

Title: You Say ‘Gerund’ and I Say ‘Participle’, You Say ‘Morpholexical’, and I Say ‘Morphosyntactical’ ... Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off!
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The Russian grammatical tradition distinguishes two hybrid paradigmatic verb forms: the adjective-like *причастие* and the adverb-like *деепричастие*. The hybrid nature of these forms lies in the apparent contradiction between their internal syntax and external syntax: while internally both forms combine with internal (non-subject) arguments and modifiers in the same way that a verb does to project a verb phrase, their external function is not that of a clausal predicate, but of a modifier: adjectival in the former case, adverbial in the latter. We will refer to the adverb-like form as an *adverbial participle* (AvPrt), though English terminology varies (sometimes calling them ‘gerunds’, sometimes ‘verbal adverbs’).

Leonard Babby’s work on AvPrts has spanned at least 35 years (1974, 1979, 1998, 2009). Like his work on other linguistic problems, Babby has combined thorough descriptive observation, thoughtful theoretical interpretation, and lucid argumentation. Over the course of 35 years, however, his theory of AvPrt’s has evolved, in large part because of the evolution of linguistic theory. His basic goal has been to capture this hybrid nature within often uncooperative linguistic theories of the day. This paper surveys the (big picture) assumptions of linguistic theory as they have affected Babby’s analysis of AvPrts over time. Babby’s recent book (2009) includes an extended discussion of AvPrts, justified by their central role in motivating his theory of argument structure. While this recent analysis utilizes some results of Rappaport’s (largely descriptive) study of AvPrts (1984), others are not incorporated. This paper also reviews those aspects of the syntax and interpretation of AvPrt’s which have not yet been satisfactorily resolved, and explores the challenges which they pose for linguistic theory.

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