (a)  *Un operario hizo rodar el barril hacia dentro.*  
(b)  *Un operario metió el barril haciéndolo rodar.*

A last variant worth mentioning is the translation of (22):

(38) (a)  *(Les) dio un beso de buenas noches a los niños.*  
(b)  *Les dio las buenas noches (a los niños) con un beso.*

In the first possible translation in (38), the content of Z forms part of the object constituent, as a nominal modifier (‘un beso de buenas noches’). It is therefore part of the object and disappears as verbal constituent. The second choice responds to (a) above.  

### 3. Conclusions

3.1 The differences in the expressive devices in both language families are due to the different paths taken by each of them in early stages of their formation as the languages they are now. It could be said that it was Latin that strayed from the ‘average’ path by leaving aside a natural step in the adverb’s grammaticalisation process. Latin conserved and developed a rich prepositional system. It could have developed an equally developed system of verbal particles, as English and German did, but its tendency towards synthetic expressions (gradually lost with the passing of time) led this language to use adverb-derived particles either as nominal prepositions or as verbal inseparable prefixes, lacking anything like the analytic verbal particles which proved to be so effective in English and German to increase and qualify verbal vocabulary. This resulted in an unbalanced system in which a set of nominal analytic particles (prepositions) coincided to a great extent with a set of prefixes, but with no correspondence to any analytic verbal particle.

3.2 Germanic languages, such as English and German, did not leave aside the second step of their evolution in the case of verbal particles. Therefore the adverb-

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6 Once again the English verb (kissed) must be translated by a general verb + direct object (*dio un beso = gave a kiss*). Spanish has the equivalent to ‘to kiss’ (*besar*) but the need to express the content of Z (*buenas noches = ‘good night’*) as a modifier of the NP functioning as direct object precludes the use of the synthetic verb (*besar*); (?) *besó de buenas noches a los niños* is not to be found in Spanish.
derived particles became either nominal (adpositions) or verbal, acquiring different syntagmatic behaviour in each case. In this case, the particle system could be said to be balanced but lacked a systematic set of prefixes parallel to the analytic items, probably because the co-existence of both sets appeared to be redundant. We could say that Germanic languages chose particles where Latin had decided to use prefixes.

3.3 The development of verbal particles by Germanic languages was favoured and even encouraged by the existence of other constructions that shared with them a similar or close direct way of attaching non-accusative constituents inside the clause frame. Actually, it can be said that the use of these particles fit perfectly into both English and German constructional philosophy. Latin, conversely, did not have this tendency and the progressive replacement of casual endings, until their disappearance in Roman languages, was always made through prepositions or other indirect devices, never through direct attachment.\(^7\)

3.4 This Germanic direct constructional philosophy extends beyond syntactic structures like those seen in the preceding lines. Examples of nominal modification such as plastic bag or summer holidays, which follow the same direct pattern as the examples seen above, would be translated into Spanish as the indirect constructions bolsa de plástico and vacaciones de verano, respectively.

These further direct constructions (into which we cannot go deeper) turn into a word formation device by compounding when two (or more) nouns’ construction is seen as just one word. In this case, the compound is written as a single word, as in newspaper or wheelchair. German is particularly rich in this kind of compound (Butterbrot, Uhrzeit, etc.) but, as in any language, its compounds come from older direct syntactic constructions. Spanish, of course, also has compounds but, on the one hand, they are usually the result of verbal constructions (parabrisas, sacacorchos, metepatas, etc.), and not so much of joining two nouns together (telaraña, madreselva or aguanieve are among the few we can find), and, on the other, compounding is altogether a quite secondary device in word-formation in Spanish. That is due to the fact that the old direct constructions that lie behind most compounds never existed as such in Roman languages. Direct ‘philosophy’ then has a lot of manifestations in English and German, but these manifestations are nonexistent or of a minor importance in languages like Spanish, whose grammatical tendencies have taken another path.

3.5 After the preceding reflexions we could draw conclusions on which languages are more ‘analytic’ or more ‘synthetic’ in the way they convey information, but our conclusions will largely depend on the point of view from which we analyse these structures. Germanic languages seem to be more analytic than Spanish since they use analytic dependent particles in cases in which Spanish uses single verbs: he went up the stairs vs. subió las escaleras. But Spanish could be seen as a more analytic language since it needs to express through separate syntactic free constituents what Germanic languages expresses through dependent particles and, therefore, as part of the verbal constituent: the two (free) constituents sequence [he] [crawled away], turns into a three constituents sequence in its Spanish version, whether we say [(él)] [salió] [arrastrándose] or [(él)] [se arrastró] [para salir].

\(^7\) The only example of direct construction in Latin is that of predicatives, both of subject and of object. Nevertheless, the use of predicatives in both Latin and in Roman languages is substantially more limited than that found in Germanic languages. It is not possible, for instance, to use resultative predicatives in connection with non-resultative verbs, as was mentioned in § 2.2.
4. References


