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ASPECTUALITY IN WELSH

A b s t r a c t. When discussing aspectuality, a distinction is normally made between grammatical and lexical aspect. Both are linked, to varying degrees, to the category of tense. The existence of grammatical aspect in a language is normally accepted if it is fully expressed in a grammatical category, preferably a verbal one, as seems to be prototypically encoded in some Slavic languages. Questions concerning aspect have been posed for Welsh, since perfectivity could be expressed by the verbal particle *ro-* in its older stages. However, Modern Welsh differentiates synthetically between six tenses for the verb *bod* 'to be' and four for all of the others (save defective verbs) in the Indicative, the category looked at here. It is little surprising, therefore, that the aspect dichotomy of perfectivity vs. imperfectivity is not expressed morphologically. However, based on field work, it has been established that issues of aspectuality in Welsh are typically expressed by employing its periphrastic VSO structure, i.e. verb–noun constructions with linking elements of varying synsemantica between the finite VS- and the "O-phrase" (complement).

Keywords: aspect; grammatical aspect; lexical aspect; aspectuality; VSO; verb-noun constructions.

1. DEFINITION OF ASPECT

The notion of aspectuality is normally discussed on the basis of two major concepts, i.e. grammatical and lexical aspect. Both are linked to varying degrees to the category of tense,[1] which they seem to specify in various ways or even replace, for example in Mandarin Chinese and Navajo (Smith; Faltz; Bhat; Comrie). As available research on aspectuality in Welsh is limited, the following article looks into potential tense–aspect relationships in Welsh, and aims to identify working paradigms expressing related notions. It is hoped that

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[1] See also Filip, Mrad and the discussion below in this article.

this preliminary study will later be further developed and answer questions arising from the initial results presented here.

The notion of aspect is a popular research topic, whose usefulness has been explored with regard to various languages. Distinguishing between grammatical or subjective aspect on the one hand, and lexical or objective aspect on the other, has furthered the discussion. Whereas grammatical or subjective aspect reveals "a systematic paradigmatic contrast in the verb" (representing a potential choice on the speaker's part to view the action analytically or synoptically), lexical or objective aspect serves "as a 'depot' for various kinds of morphemic and non-morphemic information on the occurrence of events in reality." It seems useful, therefore, to "retain the term 'aspect' for this systematic paradigmatic contrast, constituting a grammatical category on the morphological level and applying the term 'Aktionsart' (or 'verbal character', 'mode of action' or 'procedural') [or 'lexical aspect'] for this multifatious lexical information, making up a lexico-semantic category" (Hollósy 225; de Swart).

In light of this approach, grammatical aspect here refers to the presentation of an action with regard to its result or course of action (cf. also Maslow, Vendler),[2] i.e. how an event or state, denoted by a verb, extends over time. An external focus aims to look at the object of an action or the reaching of a border or limit (see also the concept of telicity by Garey 106), i.e. the depiction of an act(ion), state or event as a whole, and is normally expressed by the perfective aspect (cf. Isačenko 359ff.). The duration or repetition thereof, however, or an internal focus aimed at presenting the course of an action, is normally expressed by the imperfective aspect.

As becomes clear from the discussion above (cf. also the cognitive approach as presented by Lehmann), the existence of grammatical aspect in a language is normally accepted if it is fully expressed in a grammatical category, preferably as a verbal category. For Indo-European languages, verbal aspect is, therefore, archetypically seen as a grammatical category of verbs expressing the perfectivity or imperfectivity of states and actions in their morphology (Faßke 172ff; Werner, *Verbalaffigierung* 23ff). This seems to be prototypically encoded in Slavic, most apparently in Russian (Moser), which expresses verbal aspect in a regular way by verbal affixation, ideally

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[2] I would like to thank Professor Eduard Werner, Head of the Sorbian Institute at Leipzig University (Germany), for intensive discussions on that matter. Most of the information on Slavic aspect approaches are essentially his input, in particular the examples provided (cf. also our joint paper "Aspect in Insular Celtic and Slavic? The case of Sorbian and Welsh," www.academia.edu /38675894/Aspect_in_Insular_Celtic_and_Slavic_The_case_of_Upper_Sorbian_and_Welsh).

by empty prefixes, thus triggering pairs of verbs. A good example of prefixa-
tion by an empty prefix is *писать* (ip)/*написать* (p, prefix) 'to write'. Ideal
suffixation is displayed in *убивать* (ip)/*убить* (p, suffix) 'to kill', and sup-
pletion in *брать* (ip)/*взять* (p, suppletion) 'to take'.

The potentials of such an aspect system are varied. Russian forms verbal
pairs featuring the aspect dichotomy in order to express, for instance, ongoing
actions vs. results or sequences of acts, as can be seen in the following:

(1) *Он   открывал   окно,   но не открыл.* (telicity)
     He   opened_ip   window,   but not opened_p
     'He tried in vain to open the window.'

The aspect of the verbs actually used determines whether two actions co-occur
or not, as is displayed in the following:

imperfective verb + imperfective verb = co-occurrence

imperfective verb A + perfective verb B = B whilst A is happening

perfective verb A + perfective verb B = A and thereafter B

Some Slavic languages, e.g. Czech, prefer/require a specific combination of
certain verb classes with a respective aspectual verb, such as imperfective
verbs with performatory verbs, for example *invite*, *forbid*, *welcome*.

By treating aspect pairs as one lexeme in Russian, there is no need to
make use of suppletion when forming the periphrastic future, which can only
be established by using *быть* 'to be' and the imperfective verb in this
language. According to prescriptive and learners' grammars of Russian, the
same holds true for gerunds and participles in the Present Tense, whereas
Preterite gerunds and participles should be derived from the perfective verb.

The distinction between active and passive participles and gerunds for
past and present also requests different aspect usage, e.g. *читать/прочитать*
has *читающий* (participle pres. active, only ip), *читаемый* (part. pres.
pass., only ip), *прочитавший* (part. pret. act., only p), *прочитанный* (part.
pret. pass., only p),[3] although these rules have recently come in for
criticism.[4]

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[3] For more details, see "Russian language self study guide for beginners": www.russianfor
everyone.com/Rufe/Lessons/Course1/Grammar/GramUnit13/GramUnit13_1.htm, accessed 23 March
2020.

[4] Information about ongoing research in this area was provided by Professor Olav Müller-
Reichau from the Slavic Institute at Leipzig University.

However, verbal aspect is not focal to all Slavic languages. Verbs in Upper Sorbian, for instance, are normally either perfective or imperfective, and have little or no potential to form verbs of the opposing aspect without significant changes in the verb's semantics: *kachle stajeć* (ip) 'to construct a stove' vs. *kachle stajić* (p) 'to put down a stove'. Maintaining a more complex verbal tense system than the other Slavic languages, Upper Sorbian did not develop the notion of aspect into a fully-fledged morphological category of the verb. Reflexes of early Sorbian aspect development are only found in the simple Preterite stems of the i-conjugation, i.e. in a very reduced domain of the verbal system. However, Northern Upper Sorbian dialects also lost this limited aspect distinction in the simple Preterite. Aspectuality in Upper Sorbian is, therefore, predominantly expressed by different verb lexemes, tense variation or adverbs, and all Upper Sorbian gerunds can be formed from all verbs (Werner, *Studien*, "Upper Sorbian"; Asmus and Werner, "Aspect").

Looking only at Slavic languages, it becomes obvious that the category of grammatical aspect may not be as straightforward as other grammatical categories. This becomes even clearer when trying to apply the category of aspect or aspectuality to Insular Celtic, as in the following section.

2. IS THERE ASPECT IN INSULAR CELTIC?

Questions concerning aspect have been posed for Irish (e.g. Ó Corráin; Ó Sé) and Welsh (e.g. Falileyev; Awbery; Fife; Heinz, *Welsh Dictionaries* 80ff.; B. M. Jones; Yocum). The notion is certainly there and used to be expressed, at least partly, by the verbal particle *(-)ro-* in Old Irish (cf. Thurneysen 319–20), a fact surprisingly omitted by Ó Sé. However, Yocum looks into this matter and links this Old Irish movable verbal particle, a former preposition which he wrongly calls a prefix (Yocum 2), with the Greek preposition and Old Church Slavonic aspectual prefix *pro-*, Sanskrit *pra-* and Tartessian *(-)ro-*.[5] What remains clear is that Old Irish and Tartessian (700–500 BCE, see Koch) seem to feature a similarly working verbal particle in order to mark perfective force or completed actions. *ro-* as marker of completed action is also known for Old Welsh, although fewer descriptions are available in its regard, indicating that its importance waned early on.

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[5] Yocum is inconsistent in his use of terminology. He explains Old Irish *(-)ro-* better in the course of his article, but fails to conclusively explain the actual links between the formally similar-looking morphemes in the languages mentioned.

Modern Welsh differentiates between six tenses for the verb *bod* 'to be' and four for all the others (save defective verbs, cf. Heinz, "Walisisch" and below[6]) in the Indicative, the category looked at here.[7] A first glance at Modern Welsh on this basis would suggest that there is no verbal aspect in the current language, at least not in the Russian, Czech, Sorbian or Old Welsh way. Given the illustrated interrelationship between the notions of aspect and tense, a morphological aspect category of the Welsh verb seems to be redundant or unlikely. As previously mentioned, the categories of aspect and tense overlap in their semantics to some extent, so that those languages, which feature a reduced tense system, seem to have a focus on aspect categories, e.g. Russian, Hopi,[8] Mandarin Chinese and Navajo (Smith; Faltz), the latter of which has no tense distinction whatsoever. Those languages with a well-developed tense system may not need grammatical aspect. However, lexical aspect as a notion explaining actual shape or occurrence, i.e. the internal temporal structure of situations and events as explained above, may still allow for this lexico-semantic category within a given tense system (Bell and Anis).

As mentioned previously, there are no verbs in Welsh which can morpho-logically form a pair expressing the aspect dichotomy of perfectivity vs im-perfectivity, nor can any morphological category of tense be used to express this notion systematically.[9] However, the notion of aspectuality, particularly perfectivity, is found in Welsh. Issues linked to aspectuality are expressed by linguistic means, which are at the heart of the Welsh language (and Irish and, to some degree, in the other Insular Celtic languages as well), identifying it as a non-SAE (Standard Average European) language. These linguistic means are syntactic constructions containing a verbal noun governed by

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[6] Fife (82) hints at a diversity of ideas about the Welsh tense system in non-standard grammars, including the previous artificial learner standard *Cymraeg Byw*, which would indicate disagreement and the overdiversification of linguistic forms and their description. In Heinz (*Welsh Dictionaries*) and Asmus and Williams, this development is identified as a possible feature of language death. A random application of terminology in order to denote various verb inflections and phrases is obvious in Jones (*Dweud*), although the individual forms presented are of great interest.

[7] The division of verbal categories into different modi is not undisputed (see Werner, "Zur Trennung"; Mrad; Fife (61) and also the table below), where certain tense forms displayed reach into subjunctive use.

[8] A reduced verbal tense system is known from Hopi, which is rich in verbal lexical aspect and voices (Whorf).

[9] There seem to be isolated dialectal forms that are capable of expressing perfectivity in the Past Tense by using the suffix *-ws* instead of the usual suffix *-odd* (Fife 82). However, this may be accidental, because *-ws* was an alternative form of the 3. P Sg. Past depending on the stem vowel, i.e. in this case ‹o› (Schäfer 14).

a preposition or an adjective—plus consonant mutation where applicable—which links it to a form of *bod* 'to be'.[10] Two examples of such a system are displayed in the following:

(2) *Yr wyf yn darllen.*

Yr	*wyf*	*yn*	*darllen*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**in**_prep (the)	**read(ing)**_verbal noun

'I am reading/I read'—present continuous, imperfective?[11]

(3) *Yr wyf wedi darllen.*

Yr	*wyf*	*wedi*	*darllen*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**after**_prep (the)	**read(ing)**_verbal noun

'I have read/I read'—perfective?

These examples could suggest an aspectual distinction into continuous/progressive vs. completed/perfective expressions in periphrastic verb–noun constructions, i.e. not involving any verb morphology, but rather prepositions acting as aspectual markers (Heinz, *Welsh Dictionaries* 80–81). The syntactic context of the verbal noun may contain further linking lexemes with semantic alteration potential, e.g. prepositions such as *am* 'on, at, for', *heb* 'without', *ar fin* 'on edge' or adjectives like *newydd* 'new'.[12] There are further elements that may be used in such periphrastic structures, e.g. *ar fedr* (archaic ~ *ar fin*, Thomas 90),[13] but the focus here is on the most commonly used elements.

In order to investigate the nature of such constructions, a questionnaire for field work was created, based largely on forms found in the Welsh standard grammar by Thomas. The questionnaire was then discussed with

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[10] King (135) calls this the periphrastic method, whereby "the tense and aspect features are spread over the inflected form of *bod* (be) and the preposition aspect marker" (Awbery 56).

[11] It is generally agreed that this construction has shaped the English "continuous" form; see for instance, Vennemann and Mittendorf and Poppe.

[12] The identification of the actual word class involved is disputed, since prepositions are traditionally seen as expressions of predominantly spatial relations and not of verbal categories (Fife 315). Moreover, some of them lose their semantic force and in the case of *yn* even the feature of mutation, with the consequence that it can become encliticised (see also Heinz, *Welsh Dictionaries* 80; Fife 310). Moreover, other linking lexemes are clearly adjectives or phrases, but are, at times, also seen as prepositions (see Awbery 17) or as part of a bigger concept, as explained in Fife (311, 317).

[13] Expressions like *ymhell o orffen* 'far from finishing', *ar hanner* 'at half', *ar ganol* 'in the middle of' (Thomas 90) are here seen as descriptions.

colleagues before being presented to potential respondents.[14] This looked as follows:

Yr wyf heb <u>dd</u>ysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf am <u>dd</u>ysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf i fod i <u>dd</u>ysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf ar fin dysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf ar <u>dd</u>ysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf yn dysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf wrthi yn dysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf newydd <u>dd</u>ysgu cân
Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?
Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf wedi dysgu cân

Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?

Brawddeg amgen?

Yr wyf wedi hen <u>dd</u>ysgu cân

Cywir   Anghywir   Cyfieithiad Saesneg?

Brawddeg amgen?

Fyddai hi'n well dewis berf arall?

A oes brawddegau tebyg?

Lle geni

Oedran

Addysg/hyfforddiant

The questionnaire was answered by 17 males and females, aged 21–75, from North and South Wales, who speak Welsh at home and at work. With a focus on age and dialect range,[15] most respondents were recruited at the Eisteddfod in 2019. As can be seen from the questionnaire, they were also asked to provide English translations, which are referred to in the results. These renderings always follow the literal translation provided by myself:

(4) *Yr wyf **heb** <u>dd</u>ysgu cân.*

    Yr   *wyf*   *heb*   *ddysgu*

    aff.part   **I am**_1p.sg.pres   **without**_prep (the)   **learn(ing)**_verbal noun

    cân

    (of a) **song**

This was rendered by the respondents as "I have not (yet) learned a song." 15 of them found the Welsh sentence correct but indicated some possible semantic restrictions of the construction.

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[15] Since the standard language features some northern and southern dialectal properties (e.g. in phonetics, lexicon and syntax), it was important to make speakers from different dialectal areas answer the questionnaire. It is clear that, for further investigation, the number of respondents would need to be expanded and social differences elucidated. For this study, however, I would like to thank Owain, Gwenllian, Ceri J., Aled, Ceri A., Darren, Phyl, Rhidian, Ifan, Llinos, Hywel, Menna, Eifion, Siân, Steffan, Edward, Elen.

(5) *Yr wyf **am** <u>dd</u>ysgu cân.*

Yr	*wyf*	*am*	*ddysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**on/for/at**_prep (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal noun

cân
(of a) **song**

English equivalents given by the respondents were "I want to/I would like to/I am going to/I will learn a song." All respondents found the Welsh sentence correct but indicated a modus–tempus overlap. Subsequently, four respondents, two from the North and two from the South, understood this construction as a future expression, which in the eyes of Thomas (95) is archaic. One person understood this construction as both modus and tempus.

(6) *Yr wyf **i fod i** <u>dd</u>ysgu cân.*

Yr	*wyf*	*i fod i*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**to be to/for**_prep + verb 'to be' + prep (the)

ddysgu	*cân*
learn(ing)_verbal noun	(of a) **song**

The respondents gave the following translations: "I am to/supposed to/meant to learn a song." All of them found this sentence correct but displayed uncertainty concerning the use of the preposition *i*,[16] as was made explicit by the following example: *yr wyf i fod dysgu*. This construction could, of course, also be understood in a modal way, i.e. "I should learn"; this problem area is discussed below.

(7) *Yr wyf **ar fin** dysgu cân.*

Yr	*wyf*	*ar fin*	*dysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**on edge**_prep (of the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

The translations offered were "I am about to learn a song/I will be learning/ I am on the verge of/I am on the point of learning a song." The Welsh

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[16] This phenomenon may be partly explained by the fact that *i fod* may take further prepositions or phrases before the verbal noun (cf. Thomas 96), which is explained in more detail below.

sentence was seen as correct by all 17 respondents, but some were uncertain with regard to the use of lenition after *ar fin*.

(8) *Yr wyf ar ḏdysgu cân*.

Yr	*wyf*	*ar*	*ddysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**upon**_prep (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

The English equivalents given were "I am (just) about to learn/to start learning/am on learning [*sic*]/in the process of learning a song." 14 respondents found the Welsh sentence correct but 3 indicated "unusual" or "archaic use" or pointed out potential semantic restrictions. An alternative example given was *ar yrru car* 'about to drive a car'. For Ceredigion (West Wales), a specific local variety for this construction was given: *Dw i **biti** dysgu cân*.[17]

(9) *Yr wyf **yn** dysgu cân*.

Yr	*wyf*	*yn*	*dysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**in**_prep (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

This sentence was translated by the respondents as follows: "I am learning a song/I learn a song." All considered the Welsh sentence to be correct. One equated it with *dysgaf gân* (lit. "I will learn a song") and one characterised it as a *llenyddol* 'literary' register.

(10) *Yr wyf **wrthi yn** dysgu cân*.

Yr	*wyf*	*wrthi yn*	*dysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**at**_prep + prep (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân.
(of a) **song**

The English rendering given was "I am hard at it learning a song [*sic*]." All respondents considered the Welsh sentence to be correct.

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[17] Unfortunately, despite the request in the questionnaire for alternative expressions in Welsh, this respondent was the only one who gave an additional phrase.

(11) *Yr wyf **newydd** ddysgu cân*.

Yr	*wyf*	*newydd*	*ddysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**new**_adj	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

The sentence was translated as "I have just learned a song." All respondents found the Welsh sentence to be correct.

(12) *Yr wyf **wedi** dysgu*.

Yr	*wyf*	*wedi*	*dysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**after**_prep (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

The only rendering given by the respondents was "I have learned a song." All respondents found the Welsh sentence correct.

(13) *Yr wyf **wedi hen** ddysgu cân*.

Yr	*wyf*	*wedi hen*	*ddysgu*
aff.part	**I am**_1p.sg.pres	**after old**_prep + adj (the)	**learn(ing)**_verbal

cân
(of a) **song**

The translations offered by the respondents were "I have long (since)/ already learned a song." All respondents found the Welsh sentence correct but expressed uncertainty with regard to lenition after the adjective *hen*. One respondent wrote that this construction is *rhan annatod o'r Gymraeg* ("an integral part of Welsh"). Three Southerners wrote that they use this sentence in the sense of "too much" or even "well," e.g. *wedi hen alaru* "had too much of, very fed-up with."

Considering that the institutionalised standardisation of Welsh is currently reduced,[18] and looking at the subsequent effects of Welsh teaching, these

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[18] For details on this issue, see Asmus and Williams, as well as Asmus ("Acquisition", "Welsh Speakers"). In brief, whereas the work on terminology has been completed and the historical dictionary *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* is still being added to, the standard grammar by Thomas is from 1996. Attempts to maintain this set standard are predominantly made by the lexicographer D. Geraint Lewis, Fellow of Prifysgol Aberystwyth University, and his publications in support of adequate language acquisition, including his online dictionary www.gweiadur.com.

initial field work results have revealed surprisingly consistent paradigms expressing lexical aspect. As can be seen, the language features an intricate system of lexical aspect in use. This is displayed in table 1,[19] which shows lexical aspect as used in the Welsh periphrastic Present Tense:

heb	am	(i fod) i	ar fin (ar fedr)	ar	yn /(wrthi yn)	newydd	wedi	wedi hen
(without)	(on/for/at)	(to be)	(on edge)	(upon)	(in/at)	(new)	(after)	(after old)
not yet	potential	urge to do sth	about to do sth	beginning / start	continuous	just done	definite end	long done
	darpar-weithred	(potential action)	immediate		progressive	immediate Past	perfective	
Perception:	Future				Present		Past	
prospective			inchoative		cont./progr.			terminative
				ingressive				(resultative)
		expectation						intensifying

Table 1. Lexical aspect illustrated by the Welsh periphrastic Present Tense.

The first line in the scheme displays the most frequently used linking words/phrases when forming periphrastic constructions in the Present Tense. The second line provides their literal English translations, whilst the third line indicates their further semantics in this construction. The fourth line gives the explanations found in various secondary sources, whilst the fifth line displays the perception of those teaching and learning the language (e.g. Williams, *Cymraeg Clir* 23). The lines in blue aim to give a more conclusive explanation by interpreting the linking lexemes as aspect markers expressing lexical aspect.

At this stage, it is important to point out that there is no consensus about any set, or common core, of types of lexical aspect. However, a good overview is available for Slavic (Vassiliev). The types of lexical aspect shown in the paradigm above reflect a first brainstorming and should be explored further, especially in the light of further potential aspect markers provided by Thomas (96) and some notes on their use below. One further research area would be to work out the extent to which lexical aspect can be applied in other tenses of Modern Welsh. A first attempt thereof can be seen in table 2:

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[19] I would like to thank Mathias Schlegel, lecturer at the Sorbian Department at Leipzig University, for drawing up the following scheme.

Future	byddaf wedi (bod yn) canu	completed (with focus on duration)	
	byddaf yn canu / _heb, ar fin_	continuous or unmarked / further lexical asp	
Present	canaf	trend to future expression	
	wyf yn canu / _heb, _am, _ar fin_ …	continuous or unmarked / further lexical asp	
	wyf wedi (bod yn) canu wyf newydd (fod yn) c/ganu	completed (with focus on duration) just completed (with focus on duration)	
Imperf.[20]	canwn	trend to express subjunctive	
	oeddwn yn canu / _heb, _am, _ar fin, _i fod i_ …	continuous or unmarked / further lexical aspect	
	oeddwn wedi (bod yn) canu oeddwn newydd (fod yn) c/ganu	completed (with focus on duration) just completed (with focus on duration)	
	byddwn yn canu	continuous or unmarked (habit)	trend to express subjunctive
	byddwn wedi (bod yn) canu	completed (with focus on duration in the habitual)	
Past.	canais - wnaeth ganu, dari mi ganu	unmarked	
	bûm yn canu	continuous or unmarked	
	bûm wedi (bod yn) canu	completed (with focus on duration)	
Pluperf.	canaswn		
	buaswn yn canu	continuous or unmarked	trend to express subjunctive
	buaswn wedi (bod yn) canu	completed (with focus on duration)	

Table 2. Lexical aspects in Welsh tenses.

The known schematic presentation of the Welsh tense system[21] above was expanded upon by markers of lexical aspect, as established in the scheme of lexical aspect in the periphrastic Present Tense on the previous page. Such

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[20] Present and Imperfect, as well as Pluperfect, are the traditional labels for these tenses in standard grammars (Awbery 234–35; www.gweiadur.com/pawb), although Thomas introduced the term *Amhednodol* 'indefinite' for the Imperfect in his grammar from 1996. There is also some variation with regard to the terms Preterite and Past Tense, which are used synonymously.

[21] This scheme of the Welsh tense system, as established on the basis of standard Welsh grammars (e.g. S. J. Williams; Thorne; Thomas), was first published in Heinz, "Walisisch."

markers seem to be safely applicable in those tense forms most frequently used in the written and spoken standard and in the upper colloquial language, i.e. the periphrastic Present and non-habitual Imperfect. Fife (311–12) also lists dialectal examples in his research on the colloquial language, e.g. *Mi ddylai John fod ar weithio* 'John should be about to work'.

As can be seen in the table above, completed action/perfectivity as expressed by the one-lexeme markers *wedi* and *newydd*, with the latter expressing the concept of recency, has the potential to further distinguish between punctual and duration by adding *bod yn* 'to be in'. However, it remains unclear as to what extent this distinction can be made across all tempora, in particular with regard to *newydd*. Recency as a subtype of perfectivity is also weaker in Modern Irish, which has the rather infrequent alternative periphrastic Perfect *tá siad tar éis teacht ar ais* 'they have just come back' (Ó Sé).

The habitual may form part of the types of lexical aspect (Bertinetto and Lenci). Ó Sé states that "habituality was already present in Old Irish, in the verb 'to be', which had … distinct punctual present and habitual present roots (*attá* 'is' vs. *biid* 'tends to be')." The Welsh Present/Future and Imperfect of the verb *bod* 'to be' also distinguish between unmarked/punctual and habitual forms (S. J. Williams 119–20). The distinction is made by means of suppletion, as can be seen in the table above. Apparently, however, the concept of habituality as a notion of aspect expressed morphologically seems to be fuzzy or weak, and its forms became a regular part of the tense system. As a consequence, the Present habitual tends to be used for Future expressions. The Imperfect habitual tends to express subjunctive use.[22] Other verbs can express this concept only analytically, by expressing lexical aspect. But again, the possible degree of periphrastic constructions involving lexical aspect has yet to be examined.

Regardless, however, of how far the potential concepts of aspectuality are realised, it is necessary to state that none of them are clearly expressed by verbal morphology in Welsh. Expressions of lexical aspect add to the set of analytical constructions, which are at the core of the Welsh language (cf. Asmus, "Prolegomena"). Some of these aspect constructions seem to express modality, for instance in *Yr wyf am ddysgu cân*. (cf. one respondent above). Indeed, the respondents gave the following translations: "I want to/I would like to/I am going to/I will learn a song." However, interpreting this sentence as an expression of prospective aspect makes more sense. On the one hand, it would establish a link to its perception as an expression of the Future Tense

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[22] With regard to the historical explanations of these developments, see Morris-Jones.

(hence the translation "I will, am going to"), which Thomas (95) finds archaic, but some of the respondents do not. Furthermore, Professor Dafydd Johnston alerted me to the potential Future meaning of this phrase at the Celto-Slavica IX Conference in Brest, Brittany in June 2018. One person understood this construction as both modus and tempus. Applying this periphrasis in other tense constructions confirms the prospective perspective as the most appropriate category in order to describe expressions with *am*, as can be seen in *Yr oeddwn <u>am</u> ddysgu cân* 'I would have liked/wanted/<u>intended</u> to learn a song'. The same holds true for expressions with *i fod i*, which are better explained as phrases expressing prospective aspect rather than modality, as is shown here: *Yr oeddwn <u>i fod i</u> ddysgu cân* 'I was (expected) to learn a song'.

Such an approach makes a lot of sense, in particular when looking at how modality expressions are regularly formed in Welsh, i.e. by a finite form of *bod* 'to be', plus a noun, plus a sentence-final inflected preposition if a person is involved, just as in possessive constructions.[23] This is illustrated in the following examples:

(14) *Mae chwant bwyd arnaf.*

Mae	*chwant*	*bwyd*	*arnaf*
It is	want (of)	food	on me

'I want food.'

(15) *Mae rhaid i mi fynd.*

Mae	*rhaid*	*i*	*mi*	*^{L}fynd*
It is	must	for	me	(to) go

'I must go.'

(16) *Mae angen cwsg arnaf.*

Mae	*angen*	*cwsg*	*arnaf*
It is	need	(of) sleep	on me

'I need to sleep.'

(17) *Mae annwyd arnaf.*

Mae	*annwyd*	*arnaf*
It is	cold	on me

'I have a cold.' (temporarily—possessive construction)

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[23] In further research, I intend to investigate the link between modal and possession, and see how far modal expressions in Welsh may be subsumed under concepts of possession.

(18) *Mae arian gyda fi.*

    Mae   *arian*   *gyda fi*

    It is   money   with me

    'I have money.' (permanent—possessive construction)

Indeed, contrary to prepositions used in modal (and possessive) constructions proper, prepositions used in order to express lexical aspect cannot be inflected or placed sentence-finally (Fife 310–11).

3. CONCLUSION

So far, it is clear that lexical aspect distinguishing between continuous/progressive vs. completed actions, including recency, seems evident in Welsh. Within the concept of completion and recency, a distinction between duration vs. punctual is possible, e.g. *wedi bod yn dysgu* 'have been in (the process of) learning' and *newydd fod yn dysgu* 'have just been in (the process of) learning' (cf. Thomas 90). The same holds true for the habitual, which may feature a focus on duration.

Prospective aspect expressed by the aspectual marker *i fod* can also have a focus on the completion of a task when taking on yet another marker, for example *wedi* as in *Yr ydych i fod **wedi** talu erbyn hyn* 'You should have paid by now', but remain defective when taking on *bron â* 'nearly', as in *Yr oeddech i fod **bron â** gorffen erbyn heddiw* 'You were to nearly have finished by today', or else express an inchoative lexical aspect when adding *ar fin*, e.g. *Yr ydym i fod **ar fin** cychwyn* 'We should be about to start', etc. (cf. Thomas 96). The actual extent of the use of such intricate formations in various periphrastic constructions is yet to be fully analysed.

So far, it can be summarised that, in Modern Welsh, periphrastic constructions expressing completed action/perfectivity vs. continuous/progressive combine with further lexico-semantic concepts and tenses to form a web of contrasts and subtle descriptions of specific states of actions. In order to reveal internal temporal structures, Welsh makes use of its typical periphrastic VSO structure, i.e. verb-noun constructions with linking elements between the finite VS- and the O-phrase.[24] In the case of expressions of lexical aspect, the linking

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[24] The terminology VSO has long been disputed, but without resulting in a common consensus on any better one. It seems to be particularly inappropriate for Welsh, which only has an object proper in transitive sentences (cf. Asmus, "Prolegomena" 1; Heinz, *Welsh Dictionaries* 80), but due to the lack of any other suitable terminology, the most common is also used here.

elements are predominantly prepositions, simple or compound, and some adjectives or combinations of quantifying synsemantica, all of them serving as aspect markers. In this function, the prepositions must not be inflected. In the case of *yn*, there is no mutation instilled in the following verbal noun and it may be encliticised, i.e. prepositions and other linking elements used as aspect markers undergo—to varying degrees—semantic alteration/depletion with subsequent changes in their syntactic value (valency) in order to form predicate-like phrases to express aspect. If the emphasis is on the expression of duration, the phrase *bod yn* has to be added to certain one-lexeme markers.

The Old Irish/Tartessian *(-)ro-*/Old Welsh *ro-* was also a preposition, but became used as a—movable, in Irish—component part/morpheme of the verb (cf. Old Church Slavonic). The loss of this morphological means, and the development of periphrastic lexical aspect in Welsh, may be part of specific Insular Celtic developments, perhaps spurred by language-contact situations in the early days of the Common Era (cf. the development of the system of morpheme-initial consonant mutations as displayed in Baran and Asmus), or the singulative (Asmus and Werner, "Singulatives"; Broderick, "Indo-European and Non-Indo-European Aspects," "Some Island Names"), which is another assumption to be further explored.

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ASPEKTUALNOŚĆ W JĘZYKU WALIJSKIM

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Zagadnienie aspektualności obejmuje aspekt gramatyczny oraz aspekt leksykalny, które w różnym stopniu związane są z kategorią czasu. Zakłada się występowanie aspektu gramatycznego w danym języku, gdy jest on wyrażony jako gramatyczna kategoria werbalna, jak ma to miejsce w przypadku niektórych języków słowiańskich. Status aspektu w języku walijskim jest niejednoznaczny, gdyż perfektywność mogła być wyrażona za pomocą werbalnego przedrostka *ro-* we wcześniejszych stadiach jego rozwoju. We współczesnym języku walijskim wyróżnia się sześć czasów dla czasownika *bod* (być) wyrażonych syntetycznie w trybie oznajmującym oraz cztery dla pozostałych czasowników (z wyjątkiem czasowników defektywnych). Opozycja aspektowa dokonany – niedokonany nie jest wyrażona morfologicznie. Jednakże na podstawie badań ustalono, że aspektualność w języku walijskim wyrażona jest za pomocą peryfrastycznej struktury VSO, tj. konstrukcji werbo-nominalnych w połączeniu z różnymi synsemantika pomiędzy finitywną frazą VS oraz frazą dopełnieniową.

Przekład angielskiego abstraktu
Maria Bloch-Trojnar

Słowa kluczowe: aspekt; aspekt gramatyczny; aspekt leksykalny; aspektualność; VSO; konstrukcje werbo-nominalne.