# Complex predicates across languages: Variation and acquisition

Olga Borik, Silvia Sánchez-Calderon & Ismael Teomiro
(Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia)

Ever since Plato and Aristotle, the notion of predication has been one of the central issues in philosophy (Cocchiarella 1989; Angelelli 2004). In linguistics, predication has been one of the most prominent research areas since the 19th century (Bloomfield 1916; Williams 1980; among many others), including today's modern theories of argument structure (Hale & Keyser 2002; Marantz 2013; among many others). The main challenge in linguistic research focused on predication has been to adequately represent the crucial relation between a predicate and its arguments, which forms a core construct at all major levels of linguistic analysis. In this, and in many other respects, *complex predicates* have attracted a lot of attention because they differ considerably from canonical predication in their internal composition, syntactic and semantic properties.

Loosely defined, complex predicates are composed by several grammatical elements acting together as a single predicate (Kayne 1975; Larson 2014; Snyder 2001). This definition in and by itself admits a lot of constructions, starting from complex tenses (Muller 2006) to serial verb constructions (Haspelmath 2016) and resultative predicates (Beavers 2012; Goldberg & Jackendoff 2004), among others. One of the main problems that has been raised in complex predicate literature (Butt 1995, Alsina et al. 1997) is how to define the empirical domain covered by the term complex predicate. In this workshop, we will be interested in syntactic configurations that involve complex predicates such as:

- Complex V-V heads.
- Double object constructions.
- Light verb constructions (e.g. *make*-causatives, English causative *have*, Spanish *tener+que*+infinitive construction, etc.).
- Perceptual reports.
- *Put*-locatives.
- Resultatives.
- Verb-particle constructions.

Since complex predicates form such a heterogeneous class of constructions, the inevitable question that emerges concerns the grammatical mechanisms behind their composition (i.e. their syntax and semantics). Snyder (2001) assumed that complex predicates consist of a main verb combined with a secondary predicate and both constituents form a new expression that is semantically akin to a simple verb. Other approaches that account for the combination of a main verb and a secondary predicate, forming a syntactic complex predicate (Larson 2014, 1988), resort to the verbal subcategorization for a small clause that contains the internal

arguments of the complex predicate constructions (Aoun and Li 1989; Den Dikken 1995; Kayne 1975; Koizumi 1994; among others).

Apart from being theoretically challenging, complex predicates also represent a rich source of cross-linguistic variation. The examples are numerous and include well-studied verb-particle constructions (Dehé et al. 2002; McIntyre 2012; Snyder 2001) or resultative constructions (Levin & Rappaport 1988; Nedjalkov 1988; Goldberg & Jackendoff 2004; Beavers 2012), which are widespread in Germanic languages but highly restricted (if at all present) in Romance languages (Cuervo 2007; Demonte 1995). Both verb-particle constructions and resultatives have been shown to present interesting challenges for the syntax-semantics interface and many analyses directly link their syntactic structure to their semantic properties. Diverse data from different languages raise the question of what the source of cross-linguistic variation could be, what kind of analysis could capture this variation and what the repercussions of the suggested analysis are for other phenomena related to complex predicate formation and their properties across languages.

Besides, language acquisition data can provide important underpinnings for theoretical analyses. Indeed, a great bulk of empirical studies has reported that complex predicates begin to be produced at around the same age, as analysed in L1 English children's acquisition data (Snyder & Stromswold 1997) and in simultaneous English-Spanish bilingual children's data (Sánchez Calderón 2018). These findings suggest that the constructions listed above are acquired as a package of complex predicate constructions and, thus, share common grammatical properties. In the case of second language acquisition, a challenge has been found to arise in adults' learning of complex predicates as a result of L1 influence (Slabakova 2001; Cuervo 2007) or adult input factors (Perpiñán & Montrul 2006).

This workshop aims at bringing together theoretical and empirical research raising challenging questions concerning composition, syntax, semantics and acquisition of complex predicates from a variety of languages with the goal to improve our knowledge of complex predicates and thus, of the process of predication itself. Main research questions to be addressed in this workshop include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Why do complex predicates exist in natural language and what can they tell us about the nature and design of language as well as other cognitive systems?
2. How can we account for a great variety of constructions that are characterized as complex predicates?
3. What are the common syntactic and semantic properties shared by various complex predicate constructions?
4. How are complex predicates acquired in first and second languages?

More specific questions also include:

1. What is the role and/or status of light verbs such as the English causative *have* in the formation of complex predicates?
2. What is the relation, if any, between complex predicates and other related constructions such as reflexive-like clitics?

3. What are the shared underlying grammatical properties, if any, between complex predicates and applicative heads?
4. What kind of semantic mechanisms are involved in complex predicate formation?
5. What is the age of onset of complex predicates across languages, as examined in child first language acquisition?
6. What is the role played by adult input/language exposure in the acquisition of complex predicates, as analysed in simultaneous bilinguals, sequential bilinguals and second language learners?
7. Does the other L1 interfere in the acquisition of complex predicates in the case of simultaneous bilinguals, sequential bilinguals and second language learners?

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