

Berit Gehrke

## Ps in Motion:

On the semantics and syntax of  
P elements and motion events

This study addresses semantic and syntactic issues concerning the combination of elements of the category P (adpositions, verbal prefixes and particles) with verbs of motion and (change of) location in the description of motion events.

The general proposal is guided by the idea of a division of labour between spatial PPs and verbal predicates in structuring an event and contributing to its overall aspectual make-up. It is postulated that there are two main ways to combine PPs with verbs, namely as predicate modifiers (VP adjuncts) or as secondary resultative predicates (complements to V). Special attention is paid to the latter possibility, which is analysed as involving complex predicate formation and deriving an accomplishment event structure. Empirical support for this analysis is brought forward by a detailed investigation of English, Dutch, German, Russian and Czech data. Furthermore, a broader range of data discussed in the literature, such as Romance languages and data from language acquisition, is taken into account to address the more general cross-linguistic variation in the description of motion events. New constraints on such complex predicate formation are formulated and direct parallels are drawn to complex predicate formation with other secondary resultative predicates, in particular adjectives.

This thesis is of relevance to researchers of various linguistic backgrounds concerned with the interaction between semantics and syntax, typology, and more specifically to those interested in the area of event structure, inner aspect, and spatial meanings.

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