The Semantics of German Verb Prefixes

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John Benjamins Publishing Company

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by Robert B. Dewell

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Preface

In an earlier book in the *Human Cognitive Processing* series I proposed that German prefixed verb constructions have a schematic meaning in the special case of the particle/prefixes *um-*, *unter-*, *über-*, and *durch-*. That conclusion suggested the intriguing possibility that all of the other prefixed verb constructions in German might have such a meaning as well, and this book does in fact make that much more ambitious claim. It proposes schematic meanings not only for each individual verb prefix, but also for the prefixed verb construction itself. In the process it introduces several innovative approaches to the notion of meaning, particularly the more abstract and difficult kinds of meaning that can be expressed by grammatical constructions. I hope the book helps to establish those ways of looking at meaning generally. I also hope that the wealth of descriptive detail presented in the book can prove useful as a resource for students and teachers of German – or indeed for anyone interested in the precise meaning distinctions that can be expressed by German verbs. I am indebted to the editors of this series for their help and support in making the book possible.

Introduction

The core group of pure inseparable verb prefixes in German includes *be-*, *ver-*, *er-*, *ent-*, and *zer-*. *Über-*, *um-*, *unter-*, and *durch-* can also be used as prefixes, in addition to their uses as prepositions and as separable particles.[1] As a sentence such as (1) reflects, verb prefixes play a pervasive role in the German language.

(1)   Als minderwertig *erklärt*, *entmenschlicht*, *verfolgt*, *enteignet*, der österreichischen Staatsbürgerschaft *beraubt* und *vertrieben*.
'Declared [*er*-clarified] inferior, dehumanized [*ent*-humanized], persecuted [*ver*-followed], dispossessed [*ent*-owned], (*be*-)robbed of Austrian citizenship and exiled [*ver*-driven]'

One of the most enticing – and frustrating – topics in German linguistics is the question of what these prefixes mean. On the one hand, speakers of German feel that the prefixes do have characteristic meanings. The *ent-* of *entmenschlichen* and *enteignen* for example conveys a definite sense of depriving. On the other hand, the prefixes occur in a bewildering array of seemingly unrelated verbs, and whatever meaning they do contribute often seems very abstract and elusive. *Ver-* changes the meaning of *folgen* and *treiben*, but it is not at all clear exactly what meaning *ver-* contributes. As for the *er-* of *erklären*, we are inclined to say that the whole verb is lexicalized as a separate vocabulary item and that *er-* does not contribute any specifiable meaning that is distinct from that of the base verb *klären*. Yet the *er-* of *erklären* does seem tantalizingly similar to the *er-* of many other verbs (e.g. *erweichen*, *erfrischen*, *erwecken*), and in those verbs it does seem to add meaning – albeit a vague meaning that is very difficult to specify. As for the *be-* of *berauben*, it can seem to have a purely grammatical effect rather than a semantic one. Even in the case of *be-*, however, there is a nagging feeling that there are consistent patterns at work that somehow affect the meaning of the sentence in a way that goes beyond purely grammatical form.

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1. *Emp-* is a variation on *ent-* that occurs only in lexicalized verbs, mainly before base verbs beginning with *f-*. *Ge-* and *miss-* also occur occasionally as verb prefixes, but like the borrowed prefixes *re-* and *de-* they are not productive. *Wider-* (*wieder-*), *voll-*, and *hinter-* appear occasionally both as prefixes and as separable particles, but they are restricted to a handful of lexicalized verbs and do not reflect productive patterns.

The basic premise of this book is that the German verb prefixes do contribute consistent identifiable meanings in nearly all of their particular uses, and that we can do a much better job of articulating what those meanings are. In order to do that, however, we need to rethink some of our basic assumptions about what "meaning" is.

1.   The starting point

Generally speaking, the relatively less common prefixes are easier to specify semantically. *Zer-* for example can usually be understood in terms of an English gloss like 'to pieces'. *Über-*, *unter-*, *um-*, and *durch-* seem to have the same basic meaning as prefixes that they do as separable particles or as prepositions – i.e., roughly 'over', 'under', 'around', and 'through'. *Ent-* has two common uses that seem clearly related to each other. It can describe depriving an accusative object of something as in (1) or (6a), in which case *ent-* is the 'privative' counterpart to 'applicative' *be-* (compare *entwaffnen* with *bewaffnen*). *Ent-* verbs can also describe escaping the reach of something as in (6b), in which case there is still an element of separating one thing from another.

(2)   Das Glas *zerbrach*, sie bekam Splitter ab.
'The glass shattered [*zer*-broke] and she was hit by slivers'

(3)   a.   Er fährt auf die Gegenfahrbahn um das Hindernis zu *umfahren*.
'He drives on the wrong side of the road in order to get around [*um*-drive] the obstacle'

   b.   Sie *umhüllte* das Baby mit einem warmen Tuch.
'She (*um*-)wrapped the baby with a warm towel'

(4)   a.   Das Entscheidende ist, dass das Huhn die Straße *überquert* hat.
'The key point is that the chicken did (*über*-)cross the road'

   b.   Die ursprünglich nackten Betonwände waren mit buntem Graffiti *übermalt*.
'The originally bare concrete walls were covered [*über*-painted] with colorful graffiti'

(5)   a.   Bei dem Unfall *durchstieß* sein Kopf die Fensterscheibe.
'His head pierced [*durch*-slammed] the windshield during the accident'

   b.   Die Luft war von Rosen und Jasmindüften *durchweht*.
'The air was permeated [*durch*-breezed] with the smells of roses and jasmine'

(6) a. Dutzende Polizisten wurden *entwaffnet* und ihrer Uniformen *entledigt*.
'Dozens of policemen were disarmed [*ent*-weaponed] and divested [*ent*-freed] of their uniforms'

b. Er *entkommt* seinen Verfolgern, indem er sich auf dem Kohlewagen des Zuges versteckt.
'He escapes [*ent*-comes] his pursuers [dative] by hiding on the coal car of a train'

Er- is also clearly meaningful in many typical uses, but its meaning is more difficult to characterize. In sentences like (7a) the *er-* verbs describe gaining an accusative object by means of the base-verb activity. With a little imagination, the highly lexicalized verb *erkennen* in (7b) can be understood to have a similar meaning for *er-*. The other *er-* verbs in (7b) illustrate another basic type. The *er-* of *erwachen* adds a sense of emerging from an implicit prior state so that the base verb process becomes manifest. *Er-*'s semantic contribution could be understood similarly in *erschrecken*. *Er-* thus seems to have two almost opposite meanings: an 'inchoative' one (*erwachen*) that adds a sense of origin and beginning, and a 'resultative' one (*erkämpfen*) that adds a sense of concluding and reaching a goal. To complicate matters further, the *er-* verbs in (7c) exhibit a specialized use in which *er-* can be glossed as 'to death' and is not obviously related to either of the other types.

(7) a. Freiheit wird *erkämpft*, nicht *erbettelt*.
'Freedom is gained by battling, not by begging [is *er*-battled, not *er*-begged]'

b. Durch ein Geräusch *erschreckt*, *erwacht* der Mann und schaut nach seinem Doppelgänger, den er nicht *erkennt*.
'(*Er-*)startled by a noise, the man awakens [*er*-wakens] and looks at his double, whom he does not recognize [*er*-know]'

c. Sie *erschießen* sich. Sie hängen sich auf. Sie *ersaufen* sich. Sie *ermorden* sich, heute hundert, morgen hunderttausend. Und ich, ich kann es nicht ändern.
'They (*er-*)shoot each other (to death). They hang each other. They drown [*er*-guzzle] each other. They (*er-*)murder each other, today a hundred, tomorrow a hundred thousand. And I, I can't change it.'

Ver- is the most confusing prefix of all. In many instances, such as (8a) and (8b), it adds a definite sense of loss and demise. The dispersal image of *vertreiben* in (1) also involves a kind of loss, but now the loss is intentional and does not suggest demise. In uses such as (8c) *ver-* does not seem to add any identifiable meaning at all. And like *er-*, it is sometimes used in very specific constructions such as the reflexive one in (8d) that describes going astray.

(8)   a.   Das Auto *verbrannte* bis zur Unkenntlichkeit.
'The car (*ver*-)burned beyond all recognition'

   b.   Mieterin lässt Zietlow-Haus *verkommen*: Sonja Zietlows Haus im Wert von über 200.000 Euro ist *verwüstet* worden, weil eine Mieterin *verwahrloste* Tiere im Gebäude zurückgelassen haben soll. [Ihr Mann] erklärt, Wände und Böden seien mit Kot *verschmiert*.
'Renter lets Zietlow house come to ruin [*ver*-come]: Sonja Zietlow's house, valued at over 200,000 euros, has been ravaged [*ver*-desolated] because a renter is said to have left badly (*ver*-)neglected animals behind in the building. Her husband adds that the walls and floors were (*ver*-)smeared with feces.'

   c.   Klicken Sie jetzt um den Plan zu *vergrößern*!
'Click now to enlarge ["*ver*-larger"] the map'

   d.   Die Piloten hatten *sich verflogen* und die falsche Stadt bombardiert.
'The pilots got off course [*ver*-flew themselves] and bombed the wrong city'

In verbs like *vergrößern ver*- can seem to be a purely formal marker that does not add any identifiable meaning to the base verb. *Be*- can give that impression almost all the time. Most discussions of *be*- thus focus on its grammatical functions, such as forming denominal verbs (e.g. *bebildern* or *beschildern*) or making an intransitive base verb transitive. *Be*- is also said to signal grammatical alternations like 'Er *bemalt* die Wand (mit Bildern)' ['He (*be*-)paints the wall (with pictures)'] as opposed to 'Er malt Bilder an die Wand' ['He paints pictures on the wall']. The only effects on meaning that are usually acknowledged for *be*- are "stylistic" rather than "semantic".

(9)   a.   Er *bemalt*, *beschreibt*, *bebildert* und *beschildert* die Wand.
'He provides the wall with painting, writing, pictures and signs [*be*-paints, *be*-writes, *be*-pictures and *be*-signs it]'

   b.   Die Feuerwehr *bekämpfte* das Feuer zunächst mit Wasser.
'The Fire Department (*be*-)battled the fire with water at first'

   c.   Jede neue Idee wird am Anfang *belächelt*, *bespottet*.
'Every new idea is derided [*be*-smiled] and (*be*-)mocked in the beginning'

This brief survey – supplemented by long lists of lexicalized compound verbs to be learned as separate vocabulary items – summarizes the current state of knowledge about the meaning of German prefixes. It is not very satisfying. It is of limited help to learners of German, who correctly sense that acquiring a "feel" for how to use these prefixes is a very important part of learning the language. The received accounts are also of little help to native speakers who want to understand these prefixes in a more conscious way, so that they can become more effective speakers and writers. It is easy to find online discussions of issues such as whether it is

"correct" to make *über-* a prefix or a particle in particular uses of *überführen*, or what the difference in meaning is between *merken* and *bemerken*. When reading those discussions I am constantly struck by how interested people can be in such questions, and by how little help they get from authoritative sources such as dictionaries and grammar books. Nor are the more detailed and technical accounts aimed at linguists much more helpful. Surprisingly few studies even address the question of what verb prefixes mean in any serious way – largely because the accepted methods for studying meaning do not lend themselves very well to highly abstract constructions such as verb prefixes.

Among the many important questions that are still unresolved:

- Can we legitimately collapse the two typical uses of *ent-* verbs in (6) into a single underlying meaning, something like a sense of 'separation', or do we need to posit seemingly unrelated separate "senses" for the prefix?
- Are the two apparently opposite meanings for *er-* reflected in (7a) and (7b) really incompatible with each other, or is there a semantic common denominator of some kind that might underlie both reaching a goal and emerging as a manifest state? And if there is an underlying pattern of interpreting shared by both types, then how can we specify it without being hopelessly vague and impressionistic?
- Are *ver-* verbs really just a disorganized hodgepodge of separate variants that have nothing much in common? When speakers are occasionally confronted with a novel *ver-* verb that they have never heard before, how do they know how to interpret it? Do speakers have a largely unconscious "feel" for the meaning of prefixed verbs, even if they are not able to articulate that feel? And if so, how can we possibly begin to characterize that feel?
- How can we separate the semantic contribution of a prefix from that of its base verb (not to mention its subject, its object, its adverbial qualifications, etc)?
- Is *be-* really just a grammatical marker, or does it convey a meaning that does not conform to our usual expectations about what "meaning" is?
- Why use prefixed verbs at all, as opposed to unprefixed verbs with particles or prepositional phrases? Even if it is reasonably clear what *um-*, *durch-*, and *über-* mean, we are left with the issue of why they are sometimes used as prefixes, sometimes as particles, and sometimes as prepositions with simple verbs. What is the semantic difference between, say, prefixed *übersiedeln* and the particle verb *ÜBERsiedeln*? (In unclear cases I distinguish separable particle verbs from inseparable prefixed verbs by writing the particle in capital letters.) Why is *zerbrechen* chosen rather than, say, *entzwei brechen* or *in Stücke brechen*? Why use an *ent-* verb to express separation rather than a particle verb with *ab-* or *weg-* or *aus-*?

It is the wager of this book that we can do a much better job of answering questions such as these. But to do so we need to develop some new ways of thinking about meaning – ways that are more appropriate to higher-level grammatical constructions such as prefixed verbs.

2.   The kinds of 'meaning' to look for

Most ordinary people, and most linguists for that matter, think of meaning in terms of objective information – the kind of meaning that either is or is not appropriate to describe a given state of affairs. If a hand is curved to cover the surface of a tennis ball then we can say legitimately that the hand is 'around' the ball (*um*), but it would be wrong to say that it is 'through' the ball (*durch*) or 'in' it (*in*). That kind of objective information is certainly the most obvious part of the meaning of these expressions. It is the kind of meaning that we are looking for when we say that *zer-* means 'to pieces' or *erschießen* means to shoot 'to death', or that *ent-* has 'privative' meaning. German verb prefixes do convey objective information, and that is mainly what distinguishes one prefix from another.

But objective information is not all there is to meaning. An objective scene described by 'His hand is around the ball' might also legitimately be described as 'The ball is in his hand' – but the two sentences clearly do not mean the same thing. 'His hand is around the ball' singles out the hand for focal attention. It is construed to be the *figure* of the relation, while the ball is construed to be the ground or *landmark* in the relation. 'The ball is in his hand' on the other hand makes the ball the relatively prominent figure and reduces the hand to landmark status. Such construal relations do not necessarily alter the objective scene being described, but they definitely do change our interpretation of that scene. And they become especially important as soon as we begin to talk about grammatical relations as opposed to individual words.[2]

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2.   I am generally taking a cognitive semantic approach of the type associated especially with Ronald Langacker (1987, 2013) and Leonard Talmy (2000a, b). I use Talmy's term *figure* (FG) for the entity in a relation that is expressed as the relatively prominent one, i.e., the entity that Langacker calls a 'trajector'. I retain Langacker's term *landmark* (LM) for an entity accorded secondary prominence (which Talmy calls 'ground'). Semantically, a LM is a defined part of the setting, a specified region of the background that can be used as a reference point for locating a FG. A FG is foregrounded as an entity that is distinct from the background setting and can in principle be moved within that setting. A FG is not construed as a part *of* the setting; it is construed as something that is located *in* the setting. A FG is prototypically a thing that can do something. A LM is simply a defined region of space. The FG-LM roles can change during the course of a single construal. For example, in the sentence 'Fats shot the 8-ball into the corner

Figure-ground relations are now commonly acknowledged as an important part of the semantics of languages, but they are not the only subjective construal relations that we need to look at if we are going to understand the semantics of verb prefixes. In particular, Chapter 1 introduces a fundamental distinction between a *sequential* construal pattern that is linked to unprefixed verb constructions and a *synoptic* one that is linked to prefixed verb constructions. These two patterns do not depend on objective information; they involve things like what perspective we adopt as we imagine the scene being described, and how we are prompted to distribute our focal attention as the event unfolds.

Subjective construal relations are more difficult to identify than objective information, but they are no less real.[3] Generally speaking, they become crucial to the interpretation as soon as grammatical constructions are involved, relating different aspects of the same scene or event. Where lower-level "content words" like *Hund* or *laufen* or *um* primarily provide objective information, grammatical constructions – e.g. prepositional phrases (PPs), verb phrases with an accusative object, prefixed verbs – serve to organize the construal of that objective information, prompting us to distribute our attention over the complex scene in specified ways. Verb prefixes are at the cusp between these two types of meaning. The individual prefixes convey objective information (albeit very abstract information), but they always occur as part of a grammatical construction whose meaning can only be understood in terms of construal. The meaning of verb prefixes cannot be understood adequately if we ignore the construal relations that always accompany them.

One final comment about how we need to think of meaning as this book proceeds: Meanings are active mental processes, not static things. They are what the brain does when it interprets a language expression. As Chapter 1 makes evident, we need to understand German verb prefixes as prompts to carry out scanning

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pocket' Fats is the FG at the beginning of the construal and the 8-ball is a LM that locates the path of the implicit cue ball after being struck by the implicit cuestick. But once contact has been made with the 8-ball, the rest of the event is construed with the 8-ball as the FG (moving relative to the LM pocket). It is possible for a LM to be singled out from the rest of the setting and converted into a FG during the course of an event.

3. It is difficult to talk clearly about construal because it is almost wholly unconscious. (Incidentally, that is true of most aspects of semantic interpretation, such as how we get from extremely abstract linguistic cues to full interpretations in context.) Most speakers cannot begin to articulate the largely unconscious "feel" that they have developed over time by using and understanding these constructions on numerous occasions, but it seems clear that they do develop a sense of what the constructions mean. Another reason that construal relations are difficult to identify is that there are no straightforward objective tests. For objective information we can simply posit a situation and ask whether an expression can or cannot legitimately describe it. For example, *erschießen* is not appropriate if the victim does not die.

operations, as patterned mental pathways. The pathways are very abstract and flexible, and they merge almost immediately with the other active patterns that have been initiated by the rest of the context. Meanings are like streams that flow into each other, as opposed to things that can be assembled like the ingredients in a salad. That is how a core schematic pattern for prefixes like *er-* or *ver-* might plausibly underlie the amazing variety of specific uses that the prefixes can have.

I represent the schematic meanings for each prefix in the book pictorially, and I often speak of those meanings as "images". That is not meant to imply that the meanings really are picture-like images as opposed to flexible patterns of interpretation. But thinking of them as schematic images is much less misleading than thinking of them as propositional paraphrases or bundles of semantic features. The meanings are interpretations of symbols; they are not symbols themselves. They need to be flexible and dynamic enough to combine with other meanings in a variety of contexts.

3.   Organization of the book

This book is essentially an extension of Dewell (2011), which examined the "route path" prefixes *um-*, *durch-*, *über-*, and *unter-* in considerable detail. What makes that group especially interesting is that the same path expressions also appear as prepositions and as verb particles. There is substantial agreement about what objective information *um*, *durch*, *über*, and *unter* convey as prepositions, and that objective meaning seems essentially the same in the other grammatical constructions as well. It thus becomes possible to find cases where there is little if any objective difference between a prefixed verb construction and one with an unprefixed verb, allowing us to isolate the semantic contribution of the grammatical construction itself (e.g. the meaning of choosing a prefixed verb construction with *durchschneiden* as opposed to one with a particle verb like *DURCHschneiden* or the simple verb *schneiden* with a *durch*-PP). It turns out that there are strikingly consistent semantic patterns that characterize the prefixed verb constructions themselves, no matter which of the four route-path prefixes is used. In other words, the grammatical construction itself has meaning – if we take meaning to include subjective construal patterns as well as objective information. More specifically, the prefixed verb constructions consistently prompt a synoptic construal pattern that contrasts with the sequential pattern prompted by unprefixed verbs. This book extends that conclusion to all of the other German verb prefixes as well.

Given that background, it seems appropriate to begin in Chapter 1 with a summary of what was learned about *um-*, *durch-*, *über-*, and *unter-*. Chapter 1 can thus serve as an introduction to the key concepts and methods that are needed

to understand the subsequent chapters. It focuses on the general role played by a dynamic subjective perspective in interpreting the meaning of a sentence, and particularly on the crucial characteristics of a synoptic construal in contrast to a sequential one. Chapter 1 also introduces several other important notions, such as the nature of schematic images and the various specific types of accusative object.

Armed with the insights gained from looking at *um-*, *über-*, *unter-*, and *durch-*, Chapters 2–6 provide detailed examinations of *be-*, *ent-*, *er-*, *zer-*, and *ver-*. For each prefix I propose a core schematic meaning that can be taken to underlie the broad range of specific verbs with that prefix. Each chapter looks especially at situations when the prefixed verb construction contrasts directly with alternative constructions using simple verbs or particle verbs. That way we can begin to isolate the precise semantic contribution of the prefixed verb construction in contrast to the alternatives offered by the language. Finally, in Chapter 7 the prefixes are contrasted with each other, providing an overview of the basic system of German verb prefixes. The book closes with some general theoretical implications.

Much of the book consists of detailed descriptive contrasts between prefixed verb constructions and alternative constructions. That level of detail is warranted for several reasons. For one thing, the proposed meanings for the individual prefixes and for the prefixed verb construction itself are patterns abstracted from a wealth of particular occurrences, and the only way to justify them is to ground them thoroughly in empirical evidence. It is also important to represent *all* of the available evidence, not just selected instances that fit neatly into the story that the author wants to tell. Another reason to include a considerable amount of descriptive detail is that readers need to immerse themselves in the data if they are to gain a full understanding of the abstract patterns and processes that purport to describe it. Besides that of course, many readers will find the descriptive details about the meaning of particular German verbs intrinsically interesting and useful. I do admit, however, that exhaustive descriptions do not always make for spellbinding reading. In that vein I encourage readers to skim over the detailed evidence whenever they are not especially interested in those particular details.

4.   Sources of evidence

I have taken pains to use only naturally occurring sentences as evidence (as opposed to sentences constructed as examples by dictionaries or linguists or me). Generally speaking, all of the examples in this book were taken either from the Internet or from the COSMAS database of written German administered by the *Institut für deutsche Sprache*. I have tried to eliminate any Internet examples that might come from non-native speakers. The examples are largely unedited, though

I have corrected obvious typographical errors and I have occasionally eliminated extraneous phrases to shorten the examples.

It is important in studies such as this one to consider all available evidence, as opposed to looking only at instances that support a particular hypothesis, and I have tried very hard to do that. The conclusions reported in this book are based on an extensive collection of data, including all of the types I could find in dictionaries and linguistic studies. It would be impractical, however, to include all of the attested types in the discussion here. The book would be several thousand pages long, and although it might prove useful as a reference tool, hardly anyone would read it. The book accordingly presents the material in summary form, illustrated by representative examples rather than by a full account of all the variants I have been able to attest.

One type of evidence that is cited at various times in the discussion is frequency of occurrence. For that purpose I generally use the COSMAS database whenever feasible. For very specific searches, however, such as collocations of a verb with a particular object, a COSMAS count is often not useful because not enough instances are returned. In such cases I turn to Google, which is not as stable and reliable as COSMAS but does reflect a much larger database. Another potential advantage of a Google count is that COSMAS is largely limited to published sources by professional writers, while the Internet also contains instances from blogs or chats that may contain more colloquial expressions. Generally speaking, electronic counts of prefixed verbs are difficult because it is hard to find strings that can be unambiguously assigned to a single grammatical form. For example, *vergessen* might be an infinitive, a present-tense form in the 1st or 3rd person plural, or a past participle. *Umgeben* could be all of those things, as well as the infinitive of the particle verb, or the particle verb in the 1st or 3rd person plural in a subordinate clause. For that reason Dewell (2011) relied primarily on forms with *zu* and an infinitive (e.g. "zu übersetzen"), and I have continued that practice here when the relative frequency of two different verbs is at issue.[4]

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4.   Several obvious disclaimers apply. The COSMAS databases is frequently updated, and of course the Google searches change from one day to the next, so all frequency counts have to be seen as momentary snapshots. Also, relying exclusively on constructions with infinitives and *zu* means that some types of verb – such as those that describe intentional activities – may be favored while others – such as those that are especially apt to appear as past participles – are underrepresented.

Route-path prefixes and basic concepts

The prefixes *um-*, *über-*, *unter-*, and *durch-* are a special case discussed extensively in Dewell (2011). They are of particular interest because the same lexical items can also be used as prepositions or particles, and their objective meanings remain essentially the same in all three grammatical constructions. We can collect sets like (1)–(4), in which the same basic expression appears as a preposition in the (a) variants, a particle in the (b) variants, and a prefix in the (c) and (d) variants. Occasionally there are even directly contrasting instances like (1a) and (1c) in which the only real difference is the choice of grammatical construction – the prefixed verb construction in (1c) as opposed to the unprefixed construction in (1a).

(1) a. Die Erde läuft *um die Sonne*.
         'The earth goes around the sun'

     b. Er ist sofort *umgekehrt* und hat den Hund schnell nach Hause gebracht.
         'He turned around immediately and quickly brought the dog home'

     c. Die Erde *umläuft* die Sonne in einem Jahr.
         'The earth orbits [*um*-goes] the sun in a year'

     d. Sie *umhüllte* das Baby mit einem warmen Tuch.
         'She (*um*-)wrapped the baby with a warm towel'

(2) a. Man geht *durch die Tür* in die Toilette.
         'One goes through the door to the toilet'

     b. Es hat bei extremen Witterungen öfter schon mal *durchgeregnet*.
         'It has already rained through several times during extreme thunderstorms'

     c. Die Straße *durchschneidet* die archäologische Stätte.
         'The road bisects [*durch*-cuts] the archeological site'

     d. Ich habe fast ganz Deutschland *durchwandert*, ich kann aber nirgends Ruhe finden.
         'I've wandered through [*durch*-wandered] almost all of Germany, but nowhere can I find peace'

(3) a. Am Tag darauf sind wir mit dem Bus *über die Brücke* gefahren.
         'On the next day we drove over the bridge by bus'

     b. Aber keine Angst ich bin jetzt nicht zum Feind *übergetreten*.
         'But don't worry, I haven't gone over to the enemy'

c. Oktober 1877 gelang es schließlich, den Fluss zu *überbrücken.*
    'In October 1977 they finally succeeded in building a bridge over [*über*-bridging] the river'

d. Die ursprünglich nackten Betonwände waren mit buntem Graffiti *übermalt.*
    'The originally bare concrete walls had been covered [*über*-painted] with colorful graffiti'

(4) a. Hole die Zeitung von George und schiebe sie *unter die Tür.*
    'Go get George's newspaper and shove it under the door'

b. Wann ist die Titanic *untergegangen*?
    'When did the Titanic sink [go *unter*]?'

c. Der Plan, den Ärmelkanal zu *untertunneln*, hat lange auf die Verwirklichung warten müssen.
    'The plan to tunnel under [*unter*-tunnel] the English Channel took a long time to be realized'

d. Da sind jedenfalls noch einige Wackeltische fachgerecht zu *unterfüttern.*
    'In any event there are still some wobbly tables that need to be properly underlayered ["*unter*-lininged"]'

1.   The objective meanings

Durch, *über*, *um*, and *unter* form a semantic group.[5] To begin with, they all describe paths.[6] In a prototypical path description such as *Die Erde läuft um die Sonne* ('The earth goes around the sun'), the path expression (*um*) relates a *figure* (*die Erde*) to a *landmark* (*die Sonne*) in a continuous sequence of locations. The figure expression designates the primary object of attention, the thing whose location is at issue. The landmark designates a region of the setting that serves to locate the figure and its

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5.   Despite the differences in theoretical approach there is considerable agreement about the meaning of *über*, *unter*, *durch*, and *um*. Experts may disagree to some extent with the precise accounts that I will give in this chapter, but those disagreements do not substantially affect the main points that matter for the purposes of the book. See for example Schmitz (1964) and Schröder (1986), as well as more detailed studies such as Bouillon (1978), Schulze (1991, 1993), Wunderlich (1993), Bellavia (1996). Compare also analyses of the corresponding English prepositions such as Brugman (1981), Hawkins (1984), Deane (1993), Tyler and Evans (2004).

6.   *Über* and *unter* can also describe static locations ('above' and 'below') or goal paths to those locations, but those uses are only tangentially related to the prefixed constructions that concern us here.

path. These terms are used so often in the book that they are abbreviated from now on as *FG* and *LM* respectively. In a prototypical path description, the FG indicates a moving object that occupies a sequence of locations defined by the path expression, and each location in the sequence is situated relative to the LM.

More specifically, *über*, *unter*, *um*, and *durch* all describe a particular kind of path, a *route path*.[7] That is, they describe a path that is defined in relation to a location that is intermediate between the start of the path and the end of the path. Contrast "source path" expressions like *aus* or *von* or *ab-* that are defined relative to a beginning location, and "goal paths" expressed by locative prepositions like *in* or *auf* or *an* with an accusative object, or particles like *ein-*. A *durch* path is defined as a route that passes through an intermediate point inside a LM, an *über* path as a route that passes through a point on top of or above the LM surface, an *unter* path as one that passes through a point below the LM, and an *um* path as a route that curves around the LM, i.e., that passes through a series of points that are roughly equidistant from the LM. Taken together, these expressions form a semantic group corresponding to the English *over*, *under*, *around*, and *through*. As prepositions the route-path expressions all take an object in the accusative case.

1.1   *Über* and *unter*

The first thing to note about the prepositions *über* and *unter* is that they participate in two different semantic systems. In the meaning that concerns us here, they describe route paths that pass through a location above or below the LM. In that meaning the prepositions automatically take an accusative object (*über die Brücke*), as do the other route-path prepositions *durch* and *um*. *Über* and *unter* can also describe locations just as prepositions like *in* or *auf* can, and in that meaning the object of the preposition is in the dative case for a static location, while the accusative case marks a goal path in which the FG ends up at the designated destination. That is, a phrase like *über den Tisch* could describe a route path that passes over the table on its way to the other side, or it could describe a goal path that ends in a position above the table (such as hanging a lamp there). Only the route-path meanings are relevant to the use of *unter-* or *über-* as verb prefixes.

Actually, *unter* is not normally used to describe route paths as opposed to goal paths. A phrase such as *unter die Brücke* would probably describe a path that ends at a destination underneath the bridge, and speakers usually prefer constructions

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7.   Compare the taxonomy of paths proposed in Jackendoff (1983). There are other, more peripheral route-path expressions such as *entlang*, but they do not have prefix counterparts.

such as *unter der Brücke durch* to make it clear that the path in question is a route path that passes through that location and continues on. Not surprisingly then, *unter-* is also generally not that common as a verb prefix. It normally occurs only in highly lexicalized verbs like *unternehmen* or *unterhalten* that were created to correspond to Latin or French verbs, or else in situations where it is in marked contrast to *über-*. *Über-* on the other hand is very commonly used as a route-path preposition. In nearly all situations it will be pragmatically clear that the FG does not remain suspended in a location above the LM, and *über die Brücke* can unproblematically describe a route path over the bridge. *Über-* is commonly used as a prefix.

The core route-path meanings of *über* and *unter* can be represented as in Figures 1 and 2. The boxes stand for the LM; the meaning of the route-path expressions is the route represented by the directed arrow. Although there is no way to represent the fact in a drawing, the images are neutral as to whether there is contact between the route and the LM.
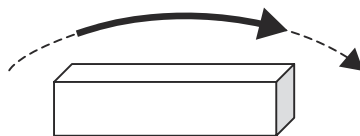
Figure 1. *Über* (route path)
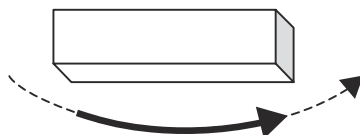
Figure 2. *Unter* (route path)

The image is also intended to be neutral with regard to the left-right direction of the path. A top-bottom axis should be assumed as part of the frame of reference in Figures 1 and 2, distinguishing the defining medial locations as higher and lower than the LM, respectively. The default frame of reference includes the direction of gravity as a given vertical. Some variants do occur though in which the gravity axis is neutralized and the LM is assigned a top or bottom for other reasons. In this case the English translation would often use 'across'.

The routes in Figures 1 and 2 are represented with a slightly arced shape, since they pass through a point above or below the LM – or at least on its top or bottom

surface – and for pragmatic reasons paths typically start and finish at ground level. Nothing significant hinges on that aspect of the meaning of these expressions in German though, as long as the route is understood to pass through a point higher or lower than the LM (as opposed to a point inside it or laterally to the side of it).[8]

1.2   *Durch*

The schematic meaning of *durch* is represented in Figure 3. It describes a schematic path that passes through a point inside the LM, thus moving in a direction from one interior boundary of the LM toward an opposing side. The endpoints of the path are unspecified, so that it is a matter of pragmatic inference whether the path continues past the LM's bounds. That is, we may interpret a *durch* path as an out-in-out path that begins and ends outside the LM (as represented by the optional dashed extension of the arrow in Figure 3), or we may interpret it as a purely internal path that takes place entirely within the LM bounds. That information is left unspecified by *durch*, much as *über* does not specify whether there is contact with the LM. The schematic image for *durch* can be rotated freely; that is, the direction of the *durch* path is unspecified in terms of a frame of reference with a given left-right or up-down axis. Generally speaking, *durch* is the least marked of all the route paths: the path is schematically straight and can go in any direction.
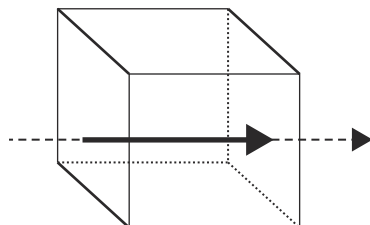
Figure 3. *Durch*

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8.   An arced shape is more significant for English *over*, which has several variants that are best understood as image-schematic transforms of an arced route – especially the variants for turning over in the vertical plane. German has no contrast corresponding to that between English *over* and *across*. See Dewell (1994, 2008).

1.3   *Um*

An *um* path is represented in Figure 4. It is schematically a curved path that passes through a series of points each equidistant from the LM. The endpoints of the path are not specified, but an *um* path typically goes at least halfway around the LM and it may continue to complete a full circle. As with *durch* the schema can be rotated freely. That is, there is no specified frame of reference and gravity vertical plays no role in the image. As is the case with all of the route-path expressions, the path can go in any compass direction. As with *über* and *unter*, the path is neutral with regard to contact with the LM.
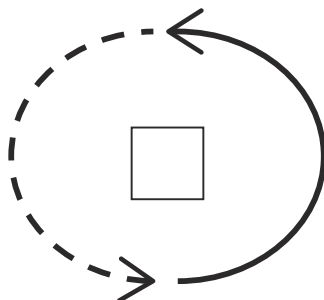
Figure 4. *Um*

An *um* path is unique among the route-path expressions in that a curve is crucial to its definition. Another important feature of an *um* path is that the LM is by definition centrally located for the whole course of the path. That is, the path curves back on itself and can never leave the LM entirely behind no matter how far it extends. (Of course a semi-circular *um* path can detour around an obstacle and the FG can then continue on its prior path.)

2.   Extending objects, fictive motion, and meanings as dynamic patterns

Note that there is no FG explicitly represented in Figures 1–4. The path expressions themselves purely describe a sequence of locations. In a typical instantiation of the schema, such as the earth going around the sun in (1a), a separate entity (the earth) will be introduced as the moving FG. It will then occupy each location on the abstractly defined route in sequence, instantiating the path.

Not all FGs instantiate the path by moving from one discrete location to the next in succession, however. To begin with, some FGs extend on the route rather than moving as whole objects. That would be the case for example when a string is

being wrapped around a package, or an arm is reaching through a window, or when liquids flow over a surface. In such cases it is actually just the leading part of the FG that occupies each location on the route in sequence, the way a simple FG would do. The rest of the FG trails behind, so that a portion of the FG typically continues to occupy the parts of the route that its leading part has already passed. The resulting states of these two types of path are thus significantly different. When a simple moving FG has finished engaging in a path, the result is that the FG occupies the last location on the route. When an extending FG has finished its path, the result is typically an extended object whose shape and location more or less coincide with the route that it extended in. Extending FGs begin to blur the distinction between a moving FG and its shaped route. They also tend to encourage a more synoptic view of the event, suggesting several occupied locations simultaneously.

More strikingly still, the FG may occupy each path location without moving objectively at all (e.g. *die Mauer um den Westteil Berlins* 'the wall around the western part of Berlin'). At that point we have an objectively static configuration being described using a path expression. Such *fictive motion* (or "subjective motion" or "abstract motion") is actually very common with route paths, and it is important to be aware of it when distinguishing prefixed verb constructions from particle verb constructions. (See Langacker (1987: 168–73) and Talmy (2000a: 99–175) for further discussion, as well as Matlock (2010) for a review of the psychology literature.)

Fictive motion makes perfect sense if we adjust our understanding of the meaning of the path expressions to focus less on the objective motion and more on the cognitive scanning patterns involved. The best way to think about the path relation itself, i.e. the meaning of *um*, *durch*, *über*, or *unter*, is that the arrows in Figures 1–4 represent a purely cognitive scanning sequence. That is, when we recognize an actual path event as an instance of a route path with *um*, what that means is that our conceptual attention moves according to the patterned sequence indicated by the arrow in Figure 4. In the prototypical case, that means that our attention follows a moving FG (the earth in (1a)) that objectively occupies each location in sequence. In the case of fictive motion our attention does exactly the same thing, but it is scanning an extended FG that is not objectively moving. The expressions *über*, *unter*, *durch*, and *um* consistently prompt us to engage in a cognitive scanning operation that conforms schematically to the arrows in Figures 1–4, which are shaped patterns located relative to a LM. That scanning pattern remains the same whether or not there is objective motion on the path.

3.   The meaning of the prefixed verb construction itself

Figures 1–4 represent objective information, and that information could apply equally to the prepositions *über*, *unter*, *durch*, and *um*, the separable particles ÜBER-, UNTER-, DURCH-, and UM- (written in capital letters to distinguish them from the prefixes), or the inseparable prefixes *über-*, *unter-*, *durch-*, and *um-*. The goal of the study reported in Dewell (2011) was to look carefully at the contrasts between the three grammatical constructions to see what semantic differences can be attributed to the grammatical constructions themselves as opposed to individual words or prefixes.

To begin with a brief illustration, consider the difference in meaning between (1a) and (1c). The path described by these two sentences is objectively the same, namely a circular path around a LM as in Figure 4. Yet there is a discernible difference in how that path is construed, and that construal difference apparently reflects the difference in the grammatical constructions. To put the distinction impressionistically at first, (1a) invites us to track the earth as it moves around the sun, while (1c) calls more attention to the circular shape of the whole path in relation to the sun. (1a) concentrates relatively more attention on where the FG is at any particular moment, while (1c) invites a more holistic construal of the path itself.

(1) a.   Die Erde läuft *um die Sonne*.
          'The earth goes around the sun'
     c.   Die Erde *umläuft* die Sonne in einem Jahr.
          'The earth orbits [*um*-goes] the sun in a year'

Dewell (2011) was able to demonstrate that this kind of construal difference systematically distinguishes constructions with route-path prefixes from those with particles or prepositional phrases. (The evidence is reviewed in Sections 4 and 5.) Moreover, the semantic differences can be traced consistently to two fundamental construal patterns that are plausibly grounded in actual perceptual experience. (1a), like unprefixed constructions generally, prompts a *sequential* construal pattern. (1c), like prefixed verb constructions generally, prompts a *synoptic* construal. These two opposing construal patterns play such a crucial role in understanding all of the prefixed verbs in this book that they warrant a general introduction before we apply them to actual verb constructions.

3.1   Synoptic vs sequential construals

A fundamental aspect of any construal is the conceptual perspective.[9] When we imagine any object or event, we necessarily do so from a perspective. We adopt an implicit vantage that involves a line of sight and a distance from the event. Being closer correlates generally with seeing more detail, while a vantage further away provides a more global perspective that includes more in the scene. Basically, perspective is the conceptual correlate to where you stand when you look at something, whether you are upright, and which direction you are looking in. Perspective interacts with how we focus our attention to see some parts of the scene in clearer focus than others. Zooming in to focus particularly on a part of the overall scene creates an effect that is much like moving closer to that part of the scene. Finally, perspective is dynamic. It changes whenever you (and more particularly your head and eyes) move. When viewing a path we typically move our line of sight by turning our head to keep track of a moving figure.

Leonard Talmy (2000a: 68–76) made the key observation that how our perspective moves tends in practice to align with how close we are to the event and how we are focusing our attention. If we are relatively far away from an event our perspective will remain relatively stable, but if our vantage is close to the event we will typically need to move our heads to keep track of moving entities in the scene. Imagine sitting in a seat high up in a soccer stadium and watching a crossing pass in front of the goal, as opposed to watching the same pass from the perspective of the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper will necessarily move his or her head considerably to track the progress of the ball, and he or she will have difficulty keeping track of other parts of the scene (such as where the other players are positioned). From our perspective in the stands we will not need to turn our heads much if at all, and we will be able to see the overall alignment of offensive and defensive players. Talmy thus distinguishes two common *perspectival*

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9.   Compare Langacker's (1987: 122–124) "viewpoint", which refers to the vantage point and orientation (alignment with respect to the axes of the visual field) that a conceptualizer adopts with respect to the objective scene. It is a variable that can be adjusted in structuring any construal (see the discussion of construal transformations in Langacker 1987: 138). Generally speaking, words like *Haus* convey objective information and leave the choice of perspective free, so it can be largely ignored as far as semantic definition is concerned. We are free to imagine a house from the front or the side or the back, or from above, or from within it, i.e., to adopt whatever perspective fits best within the overall interpretation. Perspective can occasionally be specified by grammatical constructions, however, such as the deictic difference between 'ins Haus hinein' and 'ins Haus herein', and the proximity of the perspective to the scene is an important factor in the difference between prefixed and unprefixed verb constructions.

modes – one from a relatively stable *synoptic* perspective relatively far away from the event, the other from a perspective that stays relatively close to the action and moves in a *sequential* construal process.[10]

Generally speaking, we can construe any imagined event in either perspectival mode. Your path from home to the grocery store for example could be imagined as if actually moving on the path (e.g. going straight ahead for two blocks, past the drug store on the left, and then turning right at the next corner). That would be a sequential construal – what Taylor and Tversky (1996: 375–376) call a "route tour". The same objective path could also be imagined synoptically as a whole route from a bird's eye view, adopting what Taylor and Tversky call a "survey viewpoint, similar to a map", "scanning an environment from a single viewpoint".[11]

I find it helpful to think of construal in motion-picture terms, so that our conceptual perspective corresponds to the location, aim and focus of the camera that shoots the scene. The camera may remain constant during the shot, but it may also change in various ways as the scene unfolds. It can zoom in or out (which is like moving closer or further away). The camera can also move, whether by swiveling or by moving on wheels, so that we can maintain a relatively close-up and focal view of a moving figure in a tracking shot. In a tracking shot the objectively moving figure will maintain a constant presence at the center of the frame, and the objectively stationary entities in the background will change locations in the frame because the camera is moving along with the figure. In a synoptic long shot the only thing moving will be the objectively moving figure(s).

Imagine filming a cowboy as he jumps with his horse across a ravine to escape the sheriff's posse. A filmmaker might well film the scene by zooming in for a tracking shot that concentrates focal attention steadily on the cowboy throughout his jump, so that we watch him sail through the air until he lands. That portrayal is especially apt to be chosen if the cowboy is doing something worth noting as he jumps, such as looking back and firing at the posse, or holding on to his hat to

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10. In Talmy's (2000a: 70) words, the synoptic perspectival mode is characterized by "the adoption of a stationary distal perspective point with global scope of attention". The sequential perspectival mode is characterized by "the adoption of a moving proximal perspective point with local scope of attention".

11. The distinction between sequential and synoptic construals is obviously not an absolute one. How close the perspective is to a moving figure can vary on a continuum from an extreme close-up to a long shot to a very distant view; the focus can be varied in many ways as well; and the perspective can move in ways that do not exactly track the moving figure. In practice, however, most construals can be clearly assigned to one or the other basic pattern. If the perspective is obviously moving to keep the figure focally prominent in each frame, then the construal is sequential. If the whole scene remains steadily in view during the course of the event, then the construal is synoptic.

keep it from blowing off, or talking to his horse, or looking afraid. In such cases the filmmaker will be offering a sequential construal of the event. That involves: (a) a relatively close-up perspective with concentrated focus on the moving figure and whatever activities it is engaged in, and (b) a perspective that moves along with the figure in order to keep it focally central at each point in its path. This is the most common path construal prompted by German verb constructions – the unmarked construal associated with unprefixed verbs.

Synoptic construals are more typically associated with static scenes rather than with paths, but it is certainly possible to "synopticize" a motion event.[12] An alternative way to film the cowboy's jump would be to show the whole jump from a single, relatively stable point of view and a global perspective. Both sides of the ravine would remain in constant view, and the shot would visibly reveal the length of the jump (spatially rather than just temporally). It might also include how far the cowboy will fall if he does not make it, or how close the posse is to catching him. The synoptic version focuses more on the jump itself and its relation to the whole scene, and less on the cowboy (and on details of what he is doing during the jump). The moving cowboy is still a very noteworthy part of the scene, but he is not as exclusively prominent as he would be in a sequential tracking shot.[13]

A synoptic construal is somewhat more likely for jumping a ravine than it is for most paths, because a salient aspect of the event is overcoming an obstacle and the path can suggest a line that "connects" the two sides of the obstacle. Generally speaking, however, synoptic construals are not very common when there is a single moving object like the cowboy, because such objects tend to attract our concentrated attention. Synoptic path construals become more inviting, on the other hand, when there is not a compact moving object. That is the case for example when there is an extended figure whose shape corresponds more or less to the path, such as a bridge that extends over the ravine in fictive motion. Synoptic construals are similarly encouraged by diffuse extending masses such as flood waters. In fact, a synoptic construal becomes generally attractive whenever the scene involves multiple path directions. Imagine filming a rioting mob running across a city square in a variety of directions in a chaotic scene of overall motion. Generally speaking, sequential construals are associated with *concentrating* attention on a FG at a particular place at a particular time, while synoptic construals are associated with *distributing* attention over a broader area.

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12. It is also possible to "sequentialize" the construal of an objectively static scene. Talmy's example (2000a: 71) is 'There is a house every now and then through the valley'.

13. Filmmakers have another option that is normally denied to semantic interpretation, namely cutting to a different type of shot from a different camera while the path is in progress.

A good illustration of sequential mode is the process necessary for reading. When we read we need to concentrate attention on one letter (or word) after the other in sequence. In this context it is interesting to note, parenthetically, that research by Gadi Geiger and Jerome Lettvin (1997 and elsewhere) has shown that people with dyslexia are relatively more aware of letters in the periphery than normal readers, and that dyslexics generally have better peripheral vision. In other words, dyslexia is associated with synoptic perspectival mode. Similarly, Catya von Károlyi et al. (2003) show that dyslexics are better able than others to identify whether Escher-like pictures are realistically possible or not. A synoptic overview of the whole scene is needed to make that judgment, rather than sequentially going through the paths in the picture.[14]

A key thesis of this book is that German prefixed verb constructions systematically prompt us to adopt a synoptic construal of the event, while unprefixed verb constructions (whether with simple verbs or with particle verbs) prompt a sequential construal of the event. Any time a prefixed verb is used then, part of the meaning of the construction will be to portray the event synoptically. To understand any particular verb prefix, we need to recognize that a synoptic construal will always be part of its meaning – the part of its meaning that it shares with all other prefixes in contrast to the unprefixed alternatives.

3.2   Schematic meanings in grammatical constructions

Returning to the difference between (1a) and (1c), we can say that the unprefixed construction prompts a sequential construal that concentrates relatively exclusive attention on the FG (the earth) at each stage of its path. We could represent the sequential construal prompted by (1a) in Figure 5, which should be understood as a sequence of selected moments in a continuous path, read from left to right by row. Figure 5 conveys the same objective information as Figure 4, but it adds a focal FG and concentrates attention on that FG and on each location that it occupies on the *um* path, in sequence. The FG is centrally prominent in each frame, while the LM and the overall shape of the path remain relatively peripheral. Similar diagrams could easily be drawn depicting *über*, *unter*, and *durch* paths with prominently focal FGs that are tracked at each location specified by the path expression, in sequence.

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14. Another suggestive association is the distinction in neuroscience between processing according to feedforward hierarchical models and processing based on temporal synchrony. (See for example Buzsáki 2006.) The latter model involves spatially distributed cell groups responding simultaneously to activation by a single object (compare synoptic), while the former implies spatially connected cell assemblies and sequential processing.
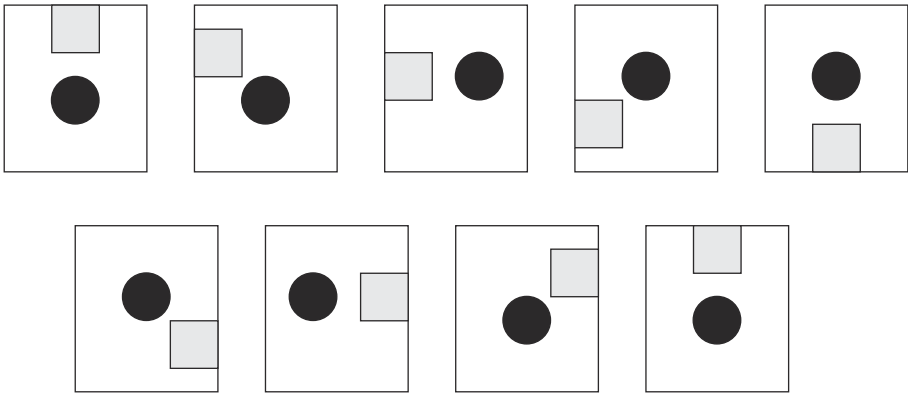
Figure 5. Sequential (prepositional) *um*

The corresponding construal for the prefixed verb construction in (1c) could be represented in Figure 6. Figure 6 and Figure 5 are objectively equivalent, but the construal in Figure 6 is synoptic rather than sequential. The whole LM (the sun) and the whole shaped *um-* path remain constantly visible in each frame, while the earth is a relatively small and peripheral part of each frame, even though it is moving. The only thing that changes in the scene from one moment to the next is the position of the earth on the *um-* path. We remain constantly aware of the whole shaped path and its relation to the sun, without particularly concentrating on the sequence of locations occupied by the earth. Where the sequential construal relates a FG to a LM in a series of locations, the synoptic construal relates a whole path to the LM.
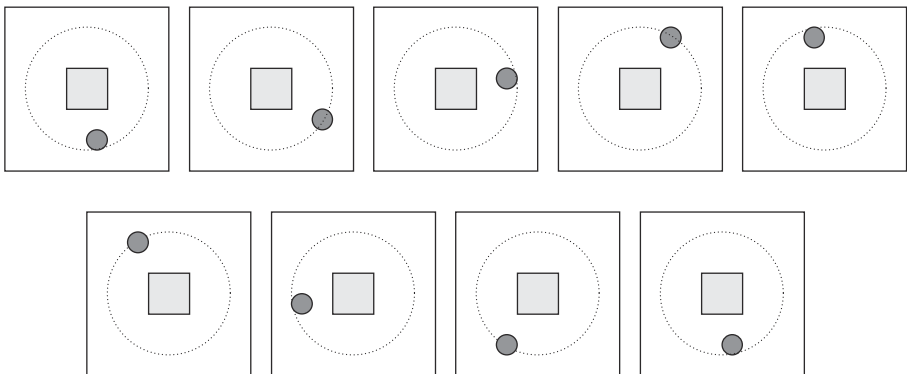
Figure 6. Holistic path with *um-* verb (expanded view)

Figure 6 is actually unusual in that it involves a distinct moving entity that instantiates the *um-* path, and moving objects like this normally attract concentrated attention and a sequential construal. Prefixed verbs do not normally occur with compact moving objects unless there is a strong sense of overcoming an obstacle (like the cowboy jumping the ravine). Prefixed verbs are more likely to occur when there is no moving object distinct from the shaped path, i.e., nothing to invite concentrated attention. That occurs for example when an object is extended to form a linear geometric shape that is not visibly distinct from the path profiled by the prefix, like the street in (2c). In effect, the image of the subject merges with that of the path arrow. Even more typically, the entity that instantiates the path is not a syntactic FG at all. It is commonly indicated by the root of a denominal verb (like *umarmen* or *überbrücken* or *untertunneln*), or else it is specified obliquely in a *mit*-PP as in (1d) or (3d). In (1c) there is no other candidate to be the subject of the verb other than *die Erde*, but it is not really the FG in the relation directly profiled by *um-*. As far as *um-* is concerned, the semantic FG in Figure 6 is the orbital path itself, represented by the arrow.

Put in more syntactic terms, the preposition *um* in (1a) combines directly with the noun FG (*Erde*), just as the verb does. The construction prompts us to concentrate attention on that FG as it moves on the *um* path (while engaging in the *laufen* activity), and it relates the FG directly to the LM (*Sonne*) at each moment during the event. The prefix *um-* in (1c) on the other hand combines directly with the base verb (*laufen*) and only indirectly with the subject noun (*Erde*). The "FG" for the prefix is not the noun but the verb. The construction prompts us to hold the whole orbital *um* path in mind and locate it relative to the LM.

The key point is that the moving entity in a synoptic construal is not allowed to distract our attention away from the whole shaped path the way the FG does in the sequential construal of Figure 5. Prefixed route-path constructions are consistently associated with the kinds of situation that make a synoptic construal more attractive. They typically describe paths that have either an extended figure whose shape corresponds more or less to the route, or else a path that involves multiple directions and thus an intrinsically vague moving entity ("theme argument") that does not attract concentrated attention.[15]

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15. The fundamental cognitive difference between a "sequential scan" and a "summary scan" (Langacker 1987: 145) is intimately related to the distinction between a sequential construal and a synoptic one. A sequential construal requires a sequential scan. A summary scan requires a perspective synoptic enough to reveal each part of a cumulative overall shape at the same time, and so a synoptic construal is necessary for a summary scan. It is possible, however, to have a sequential scan from a synoptic perspective, which is the construal reflected in Figure 6. All processes expressed by a finite verb invite a sequential scan as the process extends in time, hence the sequence of frames in Figure 6.

4.   Types with route-path prefixes

4.1   Holistic paths

One characteristic that distinguishes route-path expressions from other path expressions is that they suggest a schematic shape for the entire path. Where goal paths and source paths specify one end of the path, leaving the rest of its shape unspecified, route paths suggest an overall contour in relation to the LM. A shaped contour is most obvious with the curved path described by *um*, but *über*, *unter*, and *durch* also convey an image of the overall path as opposed to just a starting or stopping place. As a result, the route-path prefixes are uniquely able to describe holistic paths such as the one in (1c), in which an entire shaped path is located relative to a LM.

4.1.1   *Geometric images*

When a whole linear path is located relative to a LM, as in the (c) variants of (1)–(4), the result is essentially a geometric image. The path may encircle the LM, or it may intersect the LM by passing through it, or it may cross the LM by passing over it or under it. Such images are especially apt to occur when there is an extended object that intrinsically suggests a linear shape, i.e., when it is extended so that its shape begins to coincide with that of the path. In typical instances then, such as (2c), (3c), or (4c), there is an extended object that instantiates the path shape. It may be actively extending, like the arms in (5a), but more commonly it is in a stable extended state (fictive motion). (5)–(7) provide further examples of typical holistic paths with *um-*, *über-*, and *durch-*. They invite a synoptic construal that distributes attention over the whole range of locations designated by the path expression, rather than concentrating on a series of transitions from one particular location to another.[16]

> (5)   a.   Er hatte den Reisenden *umarmt*.
>   'He had hugged [*um*-armed] the traveler'
>
>   b.   Vier rechteckige Beete sind mit Buchsbaum *umgrenzt*.
>   'Four rectangular beds are (*um*-)bordered with boxwood'

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16.   There is a special geometric image associated with *über-* verbs to describe when one thing extends further than another in a shared dimension (e.g. 'Der Fernsehturm *überragt* alle Hochhäuser'). *Über-* describes extending across an implicit limit established by the LM's extent. This sense of competitive surpassing carries over to describe extending an activity further on an abstract scale and thus *out*doing the implicit competition (e.g. 'Auf Père-Lachaise sind so viele berühmte Menschen begraben, aber Jim scheint sie alle zu *überstrahlen*'). The image can also be applied to temporal surpassing, i.e., to continuing an activity longer than the LM does (e.g. 'Sie *überlebte* ihren Mann um 5 Jahre').

c. Ein hoher Zaun *umschließt* sein Grundstück.
    'A high fence encloses [*um*-closes] his property'

d. ein von dunkelblonden Haaren *umrahmtes* Gesicht
    'a face (*um-*)framed by dark brown hair'

(6) a. Eine Hängebrücke *überspannt* in 50m Höhe den Fluß.
    'A suspension bridge (*über-*)spans the river at a height of 50 meters'

b. Der Pfad *überquert* einen alten Römerweg.
    'The path (*über-*)crosses an old Roman road'

c. Diese Brücke *überführt* die A 12 von Berlin nach Warschau.
    'This bridge leads over [*über*-leads] the A 12 from Berin to Warsaw'

(7) a. Diese Länge würde ausreichen, um die Mykolsäureschicht zu *durchspannen*.
    'This length would suffice to extend all the way through [*durch*-span] the layer of mycolic acid'

b. Die Straße *durchquert* eine weite Ebene.
    'The road (*durch-*)crosses a broad plain'

c. Der Fluß *durchströmt* Altchemnitz.
    'The river flows through [*durch*-streams] the old section of Chemnitz'

Geometric images like these are not common when there is a compact moving object, since such things would normally attract concentrated attention in a sequential construal. In sentences like (1c) a synoptic construal becomes attractive because the circular shape of the path is salient, and because an orbiting path does not focus on any particular location that a FG might occupy. When holistic paths do have a compact moving object that encircles or crosses a LM in a geometric image, then the base verb often expressly indicates a geometric shape or relation, as in (8a) with the root *Kreis* ('circle') or (8b) and (8c) with the root *quer* ('crosswise'). *Durchschneiden* commonly describes a bisecting path as in (8d).

(8) a. Die Erde *umkreist* als dritter Planet die Sonne auf einer nahezu kreisförmigen Bahn in einem Jahr.
    'The earth *orbits* the sun in a year as the third planet, on a nearly circular course'

b. Es gelang ihm den Fluss zu *überqueren*.
    'He succeeded in (*über-*)crossing the river'

c. In einer langen Schlange *durchqueren* die Gläubigen den Fluß.
    'In a long line the faithful (*durch-*)cross the river'

d. Das Schiff *durchschnitt* die See.
    'The ship cut through [*durch*-cut] the sea'

4.1.2   *Focal obstacles*

There is one kind of holistic path that does commonly occur with a compact moving object rather than one that suggests a geometric image, namely paths that get past a focal obstacle (like the cowboy jumping the ravine). (8b) and (8c) could be read either way, while (9)–(11) clearly illustrate the type with a focal obstacle. *Um-* verb constructions in this variant describe (semi-circular) detouring, *über-* verbs overcoming, *unter-* verbs ducking under an obstacle, and *durch-* verbs penetrating. *Durch-* verbs may also describe forceful penetration by a non-agentive subject as in (12). All of these paths are construed synoptically as holistic events. In other words, the point of the sentence is purely that the subject takes a route that successfully bypasses or penetrates the obstacle. Nothing prompts us to pay attention to any particular moments along the way. See the discussion in Section 5 contrasting similar uses of *über-* and ÜBER- and *durch-* and DURCH-.[17]

(9)   Die Bänke können dabei – je nach Angabe – *übersprungen*, *umlaufen* oder *durchkrochen* werden.
'Depending on the instructions, the benches can be jumped over [*über-* jumped], run around [*um*-run] or crawled through [*durch*-crawled]'

(10)   Es gab eine Menge vom Schneewasser gerissene Gerinne zu *durchqueren*, Felsen zu *umgehen* oder zu *überklimmen* und Schlammstellen zu *durchwaten*, bis wir an eine vielfach zerrissene Steinwand kamen, hinter welcher unser Ziel verborgen lag.
'There were numerous gulleys created by snowmelt to cross through [*durch*- cross], large rocks to go around [*um*-go] or to climb over [*über*-climb] and muddy places to wade through [*durch*-wade] before we came to a fissured wall of stone behind which our goal lay hidden'

(11)   Als Hindernis dienten 2 Schlauchboote, die auf der 25 m-Bahn jeweils zu *untertauchen* bzw. zu *überklettern* waren.
'As obstacles there were 2 inflatable rafts on the 25-meter course that had to be either ducked under [*unter*-dived] or climbed over [*über*-climbed]'

(12)   Die Pistolenkugel *durchschlug* die Fensterscheibe.
'The bullet penetrated [*durch*-crashed] the windshield'

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17. The image of getting to the other side of a focal obstacle underlies several common metaphorical uses of these verbs. *Über-*, *unter-*, and *um-* can all describe abstract avoiding (e.g. 'Musik-Kopierschutz kann mit legalen Programmen *umgangen* werden'). *Über-* verbs are used to suggest overwhelming as well as simple overcoming. There are also established variants in which *über-* verbs or *durch-* verbs describe holistic inspections, or passing sensations (e.g. 'Ein kleiner Stich *durchfährt* meinen Körper').

4.1.3   *Summary of holistic paths*

Generally speaking, the synoptic construal of a holistic path makes us more aware of the whole shaped route path and relatively less aware of the object that instantiates the path. The prefixed verb construction prompts us to resist the temptation to zoom in and concentrate on a moving FG, instead remaining aware of how the route itself relates to the LM. That construal also increases the prominence of the LM by giving it a stable position near the center of the construal frame. The constructions consistently promote the LM to the status of a focal *accusative LM*. (See the separate discussion in Section 4.4.)

4.2   Multi-directional paths

Sometimes a single path expression can refer to several different paths of the same type. In one reading of (13a) for example there could be several separate *durch* paths going on, each with its own FG and path direction. We could in effect pick out any random child and imagine it running through the house, knowing that the same type of path image applies to the other children as well. The prefixed verb construction in (13b) can describe a very similar event in which children are engaged in multiple paths in multiple directions. The construal for (13b) is subtly different, however, in a way that reflects a synoptic construal rather than a sequential one. Rather than an image of individual children each engaged in a separate sequential *durch* path, (13b) conveys an overall impression of chaotic activity. It calls attention primarily to a confused tangle of *durch* paths that become vaguely blurred together, rather than to a plural set of children who are each running separately through the house. In effect, the paths in (13b) blend together to form a collective multiplex of paths that seem randomly distributed "all through" the house and yard until they characterize the space – what Jackendoff (1986, 1983: 101–6) calls "distributive location". A filmmaker would presumably film (13a) by zooming in on individual children or clusters of children as they ran, while (13b) would call for a longer shot that steadily shows the house and yard as a place where wild motion is going on – without focusing on any particular children. (14) is similar, conveying the impression that the *um* paths collectively blur together to characterize the space around the tower.

(13)   a.   Die Kinder liefen durch das Haus, lachten und spielten.
            'The children ran through the house, laughed and played'

        b.   Kinder *durchtoben* Garten und Haus.
            'Children are running wild all through [*durch*-raging] the yard and the house'

(14)   Fledermäuse *umschwärmten* den alten Turm.
          'Bats were swarming all around [*um*-swarming] the old tower'

As is the case with geometric holistic paths, multi-directional paths are not especially common when compact objects are doing the moving, such as the children in (13b) or the bats in (14). Such objects tend to attract concentrated attention, they leave no visible trace of their path, and their paths are not usually distributed all over, through, or around a space (i.e., their paths do not seem to characterize the space as a whole). When the events involve extended objects that correspond to the route paths, on the other hand, the multi-directional path image becomes much more attractive. In (15) for example, the stroking paths that apply the butter and the sprinkling paths that apply the sugar both leave visible traces that accumulate until they seem substantially to cover the whole surface of the cake. And unlike (13b) or (14) there is nothing about the butter or the sugar that invites us to concentrate on individual parts.

(15)   Kommen nun die fertigen Stollen aus dem Ofen, so sind dieselben nochmals mit zerlassener Butter zu *überstreichen* und dick mit Zucker zu *überstreuen*.
          'When the stollen are taken out of the oven they should be coated again [*über*-spread] with melted butter and sprinkled [*über*-strewn] with a thick layer of sugar'

The typical 'covering' images in (15) involve linear multi-directional paths (stroking the butter on with a brush, moving the sugar shaker over different regions of the cake's surface until all regions have been affected), but the more lasting image is the visible resulting state in which the substances are distributed all over the cake's surface. They involve spreading masses (butter) or multiplexes (sugar) that occupy the space after the paths have taken place. (1d), with a towel wrapped around a baby, is a typical example, and (16)–(19) provide further examples with *über-*, *um-*, *durch-*, and *unter-*. In all cases there are paths in unspecified directions that result in a state in which a substance extends all over, around, or through a LM space and perceptibly characterizes it.

(16)   a.   Sein Vorschlag war, alle Wände mit weißer Farbe zu *übersprühen*.
            'His suggestion was to (*über-*)spray all the walls with white paint'
       b.   Er *übergoß* sich mit Benzin und brannte sich.
            'He doused [*über*-poured] himself with gasoline and burned himself'

(17)   a.   Das komplette Element ist mit einer tierfreundlichen Kunstofffarbe *umstrichen*.
            'The complete item is coated [*um*-painted] with a synthetic paint that is safe for animals'

b. Das Paket wenn man es so nennen darf war sehr schäbig mit Folie *umwickelt* das Adressfeld mit Tesa-Film angeklebt.
    'The package, if one can call it that, was very shabbily wrapped [*um*-wound] with foil, the address attached with Scotch tape'

c. Ein laues Lüftchen *umweht* uns noch.
    'A balmy breeze still surrounds [*um*-wafts] us'

(18) a. Der ganze Raum schien wie von Sonnenschein und Rosen *durchstrahlt* und *durchduftet* zu sein.
    'The whole room seemed to be permeated by sunshine and the aroma of roses [*durch*-radiated and *durch*-scented by them]'

b. Das Räucherwerk *durchdrang* die Luft mit der Essenz von Harz.
    'The incense imbued [*durch*-penetrated] the air with the essence of resin'

c. Das Öl hat das Holz *durchdrungen*.
    'The oil has permeated [*durch*-penetrated] the wood'

(19) a. Der Fluß hat das Ufer *unterhöhlt*.
    'The river has eroded [*unter*-caved] the bank'

b. Man hat das Gebäude allseitig *untermauert*.
    'They buttressed [*unter*-walled] the building on all sides'

c. Fliesen mit einer Dämmschicht *unterfüttern*
    'line [*unter*-layer] tiles with an insulating layer'

The moving "theme" substance that comes to occupy and characterize the LM space is very often not accorded any status as a syntactic FG. It is commonly mentioned only obliquely in a *mit*-PP – as in (15), (16), (17a–b), (18b) or (19c). It may also appear as the root of a denominal base verb as in (18a) or (19b). The only time the moving substance appears as a FG in the sentence is when there is no other candidate to be subject of the verb, as in (17c) or (18c). Even then, the moving substance is nonindividuated, with no fixed shape of its own. It does not attract concentrated attention as an object with clear bounds independent of the LM. And the substance never appears as an accusative object.

In the examples so far the characterization "multi-directional paths" has had some objective basis, even if the objective paths in question are not always that salient. For example, wrapping a baby with a towel implies a series of linear movements, pulling the towel until it is spread around the baby in all relevant directions. The more we think in terms of the occupying mass (the towel), however, the less aware we will be of any linear paths in multiple directions. Gaseous substances such as the scent in (18b) certainly spread diffusely in many directions at once, but there is little sense of distinctly separate directions. Moreover, many typical instances like the ones in (20) scarcely imply anything at all about the path that

the substance took in order to occupy the location. All that really matters is the resulting state, not how it came about, and nothing about that state suggests any particular objective path that precedes the state. In (21) in fact the sentence does not really describe any objective motion at all. The term "multi-directional" seems odd in any objective sense.

(20) a. Der Sitzplatzbereich wurde teilweise tatsächlich sehr *umnebelt* und *umstunken*.
          'Parts of the sitting area did in fact become immersed in foggy smoke and foul odor [*um*-fogged and *um*-stunk]'

  b. Dabei muß die Stube gut *durchwärmt* sein.
      'The room must also be well heated [*durch*-warmed]'

  c. Mein Kissen war vollkommen *durchnäßt*.
      'My pillow was completely damp [*durch*-dampened]'

  d. Was benutzt ihr um eure Pickel zu *überdecken* als Mann?
      'What do you use as men to (*über-*)cover your pimples?'

  e. Rauch *umhüllte* das Haus.
      'Smoke enveloped [*um*-wrapped] the house'

(21) Der Wagen war mit Eis *überkrustet*.
      'The car was (*über-*)crusted with ice'

In terms of cognitive interpretation patterns, on the other hand, the notion of "multi-directional paths" is entirely appropriate for sentences like (16)–(21), and that is what explains the semantic similarity between those sentences and the ones like (13) or (14) with obvious objective paths in multiple directions. In a fictive motion reading for sentence (20e) for example, we are prompted to scan around the house in any randomly selected direction we choose; no matter which *um*-path we take, we will encounter smoke. There is smoke "all around" the house. The sentences in (16) have a resulting configuration corresponding to the set of all possible *über-* paths scanned over the LM (the paint is "all over" the LM); those in (18) correspond to the set of all *durch-* paths (the smells go "all through" the air). Figure 7 crudely represents the image schematically for *durch-*, and similar images could be constructed for the other route paths.[18] In effect, we are told to scan in all possible *over* paths, or all possible *through* paths, or all possible *around* paths with respect to the LM in order to locate the occupying substance.

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18. The images for *über-*, *unter-* and *um-* would require a perspective that reveals the relevant surface of the LM. For example, the 'covering' *über-* image requires a perspective from above.
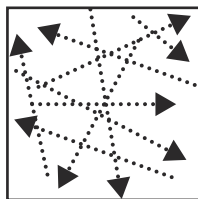
Figure 7. Schematic multi-directional *durch-* path

When we imagine a multi-directional path our attention is drawn in several different directions in no particular order, until it is eventually distributed throughout the LM region (i.e., a top surface with *über-*, a bottom surface with *unter-*, a curved surface with *um-*, and an interior with *durch-*). We might imagine the paint in (16a) to take any number of specific objective routes; that part of the image can vary randomly. What matters is that those paths eventually blur so that the paint spreads over the walls in all possible directions, so that the walls are covered in the resulting configuration. Every relevant part of the region indicated by the accusative LM is eventually occupied by the theme, and the LM as a whole is ultimately characterized by its presence.[19]

4.2.1   *Multiplexes and masses*

It may seem odd at first to consider wrapping towels around babies or smoke enveloping houses to be instances of "multi-directional paths", but there are actually very good reasons to do so. There is an important underlying similarity between a multiplex of individual paths such as the swarm of bats in (14), a mass being applied by a multiplex of linear strokes such as the paint in (17a) or the towel in (1d), and a pure mass such as the smoke in (20e) that does not especially suggest any objective linear paths at all. These images all involve the very basic process known to cognitive linguists as the "multiplex-mass transformation" (Lakoff 1987: 441–442).

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19. There are several more specific multi-directional variants with *durch-* verbs, including a special case in which a single subject engages in a path with multiple segments in varying directions as in (2d), collectively giving the impression of aimlessly meandering throughout a space. Compare 'Der Posten vor dem Tor *durchsucht* mich nach Waffen', which describes visiting every region of a space. Multi-directional *durch-* verbs also commonly describe interspersing or interweaving. *Unter-* verbs have similar variants that imply undermining. Much as holistic *über-* verbs can express competitive surpassing, multi-directional *über-* verbs can express competitive obscuring, i.e., covering something so that it is no longer perceptible (e.g. 'Hallo gibt es eine Möglichkeit, Tattoos zu *überschminken*?'). In both cases the sense of competition can become predominant (e.g. 'Der Chor *übertönte* die Solistin') so that English resorts to a construction with *out* (e.g. *outdo*, *outlive* with surpassing, or *drown out* with obscuring).

Depending on our vantage and concentration of focus, the same objective array of homogeneous particles may be construed either as a multiplex or as a continuous mass. From a moderately close perspective for example, sugar consists of individual granules all of the same type (a multiplex); but if we move far enough away it will appear to be a continuous mass with no discernible separate parts. What appears from a close enough perspective to be clearly distinct grains of sand can appear to be a continuous mass or even a shaped beach if we move far enough away. People can appear to lose their individuality and become a moving crowd. A mist can be conceived as a collection of particles or as a fluid mass. Moreover, languages commonly treat multiplexes and masses as if they were interchangeable, resulting in pervasive polysemy such as '*All* men are mortal' and '*All* gold is yellow', or 'The wine *spilled* onto the table' and 'The fans *spilled* onto the field', or 'There were stains/stripes *down* his tie'. It makes sense then, that German would use the same constructions to describe both a multiplex of similar paths (e.g. the paths of swarming bats or granules of sugar) and the diffuse spread of an undifferentiated mass (e.g. smoke, oil, butter, paint, gasoline, aromas, foil, a towel, a tablecloth).

Moreover, it makes sense that both multiplexes and masses will be associated with the relatively distal perspective of a synoptic construal. Construing a group of people as a homogeneous multiplex such as a crowd requires abstracting away from individual differences among the people, as well as ignoring the spaces between them. A sequential construal on the other hand would encourage us to concentrate attention on the individual members of the group, making us more aware of the differences among them. Subtly then, the unprefixed verb in (13a) prompts us to construe the event as a plural set of paths by individual children, while *durchtoben* in (13b) portrays a multiplex of path vectors by a homogeneous multiplex of children.[20]

4.2.2 *Multi-directional paths as uniquely synoptic*

The hallmark of a sequential construal is concentrated attention. Attention is concentrated on a moving FG, sometimes even on a particular part of that FG, and also on a particular location that is being occupied by the FG at a particular time. The hallmark of a synoptic construal is distributing attention more diffusely over the

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20. It is sometimes not clear whether a prefixed verb describes a multiplex of paths in various directions, or a plural set of separate holistic paths. 'Bahnlinien *durchschneiden* das Gebiet' ('Rail lines run through [*durch*-cut] the region') for example is probably best read as a plural set of geometric intersecting paths, but it could also describe a collective image of the region being interspersed with railroads that run "all through" it. Similarly, a sentence such as 'Venedig ist am Montag fast vollständig *überschwemmt* worden' ('Venice was almost completely (*über*-)flooded on Monday') could conceivably be read either as multi-directional covering by a spreading mass, or as a single holistic path by a wave-like mass flowing in a single direction.

scene, and nothing prompts us to distribute attention more diffusely over a scene than a construction conveying a multi-directional path image.

In a multi-directional path image a multiplex of path vectors spreads in random directions until it occupies all regions of a LM space and comes to characterize that space generally, either covering it or enveloping it or permeating it. That image is not compatible with a sequential construal. A sequential construal would require concentrating attention on particular FGs and particular paths, and on a sequence of particular locations rather than on an overall impression of the LM space. Imagine the scene described in (13b) with children running through the house and yard. If we focus on any individual child and its path, that would distract our attention from the other children and from the overall appearance of the activity in the LM space. Moreover, a sequential construal might invite us to continue tracking a FG to a location beyond the bounds of the LM, while a multi-directional image requires us to hold attention steadily on the LM space. A collective multi-directional path reading requires a synoptic perspective, and it is thus the exclusive province of prefixed verb constructions.

The prefixed verb constructions that describe linear holistic paths are a marked alternative to the more normal sequential constructions with a simple verb and a PP (or a particle). The synoptic path construal requires resisting the tendency to focus particularly on a moving FG. With multi-directional paths on the other hand, a prefixed verb construction is itself the unmarked norm. A multi-directional path is intrinsically diffuse, with no overall shape of its own independent of the LM. In fact, a true multi-directional path image can *only* be expressed in German by a prefixed verb construction.[21]

4.3   Summary of basic characteristics

Basically everything that is true of holistic paths applies even more to multi-directional paths.

–   The route path itself – whether a shaped holistic path or a multi-directional path without an independent shape – has primary prominence.

A synoptic construal increases the prominence of the path itself, the overall shape of the event. In the case of holistic paths that means heightened awareness of a linear shape; in the case of multi-directional paths that means an overall

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21. More specifically, true multi-directional path images are restricted to constructions with route-path prefixes. They are the only paths that do not specify either a starting or an end location that would have to be shared by all paths that share the same LM. The image of multi-directional route paths can thus take place essentially within the bounds of a single LM space.

impression that the event has no independent shape, that it spreads diffusely in all possible directions. In both cases what is being located relative to the LM is not primarily a thing that is moving on the path; it is the shaped path itself (the arrows in Figures 1–4). In a sequential construal, what is being located relative to the LM is a FG that is moving on the path, occupying a series of locations each defined relative to the LM.

– Any potential FG for the path has reduced prominence.

Making the overall shape of the path itself more prominent means that whatever instantiates that path becomes relatively less prominent. A sequential construal prompts us to concentrate attention on a moving FG, which is expressed either as the subject or as an accusative object of the verb. From a synoptic perspective on the other hand, even if there is a compact object moving on a path it will appear relatively smaller (viewed from further away). Much more commonly there is no compact moving object that might attract concentrated attention as an entity distinct from the path. Geometric holistic paths tend to be instantiated by extended objects with a linear geometric shape that coincides with the shape of the path, and multi-directional paths are usually instantiated by diffuse two- or three-dimensional substances that have no intrinsic shape of their own. In typical cases then, the only potential moving participants in the event are not visibly that distinct from the route paths themselves.
Syntactically, these semantic observations are reflected in the fact that the "theme" that is moving on the path is very often not given any FG status at all in the prefixed verb construction. It is most typically either embedded as the root of a denominal base verb or specified in an oblique *mit*-PP.

– There is typically a prominent resulting state that characterizes the whole synoptic scene.

Since the events typically involve extended objects rather than compact moving ones, there is typically a resulting state defined by the object's extent relative to the LM. It is often not significant how the resulting configuration was reached, and fictive motion descriptions of extension in a static scene are common.

– Elapsing time has slightly reduced prominence.

Reducing our awareness of individual internal parts of the path subtly means reducing our awareness of individual successive moments while the event is proceeding. Synoptic construals can thus make an event seem temporally more holistic, even though the amount of elapsed time is objectively the same. In the case of holistic paths that avoid a focal obstacle, the event is construed more as a holistic act (a chunked routine executed as a whole). In the case of multi-directional paths the important image is usually the relatively timeless

resulting state of extension without regard to precisely how it came about. In other words, construing the path holistically has subtle effects on how we think of the event aspectually. A sequential construal of a path over, around, or through an obstacle makes us aware of a succession of moments in time, and the length of the path is computed mainly in terms of how long it lasts rather than its purely spatial extent. A synoptic construal of the same event seems to collapse the event into a holistic shape – and it thus very subtly conveys a less vivid sense of time passing during the event.

– The LM has increased prominence.

The prominence of the LM is significantly increased. A synoptic construal intrinsically gives the LM a stable presence throughout the construal. (In a sequential construal the FG has relatively exclusive central prominence in each frame of the path construal, while the LM is relegated to peripheral status in each frame. Compare Figure 5.) Moreover, that stable position is relatively near the center of the synoptic setting. Both the holistic paths and the multi-directional ones have central LMs that locate the whole path event. (See Figures 1–4.) And in the case of multi-directional paths the LM is often the only entity in the scene with a defined shape. It hosts a diffuse path event and more or less defines the shape of whatever substance instantiates the path. Syntactically, in all of the constructions that describe either holistic paths or multi-directional paths the LM has explicit focal prominence as the accusative object of the verb. (Compare its lesser status as the object in an oblique PP, and in particle verb constructions it is typically not explicitly mentioned at all.) In fact, accusative LMs play such an important role in these and many other prefixed verb constructions – especially those with *be-* verbs – that they warrant separate discussion.

4.4   Accusative LMs

Both the holistic paths and the multi-directional paths relate the event described by the base verb directly to the LM of the prefix relation, making it an *accusative LM*. Accusative LMs warrant special notice because they are exclusively associated with prefixed verb constructions in German. They do not occur with unprefixed verbs.

When unprefixed verb constructions in German have an accusative object, the sequential construal consistently makes that object a semantic FG. (Throughout this book the term "accusative object" is meant to include the nominative subjects of passive constructions or of constructions with an attributive past participle.) The most common types of accusative FG are usually called "themes" or "patients" by linguists. A theme is set in motion on a path of its own, and a patient is altered

internally in some way so that it undergoes a change of state. In both cases the interpreter shifts focal attention from the nominative subject to the accusative object at some point during the course of a sequential construal. That is, if some-one throws a ball the focus is first concentrated on the subject and its manner of throwing, with the ball functioning as a LM for that activity. Then at some point focal attention is transferred from the subject's arm to the ball, and we begin to track it as the FG for an ensuing path. Similarly, if the ball breaks a window we start the construal focused on the ball as the semantic FG and then shift focal attention to the window as parts of it become severed from each other.[22] The most obvious test for an accusative FG is its potential to be the semantic FG for an additional predication of some kind, such as a path expression (e.g. 'Sie warf den Ball durch das Fenster') or a resultative phrase (e.g. 'Laila brach den Apfel in zwei Teile', 'Er strich die Decke glatt').

The accusative objects that appear in constructions for holistic paths and multi-directional paths are significantly different in that they do not become se-mantic FGs. They remain focal parts *of* the setting, as opposed to things *in* the setting that can do something (such as move or undergo a change of state). Unlike accusative FGs they cannot become the subject for an additional predication. One does not say for example *'Die Kugel durchschlug das Fenster ins Haus' or *'Er übergoss sich nass'.[23]

Note the typical grammatical alternations illustrated in (22) and (23). In the unprefixed (a) variants the LMs – the cake in (22) and the puddle in (23) – are expressed as the object of a preposition. In the (b) variants with a prefixed verb they are expressed as accusative LMs. The most obvious difference is focal prominence. The LM is less prominent as the object of a preposition than it is as the direct object of the verb. (It is even less prominent than that if it is not explicitly mentioned at

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22. A special type of accusative FG is an *incremental theme*, which plays a role in Section 5.2. Some accusative FGs are *reflexive-trajectors* (Lindner 1983), i.e., a special kind of extending FG in which part of the object moves in a characteristic way relative to the implicit rest of the same object. For example, a person may turn around in place so that the relatively peripheral parts rotate in an *um* path around a relatively stationary center. Reflexive-trajectors are particularly associated with particle verbs, which normally leave the LM implicit.

23. All accusative objects of a verb become the most focal noun in the profiled relation at some point during the construal, and the most prominent entity in a relation is by definition its FG – while LMs are by definition entities with secondary prominence. Accusative LMs would seem to be incompatible with those two principles: as accusatives they are the most focal noun, but as LMs they have secondary prominence. What makes their unique status possible is that the accusative LMs are the *only* noun focally profiled in the relation indicated by the verb prefix. The semantic FG is not another noun, as it is in sequential construals; it is the verb process itself (the route path represented by the arrow in Figures 1–4).

all in a particle verb construction.) The semantic role of the LM on the other hand is essentially the same in all of the constructions. It is a region of the setting that serves to locate something. In the sequential construal that something is a normal FG, either the accusative object (the sugar in (22a)) or the intransitive nominative subject (the children in (23a)). In the synoptic (b) variants the "FG" is not a noun; it is the path expressed by the prefixed verb. What makes the accusative LM semantically unusual is that it is a focal accusative object, but as a region of the setting it is not portrayed to be affected by the event in any essential way.[24]

(22) a. Wer mag, mischt sich Zimtzucker und streut ihn vor dem Kaltstellen über den Kuchen.
'If you like you can mix cinnamon sugar and sprinkle it over the cake before it cools'

   b. Wenn man die Butter gleichmäßig verteilt hat, mischt man Zucker und Vanille-Zucker und *überstreut* den Kuchen gleichmäßig damit.
'When you have spread the butter evenly, mix sugar and vanilla sugar and (*über-*)sprinkle the cake evenly with it'

(23) a. Alle Kinder gehen um die Pfütze, nur nicht Kim, die steht drin.
'All the children go around the puddle, except for Kim who stands therein'

   b. Linnea *umging* die Pfütze und kam auf ihn zu.
'Linnea circumvented [*um*-went] the puddle and came up to him'

One obvious stylistic advantage of a construction with an accusative LM is that the LM can become the subject of a passive construction or a construction with an attributive past participle. In common uses like (24a) or (24b) for example the passive voice would be awkward with an unprefixed verb, since the LM would have to be a relative pronoun that appears as the object of a preposition (e.g. 'über das … gestreut wird'). Moreover, the LM in multi-directional variants is typically characterized by the resulting state, so that it becomes attractive to make it the subject of an attributive past participle as in (24c).

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24. We know pragmatically of course that a *durch* path through a solid object will presumably dislodge part of the object, but that implication is extraneous as far as the construction with a LM is concerned. 'Die Kugel schlug durch die Scheibe' focuses only on the path of the bullet and any effect on the windowpane is incidental. The same goes for 'Die Kugel *durchschlug* die Scheibe'. Incidentally, the semantic nature of accusative LMs is compatible with the common generative syntactic practice of deriving prefixed verb constructions with accusative LMs (e.g. 'Sie *umlegten* das Grab mit Blumen') from underlying structures that have a simple verb and a PP ('Sie legten Blumen um das Grab'). See for example Stiebels and Wunderlich (1994) or Olsen (1996). The accusative LM with the prefixed verb corresponds semantically to the object of a preposition, as it would be if derived by a syntactic process of argument shift.

(24) a. Obenauf kommt geschlagenes Eiweiß, das ganz dünn mit Kaffeepulver *überstreut* wird.
'On top comes whipped egg white that is (*über-*)sprinkled with a thin layer of coffee powder'

b. Im Gelände wird eine Pfütze eher *übersprungen* als *umgangen* oder sie [Stute] rennt mitten hindurch.
'In open country a puddle is more apt to be (*über-*)jumped than avoided [*um*-gone], or else she [mare] runs right through it'

c. Geröstete Kaffeebohnen, *umhüllt* von feinster belgischer dunkler Schokolade.
'Roasted coffee beans, coated in [*um*-wrapped by] the finest Belgian dark chocolate'

We can say generally that constructions with *um-* and *durch-* all have an accusative LM. Accusative LMs are the most typical direct objects with *über-* and *unter-* verbs as well, although there are also some *über-* and *unter-* verbs that do not have accusative LMs (see Section 4.5). Accusative LMs are also consistently associated with *be-* verbs, with 'privative' *ent-* verbs, and with the 'attaining' variants of *er-* verbs. (See Chapters 2, 3, and 4.)

4.5 *Über-* and *unter-* verbs with an implicit LM

All constructions with *durch-* and *um-* can be classed either as holistic paths or as multi-directional paths with an accusative LM. Most prefixed *über-* verbs and *unter-* verbs fall into one of these two classes as well, but *über-* and *unter-* also sometimes occur in constructions like (25) with the LM left implicit. In such cases the prefixed verb can occur with an accusative object that plays the role of the theme entity that moves on the *über* or *unter* path, so that the construction basically has an accusative FG. On rare occasions the moving entity may even be an intransitive nominative subject as in (25c). The *über-* verbs in these constructions form a fairly cohesive semantic group describing abstract 'transfers' of some kind, from transfers of possession as in (25a) to more lexicalized types like (25b). The implicit LM is a presupposed gap between two spaces, and *über-* describes crossing that gap. The *über-* verbs often correspond to English *trans-* verbs. Compare the range of uses for *übertragen* reflected in (26).

(25) a. Vor Ort hatten wir eine Engländerin als Ansprechpartnerin, die uns auch die Schlüssel *übergeben* hat.
'We had an English woman on site as contact person, and she also (*über-*)gave us the keys [transferred possession]'

    b.   Ich habe angefangen, das Studio Handbuch ins Deutsche zu *übersetzen*.
       'I've begun translating [*über*-setting] the Studio Handbook into German'

    c.   Deutsche, die nach Österreich *übersiedelt* sind
       'Germans who have moved [*über*-settled] to Austria'

(26) a.   Mit der Übergabe soll dem Käufer auch das Eigentum *übertragen* werden.
       'With delivery possession is also understood to be transferred [*über*-carried] to the buyer'

    b.   Wir Deutsche müssen bereit sein, der Europäischen Gemeinschaft mehr Rechte zu *übertragen*.
       'We Germans must be ready to transfer more rights to the European Community'

    c.   Die nächsten Seminare mit Kiran werden online live *übertragen*.
       'The next seminars with Kiran will be transmitted live online'

    d.   Der Roman wurde aus dem Spanischen ins Deutsche *übertragen*.
       'The novel was translated from Spanish into German'

    e.   Die Krankheit wird vorwiegend durch Ratten oder Mäuse *übertragen*.
       'The disease is transmitted mainly by rats or mice'

    f.   Die Nervosität *übertrug sich* auf die Pferde.
       'The general nervousness spread [*über*-carried itself] to the horses'

(27) a.   Er *unterwirft sich* dem Willen Gottes.
       'He surrenders [*unter*-throws himself] to the will of God'

    b.   Die Strecke ist in drei Etappen *unterteilt*.
       'The course is subdivided into three stages'

Subtly, the synoptic image conveyed by these *über-* verbs treats the transfer as a holistic event that crosses an implicit gap, rather than as a sequential path in which we track a FG moving from one side of the gap to the other. Although the accusative object refers to the thing that moves on the *über* path, it is strictly speaking preferable to think of the FG for *über-* as the whole verb phrase (including its direct object), so that the event succeeds in bridging an implicit gap. The image is similar to holistic paths with verbs like *überspringen* or *überqueren*, except that the setting is now implicitly associated with the verb as opposed to being defined by a focal accusative LM. The essential point is that the prefixed verb construction relates a whole verb event to a setting.

    As for *unter-*, it occurs in a variety of highly lexicalized verbs that typically correspond to English verbs with prefixes such as *sub-* or *inter-*. The *sub-* verbs include verbs for supporting (*unterstützen*), undertaking (*unternehmen*), and suppressing or subjecting (*unterdrücken*, *unterwerfen*). The *inter-* verbs include *unterbinden*, *unterscheiden*, and *unterhalten* (in the 'entertain' sense). There are also *unter-* verbs

for abstract "visiting" (*unterstellen*, *unterlaufen*). Some of these *unter-* verbs are very common, but they do not form a cohesive group semantically.

Über- and *unter-* can also occur in "scalar" variants (Risch 1995) for overdoing or underdoing something. More obviously than was the case with the 'transfer' *über-* verbs, the FG for *über-* is the base-verb process itself rather than either the nominative subject or the accusative object. The verb process either extends too far beyond an implicit normal extent (*über-*) or does not extend far enough to reach the implicit norm (*unter-*). Both the scale and the normal extent are implicitly associated with the verb process.[25]

(28)   a.   Hier will ich von euch wissen, welcher Fussballer ihr für *überschätzt/ unterschätzt* hält?
            'I want to hear which soccer player you consider to be overrated/ underrated'

       b.   Die wichtigen Transitstraßen in Europa sind bereits heute *überlastet*.
            'The most important transit roads in Europe are already overburdened'

5.   Direct contrasts

One of the guiding principles of this book is that the best way to isolate the precise semantic contribution of a prefixed verb construction is to find cases where it contrasts directly with an unprefixed verb construction, so that the differences in meaning can be attributed to the prefix rather than to other grammatical differences. Such direct contrasts are often difficult to find.

In the case of (1a) and (1c) for example the contrast between a prefixed verb and a simple verb with a PP is not the only difference. There is also a significant difference between expressing the LM (*Sonne*) as the object of the preposition in (1a) and expressing it as an accusative LM in (1c). (22) and (23) illustrate similar alternations. Even if these alternations consistently reflect the difference between a synoptic construal and a sequential one, it is difficult to separate the semantic contribution of the prefixed verb from that of the other grammatical differences.

With regard to route paths there are two relatively unusual situations when a prefixed verb construction contrasts more directly with a particle verb construction, i.e., when the only obvious difference between the two constructions is

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25. See Dewell (2011: 228–42). *Über-* and *unter-* can occur in this meaning with virtually any base verb, including those that are themselves formed with an unstressed prefix or with the stressed suffix *-ieren*. That means that the prefix in a verb like *überbewerten* can receive phonological stress.

whether there is a prefixed verb or a particle verb. In one type, a prefixed *über-* verb like *überführen* has an implicit LM and its accusative object moves on the *über* path. In that case the *über-* verb construction can be nearly synonymous with one that has particle *ÜBER-* and an accusative FG. In the other type a particle *DURCH-* verb such as *DURCHschneiden* can have an accusative incremental theme that corresponds to the accusative LM with a prefixed *durch-* verb like *durchschneiden*. In these cases the prefixed verb constructions and the particle verb constructions can describe events that are objectively very similar, and any difference in meaning seems attributable to the grammatical constructions themselves. The next sections summarize briefly what was learned from such directly contrasting constructions in Dewell (2011).

5.1   *Überführen* vs *ÜBERführen*

Most directly contrasting constructions with a prefixed *über-* verb and a particle ÜBER- verb are clearly distinct semantically. In the cliché contrast between *übersetzen* and *ÜBERsetzen* for example, *übersetzen* is lexicalized in the meaning 'translate' while *ÜBERsetzen* is used for spatial paths in which a FG is set across an implicit gap. Such contrasts lead pedagogical grammars to say that prefixed verbs tend to have figurative meanings while particle verbs tend to have literal ones. Such statements have a grain of truth, but they do not stand up to much scrutiny.

(29) a. Martin Luther hat auf der Wartburg innerhalb von 80 Tagen das ganze Neue Testament ins Deutsche *übersetzt*.
'At the Wartburg Martin Luther translated [*über*-set] the whole New Testament into German in 80 days'

   b. Mit Schlauchbooten mussten alle 294 Passagiere *übergesetzt* werden.
'All 294 passengers had to be brought across [set *über*] with rubber rafts'

A more precise account looks at the matter in terms of sequential construals vs synoptic ones. The particle verb construction in (29b) invites us to concentrate focal attention on the passengers as they cross the implicit river. When the path begins, the FGs are located on one side of the river. Then they move through a sequence of intermediate locations until they eventually reach a distinct new location on the other side. The construal thus tends to remain narrowly focused in several senses: on the FG (as opposed to the rest of the setting), on each particular location that the FG occupies in the path sequence, and on each particular moment during the path. The setting is typically generic space (making it typically "literal"), so that our attention is not distracted away from the FG's location by more particular functional information about the setting.

The prefixed verb construction in (29a) invites us to focus relatively more on the route path itself as a whole event. *Übersetzen* also calls to mind a more specific abstract and complex setting where the path takes place, a setting that involves nonspatial information. The implicit LM of *ÜBERsetzen* could be the gap between any two regions in space. The implicit LM of *übersetzen* is known to be the gap between two languages. The result of the particle verb construction in (29b) is a new location for the FG. The result of the prefixed verb construction in (29a) is a completed whole act with nonspatial consequences.

These differences between a particle verb construction and a prefixed verb construction become particularly evident on the relatively rare occasions when either verb might be chosen. That is the case for example with *ÜBERführen* and *überführen* in (30)–(32), or between *ÜBERsiedeln* and *übersiedeln* in (33)–(34). In both cases the prefixed verb construction portrays the event as a holistic routine in a structured setting lexically implied by the verb, with a predictable type of destination. The particle verb construction portrays the event as a more purely spatial change of location, with a destination that could be anywhere.

(30)   a.   Wegen Suizidgefahr wurde der Tatverdächtige in eine psychiatrische Klinik *übergeführt*.
         'Because of the danger of suicide the suspect was transferred [led *über*] to a psychiatric clinic'

     b.   1963 wurde er in eine andere Klinik *überführt*, wo er bis 1974 blieb.
         'In 1963 he was transferred [*über*-led] to a different clinic, where he remained until 1974'

(31)   a.   Im Juli 1867 erhielt er den Befehl, die Leiche des erschossenen Kaisers Maximilian von Mexiko nach Europa *überzuführen*.
         'In July 1867 he received the order to transport the executed body of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico to Europe'

     b.   Jede Leiche ist innerhalb von 36 Stunden in eine Leichenhalle zu *überführen*.
         'Every corpse is to be conveyed to a mortuary within 36 hours'

(32)   a.   Die Mg-Verbindung Citrat wird ja durch die Magensäure aufgelöst und in Chlorid *übergeführt*.
         'The Mg compound citrate is dissolved by the stomach acid and transformed into chloride'

     b.   Durch spezielle Verfahren kann die Mehrheit der Atome eines Systems in den angeregten Zustand *überführt* werden.
         'Using special procedures the majority of the atoms in a system can be transformed into a state of agitation'

(33) a. Nach dem Tod von Kringel bin ich dann langsam in die Wohnung *übergesiedelt*.
'After Kringel's death I slowly moved [settled *über*] into the apartment'

b. Und ca. zur selben Zeit sind wir dann in unsere jetzige große Wohnung *übersiedelt*!
'And about the same time we (*über*-)moved into our current large apartment'

(34) a. Und diese 200000 Menschen sollten, so forderte die tschechoslowakische Regierung, nach Ungarn *übergesiedelt* werden.
'And according to the demands of the Czechoslovakian government, these 200,000 people should be relocated [moved *über*] to Hungary'

b. 150 Patienten müssen *übersiedelt* werden.
'150 patients have to be (*über*-)moved'

The prefixed verb *überführen* is used in a limited number of settings. It is lexicalized for convicting a criminal, in which case the destination is wholly predictable within a particular structured setting. In examples like (30b)–(32b) the destination is not quite that predictable, but the construction definitely describes a routine act within a structured setting. (30b) implies a routine transfer to a mortuary and (31b) to a hospital. (30a) and (31a) by contrast have destinations that are not routine or predictable. (32a) is not spatial, but it is based on a general spatial metaphor of moving from one state to another, and the destination could in theory be any other chemical state. (32b) portrays a similar event as a routine one with a predictable destination. If the destination can be predicted as normal given the meaning of *überführen* with a particular object, then the prefixed verb is appropriate; otherwise the particle verb *ÜBERführen* is better.

Similarly, the prefixed verb *übersiedeln* in (33b) suggests a routine whole event of changing residences within a constant given context (e.g. the same city). *ÜBERsiedeln* in (33a) subtly portrays the event more sequentially as a temporally extended process that takes place a piece at a time. In (34b) *übersiedeln* suggests a routine act with a predictable destination in the given setting, while *ÜBERsiedeln* in (34a) suggests a true shift to a new place that could be surprising.

5.2   *Durchschneiden* vs *DURCHschneiden*

The other situation when a prefixed verb construction can contrast directly with a particle verb construction is more common, and it is especially suited to reveal the essential construal difference between synoptic prefixed verb constructions and sequential particle verb constructions. The contrast arises when a normal *durch*-verb construction competes with a special type of DURCH- verb construction, namely one with an accusative incremental theme.

An *incremental theme* (Dowty 1991) has an extent that coincides exactly with the aspectual extent of the verb process. To take a classic example, the progress of an event of mowing a lawn can be measured at any point by looking at how much of the grass is now shorter, and the verb event is completed precisely at the point when the entire lawn is shorter. Incremental themes are often "effected objects" (e.g. 'write a letter'), "decremental themes" that are consumed ('eat a sandwich'), or objects that undergo other types of change that spread sequentially until every part of the object has been affected ('mow the lawn', 'paint a house').

When DURCH- verbs occur with an incremental theme they describe a process that moves through every internal part of the object in sequence. For example, (35a) describes playing every hole of the golf course and the extent of the playing event maps neatly onto the extent of the course (e.g., after 6 holes the playing event is one-third complete). Note that the same type of objective event might also be described as a holistic path with a *durch-* verb and an accusative LM as in (35b). The DURCH- verb in (35a) describes occupying every internal part of the route in sequence, playing each individual hole. The *durch-* verb in (35b) treats the course as a whole LM, without calling attention to any sequence of locations within the LM. Compare Wunderlich's (1983: 460) observation about the sentence *Er durchfährt in 20 Minuten den Park*: "the travel expressed … cannot be considered piece by piece but only as a whole. It is not travel composed of a lot of partial movements." This fundamental distinction between a sequential construal and a synoptic one underlies all of the subtle contrasts in (35)–(38).

(35) a. Eine Runde besteht aus 18 Spielbahnen, die nacheinander auf dem Platz *durchgespielt* werden.
'A round consists of 18 holes that are played through on the course one after the other'

b. 9-Loch-Plätze sind für eine volle Runde zweimal zu *durchspielen*.
'9-hole courses are to be (*durch-*)played twice to make a whole round'

(36) a. Alle Teilnehmer des TCO schafften diese Strecke *durchzuschwimmen*.
'All participants in the TCO were able to swim this course all the way through'

b. Jeder Teilnehmer, der die Strecke *durchschwommen* hat, bekommt als Erinnerung eine Urkunde.
'Every participant who has (*durch-*)swum the course receives a certificate as a memento'

(37) a. Sita Wissenbach hat das Band *durchgeschnitten* und somit das Haus offiziell eröffnet.
'Sita Wissenbach cut through the ribbon and officially opened the building'

b. Zur Eröffnung haben wir nicht einfach ein Band *durchschnitten*.
'For the opening we did not simply (*durch-*)cut a ribbon'

(38) a. Es muss lediglich die Wand *durchgebohrt* werden und das Ventil ver-
schraubt werden.
'The wall just has to be drilled through and the valve screwed in'

b. Dazu müsste die 15cm dicke Wand *durchbohrt* werden, sowie neue Rohre
angeschlossen und verlegt werden.
'Additionally, the 15-centimeter thick wall would have to be drilled through
[*durch*-drilled] and new pipes hooked up and installed'

(36a) for example calls attention to sustaining the swimming all the way through
each stage of the course, continuously, until the end has been reached. It describes
an exhaustive and uninterrupted path through each point on the route in suc-
cession. (36b) describes the same type of objective event as a holistic act. Similar
contrasts are common with penetrating paths like those in (37) and (38). The
particle DURCH- verbs portray the paths as sequential ones that proceed from
one side of the accusative object to the other, typically creating a slice or a hole that
emerges gradually as the path proceeds and eventually goes all the way through it.
The prefixed *durch-* verbs on the other hand portray the path holistically without
concentrating attention on any particular internal point along the way. (37a) de-
scribes a path that begins at one edge of the ribbon and proceeds through it until
it reaches the far side, and it might suggest a recurring manner (repeated scissor
cuts). (37b) suggests that the cut is accomplished in a single stroke with no internal
complexity, in an image basically like overcoming a focal obstacle. (38a) calls at-
tention to the sequential progress of the drill while it is in the wall, and probably to
the hole that it leaves in its wake. (38b) does not prompt us to zoom in and focus
on the rotating drill bit as it makes its way through any particular point inside the
board. That is why the handbooks sanction *durchbohren* only for holistic paths
such as stabbings or the penetrating paths of bullets (i.e. with a neutralized par-
ticular manner of motion). Similar contrasts arise with verbs such as *durchstoßen*,
durchstechen, or *durchbrechen*.

In sentences like (35)–(38) there is no discernible objective difference in the
events and the constructions are largely interchangeable in practice. At times,
however, the subtle construal differences can convey slightly different objective
implications. The particle DURCH- verb in (39a) implies searching exhaustively
and systematically to cover every possible location within the space. The prefixed
durch- verb in (39b) implies a more routine and holistic search that is not neces-
sarily exhaustive.

(39) a. Hast Du schon die ganze Wohnung *durchgesucht*? Hinter Schränken oder
im Schrank?? Die [Katzen] finden manchmal die tollsten Verstecke.
'Did you search through the whole apartment? Behind cabinets or in
them?? They [cats] often find the craziest hiding places'

    b.   In der Nacht wurde meine Wohnung *durchsucht*, aber nichts gefunden.
        'My apartment was (*durch-*)searched during the night, but nothing was found'

(40) a.   Wie kann ich meinem Baby helfen, die Nacht *durchzuschlafen*?
        'How can I help my baby to sleep through the night [the whole night through]?'

    b.   nach dieser *durchtanzten* und *durchzechten* Nacht
        'after this night spent dancing and carousing [this *durch*-danced and *durch*-caroused night]'

This sense that the DURCH- paths are continuous and exhaustive while the *durch-* verbs convey a more general holistic impression is especially evident in temporal sentences like (40). (40a) describes sleeping continuously, from one moment to the next without stopping until the end of the night has been reached. In (40b) by contrast the dancing and carousing do not go on continuously in any particular sequence; they are interspersed randomly through the night so that they characterize it generally as a whole. The DURCH- verb describes a path through time that is continuous and exhaustive, and the construction typically reports how long an uninterrupted activity lasts. The *durch-* verb characterizes how a time period was spent. Similar subtle distinctions between a sequential construal and a synoptic one are also reflected with lexicalized temporal verbs like *durchleben* or *durchleiden* or *durchlaufen* in contrast to particle verbs like *DURCHmachen* or *DURCHstehen*. See Dewell (2011) for more extensive discussion.

    The same semantic patterns are found with other contrasting *durch-* verbs and DURCH- verbs. If bread is *durchgebacken* it has gone through every pre-scribed step of a scripted baking process and it is also baked thoroughly, all the way through, affecting each internal part. If the bread is *mit Rosinen durchbacken* then the raisins have been randomly distributed in the space until they characterize the loaf in a more gestalt-like image as a whole – even though they do not exhaustively fill the space.

    The particle verbs all prompt us to construe the route as a connected sequence of particular places and moments – in this case with an accusative incremental theme. The prefixed verbs prompt a synoptic construal that does not concentrate on any particular place inside the LM or on any particular moment during the path. With a particle verb the path proceeds step-by-step from one internal part of a route to the next, and we zoom in conceptually to look at those particular moments and places, one after the other. With a prefixed verb we assume a more synoptic perspective that reveals only the holistic outlines, without internal detail, so that both the path and the LM are construed as wholes without clearly differentiated individual parts.

6.   Summary

Generally speaking, the prefixed verb constructions with *um-*, *durch-*, *über-*, and *unter-* differ in consistent ways from unprefixed constructions (whether particle verbs or simple verbs with a PP). They differ most obviously in the relative prominence that they accord to the main entities involved in the path: the theme that instantiates the path, the accompanying activities that the theme may be engaged in, the LM and/or the general setting, the whole shaped path itself, and the particular locations that are occupied during the path. Prefixed verb constructions are typically associated with certain types of theme and with certain types of setting. They are also typically associated with certain types of grammatical construction.

–   The theme (the thing that instantiates the path) has reduced prominence.

Unprefixed verb constructions concentrate attention on a FG that instantiates the path. The FG is expressed either as the nominative subject or as the accusative object of the verb. The FG is typically a bounded whole entity with its own definite shape that exists independent of the path. (If the FG is extended then we concentrate our attention particularly on a salient part of it.) The FG is often engaged in a distinctive activity that accompanies its motion and further attracts our concentrated attention.

A theme that instantiates the path does not attract the same level of concentrated attention in a prefixed verb construction. It typically does not have a definite shape of its own independent of the path route (i.e., it is typically extended so that its shape merges with that of the path route, forming either a geometric configuration or a diffuse multiplex or mass). It is often abstract (such as spreading emotions or diseases, or information being transmitted or translated). It is very seldom engaged in any distinctive activity that accompanies its path. Frequently all that matters is its resulting extent, which is scanned in fictive motion with no real sense of how it objectively moved to reach that state. The theme is very often not accorded any FG status at all, for example when it is expressed obliquely in a *mit*-PP or as a denominal verb root. Generally speaking, the entity that instantiates the path has to share the stage more with the LM and/or the larger setting, and with the whole shaped path itself.

–   There is usually a prominent accusative LM.

In unprefixed verb constructions the FG is much more prominent than the LM. While the FG is either a nominative subject or an accusative object, the LM is expressed only obliquely as the object in a PP; and in particle constructions it is typically not mentioned explicitly at all.

In the most typical prefixed verb constructions on the other hand the LM has focal prominence as the accusative object of the verb. Accusative LMs are exclusively linked to prefixed verbs; particle verbs never occur with them. In multi-directional path images moreover, the LM is the only entity that has its own defined shape. Prefixed verbs are the only means available to express a true multi-directional path.

– There is always a relatively prominent structured setting.

Unprefixed verb constructions typically have an unmarked setting. The path typically takes place in generic space and time, and the setting is otherwise unstructured. The FG's path involves a shift from one place in the setting to another place that is not related to the first one in any way except that they are both places in space. Nothing about the setting distracts our attention from the FG's spatial location relative to the LM, and nothing suggests additional nonspatial functional relations.[26]

In a prefixed verb construction the core verb phrase (i.e. the compound verb together with its accusative object) indicates a more complex structured setting within which the path event takes place. With route-path prefixes that setting is most typically indicated by an accusative LM. When *über-* verbs or *unter-* verbs have an implicit LM, that LM and the larger setting are lexically associated with the compound verb. In any case, the locations on the path are related to each other in a way that goes beyond the purely spatial. Prefixed verbs do not simply describe movement from one place in space to another; they describe a path from one part of a complex structured setting to another, a path that is often predictable and routine. The setting typically introduces nonspatial factors – functional information such as purposes, potential visual or physical access to things, social relations, etc. Generally speaking, prefixed verbs are relatively more apt to be lexicalized as whole verb events with their own associated settings. They are often associated with technical language, describing agentive routines in particular functional contexts. Put most basically, the prefixed verb constructions portray the path as a whole entity that is itself being located in a larger structured setting (beyond pure generic space).

– The whole path is more prominent than its internal parts.

In unprefixed verb constructions the overall path has reduced prominence as we zoom in to concentrate especially on the FG, on its accompanying activity, and on where it is currently located. Concentrating attention on the FG implies

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26. Unprefixed verb constructions are of course sometimes used metaphorically for domains other than space, but those metaphors tend to be general metaphors applying to spatial expressions generally, such as space mapping onto time.

concentrating attention on particular locations in space and also on particular moments in time. The path described by an unprefixed verb construction is construed to have salient internal parts.

The path described by a prefixed verb construction does not have any salient internal parts; it has a salient overall shape and it is itself located, as a whole, in a larger setting. The FG in an unprefixed verb construction is the theme that instantiates the path; the FG in a prefixed verb construction is the path itself. Where the unprefixed verb construction prompts us to zoom in and concentrate attention on the moving FG and on particular parts of the path, the prefixed verb construction prompts us to pan out and see how the whole path is situated in the larger setting. The internal parts of the path become less prominent in a prefixed verb construction.

– Typical grammatical and stylistic tendencies reflect the meaning.

Unprefixed path constructions are prototypically intransitive, which makes sense given the concentrated attention on the FG that instantiates the path. They can also occur with accusative FGs that similarly invite concentrated attention. Unprefixed verbs commonly occur with the deictic particles *hin-* or *her-*. They tend to be stylistically unmarked.

Prefixed verbs with *um-*, *durch- über-*, and *unter-* are associated almost exclusively with accusative objects rather than intransitive constructions.[27] Accusative LMs are well suited to become the subject of passive or attributive past participles, and prefixed verbs generally are especially associated with those constructions – especially since multi-directional paths typically characterize the resulting state of the accusative LM as a whole. Prefixed verbs never occur with *hin-* or *her-*, because those particles would call particular attention to a specific part of the path (the source or goal location).

– The prefixed verb constructions prompt a construal in synoptic mode.

All in all, the most striking feature of construals with unprefixed verbs is concentrating attention, zooming in from a generic backgrounded setting to focus especially on the nominal FG and track it as it moves in sequence from one specific

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27. Exceptions in which a route-path prefix appears in an intransitive construction are very rare, and are largely limited to special cases with *über-*. *Übersiedeln* can be be used intransitively, as can the temporal denominal formations *übernachten* and *überwintern*. There are occasional setting-subject constructions with *über-* verbs like *überlaufen* or *überfrieren* in which a nominative LM is an overflowing container or a surface that covers over. Even scalar 'excess' *über-* verbs are rarely intransitive. Otherwise, intransitive constructions with prefixed verbs occur only when there is an omitted accusative LM that is specifically recoverable from context (for example with *überwiegen* or *überleben*).

location to the next. The constructions call attention to the internal parts of the path as they are occupied in sequence, i.e., to particular places at particular times. They prompt a construal in sequential perspectival mode.

The most striking feature of construals with a prefixed verb is distributing attention, zooming out to locate a whole shaped route and then place it within a larger setting. That setting is often defined in terms of a focal accusative LM, and it consistently has a structure of its own that includes nonspatial information. Where unprefixed verb constructions focus on parts of the path, prefixed verb constructions focus on the whole path as part of a larger setting. Prefixed verb constructions prompt a construal in synoptic perspectival mode.

Although the remaining verb prefixes *be-*, *ent-*, *er-*, *zer-*, and *ver-* differ in many ways from the route-path prefixes and from each other, the rest of this book is devoted to the ambitious thesis that the same general principles that hold for *um-*, *durch-*, *über-*, and *unter-* apply to the other prefixed constructions as well.

CHAPTER 2

Be-

1. Core meaning

Be- is actually a remarkably simple and regular prefix, albeit a very abstract one. The set of typical examples in (1)–(15) have several things in common.

(1) Dann *bestreicht* man dcn Teigrand mit Butter, *bestreut* den Kuchen mit Zucker und Mandeln und bäckt ihn.
'Then you (*be-*)spread the edges of the dough with butter, (*be-*)sprinkle the cake with sugar and almonds, and bake it'

(2) Fangen Sie damit an, zunächst einmal nur ein Nasenloch zu *besprühen* oder zu *betropfen*.
'Begin by (*be-*)spraying or applying drops to [*be-*dropping] only one nostril at first'

(3) Soll Syriens Opposition *bewaffnet* werden?
'Should the opposition in Syria be armed [*be-*weaponed]'

(4) Sehr sauber, nicht *beschriftet*, *bekritzelt* oder *beklebt*, alles noch einwandfrei lesbar.
'Very clean, not written on [*be-*scripted], carved on [*be-*carved] or pasted on [*be-*pasted], everything still impeccably legible' [describing the label of a vinyl record for sale]

(5) Im Jahre 1809 zog Napoleon in Wien ein und *besetzte* die Stadt.
'In 1809 Napoleon moved into Vienna and occupied [*be-*set] the city'

(6) Irgendetwas gibt es wohl immer zu *behämmern*, *bebohren*, *besägen*.
'There's always something to be (*be-*)hammered, (*be-*)drilled, (*be-*)sawed'

(7) Am Nachmittag kam der Doktor. Er *behorchte* und *beklopfte* seine Brust.
'In the afternoon the doctor came. He listened to [*be-*listened] and (*be-*)thumped his chest'

(8) Wie verkauft man ein Produkt, das in keinem Laden zu *bestaunen*, zu *beriechen* und zu *befühlen* ist?
'How do you sell a product that can't be (*be-*)marveled at, (*be-*)smelled and (*be-*)touched in a store?'

(9) Ärzte warnen davor, Allergien selbst zu *behandeln*.
'Physicians warn against treating [*be-*dealing-with] allergies yourself'

(10)   Die ikarische Republik *beschützt* und *beschirmt* die Kinder von Geburt an.
        'The Icarian Republic (*be-*)protects and (*be-*)shields the children from birth on'

(11)   Man *beruhigt* den *besorgten* Vater, *belächelt* seine Sektenhorrorvisionen, *bedauert*, dass er von Antikultgruppen Fehlinformationen erhalten habe.
        'They reassure [*be*-calm] the concerned [*be*-worried] father, make light of [*be*-smile] his nightmare scenarios of cults, deplore [*be*-regret] the fact that he has obtained misinformation from anti-cult groups'

(12)   In meiner Tätigkeit als Drucker habe ich häufig auch Kunden direkt an der Maschine *betreut* und *beraten*.
        'As part of my activities as a printer I also frequently supervised [*be*-attended] and (*be-*)advised clients right at the machine'

(13)   Atheisten werden von der gläubigen Arroganz ständig *beleidigt*, *bespottet*, diffamiert und mit Verachtung *bestraft*.
        'Atheists are constantly (*be-*)insulted, (*be-*)ridiculed, defamed and (*be-*)punished with contempt by the arrogance of believers'

(14)   Wir haben das Thema sorgfältig und lange *besprochen*.
        'We discussed [*be*-spoke] the topic carefully and at length'

(15)   Aber die Wirtschaft *berücksichtigt* das Risiko noch kaum.
        'But business still scarcely takes the risk into account [*be*-considers it]'

–   They all have an accusative object.
–   They all profile paths directed at the accusative object – assuming a notion of "path" that is abstract enough.

A path may involve a physical substance that moves from one location to another, such as sugar onto a cake. The path might focus mainly on the transfer of energy that moves with an instrument such as a hammer or a doctor's fingers thumping a chest. The energy (and the means of conveying it) may also be more diffuse and abstract and at least partially metaphorical, such as whatever is involved in treating a disease or calming an upset person or advising a customer or making light of someone's fears or expressing regret. The path might even consist purely of directing attention to a topic, such as considering a risk. In all cases the path corresponds to the scanning pattern of the interpreter.

–   The *be-* paths are diffuse.

None of the *be-* paths end at a single specific location in the LM space; they seem to affect the LM generally. There is very often a multiplex of paths, such as the paths of individual almonds, of individual nose drops, of individual hammer blows or of individual thumps of the doctor's fingers, and the collective impression is always one of random distribution somewhere in the LM space. This principle is reflected in the common observation that *be-* verbs do not have "individuated"

(bounded, countable) theme arguments (U. Brinkmann 1997: 103). That is, when there is an identifiable moving substance such as the butter or the sugar or the almonds in (1) – or the weapons or the implicit nosespray – that substance is a mass or a multiplex with a flexible shape. It is not a compact object that would attract concentrated attention and occupy a single defined portion of the LM. Contrast sprinkling sugar over a cake's surface with placing a cherry on it. The same principle applies when no identifiable theme substance at all is being applied to the LM. There is no sense of precisely where the drilling and sawing and hammering in (6) will take place; the actions apply to unspecified places on the LM surface and seem to affect the LM generally. In the more abstract cases like (8)–(15), it is not even sensible to ask precisely where in the LM space the paths end. The effects of a *be-* path are never localized.

– The *be-* paths are temporally diffuse.

Each granule of the sugar in (1) presumably lands on the cake not only at a slightly different place but also at a slightly different time. An important semantic implication of all of the *be-* verbs in (1)–(15) is that the events they describe are sustained over time.

– The *be-* paths are aspectually open-ended.

There is no defined point at which a *be-* verb event is completed. Once the sprinkling activity described by *bestreuen* in (1) has begun, then the precise time at which it stops is arbitrary. (1) could theoretically describe sprinkling three or four grains of sugar on the cake, or piling it on until it formed mounds. Of course we have a good idea approximately when the subject will stop sprinkling, but that is a pragmatic inference rather than an implication from the meaning of *bestreuen*. Contrast a normal sequential goal path such as 'She put a cherry on the cake', which is completed precisely at the point when the cherry is on the cake. 'She sprinkled the sugar on the cake' also has a defined point of completion, namely when all the sugar has been applied. Even 'She sprinkled sugar all over the cake' suggests a point when all parts of the cake have been affected and the event can be said to be completed at that point. There is no corresponding point of completion for the *be-* verb event in (1). The same goes for the number of thumps implied by *beklopfen* in (7).

– Every accusative object in (1)–(15) is an accusative LM.[28]

The accusative objects in (1)–(15) are all prominently focal and they are all targets of the base-verb activity; but they all remain semantic LMs (defined regions *of* the setting rather than potential actors *in* the setting). The accusative LMs are there

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28. There are remarkably few exceptions to this principle considering the number and variety of *be-* verbs in the language. And even the constructions that do not have an accusative LM involve sustained activities directed at a target and construed synoptically. See the discussion in Section 5.

as a part of the setting before the *be-* verb event begins, they are focal parts of the setting while the event is in progress, and when the event ends they are still parts of the setting. They are unchanged except that something may have been added to the space that they define (such as sugar on the cake). Of course in a sentence like (6) the LM is known to be objectively affected by the event, but that is a pragmatic inference that is not part of the meaning of the *be-* verb construction. We can say that something is 'flach gehämmert' (hammered flat) or 'in zwei Stücke gesägt' (sawed into two parts) with unprefixed verbs, but we cannot say that something is *'flach behämmert' or *'in zwei Stücke besägt'. An accusative LM cannot become the FG for an explicit new location or state. As far as the *be-* verb constructions are concerned, (6) is essentially like (7) – the accusative LM is simply the target toward which the base-verb activity is directed.[29]

– The *be-* verb event is construed synoptically.

The hallmark of a sequential construal is concentrated attention on a FG in a particular location at a particular time. The paths described by the *be-* verbs in (1)–(15) do not even have a focal noun that serves as the FG for the *be-* path. If something identifiable is moving on the path then it is often left completely implicit as in (2), and at most it is specified only as the object of a *mit*-PP as in (1) or as the root of a denominal verb like *bewaffnen*. The only focal nouns are the subject, which serves as the external energy source for the profiled path, and an accusative LM that cannot actively do anything. Moreover, the diffuse nature of the *be-* paths discourages us from concentrating attention on any particular point in space or time. The *be-* verb construction directs us to distribute our attention synoptically between the sustained activity expressed by the base verb and the accusative LM.

1.1   The schematic image

The core meaning of *be-* can be summarized simply enough: A sustained activity (a diffuse flow of energy or attention), indicated by the base verb, is directed from a source (the subject) to an accusative LM, and the event is construed synoptically. *Be-* basically describes synopticized transitivity or a synopticized goal path, but with the further provision that the path is a diffuse one that does not end at any single specific location at any particular time and is sustained over time. The path

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29. Hennig Brinkmann (1962) has an insightful discussion of *be-* verbs in which he anticipates two of the main points being made in this chapter. He stresses that what I am calling an accusative LM is already a given part of the setting before the process described by the *be-* verb begins. He also makes the important observation that *be-* adds an element of being sustained temporally ("duratives Moment"), reflecting the diffuse and open-ended temporal nature of the *be-* paths.

is diffuse in much the same way as the multi-directional paths with prefixes like *um-* or *über-* or *durch-*, and like those paths it can best be thought of as a multiplex of homogeneous path vectors.

In nearly every one of its many specific uses *be-*'s semantic contribution can be represented, crudely, by the schematic image in Figure 8. The picture is insufficient in several ways, but it can convey the basic idea if we make allowances for its inevitable shortcomings. The dotted circle represents a remote energy source, prototypically an agent that serves as the grammatical subject of the *be-* verb. The square represents a focal accusative LM – usually the surface of an object. The prefix *be-* itself profiles a multiplex of homogeneous path vectors directed from the source to the LM, represented by the arrows. Those vectors must be understood very abstractly. They may sometimes be associated with the path of a moving substance such as the sugar in (1), but they essentially represent pure directed energy or pure attention. The vectors ultimately represent the scanning pattern of an interpreter. A *be-* verb construction directs us to imagine the profiled event by moving our attention in the way suggested by the vectors in Figure 8.[30]
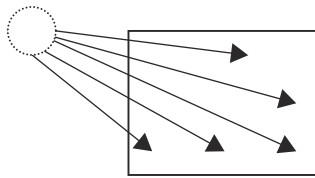
Figure 8. Schematic *be-*

The graphic representation in Figure 8 is particularly inadequate with respect to the path vectors. To begin with, the picture necessarily has a fixed number of individual arrows, while *be-* leaves the number of vectors unspecified and portrays them as a multiplex without calling attention to any individual vector. (There cannot be a single clearly defined path to a specific location within the LM space.) The vector arrows should give the impression of blurring together into a diffuse flowing multiplex or a mass with indistinct parts. The precise landing points for each vector are also intended to be vaguely unspecified, conveying an image of random distribution at the LM. Crucially, the temporal relation between the path vectors is also meant

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30. Unlike the route-path prefixes, *be-* does imply a source for the path vectors, an objective entity other than the path vectors and the LM. That makes *be-* verbs unsuited to describe the oriented location of an extended object in a reading with purely fictive motion. Even stative scenes like 'Der Schnee *bedeckt* den Wald' suggest vaguely sustained force vectors directed toward the LM rather than pure location the way *überdecken* might. If the *be-* arrows correspond to pure attention, they involve the attention of the nominative subject – not just of the interpreter.

to be indeterminate, though there is no way to indicate that in a static picture. The vectors may be iterative and they may overlap in time, but in any event the overall flow is always sustained for an indefinite amount of time. The event profiled by *be-* is ongoing and open-ended, without an intrinsic point of conclusion.

The path image suggested by *be-* is essentially like the multi-directional paths that can be expressed by *um-*, *über-*, or *durch-*, except that there is now an overall direction to the flow (from the subject toward the LM). Multi-directional paths create the impression of a blurred spread in all possible directions, all within the LM space, while the *be-* path vectors create the impression of an ongoing flow continually arriving at the LM, like surf lapping against the pilings of a pier. As with the multi-directional route paths, the description used for a multiplex of paths (such as the paths taken by each nose drop or each thump on a patient's chest) can also be used for an undifferentiated mass flow (such as the flow of liquids or butter or a blanket). It makes little difference whether a fluid such as water is administered as a succession of individual drops, or sprinkled or sprayed as a loosely organized multiplex of particles, or poured as a continuous mass. In all cases the cumulative effect is a diffuse flow. Recall the discussion of the multiplex-mass transformation in Chapter 1.

In all typical instances then, *be-* verbs describe directing an indeterminate number of homogeneous path vectors from a source (the nominative subject) to a focal accusative LM – all construed synoptically in a stable conceptual frame. At its core *be-* prompts us to direct our attention to an activity that extends from a source to a place somewhere in the focal LM space, and to continue refreshing that image until the event stops. The objective paths being described may involve physical moving "theme" substances (like butter, sugar, and almonds), or the energy of physical force vectors (like hammering), or the intended direction of symbolic expressions aimed either at referential topics (like discussing) or at audiences (like advising). It may involve pure attention (like considering risks). It may also involve any reasonable combination of these objective images.

1.2   Comparing German and English

English has no forms that explicitly represent *be-*'s synopticizing function, or the related category of an accusative LM (as opposed to an accusative FG), or *be-*'s implication that the event is spatially and temporally diffuse. Generally speaking *be-* has to be left untranslated in English, except insofar as the LM role is expressed grammatically as a direct object of the verb. *Be-* verbs thus correspond roughly to the "*with* variants" in 'spray/load' alternations (Levin 1993: 50–51, 117–19), i.e., to constructions like 'spray the wall with paint' or 'load the wagon (with boxes)' as opposed to 'spray paint on the wall' or 'load boxes on the wagon'. All that remains of *be-* in English translation are transitivity and the choice of direct object. There

is scarcely any way to convey the more subtle aspects of *be-*'s meaning, namely the synoptic construal and the implications of diffuse distribution. This lack of a good equivalent in English is one reason why *be-* is commonly held to serve only a syntactic function rather than a truly semantic one.

The related English prefix *be-* survives mainly in lexicalized compounds that are no longer felt to have a productive prefix. Words like *become*, *begin*, *believe*, *belong*, *behave*, *behold*, *betray* are scarcely felt to have a functioning prefix, and others like *behoove*, *beget*, *beguile*, *befuddle*, *bewilder*, *bereave*, *berate*, *besmirch*, *beseech*, *betide*, *beware* do not have independently analyzed base verbs (at least in the related meaning). Still, there are some vague semantic associations reflecting the old Germanic meaning of *be-* that are similar to German *be-*. Most English *be-* verbs do suggest some sense of transitive direction, and many can be grouped into recognizable clusters that can seem almost productive. Given a set such as *bedazzle*, *bewitch*, *bemuse*, *benumb*, *befog*, *becloud*, *beguile*, *befuddle*, and *bewilder*, we could understand a novel coinage like ?*betrance*. Given *bewail*, *bemoan*, *becry*, *bemourn*, *begrudge*, and *bereave*, we might understand a coinage like ?*beweep*. Other clusters that suggest semantic patterns include *befit*, *beseem*, and *behoove* (and *belong*?); *befoul*, *bemire*, *besmear belittle*, *berate*, and *besmirch*; *bestow*, *bequeath*, *bequest*; *beset*, *besiege*, *bedevil*, *befall*, and *betide*. Other verbs with potentially meaningful *be-* include *belabor*, *bestir*, *betoken*, *bespeak*, *bedeck*, *bestride*, *befriend*, *bedraggle*, and the oddly illogical meaning of *behead*. As with German *be-*, there is also a discernible association between English *be-* and attributive past participles: *belated*, *beloved*, *bereft*, *betrothed*, *benighted*. Despite these historical vestiges, however, English does not have a functioning system of prefixes comparable to the one in German, one in which each prefix contrasts systematically with other prefixes and in which choosing any prefixed verb expresses a schematic meaning such as synoptic construal.

2. *Be-* verbs and transitivity

Be- verbs are almost exclusively associated with accusative objects, and the vast majority of those are accusative LMs.[31] The link between *be-* verbs and transitivity is not surprising, since the schematic meaning of *be-* is very similar to the schematic

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31. The only *be-* verbs of any significance that do not have an accusative object are *begegnen* and the 'suit' verbs *behagen*, *bekommen*, and *belieben*, which are all lexicalized with dative objects; the 'persisting' verbs *beharren*, *bestehen*, and *beruhen*; the largely archaic use of *bedürfen* with a genitive object; and the unusual use of *beschlagen* (or *belaufen*) with a nominative LM that fogs over. Compare the host subjects that commonly occur with *zer-* and *er-*. Additionally, the verbs *befehlen*, *berichten*, *beraten*, *beratschlagen*, *befinden*, *bestimmen*, and *beschließen* can sometimes be used intransitively with an *über*-PP.

meaning of transitive constructions generally. Both involve paths (including purely abstract paths) from a focal nominative subject to a focal accusative object. In fact, *be-* is often taken to have a predominantly if not purely transitivizing function.

It makes sense then to begin the discussion of *be-* by contrasting *be-* verb constructions with normal transitive constructions, i.e., those with unprefixed verbs. Generally speaking, normal transitive constructions have simple directed paths that can be represented by a single vector arrow,[32] and they prompt a sequential construal. The interpreter begins with concentrated focus on the nominative subject and its activity and tracks it until it reaches the accusative object. At that point the accusative object typically becomes a focal FG in its own right, poised to continue the event sequence by doing something itself. It may for example be set in motion like a billiard ball (becoming a "theme", as in 'She threw the ball through the window'). It may undergo an internal change (becoming a "patient", as in 'The ball broke the window'). There is also a special case called an "incremental theme" (Dowty 1991), in which the accusative object determines the course of the verb process so that the two extend together and the event concludes when the end of the accusative object is reached (e.g. 'She sang the song'). These types often combine, for example when a patient is moved metaphorically into a new state (e.g. 'He smashed the cup to pieces') or an incremental theme is transformed (e.g. 'She ate an apple'). The transitive path is completed when focal attention has shifted to the accusative object.[33] It follows that transitive constructions are typically telic and have accusative objects that are individuated and significantly affected as whole FGs (compare Hopper and Thompson 1980).

Be- verb constructions differ from normal unprefixed transitive constructions in two basic ways: The construal is synoptic rather than sequential, and the path from subject to object is diffuse (a multiplex of vectors rather than a single vector). It follows that the *be-* verbs will have an accusative LM rather than an accusative FG, and the events will be aspectually open-ended rather than telic. The diffuse path described by a *be-* verb does not conclude when it first reaches the accusative object (or at any other defined point, such as the end of an incremental theme).

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32. Transitive constructions with simple verbs may describe iterated events, but each path is interpreted individually in sequence rather than as a synoptic multiplex.

33. In the limiting case an event may end precisely at the point when the verb process makes contact with the direct object (e.g. 'She touched my arm' or 'The arrow hit the target'), making the distinction between a normal direct object and an accusative LM minimal.

2.1   *Be-* verbs that transitivize

These differences between *be-* verb constructions and other transitive constructions are subtle, while the similarities are more obvious. Apart from the nuanced implications that reflect the spatially and temporally diffuse nature of the *be-* vectors, *be-* verb constructions are essentially just synopticized transitives. In fact, one of the most obvious stylistic functions associated with *be-* verbs is their ability to form a transitive construction from an intransitive base verb, resulting in pairs like those in (16)–(21). In the most typical cases the intransitive simple verb takes a path PP such as the *auf*-PP in (16a), the *über*-PP in (17a), the *an*-PP in (18a), or the *gegen*-PP in (19a), and the *be-* verb has an accusative LM that corresponds to the object of that PP. The accusative LM can also correspond occasionally to a dative object with the simple verb, as in (20a) and (21a).

(16) a. Marla *antwortet* nicht auf die Frage.
        'Maria does not answer the question (respond to it)'

   b. Desmond *beantwortet* die Frage nicht.
        'Desmond does not (*be-*)answer the question'

(17) a. Frauen *sprechen* über das Problem in der Regel erst, wenn sie schon seit längerem vergeblich versucht haben, schwanger zu werden.
        'Women typically do not talk about the problem until they have tried unsuccessfully to get pregnant for a long time'

   b. Sie *besprechen* das Problem mit dem Techniker am Telefon.
        'They discuss (*be-*speak) the problem by telephone with a technician'

(18) a. Er *denkt* nicht an die Folgen der Zerstörung des Regenwaldes. Für ihn geht es um das pure Überleben.
        'He doesn't think about the consequences of destroying the rain forest. For him it's purely about survival'

   b. Er *bedenkt* nicht die Folgen, dass wir uns selbst vergiften werden.
        'He doesn't reflect on (*be-*think) the consequences, that we will poison ourselves'

(19) a. Harry Belafonte *kämpft* gegen Rassismus.
        'Harry Belafontane fights against racism (struggles against it)'

   b. Die finnische Regierung *bekämpft* Rassismus im Internet.
        'The Finnish government is combatting ("*be-*fighting") racism in the Internet'

(20) a. Seine Frau *rät* ihm, mit dem Pastor zu reden.
        'His wife advises him [dative] to talk with the pastor'

   b. Sein Freund Anton *berät* ihn in Liebesdingen.
        'His friend Anton (*be-*)advises him [accusative] in matters of the heart'

(21)   a.   Sie *drohte* ihm, seine Wohnung und sein Auto zu beschädigen.
'She threatened [him, dative] to damage his home and his car'

b.   Vor Gustav Hannemann steht mitten in der Nacht ein Einbrecher und
bedroht ihn mit einer Waffe.
'In the middle of the night an intruder is standing in front of Gustav
Hannemann and (*be-*)threatening him [accusative] with a gun'

The most obvious difference in meaning between the *be-* verb constructions and
the unprefixed constructions is clearly transitivity and the accompanying increase
in focal prominence for the LM as the target of the verb activity. Occasionally
though there are other subtle semantic differences that reflect *be-*'s implication
that the activity is sustained and directed at the accusative LM. *Antworten* in (16a)
can describe any kind of response, including an evasive one, and it suggests a
single complete act. *Beantworten* in (16b) implies providing the question with a
sustained and adequate answer (Beaton 1996: 40, Farrell 1977: 18). (Since Beaton
1996 and Farrell 1977 are cited so often in this book, I omit the publication dates
in references from now on.) Similarly, simple *raten* in (20) suggests giving someone
a single piece of advice on a particular occasion, while *beraten* implies providing
counsel on an ongoing basis. *Denken* in (18) means having thoughts on a matter,
while *bedenken* means considering a topic at some length. Simple *drohen* describes
a completed act in (21a), or else a given set of circumstances that threaten con-
sequences at some time in the future, so that the threat and the consequences are
separate from each other. *Bedrohen* on the other hand describes a sustained and
immediate danger that amounts to being on the verge of actually attacking the ac-
cusative LM.[34] Even when the simple verbs also describe a sustained activity rather
than a completed act, the *be-* verb subtly suggests providing the accusative LM with
more extensive and adequate attention, as is the case for example with *besprechen*
in (17b). *Bekämpfen* in (19b) implies an organized and sustained campaign.

The sentence in (22) illustrates the subtle implications of *befolgen* and *beachten*,
as opposed to simple *folgen* (with dative) or *achten* (*auf* …). Where *folgen* describes
following a guiding principle, *befolgen* describes strictly adhering to a rule (Beaton
300, Curme 1922: 435), keeping the LM in mind as an object of sustained, con-
scious, active attention.[35] *Beachten* similarly means not only to take notice of the

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34. Constructions with *bedrohen* do not refer explicitly to what the subject is threatening to
do in the future. A *mit*-PP with *bedrohen* indicates an instrument such as the weapon in (21b),
while a *mit*-PP with *drohen* indicates what the subject is threatening to do (Beaton 725).

35. This subtle semantic difference is reflected in the frequency statistics. Simple *folgen* is rela-
tively more common with general guidelines (e.g. *Prinzip*, *Grundsatz* – not to mention *Herz*) and
befolgen is relatively more common with specific instructions (e.g. *Anweisungen*, *Vorschriften*,
Rat, *Gesetz*, *Regeln*, *Befehl*).

LM but to sustain directed attention toward it in a way that implies acting accordingly. Where (23a) just means being aware that the sign is there, (23b) means that the subject did not conform to the demands of the sign.

(22) Bei diesem Prozess wird dabei das grundlegende Prinzip *befolgt*, stets die Interessen der Bevölkerung zu *beachten* und diese vorzugsweise zu behandeln. 'The fundamental principle being (*be-*)followed in this process is to keep the interests of the people constantly in mind [*be*-attend them] and to treat [*be*-handle] them preferentially'

(23) a. Ich fahr da zwar fast täglich vorbei, habe aber noch nie auf das Schild *geachtet*.
'I drive by there almost daily but I've never noticed [attended] the sign before'

b. Dort eröffnet man uns, dass wir ein 40 km/h Schild nicht *beachtet* hätten. 'There they informed us that we had not heeded [*be*-attended] a 40-kilometer-per-hour sign'

Similar pairs can also be formed when the simple verb has a locational PP rather than a path PP. In (24) for example, *bewohnen* again serves to transitivize the base verb. Subtly, the *be-* verb also suggests that the inhabitants are to be construed as a multiplex that cumulatively occupies the space, while simple *wohnen* suggests a plural subject with each individual person residing there. *Wohnen* (*in*..) tells us where all those people live; *bewohnen* tells us how big a population the city contains. The relationship between *fahren* and *befahren* in (25) is actually similar. (25a) reports where the *fahren* activity occurs, while *befahren* in (25b) describes occupying the road, using it (cf *benutzen*).

(24) a. Rund 120.000 Menschen *wohnen* in der Stadt.
'About 120,000 people reside in the city'

b. Mehr als 300.000 Menschen *bewohnen* die Stadt.
'More than 300,000 people inhabit [*be*-reside] the city'

(25) a. Der 16-jährige Rollerfahrer *fuhr* auf der Straße Osttor in Richtung Albersloher Weg.
'The 16-year-old scooter rider was riding on Osttor Road in the direction of Albersloher Way'

b. Der 16-jährige Rollerfahrer *befährt* die Brenzstraße auf dem linken Fahrstreifen in Richtung Oststadt.
'The 16-year-old scooter rider is traveling on [*be*-riding] Brenz Street in the left lane toward Oststadt'

Neatly paired examples with intransitive *steigen* (*auf*..) and transitive *besteigen* are especially easy to come by, as in (26)–(27). Unlike the *be-* verbs in (16)–(25),

besteigen does not imply that the verb process itself is a temporally sustained activity. *Besteigen* does suggest, however, that the climbing event initiates a sustained interaction with the accusative LM, something like the 'occupying' verb *besetzen* in (5). Mounting a horse and boarding a train suggest embarking on an ensuing journey, while mounting a podium or a throne means embarking on an activity such as conducting an orchestra or being king. The *be-* verb describes a more complex event than the simple spatial goal path described by the construction with unprefixed *steigen*. Similar comments apply to *beschreiten* or to *betreten*. Taking the field in (28b) initiates an activity that will take place there.

(26) a. Ein Dirigent in Uniform *steigt* auf das Podium.
          'A conductor in uniform climbs onto the stage'

      b. Er *besteigt* das Podium und hebt sofort den Taktstock zum Einsatz.
          'He mounts [*be*-climbs] the stage and immediately raises the baton for the prelude'

(27) a. Gudrun *steigt* auf das Pferd.
          'Gudrun climbs onto the horse'

      b. Perseus *besteigt* das Pferd.
          'Perseus mounts [*be*-climbs] the horse'

(28) a. Aysha *trat* auf das Feld und stellte sich in die Mitte der Spielfläche.
          'Aysha stepped onto the field and stood in the middle of the playing surface'

      b. Kicker Jimmy Kibble *betrat* das Feld, um den fälligen Extrapunkt zu erzielen.
          'Kicker Jimmy Kibble took [*be*-stepped] the field to convert the extra point'

In all these cases there is no denying that the primary function of the *be-* verb construction is to transitivize, promoting what would be an oblique LM to the status of a focal accusative object. The transitive *be-* verbs also have the practical stylistic advantage of allowing straightforward passive constructions, or attributive participial constructions with the LM as subject. It is also true, however, that *be-* makes a semantic contribution that goes beyond just transitivity. The paths suggest that the event is temporally sustained and involves a complex interaction with the accusative LM such as actively occupying it, and the construal is synoptic.

2.2 Applicative constructions and the "locative alternation"

Another group of pairs can be formed as in (29)–(31). Now the simple verbs are themselves transitive, but they have an accusative FG (theme) and a path PP. The corresponding *be-* verbs have an accusative LM, and the theme is expressed only in a *mit*-PP if at all. The *be-* verbs clearly function largely to promote the LM

to the status of accusative LM, much like the transitive *be-* verbs that alternate with intransitive base verbs. The constructions now also intrinsically reduce the prominence of the theme in comparison with the unprefixed verb constructions, demoting it from its status as accusative FG.

(29) a. Giles *tupfte* Jod auf die Wunde.
'Giles dabbed iodine on the wound'

b. Jana *betupfte* die Wunde mit Jod.
'Jana (*be-*)dabbed the wound with iodine'

(30) a. Wir *liefern* warmes Essen an 7 Tagen in der Woche direkt nach Hause.
'We deliver hot meals directly to your home 7 days a week'

b. Wir *beliefern* unsere Kunden mit warmem oder kaltem Essen.
'We provide [*be-*deliver] our customers with hot or cold meals'

(31) a. Mein Traummann *malt* gerade Pokemon auf Ostereier.
'The man of my dreams is at the moment painting pokemon figures on Easter eggs'

b. Der Egg-Bot *bemalt* Ostereier mit Ihren selbst entworfenen Mustern.
'The Egg-Bot (*be-*)paints easter eggs with patterns that you design yourself'

Such pairs lend themselves particularly well to studies with a syntactic focus, and they have received additional attention because they look like the German counterpart to the much-discussed "locative alternation" in English. (Compare 'load hay onto the wagon' with 'load the wagon with hay'.) The results have been interesting. Ursula Brinkmann (1997) continued an approach proposed by Wunderlich (1987), which is in turn is based on detailed studies by Günther (1974, 1987) and Eroms (1980). Eroms first formulated the notion that *be-* marks a "local phrase passive". In this generative account, a locative element such as the wound in (29) is shifted from its underlying status as the LM in an oblique PP, as reflected in (29a), and moved into direct-object position as in (29b). In so doing, it replaces the theme (the ointment) as direct object. If the theme is to be overtly expressed then it needs to be re-introduced in an oblique *mit*-PP as it is in (29b). The nice insight here is that the operation is essentially like the one usually posited for passive voice. Passive shifts an underlying direct object into subject position (replacing the agent or bumping it into an oblique *von*-PP). According to this account, *be-* shifts an underlying locative LM into direct-object position, replacing the theme or bumping it into an oblique *mit*-PP.[36]

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36. Wunderlich (1987) develops that conception into a lexical rule of "preposition incorporation" within Lexical Decomposition Grammar. See also Olsen (1994). Becker (1971) offers an analysis of these alternations in terms of a "Case for Case" style "*be-*insertion rule". See Levin (1993: 49–55) for a summary of the research into the English alternation.

A nice semantic implication of this analysis is that it can account for the special nature of accusative LMs, which is a crucially important factor in understanding the semantics of *be-* verbs. Deriving the accusative objects from an underlying locative LM would explain why they are understood to be focal parts of the setting that (a) already exist as such independently of the *be-* event and (b) are not substantially transformed or moved by the event. Moreover, the analysis can capture neatly the important similarity between accusative LMs with *be-* and accusative LMs with *über-*, *um-*, *durch-*, and *unter-* (and *ent-*). Wunderlich traces the meaning of *be-* to an abstract underlying "topological" P (roughly the equivalent of *auf* or *an*, the German counterparts to English 'on'), expressly comparing it to the route-path prefixes (which can also be used as Ps). The analysis thus encourages us to focus on the semantic contrasts between *be-* and these other prefixes, and on the special status of their accusative objects.

Be- does seem to have a primarily syntactic function in these constructions, essentially as a vehicle to allow an accusative LM. If there are further semantic differences between the (a) and (b) variants in sentence pairs like (29)–(31), it is not normally very apparent, since the constructions with an unprefixed verb also describe sustained applications and diffuse paths. A more revealing semantic comparison becomes possible if we consider some related pairs in which the *be-* verb contrasts more directly with the unprefixed verb, as we do in Section 3.

3.   Direct contrasts with unprefixed transitive constructions

So far we have looked at *be-* verb constructions that do not compete directly with unprefixed verb constructions. They have alternated with unprefixed verbs in complementary distribution, often transitivizing an intransitive base verb and consistently promoting what might otherwise be an oblique LM to the more focal status of an accusative LM. In such cases it is difficult to separate the meaning of *be-* from the meaning of the grammatical construction it appears in. If we want to isolate the precise semantic contribution of *be-* it is preferable to find situations when it contrasts more directly with the unprefixed base verb, i.e., when it occurs in essentially the same grammatical environment with objectively similar accusative objects. In this section we look closely at several such situations, beginning with an interesting variation on the locative alternations discussed in Section 2.2.

3.1 Direct contrasts with unprefixed goal-object verbs

In examples like (32)–(35), the *be-* verbs not only alternate with (a) variants that have accusative themes; they also contrast directly with the constructions in (c), in which an unprefixed German verb has the locative goal as its accusative object. These (c) constructions with unprefixed goal-object verbs are not always available, but when they do occur they provide a very revealing semantic contrast to the *be-* verb constructions. They allow us to concentrate attention on the key semantic differences between normal accusative objects and accusative LMs. See Dewell (2004).

(32) a. Vater *packt* die Koffer in das Auto.
'Father packs the suitcases into the car'

b. Und auch der Benzinverbrauch richtet sich danach wie schwer *bepackt* das Auto ist.
'Gas mileage also correlates with how heavily the car is (*be-*)packed'

c. Robert Manthey *packt* das Auto für die Fahrt nach Hannover.
'Robert Manthey packs the car for the trip to Hannover'

(33) a. Das Gepäck wurde auf den Wagen *geladen*.
'The baggage was loaded onto the car'

b. Wir *beladen* den Wagen mit unserem Gepäck.
'We (*be-*)load the car with our baggage'

c. Wir fahren nach Hause und *laden* den Wagen noch einmal voll.
'We drive home and load the car full again'

(34) a. Mit roter Farbe wurden an zwei Stellen große Buchstaben an die Wand *gesprüht*.
'Large letters were sprayed on the wall in two places with red paint'

b. Im Innern des Zuges wurden Fensterscheiben und die Decke *besprüht*.
'In the interior of the train window panes and the ceiling were (*be-*)sprayed'

c. In Altona wurde die schwarz-grau gestreifte Decke weiß *gesprüht*!
'In Altona the gray-and-black-striped ceiling was sprayed white!'

(35) a. Die Mutter *giesst* Wasser auf die Blumen, auf die Erde, oder in den Napf unterm Topfe.
'Mother pours water on the flowers, on the earth, or in the dish under the pot'

b. So kann man das Wasser trinken oder damit die Felder und Blumen *begießen*.
'That way one can drink the water or water (*be-*pour) the fields and flowers with it'

    c.   So *gießen* wir bei uns im Blumenladen unsere Blumen.
         'That's how we water (pour) our flowers in the flower shop'

Think for example of packing a car for a trip, as in (32). The normal verb to describe packing a car or a suitcase in German is not *bepacken*; it is unprefixed *packen* with the car or suitcase as the accusative object, as in (32c).[37] Like a 'packed car' in English, a car that has been *gepackt* is one that has been transformed into a new state and is ready to go (an accusative FG). The packing event has reached its intrinsic conclusion, which is defined either in terms of the car's capacity (it is full and can hold no more) or in terms of the theme supply (everything to be packed is now in the car, so the car is ready for the trip). If *bepacken* is used with cars or suitcases it is a marked alternative to simple *packen*. The *bepacken* process is temporally sustained and open-ended, with no intrinsic point of completion. It simply goes on until it stops at some unpredictable point. In the most typical cases, like (32b), the focus is on how much burden is added to the car.

    Similar distinctions between *be-* verbs and unprefixed goal-object verbs can be observed with *laden* in (33), *sprühen* in (34) or *gießen* in (35). *Beladen* is considerably more common than *bepacken* is, because the base verb is more apt to suggest burdening with no intrinsic point of conclusion. The use of *laden* in (33c) is relatively unusual, as it is with most alternating verbs. It occurs mainly when there is a resultative expression (in this case *voll*) that requires the accusative object to be read as an accusative FG rather than as an accusative LM. Simple *gießen* in (35c) portrays the event as a normal everyday one of watering all the plants in sequence, and it is obvious enough when the event is finished. *Begießen* by contrast seems marked to portray the activity as open-ended, with no intrinsic point of conclusion. As in (35b), it commonly refers to habitual or automated activities rather than individual events.

    Base verbs like *füllen* or *stopfen* imply filling a containing space and thus have an intrinsic point of completion defined by that containing space, so they do not normally occur in *be-* verb constructions (U. Brinkmann 1997: 76). *Befüllen* is used, however, to profile an ongoing iterative activity of inserting, often by a mechanical process such as packages being filled with products for sale. It does not particularly call attention to a point of completion defined by the capacity of the container (Michaelis and Ruppenhofer 2001: 48–49). *Bestopfen* can also occur occasionally under similar circumstances as in (37b).

(36) a.   Danach werden kleine Kieselsteine in die Dose *gefüllt*.
         'Afterwards little pebbles are filled into the can'

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37. The string "packt den Koffer" returned 18,600 instances in a Google search, and "bepackt den Koffer" none (apart from one instance with a comma after *bepackt*). "Packt das Auto" returned 51,400, "bepackt das Auto" 55 (most of which were not relevant).

b. Die eckige Vorratsdose aus Glas kann mit allerlei Süßigkeiten, Tee oder Liebesbotschaften *befüllt* werden.
'The square-cornered glass storage jar can can be (*be-*)filled with all kinds of candy, tea or love letters'

c. Jetzt muss ich mir nur noch überlegen, womit die Dose *gefüllt* wird.
'Now I just have to think what the can will be filled with'

(37) a. Die wurden kurz in Wasser gelegt und dann in das Loch *gestopft*.
'They were put in water briefly and then stuffed into the hole'

b. Aber Hauptsache ist doch, dass Lücken die entdeckt wurden, auch schnellst möglich *bestopft* werden.
'But the main thing is that holes are filled (*be*-stuffed) as quickly as possible after they have been discovered'

c. Aus den Medien ist das Thema verschwunden, nachdem BP das Loch *gestopft* haben.
'The topic disappeared from the media after BP plugged the hole'

(38) a. Er *streicht* Butter auf sein Brot.
'He spreads butter on his bread'

b. Und der Vater *bestreicht* das Brot mit Butter.
'And the father (*be-*)spreads the bread with butter'

b1. Der Freund *bestreicht* eine Scheibe Brot mit Butter und wirft sie hoch.
'His friend (*be-*)spreads a slice of bread with butter and throws it in the air'

c. Er schaut in die Zeitung und sie *streicht* ein Brot.
'He looks at the newspaper and she makes a sandwich [spreads a bread/sandwich]'

There is a clear pattern here in which the *be-* verb construction marks a sustained applicative activity with no intrinsic point of completion. In a related observation, the *be-* verbs have an accusative LM in contrast to an accusative FG with the unprefixed verbs. The accusative LM remains a LM, even though something new is added to it and occupies it. The accusative objects with the unprefixed verbs become FGs that are transformed into a new state, often incremental themes and/or things converted to a new state of functional readiness. As Hennig Brinkmann (1962: 416) clearly recognized, the accusative LM with a *be-* verb is not essentially transformed ("nicht in seiner eigentlichen Substanz verändert"). The bread in (38b) is still the same piece of bread, only now with butter on it. The simple verb *streichen* can also have the word *Brot* as its object as in (38c), but only because the word *Brot* can mean a sandwich (open-faced) as well as a piece of bread. In other words, (38c) describes transforming the bread into a new entity (a sandwich), and whatever was spread on it is now a part of it (an ingredient). It is a type of incremental theme

called an effected object. Unlike the *be-* verb, the simple verb *streichen* does not take *eine Scheibe Brot* ('a slice of bread') as its object, because that would not describe a finished sandwich. Compare using the simple verb *streichen* to mean painting something such as a wall – the paint becomes part of the wall and transforms it. If *bestreichen* were used, then it would be marked to refer to the iterative application strokes with no defined point of completion.

3.2   Direct contrasts with other unprefixed verbs

There are several other situations when *be-* verbs contrast directly with the simple base verbs. Again the recurring theme is that *be-* portrays the event as temporally sustained and open-ended, with no intrinsically predictable point of completion. The *be-* verbs prompt a synoptic construal with an accusative LM, and they may lend other subtle semantic implications that reflect the diffuse nature of *be-*'s multiplex of path vectors. The events described by *be-* verbs often seem more complex or abstract than those described by unprefixed verbs.

3.2.1   *Sustain an activity* (befragen, begrüßen, begründen, behalten)
As is the case with intransitive verbs for communicative acts (e.g. *antworten*, *raten*), the simple transitive verbs *fragen* and *grüßen* describe single normal completed acts. Simple *fragen* means to ask a question, while *befragen* means to conduct an extensive interrogation, either a very thorough questioning of one person or a survey of many people (Farrell 30, Beaton 64). (39b) implies asking a sustained series of questions. Simple *grüßen* simply means to say hello, while the *be-* verb implies a more complex, diffuse and temporally sustained event. *Begrüßen* may suggest an iterative series of actions (e.g. greeting, hugging, exchanging introductory conversation, offering a seat), as in (40b), and it also suggests initiating an ensuing conversation and social interaction (compare *besteigen* or *betreten*). *Begründen* meaning to found an organization or a movement similarly implies that the subject initiates a sustained process of providing the accusative LM with what it needs. According to Farrell (138), unprefixed *gründen* "suggests one clear act", typically realized in an official ceremony, or at most just the initial and relatively concrete stages of founding an institution. It describes a completed act of bringing the organization into existence. *Begründen* means to lay a foundation for further development (Beaton 305), suggesting both the original idea and its subsequent consolidation, and it is not limited to any particular official act (Farrell 138). Verbs like *raten*, *antworten*, *fragen*, *grüßen*, and *gründen* describe straightforward events, typically one-time occurrences, while the corresponding *be-* verbs describe a more complicated, diffuse and temporally sustained event.

(39) a.   Dieser *fragte* ihn nach seinem Namen.
          'This man asked him (about) his name'

      b.   Hans Kumpf *befragte* ihn nach seinen Erfahrungen dort.
          'Hans Kumpf (*be-*)asked him about his experiences there'

(40) a.   Ich *grüßte* ihn, als ich ihm auf der Straße begegnete.
          'I greeted him when I saw him on the street'

      b.   Boris *begrüßte* ihn stürmisch, umarmte ihn wie einen verloren geglaubten Sohn.
          'Boris (*be-*)greeted him passionately, embraced him like a long-lost son'

(41) a.   Lisbeth Herkenrath *gründete* die Schule im Zweiten Weltkrieg, am 1. Februar 1942, unter dem Dach des damaligen Volksbildungswerkes.
          'Lisbeth Herkenrath founded the school during the Second World War, on February 1, 1942, under the auspices of what was then the People's Adult Education Program'

      b.   1654 siedelte er nach Kulmbach über und *begründete* seine eigene Orgelwerkstatt.
          'In 1654 he relocated to Kulmbach and (*be-*)founded his own organ workshop'

(42) a.   Die Bibliothekarin *hält* das Buch in der Hand und sagt: "Hmm. Christa Wolf."
          'The librarian holds the book in her hand and says: "Hmm. Christa Wolf."'

      b.   Sie *behält* das Buch in der Hand, wirft aber einen Blick über die Seiten zu mir rüber und beobachtet mich kurz, ehe sie das Buch weglegen will.
          'She keeps [*be*-holds] the book in her hand, but glances over the pages at me and watches me briefly before she is ready to put the book down'

Halten is another unprefixed verb that describes a simple, straightforward event in comparison with the prefixed verb *behalten*. (42a) basically just describes holding something in a position, without regard to whether the position is new or how long it will remain in effect. *Behalten* on the other hand clearly adds a sense of sustaining the position temporally, keeping a given situation in effect (Beaton 375–6, Farrell 171–3). Compare *bewahren*.

3.2.2   *More complex activities* (befürchten, bemessen, betreffen)

There is a consistent semantic difference between *fürchten* and *befürchten*. The simple verb describes fear or dread, while *befürchten* describes anticipating that something unwanted is going to happen (Farrell 121, Beaton 283). Thus (43a) means that the subject dreads an attack that the troops may not be able to handle, while (43b) means that the subject is afraid that one may occur (not necessarily that

the subject is actually afraid of the pirates). The simple verb describes a straightforward emotional state; the *be-* verb describes a sustained attitude directed toward a mental proposition.

(43) a. Ich *fürchte* einen Angriff. Obwohl zahlenmässig überlegen, sind unsere Kämpfer schlecht gerüstet.
'I'm afraid of (fear) an attack. Although superior in number, our soldiers are badly equipped'

b. Ich *befürchte* einen Angriff von Piraten, da ich wertvolle Fracht an Bord habe.
'I'm afraid [*be*-fear] we'll be attacked by pirates, since I have valuable cargo on board'

(44) a. Anna soll die Entfernung mit einem Bandmaß *messen*.
'Anna is to measure the distance with a tape measure'

b. Auch nach der Zeit, welche der Schall braucht, um einen gewissen Raum zurückzulegen, kann man die Entfernung *bemessen*.
'The distance can also be (*be*-)measured by the time that sound takes to cover a certain distance'

When unprefixed (*aus*)*messen* is used with an agentive subject it simply means to measure, much as unprefixed *fürchten* straightforwardly expresses fear. *Bemessen*, much like *befürchten*, conveys a more complex and abstract meaning, namely to measure something by an indirect process such as calculating according to a particular criterion.[38] Compare (*aus*)*rechnen* and *berechnen*.

Simple *treffen* basically means to hit a target (as opposed to missing it), prototypically referring to things such as arrows or bullets or punches or soccer shots on goal, i.e., events with a very definite point of completion. It can be extended to abstract metaphorical things such as disasters, as in (45), often implying an emotional impact on people, and in that case *treffen* and *betreffen* are very similar. Where *treffen* describes a simple direct hit (a fairly vivid spatial metaphor), *betreffen* suggests a more complex and diffuse image whose effects are more distributed so that the accusative LM does not necessarily receive the full force of the impact. As Farrell (10–11) puts it, *betreffen* "differs from the simple verb *treffen* in that the sense is not literal and that it does not denote one clear, forceful act. It rather suggests indirect effects and the diffusion of these over a wide area, and frequently carries the implication that the object is just one of a number of things affected."

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38. The string "mit einem Bandmaß bemessen" did not return a single instance in a Google search, while "mit einem Bandmaß gemessen" returned 6,330 and "mit einem Bandmaß messen" 1,030.

Betreffen suggests that the diffuse multiplex of path vectors affects an area larger than the LM, so that only a portion of them actually hits it. Typical subjects of *betreffen* have emotional rather physical impact, such as deaths or depressing conditions such as poverty, that affect people other than the accusative object. *Betreffen* is also commonly used to report that statements, especially general policies such as laws and regulations, apply to the accusative LM (among others). (The common pattern 'was … betrifft' expresses the sense of English 'as far as … is concerned'.) Where *treffen* describes hitting a particular target with a single directed shot, as if from a rifle or a cannon, *betreffen* suggests an image more like scattering buckshot or machine gun fire over a broad region and happening to hit the accusative LM among other things.

(45)   Die Menschen finden es immer gerechtfertigt, nur in ihrem eigenen Interesse und zu ihren eigenen Gunsten zu arbeiten. Aber das ist keine gute Lösung, denn wenn die Gemeinschaft von einem Unglück *getroffen* wird, sind auch sie *betroffen*.
'People always think they are justified when they work only in their own self-interest for their own benefit. But that is not a good solution, because when the community is hit by a disaster then they are affected [*be*-hit] by it too'

(46)   a.   Von dem Tode seiner Tochter zutiefst *getroffen*, schwört der General Rache.
'Hit hard (deeply affected) by the death of his daughter, the General swears revenge'

   b.   Sein plötzlicher Tod hat uns alle zutiefst *betroffen*.
'His sudden death has deeply (*be*-)affected us all'

(47)   Die Verordnung *betrifft* vor allem kleinere Tankstellen, die pro Jahr zwischen 100 und 1000 Kubikmeter an Kraftstoff umsetzen.
'Mainly the act applies to [*be*-hits] smaller gas stations with a volume of sales between 100 and 1000 cubic meters of fuel'

3.2.3   *Accusative LM vs accusative FG (*befühlen*, beschließen*, betreiben*, benutzen)*

The distinction between an accusative FG and an accusative LM is frequently the obvious difference between an unprefixed verb construction and one with a *be*-verb. The simple verb *spülen* for example can have an accusative theme as in (48a), or it can describe rinsing something completely until it has become clean as in (48b). The *be-* verb in (48c) on the other hand has an accusative LM that is neither moved nor transformed into a new state, and there is no intrinsic point of completion. At times the distinction can become more subtle. (49a) describes rinsing out the mouth completely until clean, while (49b) describes sustained pouring with no profiled change in the accusative LM or intrinsic point of completion for the rinsing event.

(48) a. Ein Brecher *spülte* auch mich von Bord.
          'A breaking wave washed me overboard'

      b. Es hörte sich an, als wäre jemand in der Küche und *spülte* das Geschirr.
          'It sounded as if someone were washing the dishes in the kitchen'

      c. Das Wasser eines breiten, tiefen Grabens, der von der Seine gespeist wurde,
          bespülte die Mauern der Stadt.
          'The water of a wide, deep ditch that was fed by the Seine was washing
          against [*be*-washing] the walls of the city'

(49) a. Ich war mir sicher, dass es vergiftet war, rannte zur Toilette und *spülte* den
          Mund.
          'I was sure that it was poisoned, ran into the bathroom and washed out
          my mouth'

      b. Und inzwischen übergoß man ihnen das Antlitz mit frischem Wasser und
          bespülte den Mund mit Flüssigkeit.
          'And in the meantime they washed [*über*-poured] their faces with fresh
          water and bathed [*be*-rinsed] their mouths with liquid'

The difference between *fühlen* and *befühlen* also illustrates the difference between
an accusative FG and an accusative LM. The simple verb can be used intransitively
(with a *nach*-PP) to describe trying to find something by feeling as in (50a), and
it can also be used as in (50c) to describe becoming aware of an accusative FG
by using the sense of touch. *Befühlen* describes sustained probing directed at an
accusative LM space, as in (50b) or sentence (8) in the opening examples. The dif-
ference between (50b) and (50c) is essentially that between an accusative LM and
an accusative FG. *Fühlen* describes an act with a definite moment of conclusion,
namely when the subject becomes aware of the accusative object via the sense in
question. There is a kind of accusative theme that the subject takes possession of
or "captures" using the sense. The *be-* verb on the other hand describes a sustained
examination of an accusative LM that involves repeated probes and has no intrinsic
point of completion.[39]

(50) a. Sie *fühlt* nach dem Puls – nichts, ebenso kann sie keinen Herzschlag
          spüren.
          'She feels for a pulse – nothing, and she can't feel a heartbeat either'

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39. As Becker (1971:140) observes, the transitive uses of *fühlen* do not necessarily imply a
deliberate activity by the subject, while the *be-* verbs do. Whether the subject plays an agentive
role is not the key semantic difference between the *be-* verb and the simple verb, though. It is
the sustained iterative nature of the *befühlen* process that accounts for the implication that it is
deliberate behavior.

   b.   Der Zuschauer kann sogar Ihre Hand *befühlen*, um sicher zu gehen, dass dort nichts versteckt ist.
      'The audience member can even examine [*be*-feel] your hand to make sure that nothing is hidden there'

   c.   Er spürt ihre Lippen auf seinen, er *fühlt* ihren Körper.
      'He senses her lips on his, he feels her body'

As Hennig Brinkmann (1962: 415) astutely observed, an important prerequisite for the status of accusative LM – and thus for the use of *be-* – is that the object must already exist in the setting, independent of the verb activity. He notes: "Man *schwört einen Eid*, aber *beschwört seine Unschuld*" ('One swears an oath but *be*-swears one's innocence'). There cannot be a moment when the object comes into existence, and there cannot be a moment when the object first becomes perceptible, which would be the case in (50c).

    (51) and (52) reflect a more subtle difference between an accusative FG and an accusative LM. *Schließen* and *enden* can both be intransitive verbs as in the (a) variants, but they also have transitive variants as in (51c) and (52c) that are very similar in meaning to the *be-* verb constructions in the (b) sentences. Simple *enden* and *schließen* describe bringing the speech to a close, essentially a causative counterpart to the intransitive (a) variants. *Beschließen* and *beenden* mean providing the speech with an ending, marking its end with a special feature of some kind, a finishing touch (Farrell 192). In other words, the unprefixed verbs have an accusative FG that comes to an end, while the *be-* verbs have an accusative LM that is provided with something that serves as its end.

(51) a. Seine Rede *schließt* mit einem Wort des Dankes.
       'His speech closes with a word of thanks'

      b. Er *beschließt* seine Rede mit den Worten: …
         'He (*be*-)closes his speech with the words: …'

      c. Der oberste Bundesbanker *schließt* seine Rede mit einem Churchill-Zitat: …
         'The ranking member of the Central Bank closes his speech with a quote from Churchill: …'

(52) a. Seine Rede *endete* mit den Worten: …
       'His speech ended with the words: …'

      b. Putin *beendete* seine Rede mit dem Ruf, "Slawa Rossija" (Es lebe Russland).
         'Putin (*be*-)ended his speech with the cry "Slawa Rossija" (Long live Russia)'

      c. Er *endete* seine Rede mit den markanten Worten: …
         'He ended his speech with the striking words: …'

The simple verb *treiben* normally means being the driving force that keeps an accusative FG moving on a directed path. There is often an explicit goal, and if the path is generic without a specific goal then the particle *an* ('onward') is added (or a semantically comparable expression such as *vorwärts*). *Betreiben* is typically used more abstractly for 'operating' equipment or for 'running' a business as in (53b). Much like *bedienen* or *betreuen*, it suggests that an agent tends to something and provides it with what it needs on an ongoing basis, maintaining it in its current state of operation (compare *behalten*). The accusative object "keeps going", but its state of motion is abstract and the *be-* verb activity just preserves that state without changing anything. Unlike the unprefixed verb, *betreiben* does not take a goal expression specifying where its accusative object is going.[40] In the rare cases like (54b) when *betreiben* is used much like *antreiben*, it subtly portrays the car as an accusative LM being kept in normal operation rather than an accusative FG being driven spatially forward. The *be-* verb makes the image more abstract and diffuse, and it also treats the object as an accusative LM being maintained in its current state.

(53) a. Der 1,3-Liter-Benziner *treibt* das Auto in elf Sekunden aus dem Stand auf Tempo 100.
          'The 1.3-liter gasoline engine can propel the car from 0 to 100 in 11 seconds'

      b. Die Firma BS-Strom *betreibt* ein Kraftwerk, das sowohl Strom als auch Fernwärme produziert.
          'The company BS-Strom operates [*be*-drives] a power plant that procudes not only electricity but also long-distance heating'

(54) a. Welcher Kraftsoff *treibt* das Auto der Zukunft an?
          'Which fuel will propel the car of the future?'

      b. Das Auto wird mit regenerativem Strom *betrieben*.
          'The car is powered [*be*-driven] by renewable electricity'

Nutzen (or, regionally, *nützen*) can be used intransitively with a nonagentive subject meaning to be of use, to prove useful (compare *dienen* meaning to be available for service, which is roughly paraphrasable as 'kann genutzt werden'). With an accusative object, as in (55c), *nutzen* is basically causative, meaning to cause the object to prove useful, i.e., to find a use for it. (Like *dienen*, *nutzen* often refers to a habitual state of affairs (Farrell 364).) *Benutzen* describes using an implement in a sustained way on a particular occasion. It is to some extent like *bedienen* or *betreiben* for operating equipment, but it is especially similar to *beschäftigen*. *Benutzen* implies that the subject is employing the object, occupying it and keeping

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40. The string "treibt ihn in die Ecke" returned 108,000 Google hits; "betreibt ihn in die Ecke" 0.

it busy. Once again there is a subtle difference between an accusative FG and an accusative LM at work here. *Benutzen* presumes that the accusative LM is useful (*nützlich*) and describes actually directing sustained activity toward it. Transitive *nutzen* describes causing the object to be useful, putting it to use or finding a use for it. If an object has one obvious use, such as a TV remote control or an entrance or a condom, then *benutzen* is more appropriate since its usefulness is apparent and the meaning can only be making use of it, not finding an application for it. On the other hand, if the object is an opportunity such as *Vorteil* (advantage) that may or may not be exploited in some way, then unprefixed *nutzen* is clearly preferred.[41]

(55) a. Was *nutzt* mir die schönste Website, wenn sie von niemandem gefunden wird?
'What use is [is the use to me] the most beautiful web site in the world if it's not found by anyone?'

b. Es zeigt Ihnen, wie das Gerät zu *benutzen* ist.
'It shows you how to (*be-*)use the device'

c. UMTS *nutzt* das Gerät lediglich, um im Internet surfen zu können.
'UMTS only uses the device for surfing the Internet'

3.2.4   *Special notice:* merken *vs* bemerken

The difference between *merken* and *bemerken* is subtle and interesting enough to warrant extensive discussion. In some uses the verbs *merken* and *bemerken* are clearly distinct.When it appears with a dative reflexive pronoun *merken* is lexicalized to mean making a mental note to remember something. *Bemerken* is called for rather than simple *merken* for making a verbally expressed remark or observation ('nebenbei bemerkt'). More generally, however, both *merken* and *bemerken* are used to describe noticing something, making a purely mental observation, and directly contrasting pairs commonly arise as in (56)–(60) that are very difficult to distinguish semantically. Both verbs can describe noticing the presence of something as in (56), or pain in oneself (57), or pain in others (58), or traits such as accents (59) or age (60).

(56) a. Sam hat wohl schon vorher *gemerkt*, dass er da ist, denn sie hat sich nicht erschreckt und dreht sich langsam um.
'Sam has apparently already noticed that he is there, since she wasn't startled and she now turns around slowly'

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41. The string "benutzt ein Kondom" returned 59,500 instances in a Google search, "nutzt ein Kondom" only 143. "Benutzt die Fernbedienung" returned 16,000, "nutzt die Fernbedienung" 1,720; "benutzt den Haupteingang" 2,220, "nutzt den Haupteingang" 41. On the other hand, Google returned 107,000 for "nutzt den Vorteil" and only 300 for "benutzt den Vorteil".

b. Bisher hat sie jedoch immer rechtzeitig *bemerkt*, dass er da ist, und ist entweder im Auto oder im Haus geblieben.
    'Up to now she always (*be-*)noticed in time that he was there, and stayed either in the car or in the house'

(57) a. Man *merkt* den Schmerz meistens erst, wenn alles vorbei ist.
        'Most of the time you don't notice the pain until everything is over'

  b. Sie *bemerkt* den Schmerz, *bemerkt* ihr Wanken, sie klammert sich an einem Sitz fest.
    'She (*be-*)notices the pain, (*be-*)notices the unsteadiness on her feet, and she clings onto a chair'

(58) a. Super schönes Lied und man *merkt* den Schmerz in ihrer Stimme genau.
        'Super beautiful song, and you clearly notice the pain in her voice'

  b. Jeder sagt ihr, dass sie jetzt glücklicher ist, und niemand *bemerkt* den Schmerz in Buffys Gesicht.
    'Everyone tells her that she's better off now, and no one (*be-*)notices the pain in Buffy's face'

(59) a. Das Englisch war gut, bei dem Deutsch hat man durchaus den Akzent *gemerkt*, aber ansonsten war alles fehlerfrei.
        'The English was good. When he spoke German you certainly noticed the accent, but it was otherwise impeccable'

  b. Sobald man jemanden auf der Straße auf Französisch anspricht und er den Akzent *bemerkt*, wird man die Antwort in schlechtem Englisch erhalten.
    'As soon as you speak to someone on the street in French and they (*be-*) notice the accent, you'll get a reply in bad English'

(60) a. Man hat definitiv *gemerkt*, dass sie älter geworden sind, nicht nur in den Interviews, auch an den Texten und der Musik.
        'You definitely noticed that they've become older, not just in the interviews but also in thee lyrics and music'

  b. Sie hat *bemerkt*, dass sie älter geworden ist und egal wie sie ihre Haare ordnete, ihr wollte es einfach nicht gefallen.
    'She (*be-*)noticed that she had become older and no matter how she did her hair it just wasn't right'

Interestingly, everyone agrees that *merken* and *bemerken* do differ in meaning in these contrasting pairs. It is remarkable, however, how much people disagree about what that difference is. In fact, Farrell (233) and Beaton (464) offer almost polar opposite characterizations of the difference. According to Beaton, *bemerken* simply describes a straightforward sense perception, while *merken* suggests intuition as well and "presupposes not just seeing with the eyes but also drawing a conclusion". In Beaton's understanding, *merken* goes beyond what is perceptually evident and

involves a more complex process, such as inferring hidden intentions. Farrell on the other hand says that it is *bemerken* that implies "mental activity, however brief, after the sense perception, and an inference from the sense material".

The topic arises in several Internet discussions, and the native speakers who participate in those discussions tend to agree with Beaton, i.e., to link *bemerken* to direct sense perception and *merken* to a more complicated mental event that involves more than just sense perception. A contributor to Wordreference.com for example says: "The difference is very slight. In most situations, especially in spoken language, I don't think there really is any. But I think 'Ich merkte' means I realize something while 'Ich bemerkte' means I perceive something, thus *merken* involves thinking about it and arriving at some conclusion, unlike *bemerken*."[42]

One LEO participant represents the Beaton-style position particularly well, presenting well-chosen examples such as (61) to illustrate that *bemerken* requires direct sense perception while *merken* requires a more complicated process involving indirect reasoning or intuition.[43] Similarly in pairs like (60), *bemerken* is based on readily perceptible evidence (physical appearance), while *merken* is based on inference drawn from more indirect information reflecting their age. In (62), the new hairstyle is certainly visibly apparent and *merken* would not be used.[44] Another LEO contributor adds the sentences and glosses in (63).

(61) a. Das Telefon war kaputt und ich hab es nicht *gemerkt*, weil ich die ganze Woche nicht telefonieren musste.
'The telephone was broken and I didn't notice because I didn't need to make a call all week'

        b. Das rote Lämpchen hat aufgeleuchtet und ich hab es nicht *bemerkt*, weil ich die ganze Zeit abgelenkt war.
'The light was red and I didn't (*be-*)notice because I was distracted the whole time'

(62) Keiner hat meine neue Frisur *bemerkt*.
'Nobody (*be-*)noticed my new hairstyle'

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42. Discussions contrasting *merken* and *bemerken* can be found at LEO, dict.cc, Wordreference.com, wer-weiss-was.de, gutefrage.net, Gesellschaft zur Stärkung der Verben (verben.texttheater.net).

43. "Zwischen *merken* und *bemerken* ist ein feiner aber eindeutiger Unterschied. *bemerken* = direkt mit einem Sinnesorgan (meist dem Auge) wahrnehmen. *merken* = indirekt etwas erkennen, was nicht offensichtlich ist (klar werden); das Erkennen kann durch Sinneswahrnehmung oder Beobachtung, aber auch durch Intuition, Gefühl oder Ahnung erfolgen)."

44. "Frisur bemerkt" had 743 Google returns, "Frisur gemerkt" only 45 (and those were almost exclusively either with a PP like 'an der Frisur'or else the verb was *sich merken*).

(63)   a.   Hast du *gemerkt*, dass weniger Züge nach London fahren?
            'Did you feel that there are fewer trains going to London?' [– Yes, I could
            read twice as much waiting on the platform.]
       b.   Hast du *bemerkt*, dass weniger Züge nach London fahren?
            'Did you (*be-*)notice, that there are fewer trains going to London?' [– Yes,
            I read the new timetable.]

There is one other observation made by several forum participants that is worth
mentioning, although it is not obvious what type of analysis it supports. They find
a link between simple *merken* and emotional involvement (*Anteilnahme*), i.e., with
vague subjective feelings rather than clear sensory perceptions, that is not there
with *bemerken*. Note that the LEO contributor glosses *merken* in (63a) as 'feel'.
Another LEO contributor translates 'Ich merke, dass du schlechte Laune hast' as
'I feel that you are in a bad mood'.

Clearly there is much to be said for this Beaton-style position. *Merken* does not
describe straightforward sense perception, i.e., it contrasts with verbs like *sehen*,
hören or *riechen*, and even *fühlen* or *spüren*. Duden defines it accurately as recog-
nizing something that is not readily perceptible, whether by using sense perception
and observation or intuition and vague presentiment. It is also certainly true that
bemerken tends to be used rather than *merken* whenever the accusative object is
readily apparent perceptually.

Still, this analysis does not accord well with what we know generally about the
difference between *be-* verbs and unprefixed verbs. The evidence throughout this
chapter suggests that it is unprefixed verbs that describe relatively straightforward
simple events, while *be-* verbs mark the event as more complex and abstract and
sustained. Perhaps there is also something to be said for the Farrell position that
bemerken reports a more complex event than *merken* does, and that *bemerken* is
"less vivid and sensuous" than *merken* (Farrell 233).

Just because *merken* describes a vaguely intuitive process that is contrasted
with more clearly understood sensory verbs like *sehen*, it does not necessarily fol-
low that *merken* is construed to be more complex than those verbs. Just because it
describes awareness of things that are not apparent, it does not necessarily follow
that this awareness results from a complex process of logical reasoning and induc-
tion. A vague awareness of something not directly perceived could just as well
result from a simple – if poorly understood – act of subjective intuition. In fact,
the link between *merken* and vague subjective feeling could well serve to explain all
of the uses of *merken* in (56)–(63), without resorting to any sort of inferential rea-
soning. It also speaks for Farrell's position that *merken* is an everyday term, while
bemerken in its purely mental meaning "belongs more to the educated language"
(Beaton 464), although *bemerken* is certainly also a common word.

By the same token, just because *bemerken* is typically based on sense perception such as sight, it does not follow that it can be identified with such sense perception. There is no reason to think that *bemerken* is a sort of cover term for verbs like *sehen* and *hören*.

In fact I would claim, with Farrell, that *bemerken* actually conveys a more complex image than simple *merken* does. *Merken* is admittedly more abstract and vague than typical unprefixed verbs, but it nevertheless describes a straightforward apprehension on a par with a verb like *sehen* or *fühlen*. *Bemerken* on the other hand involves not only becoming aware of the object but also consciously directing attention toward it. The difference between *merken* and *bemerken* is actually much like that between *achten* (*auf..*) and *beachten* – a simple event of attending as opposed to a more complex and sustained process of taking something into account as part of a larger patten of thinking and acting, of paying attention to something.

In effect, the difference between the constructions with *merken* and *bemerken* is the difference between an accusative FG and an accusative LM, as it is with *fühlen* and *befühlen*. *Merken* basically means to 'become aware' of something, to gain awareness of it. Where a verb like *sehen* or *fühlen* means to become aware by using a specific sense, *merken* means to become aware by an intuitive process that is defined as not being describable by normal verbs of sense perception. The key component that *merken* and *sehen* have in common is that the accusative object is apprehended. It is in effect captured and represented in the mind, created there so that it exists as a conscious thought for the first time. The subject of (57a), for example, gains awareness of the pain, which as far as the subject is concerned did not exist until that moment. The use of *merken* with a dative reflexive to describe making a note to remember something fits nicely with this understanding, since it can be understood as storing the thought in memory. In all cases the accusative object is an accusative FG being moved to a place in the mind (or, if you prefer, created there).

Bemerken on the other hand portrays the object as an accusative LM that already exists as such in the world when the process described by the *be-* verb begins. The red light in (61), the new hairstyle in (62), the fact that there are fewer trains in (63), etc, are all apparent facts before the subject chooses to pay attention to them. So is the pain in (57b) or (58b). The subject in (57b) is not becoming aware of the pain or her unsteadiness for the first time; she is thinking consciously about the fact that the conditions exist. What *bemerken* describes is that the subject directs conscious attention to something that is given in the setting and attaches significance to it. The forum participants are struck by a link between *bemerken* and direct sense perception because it implies directing conscious attention.

3.3   Bare denominals vs denominal *be-* verbs

Denominal verbs like *beölen* in (64b) are normal applicative *be-* verbs. They cannot participate in a locative alternation with the unprefixed verb, however, because the base verb already has the theme expressed in its root. A verb like *ölen* would hardly express the theme both in its root and also as an accusative FG as in (64a). Even though there are no variants like (64a), there are very definitely variants such as (64c), an unprefixed goal-object verb that competes directly with the *be-* verb as in Section 3.1.

(64)   a.   *Er ölt das Öl auf die Maschinenteile.
             *'He oils the oil on the machine parts'

        b.   Nach dem Brünieren können die Teile noch *beölt* werden.
             'After burnishing the parts can be (*be-*)oiled again'

        c.   Es sollen also alle Teile *geölt* werden, vom Kopf bis zum Fuß.
             'So all the parts are to be oiled again, from head to toe'

In fact, it is generally the case that bare denominals like *ölen* are more common than the corresponding *be-* verb. An expression such as 'die Teile ölen' is functionally adequate to describe most normal events, and there is no particular reason to call attention to the semantic distinctions that could be conveyed by adding *be-*. In other words, it is rarely pragmatically important to specify that the application of oil is iterative or uneven and has no intrinsic point of completion, or that the accusative object is not transformed into a new functional state of usefulness, or that the oil remains an identifiable separate entity and is not incorporated into the accusative object as a new part. In practice then, *beölen* is a superfluous verb in most situations, even when it would be easily comprehensible and semantically appropriate. Similar comments apply to many other denominal verbs with specific root themes. In effect, German speakers do not usually need to make use of the added constructional possibility offered by *be-*, and they get along much as English speakers do with verbs such as *oil* or *paint*.

On the other hand, denominal *be-* verbs like *beölen* do definitely exist, and the construction is productive. Günther (1974: 129–30) provides a long representative list. In that case there is usually direct competition between the *be-* verb and the unprefixed verb, and *be-*'s semantic contribution is put in sharp relief. There are several reasons why a *be-* verb might be preferred, and they all reflect the schematic meaning depicted in Figure 8 and the general traits that have become apparent in the rest of this chapter.

3.3.1   *Sustained processes* (belüften)

One common reason for using a *be-* verb is to mark the applicative process as a complex technical routine in a specialized domain, rather than the kind of everyday act that might be associated with an unprefixed verb. That is especially the case when the applicative process is automated and temporally sustained. *Belüften* and *bewässern* in (65b) and (66b), for example, suggest automated delivery systems that ventilate or irrigate. They contrast with the more common everyday verbs *lüften* (which describes a single completed event of exposing something to air, for example by opening a window) and *wässern* (which implies a normal single session of watering all the plants once). Compare *gießen* and *begießen*, as well as verbs like *befüllen* or *bestopfen* as discussed in 3.1 Expressions such as **'Betten/ Matratzen belüften'* are almost never used, because there is no systematic way to ventilate mattresses. But in the very rare situation described in (65c) the word *belüften* does become appropriate.[45]

(65) a. Sie *lüften* das Zimmer während den Pausen.
           'They air (out) the room during the breaks'

    b. Ventilatoren *belüften* den Fasskeller.
           'Fans ventilate [*be*-air] the cellar where the barrels are'

    c. Die Matratzen *belüften sich* außerdem durch das Spannen und Entspannen der Federn von selbst.
           'Besides that, the mattresses ventilate [*be*-air] themselves through the tensing and relaxing of the feathers'

(66) a. Bei anhaltender Hitze und fehlenden Niederschlägen von März bis Juni ist regelmäßig zu *wässern*.
           'One should water regularly from March to June when there is prolonged heat and no precipitation'

    b. Auch war nur ein kleiner Teil des Landes so situiert, dass Kanäle über den Feldern gebaut werden konnten, um die darunter liegenden Felder zu *bewässern*.
           'And only a small part of the land was situated so that canals could be built above the fields in order to irrigate [*be*-water] the lower-lying fields'

(67) a. Grundsätzlich ist der Mieter nicht verpflichtet, seine Wohnung zu *heizen*.
           'Basically the tenant is not obligated to heat his apartment'

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45. Incidentally, another potential factor contributing to the use of *be-* is a perceived contrast to the opposing process expressed by an *ent-* verb. According to Günther (1974: 244), *belüften* is a recent coinage influenced by *ent-*.

    b.   Seine Wohnung mit einem Gasradiator zu *beheizen* ist selbstverständlich erlaubt.

         'Of course it is allowed to (*be-*)heat one's apartment with a gas radiator'

Although it is debatable whether *beheizen* is a denominal verb (cf *Hitze*) as opposed to a deadjectival one (cf *heiß*), it is semantically very much like *belüften*. *Beheizen* is stylistically marked to draw more attention to the technical means of delivering the heat (Beaton 335), suggesting an automated routine delivery process that is sustained over time. In (67b) for example the focus is on the technical delivery system, while in (67a) the delivery system is irrelevant and there is no reason not to use the unmarked simple verb.[46]

3.3.2   *Untransformed LMs* (besalzen, bekrönen)

As usual, an important factor in the choice of construction is the difference between an accusative FG that is being transformed into a new state and an accusative LM that is being provided with something. *Beheizen* has an accusative LM and synoptically describes providing the space with heat, while *heizen* has an accusative FG that is put into a warm state. (*Heizen* seems more deadjectival, while *beheizen* seems semantically more like a denominal verb.) The main difference between two competing denominal constructions is often whether the applied substance is construed to become a part of the accusative object and re-constitute it with a new ingredient, or whether it is construed to remain an identifiably distinct entity that occupies an accusative LM but is not incorporated into it to alter its essential composition.

    Consider for example the verbs for applying things like salt, pepper or sugar. The normal everyday terms are definitely unprefixed *salzen*, *pfeffern*, and *zuckern* rather than the *be-* verbs *besalzen*, *bepfeffern*, and *bezuckern*. One reason is again that these are ordinary everyday acts. Another reason is that salt, pepper and sugar normally become part of the food, transforming it so that it contains a new ingredient that is no longer recognizably distinct from it. The *be-* verbs by contrast are marked to describe events where that is not the case. That occurs most obviously when the themes are not being added to food but are being sprinkled over surfaces such as counters or implements, occupying them without being incorporated into them. Unprefixed *zuckern* in (68a) for example describes sweetening

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46. *Beheizen* is relatively more common than *belüften*, but it is still less frequent than simple *heizen*. COSMAS returned 942 instances of "zu heizen" and 455 of "zu beheizen". Note that there are no verbs *bewärmen or *bekühlen corresponding to *beheizen*, except in extremely rare special cases. Apparently *wärmen* and *kühlen* are true deadjectival causatives that describe making the accusative object warm(er) or cool(er), while *heizen* is felt to have a more denominal base verb for delivering heat.

an accusative FG by adding sugar, clearly transforming it into a new state. (Note the English deadjectival gloss.) Another reason to prefer simple *zuckern* is that sugar is commonly stirred in and dissolved, so that it becomes unrecognizable as an entity distinct from the accusative FG. For all these reasons *bezuckern* is uncommon. *Bezuckern* is marked to suggest sprinkling sugar in iterative doses onto something that is not basically changed by the addition of the sugar, such as the work surface as in (68b).

(68) a. Besonders Kinder sollten keinen *gezuckerten* Tee trinken, denn damit steigt ihre Lust auf süße Getränke.
    'Children in particular shouldn't drink sweetened (sugared) tea, since that would increase their desire for sweet drinks'

   b. 5dag Marzipan auf einer *bezuckerten* Arbeitsfläche etwa 3mm dick ausrollen.
    'Roll out 5 dekagrams of marzipan about 3mm thick on a (*be-*)sugared work surface'

(69) Die Arbeitsfläche der Küche war *besalzt* – warum *salzen* Männer immer aus 2 m Höhe?
    'The work surface of the kitchen was littered with salt (*be-*salted) – why do men always salt from 2 meters above (the food)?'

(70) a. Wer mag, *buttert* das Brot bevor der Schinken aufgelegt wird.
    'If you like you can butter the bread before putting the ham on it'

   b. Den Boden einer Springform von 26 cm Durchmesser leicht *bebuttern*, mit Backpapier *belegen* und dieses in der Grösse der Form zuschneiden. Ebenfalls leicht *bebuttern*.
    'Lightly (*be-*)butter the base of a springform pan with a diameter of 26 cm, cover (*be-*lay) with baking paper and cut the paper to fit the form. (*Be-*)butter it lightly as well.'

(71) a. Piccata nach Mailänder Art ist ein Schnitzel, *gemehlt* und mit Ei sowie Käse paniert.
    'Piccata milanese is a cutlet, floured and breaded with egg and cheese'

   b. Das plattierte Schnitzel wird erst *bemehlt*, dann durch das verschlagene Ei gezogen.
    'The tenderized cutlet is (*be-*)floured first, then pulled through the beaten egg'

The difference between *salzen* and *besalzen* is nicely illustrated in (69). The unusual and marked event of pouring salt on the kitchen counter is described using *besalzen*, in clear contrast to the normal event of salting food (*salzen*). The counter is an accusative LM that hosts an occupying substance; the food is an accusative FG

being altered in its composition. *Besalzen* and *bepfeffern* are only rarely used for adding salt or pepper to food, and if they are they can suggest an automatic delivery process. Similar comments apply to *buttern* and *bebuttern* in (70).

In contrast to *bezuckern*, *bebuttern*, *besalzen*, and *bepfeffern*, *bemehlen* is more common than simple *mehlen*. The reason is presumably that flour is typically sprinkled on a work surface rather than added as an ingredient that becomes indistinguishable from the whole. Even when flour is added to food during preparation as in (71b) it can appear to occupy the surface rather than become incorporated, making *bemehlen* a viable alternative to *mehlen*.

A similar type of distinction can arise when the verbs describe adding an optional accessory, raising the issue of whether the theme becomes incorporated into a transformed accusative FG or remains a recognizably distinct accessory that occupies a position there but does not fundamentally alter the accusative LM in any essential way. The latter reading is evidently in effect when computers are described as *bemaust*, or when sports arenas are provided with a roof as in (72). A well-established group has articles of clothing as the root theme, in which case the *be*-verb tends to be the normal choice and it is the unprefixed verb that is semantically marked. For example, *bebrillt* in (73b) is the normal way to describe simply having on glasses. Eyeglasses, like articles of clothing generally, are presumably considered to remain separate accessories that complement people rather than becoming a part of them in any essential way. These *be-* verbs with articles of clothing form a well defined group (e.g. *befrackt*, *behost*, *bemützt*, *behelmt*, *beringt*, *beuhrt*, *behandschuht*, *beschuht*, *bestrumpft*, *beschürzt*). In some situations, however, an article of clothing does functionally alter a person and the simple verb becomes appropriate. That is the case with the rose-colored glasses in (73a) for example. Compare the usual term *bestiefelt* with the special case of 'Der gestiefelte Kater'. A classic example that calls for an unprefixed verb is crowning a king. *Bekrönen* comes into play only in metaphorical uses like (74b) that do not functionally transform the object.

(72)   Mit unserer Technologie sind wir imstande, jeden Sportplatz zu *bedachen*.
'With our technology we are capable of covering (*be*-roofing) every sports arena'

(73)   a.   Rosarot *gebrillt* bin ich auch nicht.
'I'm also not wearing rose-colored glasses ("eyeglassed" rose-colored)'

b.   Und blond und *bebrillt* ist sie auch noch.
'And she's blond and wears glasses (is "*be*-eyeglassed") too'

(74)   a.   Der Vater von Queen Elizabeth II. wurde 1937 nach der Abdankung seines Bruders zum König *gekrönt*.
'Queen Elizabeth's father was crowned king in 1937 after his brother's abdication'

    b.   Das Wahrzeichen der Stadt ist der rebenbewachsenen Schlossberg. Ihn *bekrönt* die Burgruine der Herren von Staufen.
        'The emblem of the city is its vine-covered castle mountain. It is (*be-*) crowned by the castle ruins of the Staufen lords'

(75) a.   Bis an die Gemeindegrenze wurde die Straße *gepflastert*.
        'The street was paved up to the city limits'

    b.   Bald war die ganze Straße *bepflastert* mit Strapsen und anderen Kleidungstücken.
        'Soon the whole street was littered [*be*-plastered] with garter belts and other articles of clothing'

There is sometimes a significant difference between denominal verbs that have a specific type of root theme and denominal verbs that have a generic type. Unprefixed *pflastern* for example is the normal term for paving something with asphalt as in (75a), as we would expect since the street is functionally transformed (as an incremental theme) and the asphalt becomes part of it as a new ingredient. If *bepflastern* does occur it does not describe applying asphalt; it is a more general applicative verb for metaphorically "plastering" an accusative LM surface with things such as advertisements.

3.3.3   *Uncompleted events* (bekleiden)

It is debatable whether *kleiden* is felt to be a denominal verb. In any case it is a normal unmarked term for dressing oneself or someone else. *Kleiden* alone normally describes habitual manners of dressing, as in (76a), while the particle verbs *ankleiden* and *anziehen* describe more particular events of putting on clothes. *Kleiden* refers to dressing the whole person in an ordinary way, so that the person can be said to be in a fully clothed state (*gekleidet*). *Bekleiden* by contrast is marked to describe dressing events that are not completed in the ordinary way. It may describe providing an accusative LM only with minimally necessary clothing as in (76b) (Farrell 100), so that it would be inappropriate to say that the person is fully dressed. *Bekleiden* is similarly used to describe providing someone with a specific article of clothing as an accessory, much like *bebrillen*, *bemützen*, etc, especially if there is something unusual about how the person is dressed, as in (76c). Like many other *be-* verbs such as *bepflastern* or *bekrönen*, *bekleiden* is most commonly used in metaphorical ways that do not involve normal dressing at all, such as (76d). In all cases the *be-* verb means that the event is not completed in the normal way suggested by the unprefixed verb.

(76) a.   Sie *kleidet* sich mit Geschmack.
        'She dresses (herself) with taste'

   b.   Eine Frau, nur mit einem Slip *bekleidet*, wird tot auf der Straße gefunden.
        'A woman, (*be-*)dressed only in (with) a slip, is found dead on the street'

   c.   Der Mann ist Hoher Priester im eigenen Haus, *bekleidet* sich bei bestimmten Anlässen mit weißem Gewand.
        'The man is High Priest in his own house, (*be-*)dressing (himself) in (with) a white robe on special occasions'

   d.   Denn die Pflanze *bekleidet* sich zu ihrem Schutz vor Fressfeinden mit Brennhaaren.
        'For the plant is cloaked in [*be-*clothes itself with] stinging hairs for protection against natural enemies'

3.3.4   *Marking the construction as denominal*

Generally speaking, denominal *be-* verbs make it plain that the verb is in fact a derived denominal verb. Unprefixed verbs like *heizen* or *kleiden* seem like normal verbs, with sequential construals and accusative FGs, that are not derived by productive grammatical processes. *Beheizen* and *bekleiden* by contrast are understood as grammatically derived constructions with a root theme. Where simple *krönen* describes the normal act of crowning a king, *bekrönen* reflects a derivational process and describes an applicative activity with a type of theme indicated by the root noun. That is presumably why *bekrönen*, like *bekleiden* or *bepflastern*, is apt to be read with generic or metaphorical themes that fill the "crown" role on a particular occasion.

   The principle holds true even for the lexicalized verb *bedecken*. *Bedecken* is the "ordinary prosaic term" (Farrell 85) for providing a LM surface with something such as a cloth as in (77b). That meaning is semantically distinct from that of simple *decken* in (77a), which suggests inserting the hands like a shield between the face and an implicit threat of some kind. Even though lexicalized, *bedecken* is a perfectly normal grammatically derived denominal *be-* verb construction. It is semantically very similar to *bekleiden* – especially in metaphorical uses like (76d).

 (77)   a.   Christian *deckt* sein Gesicht mit beiden Händen.
             'Christian covers (shields) his face with both hands'

        b.   Einer der Prälaten *bedeckt* das Gesicht des Toten mit einem weißen Tuch.
             'One of the prelates (*be-*)covers the dead man's face with a white cloth'

3.4   Deadjectival verbs (*befeuchten*, *betrüben*, *bereinigen*)

It follows from much of what has been said about denominal verbs that *be-* would not normally be semantically appropriate with deadjectival verbs. After all, the most natural reading for a deadjectival verb is that an accusative FG is caused to be

in the state suggested by the adjectival root. Transitive *röten* could mean to make something *rot* (red), or at least redder than it was, and there is no obvious use for a verb like **beröten*. Deadjectival *be-* verbs are indeed relatively rare, much less common than denominal ones.

When a deadjectival *be-* verb does occur, it usually conveys an image that seems like a very abstract denominal verb. The adjectival quality is construed more like an abstract and diffuse metaphorical "substance" that is being applied to an accusative LM, as opposed to a predicate with an accusative FG as its logical subject. *Befeuchten* ('*be*-moisten') for example is not really that different semantically from *bewässern* or *bestäuben*. It can be taken to describe adding moistness to a LM, a process that continues without an intrinsic conclusion (such as a point when the object can first be considered *feucht*). Unprefixed *feuchten*, by contrast, does describe making an accusative object moist (*feucht*), and the event is defined to be completed when that state is in effect.

In this respect it is worth noting that the adjectival roots of *be-* verbs often suggest a related nominal form. For example, *bestärken* or *bekräftigen* suggest adding strength (*Stärke*, *Kraft*), and *beängstigen* suggests imparting anxiety (*Angst*). It is also suggestive that deadjectival *be-* verbs are commonly associated with complex bases, especially ones that end in *-igen*. A bare deadjectival like *feuchten* does not dilute the semantic force of its root adjective, but the *be-* verb construction makes it more abstract and less predicative. The deadjectival *be-* verbs are also like the denominals in that the root is more apt to be read generically or metaphorically when there is a prefix. For example, unprefixed *reinigen* is the unmarked term for purging something of impurities, especially if the process is concrete (such as cleaning drains or ears). *Bereinigen* is marked for more abstract uses, such as clearing up misunderstandings or bones of contention (Beaton 620), or rectifying statistics, bowdlerizing, cleaning up computer databases. *Bestärken* and *bekräftigen* are typically used in abstract contexts such as confirming an opinion or strengthening someone's resolve, making it clear that new factors are contributing to the strength of an assertion, not necessarily that the assertion becomes 'strong'. The unprefixed verbs on the other hand typically describe literal strengthening. Generally speaking, deadjectival verbs tend to make the root quality more prominent and literal when the verb is unprefixed and somewhat more abstract and metaphorical when it is covered by a prefix.

(78) a. Anfänglich ist es wichtig, dass die Erde gut *gefeuchtet* wird, wenigstens da wo die Asseln eingesetzt werden.
'In the beginning it is important that the soil is well moistened, at least at the place where the woodlice are being deployed'

      b.   Zu Großmutters Zeit wurde die Bügelwäsche mittels Besprenkeln mit Wasser *befeuchtet*.
'In Grandmother's time the ironing was (*be-*)moistened with water by means of (*be-*)sprinkling'

(79) a.   Meine Freundin *reinigt* die Ohren ihres Säuglings nur mit einem Tuch.
'My girlfriend only cleans her infant's ears with a cloth'

      b.   Es ist uns ein großes Anliegen, mögliche Missverständnisse zu *bereinigen*.
'One of our top priorities is to clear up (*be-*purify) potential misunderstandings'

(80) a.   Sie [Feldenkrais-Methode] entlastet den Körper und *stärkt* ihn für den Berufsalltag.
'It [Feldenkrais therapy] relieves the body of pressure and strengthens it for the workday'

      b.   Seine Fronterfahrung *bestärkt* ihn in seinem Widerstand.
'His experience at the front (*be-*)strengthens him in his opposition'

(81) a.   Der Gedanke, etwas nicht zu riskieren, *ängstigt* mich zu Tode.
'The thought of not taking a risk scares me to death'

      b.   Es *beängstigt* mich richtig, wie schwer es mir fällt, mich an mein Leben vor dir zu erinnern.
'It truly (*be-*)frightens me how hard it is for me to remember my life before you'

(82) a.   Zum Glück hat sich mein Magen *geruhigt* und ich kann wieder Kaffee trinken.
'Fortunately my stomach has settled [calmed itself] and I can drink coffee again'

      b.   Der Arzt *beruhigt* ihn: Alles in Ordnung.
'The doctor reassures (*be-*calms) him: Everthing is okay'

In any event, the same factors that distinguish denominal *be-* verbs from bare denominals are at work with deadjectival verbs as well. The *be-* verbs describe temporally sustained applications with an accusative LM. There is no definite point at which the event is completed, i.e., there is no point when the accusative object is converted into the root state. Even when the root adjective pertains to a subjective mental state such as serenity or anxiety the deadjectival *be-* verb focuses more on the causal process than on the resulting state. *Beängstigen* for example calls attention to whatever is causing the reaction in a temporally sustained way, while unprefixed *ängstigen* makes the resulting state more prominent (Farrell 140). *Beruhigen*, like *besänftigen*, describes a sustained process of doing things to a person intended to soothe them, an image that is perfectly compatible with Figure 8. It does not necessarily mean that the person becomes *ruhig* (calm, at peace).

3.5   Summary: The semantic contribution of *be-*

Be- shares much of its meaning with transitive constructions generally, namely a sense of motion (energy and/or attention) that begins at a nominative subject and is directed at a focal accusative object. The distinctive contribution of *be-* to a transitive construction can be summarized by these general points.

– The event described by the *be-* verb construction is construed synoptically. The *be-* verb prompts the interpreter to adopt a perspective that holds both the verb activity and the accusative object steadily in view together for as long as the *be-* verb path is in effect. (Contrast sequential construals in which the interpreter's attention concentrates first on the subject and its activity, moves along with the flow of the activity until it reaches the accusative object, and then shifts to concentrate on the accusative object, which is poised to be the next FG as the event continues.)
– The accusative object is nearly always an accusative LM, a whole bounded space (typically the surface of an object) that exists as part of the setting before the *be-* event takes place and is substantially unchanged when the *be-* event is over. There is no point at which the accusative object attracts exclusive concentrated attention to become a FG in its own right. (If something new is introduced into the LM space as a result of the *be-* event then it does not become incorporated into the LM as a functional part of it; it remains an identifiably separate entity that occupies an otherwise unchanged LM space.)
– The *be-* path is diffuse, both spatially and temporally, as reflected in the multiplex of path vectors in Figure 8. (The diffuse nature of the path makes a synoptic construal more inviting, discouraging a reading that concentrates attention on specific locations in space or time.)
– The diffuse *be-* path is aspectually open-ended and does not have a predictable point of completion.
– *Be-* verbs are thus well suited to describe recursive mechanical routines and other sustained activities.
– The diffuse nature of *be-*'s multiplex of path vectors often makes the events seem more abstract and complex in comparison with those described by unprefixed verbs.
– The LM is more prominent as an accusative LM than it would be in an oblique PP.
– The precise manner of the causal activity is typically less prominent compared with the concentrated focus on the subject's activity in normal sequential construals.

– A moving theme is less prominent in a *be-* verb construction. In fact, *be-* verb constructions frequently do not involve any theme role whatsoever. See Section 5.

4. Stylistic tendencies

4.1 Register

In stylistic effect *be-*verbs are often similar to English verbs with *-ize*. Several authors comment on a link between *be-* verbs and an impersonal bureaucratic style that tends to objectify people, turning them into accusative LMs. As examples of *be-* verbs with a bureaucratic tone, H. Brinkmann (1962:244) mentions *begutachten, befürworten, besteuern, besolden, beauftragen, beurlauben, beurteilen, bevormunden, beanstanden, betreuen*, and especially formations with *-igen*. Hallwass (1991:94–96) adds *betanzen, beschenken, bedenken, bemustern, beliefern, beschulen, beheimaten, bezuschussen, berenten*. Brinkmann lists *belohnen, beschenken, beraten, bedienen, belauschen*, and *bedrohen* as examples where the *be-* verb objectifies people as an accusative LM when they would have dative status with the simple base verb, and *beantworten, befolgen*, and *beklagen* where people are replaced by an inanimate object. Brinkmann also mentions verbs like (*sich*) *besehen* and *betrachten* in this context.[47]

Be- verbs are also associated with the specialized contexts of technical jargon, often involving an agent who uses a root instrument to perform a routine operation on an object. Like prefixed verbs generally, *be-* verbs serve to synopticize an extended event with several distinct parts into a more complex whole that is itself a part of a larger whole structured setting. That setting is not just generic space-time.

Possibly because of the incongruity of using many *be-* verbs outside of bureaucratic or technical contexts, *be-*verbs can sometimes contribute to a playful, ironic style, as if obviously using pretentious language to describe ordinary or trivial events. Weinrich (1993:1063) quotes Goethe: 'Nachdem er nun alle heiligen Orte betreten und *bebetet* hatte, …' Curme (1922:435) also refers to an "ironical application of the idea", citing 'Ich bin elend! Ach was, ich will dich *beelenden*' and 'Ich will sie *bejunkern*, daß sie an mich denken soll' (i.e., act as if she is a Junker, as she claims).

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47. Hallwass (1991:96) comments: "Neue Zeitwörter mit der Vorsilbe *be-* scheinen überall da am Platze, wo wir nicht als Menschen *gewertet*, sondern als Glieder irgendeiner Statistik *bewertet* werden." She goes on (1991:97) to decry the general tendencies this way: "Den Vogel abgeschossen haben die Aktenmenschen, die es fertigbrachten, nicht nur Menschen mit Sachen, sondern gar umgekehrt Sachen mit Menschen auszustatten. Messen werden *beschickt*, nicht nur mit Ausstellungsgut, auch mit 'Standpersonal'. Wälder werden *beförstert*. Daß aber eine Ehe *bekindert* sein kann, geht zu weit!"

4.2   Past participles

Prefixed verbs generally are commonly used as past participles, whether in passive constructions or attributive constructions. That is particularly the case with applicative *be-* verbs, since the accusative LMs are characterized as wholes by the presence of whatever they were provided with. Moreover, an accusative LM is grammatically available to be the subject of a passive or an attributive participle in a way that the object of a preposition is not. Stylistically, both passive voice and *be-* verbs are characteristic of bureaucratic style.

The peculiar sustained nature of a *be-* verb activity also contributes to an association of *be-* verbs and past participles. The participle of an unprefixed verb will tend to describe its subject as a transformed participant which has been the patient of a completed prior act and is now in a new resulting state ready to do something itself. *Der Wagen ist geladen* means the car has been loaded and is ready to be driven away. If we really want to concentrate on the resulting state, however, we would normally prefer an adjective if an appropriate one exists. That is, rather than describing the truck as *geladen* we could call it *voll* ('full') or *fertig* ('finished') or *bereit* ('ready'). It is hard to imagine an adjective that could replace the attributive participle *beladen*, however. The past participle of a *be-* verb is almost uniquely qualified to describe a continuing influence on a noun (as opposed to a completed verb event with a distinct resulting state). The past participle of a simple verb announces that a prior sequential event has been completed. The past participle of a *be-* verb can describe the ongoing influence after the LM has been occupied.

In any event, there is a notable tendency for *be-* verbs to occur as past participles (Günther 1974: 244), and that is especially the case with denominal *be-* verbs (Günther 1974: 135). A large number of *be-* verbs are used more or less exclusively as past participles. The list includes *berühmt, bekannt, bewusst, begabt, betagt*. There are several clusters of similar participles such as *betrunken* and its many synonyms, verbs for being emotionally affected (*bedrippst, bedeppert, bekleckert, belatschert, belemmert, benüsselt, besorgt, betatscht, befangen, benommen, beklommen, betreten, betroffen*) or for being mentally abnormal (*behämmert, bekloppt, beknackt, beknattert, beschränkt, besessen*). There is a particularly large group of participles that characterize something as having an affixed object of some kind, whether an accessory such as an article of clothing (*bebrillt, befrackt, behandschuht, behost, bemützt, beringt, beschuht, beschürzt, bestiefelt, bestrumpft, behelmt, bekleidet*) or some other feature whose presence can characterize something (*bepanzert, beleibt, bepelzt, behaart, bezopft, betresst, bebändert, beblecht, besandet, bemehlt, bezuckert, bepudert, berusst, bestaubt, beblättert, beblümt, bebuscht, befiedert, begrannt, begrast, bereift, berindet, beschilft, beschneit, beschrankt, besternt, betaut, bewaldet, bewimpert, belaubt, bemittelt, begütert, begnadet, beherzt, besaitet, betucht*).

4.3   Marking complex denominal base verbs

As discussed in Section 3.3, *be-* is often used with denominal base verbs, making a consistent semantic contribution. *Be-* seems especially apt to be used when the base verb is already morphologically complex, for example when it has the suffix *-igen*. There is one type of denominal verb that seems almost to require a prefix for morphological reasons, namely those with a nominal root that already has a stressed prefix (from a particle). Examples include *bevorzugen, beanspruchen, beeinflussen, beeindrucken, beauftragen, beanstanden, bevorteilen, bevorrechten, beglückwünschen*, and *beschlagnahmen. Bevollmächtigen, berücksichtigen, beabsichtigen, beaufsichtigen, benachteiligen, benachrichtigen, bevorrechtigen, bewerkstelligen*, and *beeinträchtigen* all have base verbs with both a stressed prefix and an *-ig* suffix. In all of these cases the derived verb requires a prefix; a bare denominal like *vorzugen is not an option. The only real choice is whether the prefix will be *be-* or one of the others such as *ver-* (or occasionally *er-*), and in the case of denominal verbs *be-* is the usual choice, the one whose meaning is most generally applicable. *Be-* serves a largely grammatical function to mark the complex denominal verb as a verb.

5.   The irrelevance of themes

A significant number of *be-* verb constructions have an identifiable substance that is moved to occupy the accusative LM space, such as the butter, sugar, almonds, nosedrops, nosespray or weapons in the opening examples. The substance is not always overtly expressed, but it can appear as the object of a *mit*-PP or as the root of a denominal verb like *bewaffnen*, and in some constructions the nominative subject may also fill the role of moving theme, as it does in (5) with *besetzen*. Constructions with an identifiable theme are generally referred to as "applicative" constructions.[48]

For the *be-* verb construction to apply unproblematically, a moving theme needs to be a "nonindividuated" mass or multiplex, such as butter or sugar, that does not have an intrinsic shape of its own. That makes sense given the basic

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48. Many discussions of *be-* verbs tend to limit themselves to these applicative constructions. There are at least two reasons for this. One is a general bias in favor of sequential path construals, making us inclined to follow the moving theme as a focal FG. The applicative constructions seem more tangible and easier to talk clearly about than those that do not have an identifiable moving entity. Another is the particular concern of generative linguistic approaches to find a syntactic relation between the *be-* verb constructions and those with expressed accusative FGs, as in discussions of the locative alternation.

meaning of *be-*, since a compact moving object with a fixed shape would normally attract concentrated attention and would not lend itself to a diffuse path image with a multiplex of vectors. Awareness of a fixed shape for a moving object would also tend to distract our attention from the whole focal accusative LM, inviting us to focus more particularly on the localized portion of the LM that the theme comes to occupy. The theme and the LM compete for our focal attention, and a compact shaped theme normally wins, becoming the FG in a sequential construal.[49]

Applicative constructions with an expressible theme are certainly an important and interesting group of *be-* verb constructions, and looking at the constraints on what types of entities can function as themes has led to significant insights. However, focusing on applicative constructions to the exclusion of other *be-* verb constructions can lead to misconceptions about the meaning of *be-*. It probably comes as a surprise to many readers that there is no moving theme whatsoever represented in Figure 8, but it is evident that a theme is not a necessary part of the meaning of *be-*.

To see that a theme is basically irrelevant to the core meaning of *be-* verbs, we can begin by looking more carefully at perfectly normal applicative *be-* verb constructions like (83b), which enters into a standard locative alternation with (83a). (83c) is also a normal applicative construction, except that the theme is left unexpressed. But what would the theme for (83c) be? The most likely candidates are things like sweat or dirt that are being *removed* from the LM rather than added to it like the holy water in (83b). Does that mean that we should posit a grammatical alternation between (83c) and (83d)? Such an analysis would distort the meaning of *be-* (incorrectly making it seem as though *be-* can have the same meaning as *ent-*). The fact is that the *be-* verbs describe directing energy to an accusative LM in both (83b) and (83c), and it makes no difference whether a putative theme comes along for the ride. If we want to understand the meaning of *betupfen*, we would do well to look at sentences like (84) that do not especially suggest any theme at all. The only reason to talk about themes is to make the grammatical observation that they can sometimes be specified in a *mit-*PP.

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49. Compare the determiner constraints that are associated with distributed entities generally (Jackendoff 1983: 101–06), and with the English locative alternation in particular. Exceptions to the principle that an applicative theme needs to be nonindividuated and diffuse are remarkably rare. The only general exceptions are the *bekleidet*-style constructions when a physically individuated theme continues to characterize the whole LM in a sustained and diffuse way, especially if it seems to "crown" the LM (e.g. *bekrönen*, *bekränzen*, *bemützen*, *behelmen*). Compare similar themes with verbs like *befirsten*. *bedachen*, *betiteln* or *beampeln* that suggest more laterally extended themes. Compare also constructions that can suggest attaching an identifying label (e.g. *bezeichnen*, *besiegeln*).

(83) a. Man *tupft* einem Schimpansen einen roten Farbklecks auf die Stirn.
          'They dab a red paint spot on a chimpanzee's forehead'

      b. Sie *betupfte* die Stirn mit Weihwasser.
          'She (*be-*)dabbed the forehead with holy water'

      c. Horatio *betupfte* die Stirn mit einem kleinen Tuch.
          'Horatio (*be-*)dabbed the forehead with a small cloth'

      d. Ein Junge flößte ihm Wasser in den Mund und *tupfte* den Schweiß von
          seiner Stirn.
          'A boy fed water into his mouth and dabbed the sweat from his forehead'

(84) Sie *betupfte* die Wunde solange, bis das Blut langsamer floss.
      'She kept (*be-*)dabbing the wound until the blood flowed more slowly'

5.1   Themes and instruments

Even the link between themes and *mit*-PPs is problematic, however. Note that (83c)
has a *mit*-PP, but it refers to an instrument of application rather than to a theme.
There is potential ambiguity between applicative *mit*-PPs and instrumental ones.
(85a) for example could theoretically mean that the cranes are themes being loaded
onto the ships rather than instruments being used to load other things. Compare
(85b). Such ambiguity rarely arises, however, because instruments are normally
singular individuated things and applicative themes are nonindividuated.

(85) a. Im Hafen von Botany bei Sydney werden gleich 5 Schiffe mit Kränen
          beladen.
          'In the Botany harbor near Sydney 5 ships are being (*be-*)loaded with
          cranes'

      b. Ich teilte mir den Weg mit Bussen, Öltankern, Lastwagen mit Kränen
          beladen, wurde angehupt … Es war lebensgefährlich.
          'I shared the road with busses, oil tankers, trucks (*be-*)loaded with cranes,
          had horns blowing at me … It was life-threatening'

(86) a. Sie *bemalt* Ostereier mit Motiven von Klimt.
          'She (*be-*)paints Easter eggs with motifs from Klimt'

      b. Ute Arndt aus Mildenau *bemalt* Ostereier mit Acrylfarben.
          'Ute Arndt from Mildenau (*be-*)paints Easter eggs with acrylic paints'

      c. Der Elternbeirat *bemalt* Ostereier mit den Kindergartenkindern.
          'The parents' council (*be-*)paints Easter eggs with the kindergarten
          children'

It is actually interesting to note how similar the applicative *mit*-PPs are to normal instrumental *mit*-PPs. The main difference between the holy water in (83b) and the cloth in (83c) is that the holy water remains on the LM and the cloth does not. The Klimt motifs in (86a) are clearly understood as themes, but are the acrylic paints in (86b) themes or instruments? In effect, the applicative *mit*-PP can be understood as just a special case of *mit*-PPs generally, albeit one that is grammatically associated with applicative *be-* verb constructions. Whether it indicates a theme substance being added (83b, 86a) or a normal instrument (83c) or even a co-agent (86c), the object of the *mit*-PP simply has to accompany the path profiled by *be-*.

In certain situations the substance that moves to occupy the accusative LM can appear as the nominative subject of a *be-* verb, much as an instrument can appear as a subject rather than its agent. (87)–(89) illustrate such alternations with *bedecken*, *bespülen*, and *berühren*. As far as the *be-* verb construction is concerned, however, the role of theme is again irrelevant. The hand in (87b), the water in (88b) and the straw in (89b) are all portrayed as the source of a diffuse set of path vectors directed at the accusative LM – the role prototypically filled by an agent. That is even the case in (89b), which describes an objectively static configuration as something that the straw is doing to the floor. Compare the pseudo-activity attributed to the subject by a reflexive construction like (89c).[50]

(87) a. Langsam streckte Mike seine Hand aus und *berührte* ihren Arm.
    'Slowly Mike stretched out his hand and (*be-*)touched her arm'

   b. Eine kühle Hand *berührte* ihren Arm.
    'A cool hand (*be-*)touched her arm'

(88) a. Man *bespülte* den Mund mit Flüssigkeit.
    'They (*be-*)rinsed out the mouth with liquid'

   b. Das Wasser *bespülte* die Backsteinmauer.
    'The water washed against [*be-*rinsed] the brick wall'

(89) a. Sie *bedeckte* den Boden mit trockenem Stroh.
    'She (*be-*)covered the floor with dry straw'

   b. Stroh *bedeckte* den Boden.
    'Straw (*be-*)covered the floor'

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50. Günther (1974: 118) also lists these predominantly agentive verbs as allowing a nominative theme on occasion: *behängen*, *befestigen*, *begrünen*, *bekleiden*, *bekränzen*, *bekrönen*, *belasten*, *beschweren*, *bepflastern*. He compares the unusual spatial use of *bestehen* in 'Eichen *bestehen* den Platz' with the causative act described by *bestellen*. Compare also verbs like *beherbergen*, which normally occur in agentive variants for providing shelter but occasionally describe containing.

c.   Der Boden *bedeckt sich* mit sehr kurzen und wenig saftreichen Gräsern.
'The ground becomes covered [*be*-covers itself] with short and relatively
dry grasses'

5.2   *Be-* verbs with no theme

More generally, the most obvious argument that *be-* verb constructions do not
necessarily involve a theme is that a great many *be-* verbs simply do not have a
theme. In the opening set of typical *be-* verb examples, there is no identifiable
theme substance involved with *behämmern, bebohren, besägen, behorchen, beklop-
fen, bestaunen, beriechen, befühlen, behandeln, beschützen, beschirmen, beruhigen,
belächeln, bedauern, besprechen, bereuen, bejammern, betreuen, beraten, beleidi-
gen, bespotten, bestrafen,* or *berücksichtigen*. In (7) for example, *beklopfen* does
not transfer anything but energy to the accusative space, and *behorchen* does not
even apply physical energy – only attention. The list of *be-* verbs that do not have
any expressible theme can be expanded almost at will. To restrict our attention to
be- verb constructions that have identifiable themes means to ignore *bearbeiten, be-
dienen, bereinigen, beanspruchen, beschäftigen, benutzen, beherrschen, beeinflussen,
bekämpfen, beschädigen, betrügen, beobachten, betrachten, besichtigen, bewundern,
bedenken, beachten,* and many others. Constructions with these verbs do not in-
volve themes, but they do all involve a diffuse path directed at an accusative LM,
typically a relatively complex and temporally sustained event without an intrinsic
conclusion. They all conform to the image in Figure 8.

Even when there is an evident material theme substance, the *be-* verb normally
suggests a more complex and abstract event such that the process does something
to the accusative LM other than simply transfer the theme there spatially. For
example, *beschmutzen* implies a qualitative change in the LM space, adding an
evaluative element that goes beyond the theme's simple spatial presence. *Beladen*
describes more than the spatial addition of the things being loaded; it implies add-
ing weight, kinetic energy to the LM, and it further implies doing so in a series of
events over time. *Belasten* is even more explicit in profiling the sustained pressure
that ensues as a consequence of the spatial addition. *Beliefern* implies serving a
functional purpose within the LM space, providing it with something it needs.
The 'occupying' image of *besetzen* has similar implications that the presence of the
theme imposes abstract forces and functional effects on the LM. In other words, the
path described by the *be-* verb is not merely spatial; it implies a variety of potential
functional vectors that operate on the LM.

6. Frequencies

Table 1 reports the results of a search in the COSMAS database for strings of the form "zu" plus the infinitive of selected *be-* verbs, e.g. "zu bekommen" (i.e., searches of the form "zu /w1:1 bekommen"). (The searches do not reliably distinguish umlauted vowels from non-umlauted ones, so the results for *bewahren*/*bewähren* and *befördern*/*befordern* are merged.)

Table 1. *Be-* verb frequencies

bekommen	82,022	begrenzen	5,887	bekräftigen	723
bewältigen	35,533	bewerben	5,871	belästigen	652
bedenken	30,264	beschaffen	5,797	beunruhigen	632
berichten	29,679	begehen	5,756	bepflanzen	627
bezahlen	28,171	bezwingen	5,645	benachrichtigen	607
bewegen	27,064	belasten	5,425	benachteiligen	592
beobachten	26,252	bearbeiten	5,407	bereisen	575
besuchen	25,933	besitzen	5,362	bekleiden	503
besichtigen	23,829	beschließen	5,246	bemessen	498
beenden	20,941	beschränken	5,117	bedecken	477
[bewahren/		besorgen	5,096	beheizen	455
bewähren	19,304]				
befürchten	19,263	begründen	5,019	beladen	329
beweisen	19,101	bemerken	4,896	bewaffnen	285
betreiben	18,670	betonen	4,849	bewerfen	282
bestehen	18,118	beschleunigen	4,737	bedrängen	266
beginnen	17,372	befinden	4,727	bewässern	266
beachten	17,172	besiegen	4,437	bestehlen	257
befreien	15,993	befriedigen	4,396	befehlen	239
beseitigen	15,880	begleichen	4,242	berichtigen	238
berücksichtigen	15,381	betreten	4,082	beschießen	228
begrüßen	13,737	[befördern/		begießen	221
		befordern	4,032]		
betrachten	13,725	beherrschen	3,778	befallen	201
behandeln	13,637	bewerkstelligen	3,544	bedrücken	197
beklagen	13,459	befragen	3,368	bewohnen	182
bekämpfen	13,453	bekennen	2,965	beschmutzen	167
behalten	13,087	betätigen	2,927	betreffen	156
besetzen	12,677	beleuchten	2,890	beschildern	153
beraten	12,459	behindern	2,708	beeilen	151
beschäftigen	12,347	berühren	2,533	bekleben	97
begegnen	11,343	bewirken	2,292	bestreuen	91
bewerten	11,180	befahren	2,160	befeuchten	90

Table 1. (*continued*)

bestimmen	10,637	bedeuten	1,862	beschichten	81
behaupten	10,536	besteigen	1,757	beschmieren	73
benutzen	10,389	befestigen	1,647	beschlagen	65
beurteilen	10,330	besänftigen	1,489	belüften	59
begleiten	10,033	bescheren	1,465	benetzen	53
betreuen	9,438	bereinigen	1,452	bestreichen	47
beziehen	8,864	beschweren	1,400	bespritzen	36
beruhigen	8,796	beanspruchen	1,336	belaufen	26
bezeichnen	8,695	begraben	1,290	bedingen	24
bedienen	8,651	beliefern	1,164	befremden	22
bestellen	8,281	beschützen	1,042	bepacken	12
beheben	8,217	benötigen	911	bestecken	6
besprechen	7,682	beschenken	875	besprenkeln	3
bestätigen	7,208	betrügen	859	benässen	1
beschreiben	7,179	bemalen	833	bestoßen	0
begreifen	6,615	bespielen	832	beschieben	0
befassen	6,523	berauben	829	bezuckern	0
belegen	6,019	benehmen	825		
beeinflussen	5,930	beleidigen	764		

CHAPTER 3

Ent-

1. Schematic meaning

Ent- is semantically very consistent, and it is generally agreed that it basically describes separation.[51] Something (a "theme") is contained in a LM's bounds, or attached to the LM, or otherwise located within the LM's reach, and then it gets loose from whatever was keeping it there. After the *ent-* event the theme is no longer in or on or accessible to the LM. In (1) for example the weapons and the uniforms are separated from the policemen, and in (2) the subjects manage to separate themselves from their pursuers or from a containing location. Basically *ent-* describes a source path construed synoptically, profiling the event of separating without following a moving FG on to its subsequent locations.

(1) Dutzende Polizisten wurden *entwaffnet* und ihrer Uniformen *entledigt*.
'Dozens of policemen were disarmed [*ent*-armed] and divested [*ent*-freed] of their uniforms'

(2) a. Er *entkommt* seinen Verfolgern, indem er sich auf dem Kohlewagen des Zuges versteckt.
'He escapes [*ent*-comes] his pursuers [dative] by hiding on the coal car of a train'

b. Osio *entkommt* aus dem Gefängnis.
'Osio escapes out of prison'

c. Napoleon *entkommt* von Elba.
'Napoleon escapes from Elba'

The complicating factor with *ent-* verbs is that (1) and (2) represent two quite different types of grammatical construction. In one an external subject causes a diffuse path in which something vacates an accusative LM; in the other the focal noun is a grammatical FG that achieves separation from a dative object or an oblique source LM. The two constructions share a highly schematic sense of 'separation', but they are otherwise quite different.

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51. See e.g. Curme 1922: 436, H. Brinkmann 1962: 249–50, Weinrich 1993: 1064–5, Fleischer 1971: 300 or Schröder 1992, as well as the more detailed discussions in Kühnhold (1973) and Stiebels (1996).

1.1   Privative *ent-*

The most characteristic use of *ent-* is a 'privative' construction such as (1), further illustrated in (3)–(13). An accusative LM such as the policemen in (1) is deprived or rid of something, such as weapons. The weapons however – the theme that is being removed – are not portrayed as a focal FG. The theme is typically a non-individuated mass or multiplex indicated by the root of a denominal verb (e.g. *Waffen* in (1)). It can also be an abstract quality indicated by a deadjectival root (e.g. *menschlich* in (9)). Less commonly it can be specified as a genitive object in a 'divesting' construction with verbs like *entledigen* in (1) or *enteignen* in (12).

(3)   Im Anschluss daran werden die Tiere geschlachtet, *entblutet* und *enthäutet*.
       'At that point the animals are slaughtered, (*ent-*)bled and (*ent-*)skinned'

(4)   Die Niere *entgiftet* den Körper.
       'The kidney detoxifies [*ent*-poisons] the body'

(5)   Nach einem Krieg in der nahen Zukunft sind weite Landstriche der Erde *entvölkert*.
       'In the near future broad stretches of the earth will be depopulated [*ent*-peopled] after a war'

(6)   Berlusconi *entwürdet* das Amt nicht, sondern *entkleidet* jene, die die Ämter bekleiden, nämlich die Politiker.
       'Berlusconi does not dishonor [*ent*-dignify] the office; he exposes [*ent*-clothes] those who hold [*be*-clothe] the offices, namely the politicians'

(7)   Außerdem will die künftige Koalition den Straßenverkehr *entlasten*, in dem sie die Einführung der übergroßen Lkw verhindert.
       'Besides that the future coalition plans to relieve [*ent*-burden] traffic by preventing the introduction of oversized trucks'

(8)   Textilien werden *entgilbt* und *entgraut*.
       'Textiles are rid of yellow [*ent*-yellowed]and gray [*ent*-grayed]'

(9)   Künstler werden durch die Angriffe der Netzaktivisten *entmenschlicht* und *entwertet*.
       'Artists are dehumanized and devalued [*ent*-humanized and *ent*-valued] by the Internet activists' attacks'

(10)   Dies entspricht dem Ziel, zu *entflechten* und zu *entbürokratisieren*.
       'This corresponds to the goal of decentralizing [*ent*-entangling] and de-bureaucratizing [*ent*-bureaucratizing]'

(11)   Die Muskeln werden *entkrampft* und *entspannt*.
       'The muscles are loosened [*ent*-cramped] and relaxed [*ent*-tensed]'

(12) Die Polizei wird sofort aktiv und *enteignet* ihn seines eigenen Hauses.
'The police take action immediately and disposess [*ent*-own] him of his own house [genitive]'

(13) a. Dekan Stephan Arras *entpflichtete* ihn seines Amtes.
'Dean Stephan Arras relieved [*ent*-dutied] him of his office'

b. Bischof Felix hat jetzt einen Geistlichen mit sofortiger Wirkung von seinem priesterlichen Dienst *entpflichtet*.
'Bishop Felix has relieved [*ent*-dutied] a clergyman of [from] his priestly duties effective immediately'

These privative constructions come close to being the exact opposite of the 'applicative' *be-* verb constructions. Where *be-* describes a synopticized diffuse goal path to an accusative LM, *ent-* describes a synopticized diffuse source path from an accusative LM. Privative *ent-* verbs can be represented by Figure 9, which is very similar to the *be-* image except that the profiled diffuse path goes away from the accusative LM rather than toward it. *Ent-* presumes a subject, typically an agent, that directs energy toward a prominently focal accusative LM. The subject and its activity are represented by the dotted circle and arrow operating on the LM from the left. The LM is represented by the square at the center of the image. What *ent-* profiles is a diffuse multiplex of path vectors, the dark arrows in Figure 9, that are caused to leave the accusative LM. Their departure is construed synoptically, so that the LM remains steadily focal and central for as long as the *ent-* event is going on. The result of the event is a LM freed or bereft of the theme.
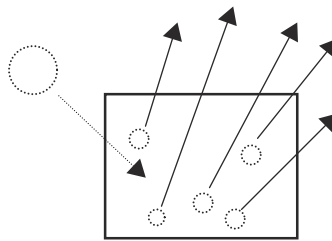

Figure 9. 'Privative' *ent-*

As with schematic *be-* and the multi-directional route paths, the number of path arrows in Figure 9 is intended to be indefinite, forming a diffuse multiplex – even though the graphic representation necessarily shows a specific number of *ent-* arrows. Also like *be-* and the multi-directional route paths, the multiplex of path vectors can blend together to form the image of a mass (such as the blood and skin in (3)). Figure 9 is also intended to be neutral with respect to the precise direction

of the arrows, apart from the fact that they lead away from the LM. The image in Figure 9 can essentially reverse an event described by an applicative *be-* verb, at least when the substance being removed is not an intrinsic part of the LM but is there only contingently. *Entwaffnen* for example might well undo a prior event described by *bewaffnen*. *Entkleiden*, *entlasten*, and *entvölkern* are similarly antonyms of the corresponding *be-* verbs.

There are some subtle differences between *ent-* and *be-* other than the direction of the path vectors, however, resulting in a subtly more integral role for *ent-*'s theme (the entity being separated from the LM). Common *be-* verbs such as *behandeln* do not really require any distinct theme at all, since the subject's activity itself can correspond to the profiled *be-* path. With *ent-* on the other hand the subject's activity cannot be identified with the profiled *ent-* path, since the subject's activity is largely directed toward the LM. Something other than the subject's activity has to move away from the LM, and so the theme becomes a subtly more necessary aspect of the *ent-* image than it was for *be-*. The theme still does not have FG status as subject or accusative object, and it is still often an extremely abstract trait (such as humanity or the state of being bureaucratized), but a theme entity of some kind is a necessary part of the *ent-* event. The theme is represented in Figure 9 as the small dotted circles at the base of each profiled path arrow. Like the arrows themselves, the dotted circles are intended to form the collective image of a diffuse multiplex or a mass.

This subtly more integral role for the theme has aspectual and grammatical implications. The theme visibly occupies the LM space at the start of the event, so we can always tell if there is still any of it left there. *Ent-* verb constructions thus usually imply that all of the theme is eventually removed and the LM is completely free of it. A *be-* verb event has no intrinsic point of conclusion, but an *ent-* verb event usually does, namely the moment when there is no more of the theme left at the LM.[52] The usual result of an *ent-* verb event is a LM that is no longer occupied by any of the theme.

The fact that the theme plays a more integral role affects the grammar of the constructions as well. The interpreter needs to have at least a vague idea what is being removed, so some indication of the theme needs to be provided. The theme cannot be indicated by the subject (the external agent) or the direct object (the accusative LM), so it needs to be indicated either obliquely or in the root of the base verb. In nearly all cases the privative theme can be discerned from the base verb. The most typical pattern is denominal (e.g. *entwaffnen*, *enthäuten*, *entgiften*,

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52. Privative *ent-* verbs thus describe events that would have incremental themes (more specifically, decremental themes) in a sequential construal – i.e., the aspectual course of the event would map exactly onto the disappearance of the theme.

including more abstract nouns like *entlasten*, *entpflichten*, or *entwürden*). There are also deadjectival *ent-* verbs that describe ridding the accusative LM of an abstract quality indicated by the adjective (e.g. *entgilben*, *entmenschlichen*), and similar abstract images can be described with *-ieren* verbs (e.g. *entbürokratisieren*). Even 'divesting' verbs like *enteignen* or *entpflichten* have base verbs that indicate a generic theme category. In the relatively rare event that a theme does need to be specified obliquely, a *mit*-PP is not available to *ent-* verbs the way it is to *be-* or the route-path prefixes. The role of the *ent-* theme is not even vaguely instrumental. Traditionally, privative themes can be specified as genitive objects in the 'divesting' pattern illustrated by *entledigen* in (1) or *enteignen* in (11). The construction with a genitive is now sometimes replaced by one with a *von*-PP, as reflected in (13b) as opposed to (13a).[53]

Unlike *be-*, privative *ent-* can often be translated using an English prefixed verb. Probably the most general English gloss has a verb with *de-*, as in (4), (5), (9), and (10). *Dis-* verbs also often correspond to *ent-* verbs, as in (1), (6), (12), and (13). If the base verb is established as a verb in its own right, then an English *un-* verb may also come into play (e.g. *unpeel*, *unburden*, *uncover*, *unlock*, *unnerve*).[54]

1.2 Separation by a focal theme

The other basic type of *ent-* verb construction, illustrated in (2) and (14)–(16), is different in several signficant ways, and many aspects of Figure 9 no longer apply. To begin with, the *ent-* theme that separates from the LM is now a focal noun that serves as a grammatical FG in the construction. It is typically a nominative subject in an intransitive construction like (2), and occasionally an *ent-* verb may take an accusative FG as in (16). Rather than a diffuse multiplex of path vectors there is a clearly directed path by an individuated theme. The constructions prototypically describe escaping or eluding as in (2) or (14), and there are also variants that describe originating at a source as in (15). This type of *ent-* verb can be designated rather crudely as the 'escaping' variants.

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53. See Section 3.1 for discussion of a handful of "illogical" verbs like *entleeren*, *entblößen*, *entledigen*, and *entbreiten* with base verbs that refer to the resulting state of the accusative LM.

54. Other candidates with *de-*: *deprive*, *decontaminate*, *delouse*, *deacidify*, *decalcify*, *desalinate*, *desulphurize*, *degrease*, *defrost*, *defoliate*, *derust*, *decorticate*, *deice*, *deflower*, *debone*, *dehydrate*, *defuse*, *defrock*, *decode*, *devalue*. With *dis-*: *dispose*, *disinfect*, *dismiss*, *disinherit*, *disown*, *discourage*, *dishonor*, *disenchant*. English may also have a bare denominal verb if the privative meaning is clearly implied (e.g. *skin*, *shell*, *scale*, *dust*, *fillet*, *bone*, *peel*, *strip*, *gut*, *core*, *weed*) – even though such verbs are theoretically ambiguous between a privative meaning and an applicative one.

(14)   a.   Die Waffe *entschlüpft* seinen Händen.
           'The weapon (*ent-*)slips from his hands [dative]'

       b.   Ein "oberpeinlich" ist mit Abstand das flippigste Wort, das ihrem Mund
           entschlüpft.
           'An occasional "extremely embarrassing" is by far the most unconventional
           expression that ever escapes [*ent-*slips] her mouth [dative]'

(15)   a.   Die Fulda *entspringt* am höchsten Berg von Hessen, der Wasserkuppe.
           'The Fulda originates [*ent-*springs] at the highest mountain in Hessen,
           the Wasserkuppe'

       b.   Der größte Nebenfluss des Rheins *entspringt* aus zwei Quellen.
           'The largest tributary of the Rhine arises [*ent-*springs] out of two sources'

       c.   Jesus *entspringt* dem Stamm Davids.
           'Jesus stems from [*ent-*springs] the tribe of David [dative]'

(16)   a.   Marlene *entzieht* ihm die Hand und macht einen Schritt rückwärts.
           'Marlene withdraws [*ent-*pulls] her hand from him [dative] and takes a
           step backwards'

       b.   Bertram fasste nach ihren Brüsten, aber sie *entzog sich* ihm.
           'Bertram reached for her breasts, but she eluded [*ent-*pulled herself from]
           him [dative]'

The *ent-* LM from which the theme 'escapes' is not expressed as an accusative LM.
The *ent-* LM can sometimes be specified obliquely in an *aus*-PP as in (2b), or in
a *von*-PP as in (2c). Most typically, though, it is portrayed as a potentially active
participant in the event by making it a dative object, as in (2a) or (14). Essentially,
the separation event profiled by *ent-* is now situated in a setting characterized by
the relation that originally connected the focal theme to the LM.

It is very difficult to represent this *ent-* image pictorially, because it needs to
be neutral as to the original relation that held the focal theme to the *ent-* LM. The
theme may be contained inside the *ent-*LM at the beginning as in (2b), or it may
begin attached to its outer surface, or it may begin outside the *ent-* LM altogether
but within its potential reach, as in (2a). In all cases the *ent-* LM has some sort
of "hold" on the theme entity at the start of the event – often a purely functional
one such as possession. That hold may be relatively weak and passive, in which
case the LM will appear in an oblique *aus*-PP (containment) or *von*-PP (attach-
ment), but in the most typical cases the *ent-* LM is a more active participant in
the event and will appear as a dative object. In any event there is a moment of
separation when the focal noun is no longer bound in any way to the LM, and
it is that moment that is profiled by *ent-*. The path image is becoming almost a
punctual moment of release.

Figure 10 is a very crude attempt to convey the kind of synoptically construed
'escaping' image that is reflected in these sentences. The entity that is rectangular

on three sides represents the *ent-* LM. The enclosing arrows on its right side represent its (potential) "hold" on the focal theme, which is represented by the shaded dotted circle. The image is meant to be neutral as to exactly what kind of relation originally held the focal theme to the LM, although such vagueness is impossible to represent in a single picture such as Figure 10. It is also intended to be neutral as to how actively the LM participates in the event (how active its original hold is). The bold outward arrow represents the actual profiled *ent-* path, which should be understood as a synoptically construed relation between the theme and the LM – a moment when the LM's hold on the theme is broken. Both the theme and the LM are present in a single synoptic image throughout the event. The theme is expressed as a focal noun, either the subject of the verb or an accusative FG, but it is not strictly speaking the FG for the *ent-* image itself. That is, *ent-* does not direct us to concentrate attention exclusively on a noun FG as it moves away from the LM the way we would in a sequentially construed source path. What is being profiled by *ent-* is the event of separation, the severing of a connection (often a very abstract connection). Much like the holistic route paths, the *ent-* path gets past an obstacle, namely whatever was originally holding it.
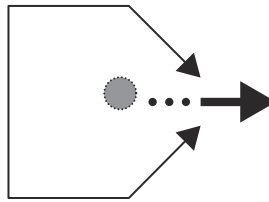
Figure 10. Schematic 'escaping' *ent-*

The 'escaping' pattern with an individuated theme is not as consistently marked in the English translations as the privative *ent-* verbs are with *de-* or *dis-*. To the extent that any English prefix corresponds to *ent-* in constructions like (13)–(16) it is *ex-* and its variants (e.g. *extricate*, *escape*, *elude*, *eradicate*).

1.3 The shared underlying pattern

If we take Figure 10 to be schematic enough it can plausibly underlie the 'privative' variants as well, despite the important grammatical differences in the constructions. In other words, Figure 10 can be understood to describe synoptic separation in the most general way, as a theme entity that becomes separated from a LM entity. That maximally schematic 'separating' image will need to allow for a variety of original relationships between the theme and the LM, however, in a way that cannot be conveyed well in a picture such as Figure 10.

A key variable in the maximally schematic 'separation' image is how active the LM is. In the privative constructions the LM's original "hold" on the theme is a minimally active one, and the same goes for 'escaping' variants when they have oblique LMs as in (2b). In the more typical 'escaping' constructions with a dative object, on the other hand, the LM is read to be an active participant in the event. The schematic *ent-* image needs to allow for that range of LM activity.

Given such a schematic image, the privative image of Figure 9 can be derived by transforming the path in ways that are already familiar from the multidirectional route-path variants. The single schematic arrow of Figure 10 becomes a diffuse multiplex of path vectors, and the theme itself becomes a diffuse multiplex or mass. The privative construction adds a causal subject that acts on an accusative LM, relegating the diffuse theme to peripheral status. In the 'escaping' constructions like (14)–(16) by contrast the themes are individuated and have prominent status as the subject of the verb (or its accusative object).[55]

In all cases the *ent-* verb construction describes a source path that is objectively very similar to one that could also be described sequentially with an unprefixed verb and an *aus-*PP or a *von-*PP – or with the particles *aus-* or *ab-* or *weg-*. The prefixed construction synopticizes the construal to focus particularly on the moment when the theme separates from the LM, rather than tracking the theme as a FG that continues to move further away from the LM. The *ent-* LM is thus relatively more prominent in the synoptic construals, since it remains steadily in the construal for as long as the event lasts. A connection is broken, whether that connection was containment, attachment, or potential grasp. The result of the event is both a theme that is free of the LM and also a LM that no longer has the theme. The synoptic image packs more information into a single frame, making the *ent-* events more complex than the sequential constructions – often suggesting nonspatial functional implications.

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55. Roughly speaking, if the kind of theme for *ent-*'s separation image is indicated in the base verb, then there is no need to specify it as a nominative or accusative FG, and there will be an implicit subject directing energy at an accusative LM and causing the profiled *ent-* path to occur. The same can be said for other prefixed verb constructions with diffuse paths and accusative LMs, i.e. with verbs like *bewaffnen*, *überzuckern*, *durchlüften*, or *umhüllen*. The subject's causative activity operates on an accusative LM, so the privative LM is portrayed to be less active than the typical dative participants in the 'escaping' constructions. Since there is no defining path shape for the *ent-* image and there is an objective energy source, there are no fictive-motion variants to speak of (other than the measured distance to an endpoint with the lexicalized participle *entfernt*).

2. Contrasts with unprefixed verbs

2.1 Simple verbs

Ent- verbs often serve as antonyms to an unprefixed base verb, much as they do with some *be-* verbs or *ver-* verbs. That is especially the case when the *ent-* verb has strong 'reversative' force for undoing a process (for example with base verbs like *spannen, frosten, falten, laden, weihen, mischen, hemmen, stören, warnen, schädigen,* or *-ieren* verbs). See Section 3.1.

    Ent- verbs do not normally compete with simple unprefixed verbs to describe objectively similar events. Generally speaking the constructions are semantically similar only when a simple verb of motion (or caused motion) combines with a source-PP, and even then there is a definite semantic difference. An unprefixed verb construction with a source-PP describes a sequential path that takes place in a spatial setting with no additional functional implications, while an *ent-* verb marks the event as one of synoptic separation with definite nonspatial implications. The unprefixed verb in (17a) for example reports an unmarked spatial path that does not suggest overcoming a restrictive hold that the container had on the subject, who had been released and allowed to walk out normally. *Entkommen* may not always imply forceful escape the way it does in (17b), but it does always imply achieving separation from a functional hold of some kind. The semantic difference is less pronounced in sentences like (18), because the base verb *reißen* already implies forcefully overcoming resistance. Even here though there is a discernible difference between (18a) and (18b). The point in (18a) is that the robber now has the phone, while in (18b) the point is that the sniper no longer has the weapon. We may assume that the weapon is now in the subject's possession, but that is only an incidental implication. The unprefixed verb construction tracks a FG sequentially away from the LM, while the *ent-* verb focuses synoptically on the moment of separation. An *ent-* verb is especially appropriate when the nonspatial functional implications predominate, as they do for example in (18c).

(17) a. Er war doch gerade erst aus dem Gefängnis *gekommen* – in seiner Tasche finden Polizisten später seine Entlassungspapiere.
        'He had just gotten out of prison – the police later found his release papers in his pocket'

      b. Mit Hilfe von Chiltons Kugelschreiber kann Lecter seine Handschelle knacken und auf unübertroffen brutale Weise aus dem Gefängnis *entkommen*.
        'With the aid of Chilton's pen, Lecter is able to break out of his handcuffs and escape [*ent*-come] from the prison in a way that is unmatched for brutality'

(18) a. Der Räuber *riss* ihm laut Polizei das Handy aus der Hand.
          'According to police the robber tore the cell phone out of his hand'

      b. Er stürzte sich auf den Schützen und *entriss* ihm die Waffe.
          'He lunged at the sniper and wrested [*ent*-tore] his weapon from him [dative]'

      c. Wilbär soll seiner Mutter *entrissen* werden.
          'Wilbär is to be forcibly taken away [*ent*-torn] from his mother [dative]'

      d. Der Schneemann *riss* ihm die Puppe *weg*.
          'The snowman tore the doll away from him [dative]'

      e. Im Krieg kam er in Kontakt mit einer Mine und diese *riss* ihm beide Hände *ab*.
          'In the war he came in contact with a mine and it tore both of his hands off'

      f. Derweil hat sie ihm schon alle Haare *ausgerissen*.
          'In the meantime she has already torn all his hair out'

2.2   Particle verbs with *ab-* and *aus-*

The *ent-* verb construction is closer semantically to particle verb constructions than to those with simple verbs and a source-PP, since the particle verbs concentrate attention more exclusively on the beginning of the source path. That is true to some extent for the *weg-* verb in (18d) for example, though the *weg-* verb does still imply a new resulting location for the FG. (18d) leaves little doubt that the snowman now has the doll in his possession. (Verbs with *fort-* or *davon-* direct attention slightly more downstream to the FG's subsequent path than even *weg-* does.) The similarity between *ent-* verbs and particle verbs becomes truly subtle with *ab-* and *aus-*. The *ab-* verb in (18e) and the *aus-* verb in (18f) mark the event as complete when the FGs (the hands and the hair) have departed from the LM. They do not call any attention to where the FGs are now – other than not attached to the LM – and the events seem objectively the same as those described by an *ent-* verb.

Even though verbs with *ab-* and *aus-* restrict their focus to the very beginning of the path and normally leave the rest of the path unspecified, they still prompt a sequential construal rather than a synoptic one. (18e) and (18f) convey vivid spatial path images with attention concentrated on the moving FG, albeit with focus solely on the very opening stage of the paths. Very subtly, (18e) and (18f) report that the hands and the hair have been moved away from the people, while an *ent-* verb would report that the person is now bereft of the theme. The particle verbs report that a FG has started a path away from a LM, while the *ent-* verb

reports that a theme has been separated from a LM. The same sort of distinction is at work in (19). The base verb *locken* intrinsically suggests interaction between people and active participation by its object, making *entlocken* a more common choice than *ablocken*. When *ablocken* does occur, as in (19a), it focuses more on gaining possession of the information, while *entlocken* in (19b) focuses more on the fact that the LM loses its hold on the information. As H. Brinkmann (1962: 425) puts it, *ent-* focuses more on taking ("Nehmen") and often suggests force or deception, while *ab-* focuses more on gaining the object ("Gewinn"). The particle verb constructions invite us to concentrate attention on the FG that is being removed, tracking it as it begins to move away. The event described by an *ent-* verb construction is over at the moment of separation (Brinkmann's (1962: 249–52) "Moment der Loslösung").

(19) a. Deswegen versuche so oft wie nur irgend möglich Deinem Gegner Informationen *abzulocken*.
'Therefore make every attempt to coax [lure away] information from your opponent'

b. Mit immer neuen Tricks versuchen Kriminelle, Internet-Nutzern Informationen zu *entlocken*.
'Criminals keep coming up with new tricks in their attempt to elicit [*ent*-lure] information from Internet users'

(20) a. In allen Rezepten stand am Anfang, dass man das Tier *häuten* soll.
'All the recipes say in the beginning that you are supposed to skin the animal'

b. Um den Rest zu gewinnen, muß man das Tier *enthäuten*, die Muskeln von den Knochen abtrennen.
'In order to get the rest you have to (*ent-*)skin the animal [and] detach the muscles from the bones'

c. Inzwischen hatte ich damit begonnen, das Tier *abzuhäuten*.
'In the meantime I had begun to skin the animal ["skin it off"]'

d. Und wie sie es schafft ein Tier zu töten und *auszuhäuten*?
'And how she manages to kill an animal and skin it ["skin it out"]?'

The distinction between *ent-* and *ab-* can become especially subtle in the unusual special cases like (20). The *ab-* verb in (20c) takes an accusative object that corresponds to the accusative LM with a privative *ent-* verb, as in (20b). The accusative object in (20c) does not serve as the FG for an *ab-* path; it apparently refers to the source LM from which the skin is being removed. The exact semantic role of the accusative object in these *ab-* verb constructions is debatable, and the matter is complicated further because the most common verb of all to describe skinning an

animal is simple *häuten*, as in (20a).[56] The simple verb *häuten* and the base verb of *abhäuten* both seem to describe the manner of a causal activity directed at the accusative object, while *enthäuten* seems more truly denominal. Compare the comments about denominal *be-* verbs in Section 3.3.4 of Chapter 2. In any event, the semantic difference between (20b) and (20c) is much the same as it is in sets like (18) when both verbs have normal accusative themes. *Abhäuten* describes a spatial separation, severing the skin from the animal, and the resulting state includes the removed skin as well as the skinned animal. The purpose of the *abhäuten* event could well be to salvage the pelt. The resulting state of the *enthäuten* event is a skinless animal with an exposed interior (a classic accusative LM). Even though the skin is not a grammatical FG in the construction with *abhäuten*, it still seems more prominent as a moving spatial thing than it does with *enthäuten*. Compare Curme's (1922: 343) discussion of *entbalgen*, *ausbalgen* and *abbalgen*.

(20d) with *aushäuten* looks superficially similar to the constructions with *enthäuten*, *abhäuten* or plain *häuten*. That similarity is probably more apparent than real, however, since the accusative object with *aushäuten* can be understood as a FG that emerges out of the skin. Compare *auswickeln* meaning to unwrap. At times, however, it is hard not to think of such events as removing an implicit enveloping theme outward from the accusative object rather than causing an accusative FG to emerge. That is the case for example with the lexicalized undressing verbs (*sich*) *ausziehen* and (*sich*) *auskleiden* in sentences like (21). *Ausziehen* is the unmarked term for the normal act of taking off clothes, typically for purposes such as putting on different clothes, or bathing, or going to bed. Like *auskleiden*, *ausziehen* is opposed to a corresponding *an-* verb for putting clothes on. *Entkleiden* on the other hand is opposed to (*be*)*kleiden*, and it subtly implies undressing purely for the sake of being undressed (much as the purpose of *enthäuten* is to make the accusative LM skinless). *Entkleiden* typically suggests that the purpose of the act (or at least its effect) is to expose the naked body to view, revealing it for inspection, possibly to make it seem vulnerable and possibly to be sexually titillating. *Entkleiden* is more likely than *ausziehen* to occur in degrading contexts such as prisons, as opposed to normal dignified undressing.[57] The particle *aus-* verb calls more attention to the outward spatial path taken by the clothes away from the LM, and it can also suggest that the accusative object becomes a FG that is poised to do something else.

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56. Google returned 7,640 instances for "Tier zu häuten", 2,740 for "Tier zu enthäuten", 91 for "Tier abzuhäuten", and only 2 for "Tier auszuhäuten". Incidentally, *ab-* verbs also occasionally have a different meaning that can be the opposite of deadjectival *ent-* verbs. For example, *abhärten* can describe the reverse of *enthärten*, *absichern* the reverse of *entsichern*.

57. Even though *ausziehen* is normally much more common than *entkleiden*, Google returned 84 hits for the string "Häftlinge zu entkleiden" and only 4 for "Häftlinge auszuziehen" (and none for "Häftlinge auszukleiden").

(21) a. Dazu soll das Kind *ausgezogen* werden und viel trinken.
'Moreover, the child is to be undressed ["pulled out"] and to drink a lot'

    b. Man *kleidet* ihn *aus*, legt ihm das Torturhemd, das auf dem Rücken geöffnet ist, an.
'They take off his clothes [dress him out] and put a torture shirt on him that is open in the back'

    c. Nach dem Eintreffen in Hadamar wurden die Kranken *entkleidet*, nochmals kurz ärztlich und personell überprüft.
'After arriving in Hadamar the patients were undressed and again briefly checked over medically and personally'

Some general observations can be made. Even when *ent-* verbs and verbs with the particles *ab-* or *aus-* describe objectively similar events with the participants in similar syntactic roles, the subtle distinction between a synoptic construal and a sequential one is evident. The particle verbs convey spatial path images with attention concentrated on a FG that moves or extends, even though they profile only the beginning of the path. The *ent-* verbs hold our attention synoptically either at the moment of mutual separation or at an accusative LM that is rid of an implicit theme. The *ent-* verb constructions describe an event that takes place in a larger setting that involves more than just generic space/time, so that they consistently have nonspatial functional implications. An *ent-* verb also suggests a more holistic event in a more complex context with prominent interpersonal interaction and nonspatial implications.[58]

2.3   Particle verbs with *an-*

In a few special cases like (22) the *ent-* verb pattern for originating at a source extends to describe causing the emergence of an activity such as burning. (Cf *er-*.) Such *ent-* verbs can describe the same objective event as an *an-* verb. The construals are clearly different, however. *Anzünden* implies an external act that converts the fire into an active state, turning it on. *Entzünden* describes the fire's origin as it separates from its source. There may be an external cause, as in (22a), but the fire could also emerge from purely internal causes. *Sich entzünden* makes sense when something catches fire on its own, but *sich anzünden* does not. As we might expect, *entzünden* is much more apt than *anzünden* to describe abstract events

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58. It makes sense that *ent-* verbs are generally more apt to have specific extended meanings tied to very specific contexts, while the corresponding *ab-* or *aus-* verbs are used more generally and spatially. If film is *abgewickelt* it is extended spatially. *Entwickeln* is lexicalized to describe developing the image on the film. *Ent-* does not usually have much competition from *ab-* or *aus-* with base verbs like *ehren* or *weihen*.

such as passions that enflame. Similar comments apply to *entbrennen* and *anbrennen*. *Entbrennen* is typically used metaphorically to indicate that something burns from within, while *anbrennen* implies an external cause. Passions such as anger and love can only *entbrennen*, not *anbrennen*. See the discussions in Eberhard et al. (1802/1910: 459, 476). (Rather than page numbers the references to Eberhard pertain to article numbers. The publication dates are omitted henceforth, with references simply to "Eberhard" with the article number.)

(22) a. Am Donnerstagvormittag wurde das olympische Feuer *entzündet*.
'On Thursday morning the Olympic fire was ignited [*ent*-sparked]'

b. Am Ende des Fackellaufs wird dann im olympischen Stadion das olympische Feuer *angezündet*.
'At the end of the torch run the Olympic fire is lighted [sparked *an*] in the Olympic stadium'

3. Issues with *ent*- verbs

3.1 'Reversative' *ent*-

Most existing accounts link privative *ent*- verbs to the notion of reversing or undoing an opposed process or state (Stiebels' (1996) "reversative" as opposed to "ablative", H. Brinkmann's (1962) "Gegenbewegung", Duden's "rückgängig").[59] There are obvious reasons to think of *ent*-'s meaning this way, beginning with its etymological relation to 'opposing'. Generally speaking, the same objective events can often be read either with a privative image (suggested by English *dis*- or *de*-) or with an image of undoing the base-verb process that put the theme there in the first place (suggested by English *un*-). *Entladen* for example not only describes depriving the accusative LM of its contents; it also suggests undoing a prior event that can be described by *laden* (or *beladen*) – turning 'loading' into '*un*loading'. *Enttäuschen* both rids someone of an illusion and undoes a *täuschen* process.

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59. Stiebels (1996: 170–86) in particular posits a basic 'reversative' sense ("das Aufheben eines vorherigen Zustandes") for *ent*- rather than a privative one. Emphasizing that aspect of the meaning allows her to posit a predicate-decompositional analysis in terms of negation. In effect, *ent*- is the narrow-scope complement to wide-scope *nicht*. If 'Das hemmt ihn nicht' is ~CAUSE(x, BECOME(GEHEMMT(y))), then 'Das enthemmt ihn' is CAUSE(x, BECOME(~GEHEMMT(y))). Oddly however, that analysis leads her to marginalize the prototypical denominal privative verbs because they are not that neatly reversative. Moreover, a prime candidate to have reversative meaning like *entwarnen* is a problem for Stiebels' (1996: 183) formal apparatus, so she is forced to consider it to be interpreted as reversative at the level of conceptual structure.

The examples in (23)–(30) amply illustrate the point. A verb like *entspannen* in (24) can reasonably be understood either as freeing an accusative LM of a constriction or as reversing a prior process of becoming tense or constricted. Similar comments apply to *entwirren*, *entmischen*, *entflechten*, or *enthemmen* – compare 'disentangling' with 'untangling'. *Enttarnen* in (25) undoes a prior act of camouflaging while ridding the object of its obscuring cover (like *enthüllen* or *entkleiden*). The same could be said of deadjectival verbs like *entsichern* in (26), and a reversative sense is especially apt for most *-ieren* verbs – such as *entnationalisieren* in (27). Even classic denominal privatives like *entwaffnen* in (28) can often be understood as reversing a prior event of arming (*bewaffnen*).

(23) Wenn ein Irrtum den Täter *belastet*, *entlastet* ihn der umgekehrte.
'If an error incriminates (*be*-burdens) the perpetrator, the reverse clears (*ent*-burdens) him'

(24) Das Zwerchfell ist ein Muskel, der sich *spannen* oder *entspannen* kann.
'The diaphragm is a muscle that can tauten or slacken (*ent*-tauten) itself'

(25) Und ich brauch unbedingt den Sound, den bei Star Trek die Schiffe von sich geben, wenn sie sich *tarnen* oder *enttarnen*.
'And I definitely need the sound that the ships make in Star Trek when they camouflage or decamouflage [*ent*-camouflage] themselves'

(26) Beim *Sichern* oder *Entsichern* der Waffe stets den Finger vom Abzug lassen und die Mündung in eine sichere Richtung halten!
'While engaging or releasing the safety (securing or *ent*-securing the weapon) always keep the finger off of the trigger and point the barrel in a safe direction'

(27) Eine Nation könne nur dort entstehen, wo der Staat „nicht bewußt *nationalisiert* oder *entnationalisiert*".
'A nation can allegedly arise only where the state "is not consciously nationalized or denationalized [*ent*-nationalized]"'

(28) Der Benutzer kann das System auch *bewaffnen* oder *entwaffnen* und Eigenschaften mit Remotetelefonsteuerung aktivieren.
'The user can also (*be*-)arm or disarm [*ent*-arm] the system and activate features by remote telephone'

(29) a. Mit meinem besten Freund bin ich seit etwa 4 Jahren *befreundet*.
'I've been friends [*be*-friended] with my best friend for about 4 years'

b. Wenn man jemanden auf Facebook *entfreundet*, bekommt diese Person eine Benachrichtigung?
'If you unfriend [*ent*-friend]someone on Facebook, does the person receive a notification?'

(30) Wir kennen es alle: den Schmerz auf Twitter *entfolgt* zu werden.
'We are all familiar with it: the pain of being unfollowed [*ent*-followed] on Twitter'

The reversative "*un-*" implications associated with *ent-* are nicely illustrated by the coining of *entfrienden* or *entfreunden* to express the English concept of "unfriending", as in (29b). (*Entfreunden/entfrienden* was a candidate to become the Anglicism of the Year for 2010 in Germany, losing out to *leaken*.) These verbs are interesting for several reasons, not least because of the progression from the loan word *unfrienden* to the partially more Germanized *entfrienden* to the loan translation *entfreunden*. Incidentally, *entfolgen* in (30) seems to translate 'unfollow' for Twitter much as *entfreunden* translates 'unfriend' for Facebook.

Clearly then, privative *ent-* verbs frequently imply reversing a prior event. It is doubtful, however, whether *ent-* verbs ever convey a pure 'undoing' image with no sense of the kind of privation illustrated in Figure 9. Even when a reversative element is especially strong, as with *entfreunden*, there is always also a definite privative sense. The root noun *Freund* implies a social relationship status that the accusative LM is being 'divested' of (compare *entrechten*).

One candidate to be a pure reversative 'undoing' verb is *entwarnen*. *Entwarnen* means basically to sound the all clear (*ent*-warn), so that it usually suggests undoing a prior act of (*ver*)*warnen*. In many instances though, such as (31), there is no suggestion that an original warning preceded the *entwarnen* event. Of course we might still maintain that *entwarnen* conveys a reversative image even when there is no objective prior event that is being undone, but it is simpler to consider the privative image to be basic and the reversative meaning to be a common pragmatic implication. *Entwarnen* can always be read as freeing the object of a burden (like *entlasten* or *entpflichten*).

(31)   Die Unternehmen und Behörden agieren entsprechend: Entweder *warnen* sie die Bevölkerung oder, was weitaus häufiger ist, sie versuchen zu *entwarnen*. 'The companies and government agencies act accordingly: Either they warn the population or, much more commonly, they try to reassure (*ent*-warn, tell not to worry)'

(32)   a.   Tolles Klapprad – läßt sich mit wenigen Handgriffen *falten* oder *entfalten*. 'Great collapsible bike – can be folded or unfolded with a few flicks of the wrist'

    b.   Die Kunst gleicht einer Blüte, die *sich* frei *entfaltet*. 'Art is like a blossom that develops [*ent*-folds itself] freely'

(33)   a.   Nach dem Credo steht der Fahnenträger vor den Stufen des Altartisches und *entrollt* die Fahne. 'After the credo the flag bearer stands in front of the steps to the altar table and unrolls the flag'

b. Eine verzwickte und spannungsreiche Geschichte *entrollt* sich von da an
    vor den Augen des Zuschauers.
    'From that point on an intricate and spellbinding story unrolls (itself)
    before the eyes of the audience member'

Entfalten in (32a) certainly reverses *falten* – unfolding as opposed to folding.
Entfalten is a special case, however. It is a 'developing' verb that can be considered
transitional between a privative construction with an accusative LM and an 'escap-
ing' construction with an accusative theme (Figure 10). On the one hand it can
be read as ridding an accusative LM of a distributed theme (*Falten*, folds), but it
also suggests that the accusative object extends and emerges out of a constricting
configuration. The latter image is one in which an accusative theme (a reflexive-TR)
separates from a source that has been holding it, originating there. In any event,
entfalten can be adequately defined without mention of any opposing process that it
reverses. The same goes for *entrollen*. Unrolling a flag as in (33a) obviously suggests
undoing a prior act of rolling or folding it up, but its meaning can be adequately
explained without recourse to any opposed process. Moreover, the figurative uses
in (32b) and (33b) do not imply reversing a process, and it would be odd to include
that as part of the definition of the *ent-* verbs.

As common as 'reversative' implications are with *ent-* verbs then, it is not a
defining trait. All privative *ent-* verbs can be explained adequately in terms of the
image in Figure 9, without considering reversative implications to be any more
than a very commonly associated implication. On the other hand, many privative
ent- verbs do not imply undoing a process, and that is especially true of the most
typical and productive privative *ent-* verbs of all – the denominals. A partial list of
privative *ent-* verbs that do not reverse a process would include *entbluten*, *enthäu-
ten*, *entlauben*, *entsäuern*, *entsalzen*, *entkeimen*, *enthaupten*, *entkräften*, *entfärben*,
entgrünen, *entwürdigen*, *entsinnlichen*, *entrauschen*, *entdecken*, *entledigen*, and many
others (including *entjungfern*). Although *ent-* very often has implications that sug-
gest English *un-*, the two prefixes are not equivalent.

3.2   'Inchoative' *ent-*?

Many accounts posit a separate semantic category for 'inchoative' *ent-* verbs that
indicate a beginning or origin (Curme 1922:435–6, Schulz and Griesbach 1960,
Schröder 1992:100–1). There is not complete agreement about which *ent-* verbs
belong in this category, but the core members are *entstehen*, the verbs for breaking
out in flames (*entflammen*, *entbrennen*, *entfachen*, *entzünden*, *entglühen*, *entglim-
men*), and the 'go to sleep' verbs *entschlafen* and *entschlummern*. Some accounts

also include *entwerfen*, the other 'originating' verbs (*entstammen, entspringen, entsprießen*), or the verbs for unfolding and developing (*entfalten, entwickeln, entspinnen*). A few consider the "illogical" verbs like *entleeren, entblößen*, or *entfremden* to be in this category as well (see Section 3.3).

(34)   Hier *entsteht* eine Schule für entwicklungsverzögerte Kinder.
        'A school for developmentally delayed children will arise [*ent*-stand] here'

(35)   Kaum ist diese Diskussion *entbrannt, entflammt* sich auch eine Grundsatzdebatte über den Denkplatz Luzern.
        'This discussion has scarcely broken out [*ent*-burned] when a fundamental debate begins to rage [*ent*-flames] about Lucerne as an intellectual center'

(36)   In Cham *entschläft* Dr. med. Heinrich Ritter nach längerer Krankheit im Alter von 72 Jahren.
        'Dr. Heinrich Ritter passes on [*ent*-sleeps] in Cham at the age of 72 after an extended illness'

The most obvious reason for considering this to be a separate sense is that some of the verbs can be paraphrased roughly as 'begin to [base verb]'. The school in (34) begins to be standing, the discussion in (35) begins to burn and the debate begins to flame, and the man in (36) begins to sleep.[60] It would be simplistic, however, to conclude from that paraphrase relation that 'beginning' is the meaning contributed by *ent-*. H. Brinkmann (1962: 249–50), who thinks primarily in terms of imagistic patterns rather than propositional paraphrases, aptly characterizes the inchoative verbs as focusing on a moment of being detached ("Moment der Loslösung"), which would make them perfectly compatible with the basic 'separating' image of Figure 10. That allows him to offer an insightful contrast between these *ent-* verbs and *er-* verbs (e.g. *erblühen, erwachen, erscheinen*). If on the other hand *ent-* can be purely 'inchoative', then these *ent-* verbs seem semantically more like *er-* verbs than like the rest of the *ent-* verbs.

All of these verbs conform to the basic 'separation' image of Figure 10, and whatever 'inchoative' meaning they convey is implicit in that image. An apparent 'inchoative' meaning is especially apt to arise when the *ent-* LM is left vaguely implicit rather than specifying it as a dative object or the object in a source PP. The verbs can thus seem to describe pure coming into being as opposed to originating at a particular source. That is most typically the case with the lexicalized verb *entstehen* as in (34), making it the strongest candidate to have pure inchoative meaning. Even *entstehen*, however, can easily be related to more obvious separation verbs like *entspringen*, so

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60. Another reason for positing an 'inchoative' category is that many of these verbs are held to derive from an etymologically distinct source ('in') – though many authors include verbs that cloud the etymological purity of the class.

that there is little reason to posit a separate 'inchoative' sense for it. The separation image becomes evident when 'originating' verbs like *entflammen* or *entstammen* express the source in an *aus*-PP (or occasionally even as a dative object).

Entschlafen and *entschlummern* can be considered 'escape' verbs, even though there is no explicit sense of what the subject is escaping from. As in (36), they are normally used as euphemisms for dying rather than literally for beginning to sleep. *Entwerfen*, which describes designing or sketching something such as a blueprint, is similar to 'developing' verbs like *entfalten* or *entwickeln*. As for verbs like *entblößen* or *entleeren*, they admittedly do suggest entering a new state of being *bloß* or *leer*. But as Section 3.3 makes clear, their meaning is not really different from normal privative *ent-* verbs. Assigning *entblößen* to a separate 'inchoative' category would have the misleading effect of making it seem that the *ent-* of *entblößen* is semantically unrelated to the *ent-* of *entkleiden*. (Similar comments apply to putting verbs like *entleeren* in a 'factitive' category.)

3.3   "Illogical" deadjectival privatives with resulting state (*entleeren*)

Nearly all privative *ent-* verbs, even most deadjectivals, indicate the theme (what the accusative LM is being rid of) in the base verb. *Entschuldigen*, for example, frees the accusative LM of being *schuldig*, and the same goes for *entsichern*, *entfeuchten*, *entgrünen*, and so on. If we look carefully at verbs like *entblößen* or *entleeren*, however, they do not conform completely to this pattern. The adjectival roots (*leer*, *bloß*) do not indicate what the accusative LM is being rid of; they indicate the state of being bare or empty that results after something implicit is lost.[61] In sentences like (37) and (38b) *ent-* still conveys the privative image in Figure 9, and there is still an accusative LM; but the base verb does not indicate the theme.

(37)   Er hat live im TV die Brust von Janet Jackson *entblößt*.
   'He exposed (*ent*-bared) Janet Jackson's breast on live TV'

(38)   a. Nach der Fermentationsphase wird der Eimer *geleert*.
    'After the fermentation phase the pail is emptied'

  b. Wenn der Eimer voll ist wird die Folie durchtrennt und der Eimer *entleert*.
    'When the pail is full the foil is severed and the pail is (*ent-*)emptied'

  c. Worte werden von ihren Inhalten *entleert*.
    'Words are being (*ent-*)emptied of their meanings (contents)'

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61. Kühnhold (1973: 295) puts verbs like *entleeren* in a 'factitive' category. Her list of *ent-* verbs that signal "Zielzustand" includes *entgrünen, entfernen, entblößen, entleeren, entübrigen*, and *sich entledigen*.

Entblößen and *entleeren* are thus oddly "illogical" *ent-* verbs. They "should" mean that the accusative LMs are being deprived of the quality of emptiness or bareness, i.e., that they are being covered and filled respectively! If it followed the normal pattern for privative *ent-* verbs, *entblößen* in (37) would mean that Janet was rid of her state of nakedness – i.e., that she became clothed. Similarly, *entleeren* in (38b) would mean that the pail was rendered no longer empty. As a participant in an online forum has pointed out, *entleeren* should logically be synonymous with *füllen* (fill), while *entfüllen* should be synonymous with *leeren*.[62]

Put another way, *entleeren* in (38b) has essentially the same objective meaning as the somewhat more common simple verb *leeren* in (38a), so that *ent-* is logically redundant in much the same way as the second negative in a double negative is redundant. That is not to say, however, that *ent-* does not make a semantic contribution in these constructions. There is a subtle semantic difference between *entleeren* and unprefixed *leeren* (and the same is true of *entblößen* and *blößen* to the extent that *blößen* exists as an option).[63] *Leeren* describes a simple act of causing an accusative FG to become empty (*leer*), period. *Entleeren* implies a more complex synoptic construal with an accusative LM that is being gradually drained of its contents. The object is not simply being converted into a new state of being empty; it is being deprived of what it used to contain. *Entleeren* seems definitely better than the unprefixed verb when a *von*-PP specifies what the object is being emptied of, as in (38c).

Of course all languages are full of such "illogical" constructions with redundant expressions, most famously double negatives. (Compare English *unloosen*.) And *entleeren* and *entblößen* are not alone. The phenomenon also occurs with *entledigen*, *entfernen*, *entbreiten*, and *entfremden*. All of these verbs describe events that are perfectly consistent with the *ent-* images of Figure 9 or Figure 10; but the base verb indicates a resulting state rather than the theme as is usual with privative *ent-* verbs. An inevitable effect of such constructions is that the accusative object is felt at least to some extent to be the semantic subject of the root adjective (the thing that becomes *leer* or *bloß* or *fern* or *fremd*). That makes it more FG-like, and *entfernen*, *entbreiten*, and *entfremden* do in fact have accusative FGs.

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62. "Da nimmt man doch keine Leere weg, sondern tut eine rein. *Entleeren* müßte synonym zu *füllen* sein, und *entfüllen* zu *leeren*." (newsgroups.derkeiler.com)

63. Unprefixed *blößen* is not normally used in the modern language, but it is instructive to compare its potential use for baring teeth in the sentence 'Lachend erhebe ich mein Haupt, die scharfen Zähne geblößt'. In that case *ent-* seems semantically inappropriate.

3.4 Privative divesting vs separating with a focal theme

3.4.1 *From 'divesting of' to 'separating from'* (entheben, entbinden, enteignen)
The sentences in (39) all describe removing someone from a throne, or stripping someone of the authority symbolized by the throne. The constructions with *entreißen* in (39d) and (39e) clearly portray the event as separating an accusative theme from a dative object, whether that theme is construed to be the person removed from the throne as in (39d) or the throne taken away from the person as in (39e). (39a) with *entthronen*, by contrast, is apt to be read as divesting an accusative LM of the authority symbolized by the root throne. That privative reading conforms to the predominant denominal pattern with *ent-* verbs. On the other hand, if we think in spatial terms a 'separation' reading for (39a) is also inviting – with the throne as a source LM as in the 'escaping' variants. *Entheben* and *entsetzen* could similarly be read either as privative divesting (with an accusative LM) or as separation with a focal accusative theme. Now, however, the influence of the privative pattern is weaker because the verbs are not denominal, and the temptation to read the accusative object as a theme is stronger because the base verbs *heben* and *setzen* take an accusative FG when they are unprefixed. Still, even *entheben* and *entsetzen* conform to the privative 'divesting' pattern as long as they take a genitive object as in (39b) and (39c), and we could strain the notion of an accusative LM to include them.

(39)   a.   Ich stieß meinen Bruder vom Throne und wurde selbst von meinem Neffen *entthront*.
'I thrust my brother from the throne and was myself dethroned by my nephew'

   b.   China fehlen nur noch wenige Jahre, um die USA des Throns zu *entheben*.
'China is only a few years away from deposing (*ent*-hoisting) the USA from its throne [genitive]'

   c.   Napoleon wird des Throns *entsetzt*.
'Napoleon is ousted (*ent*-set) from the throne [genitive]'

   d.   Der Held wird dem Thron *entrissen* und muss sich eine Armee aufbauen.
'The hero is wrested (*ent*-torn) from the throne [dative] and must build an army for himself'

   e.   Jahwe hat dir den Thron *entrissen*.
'Yahweh has wrested (*ent*-torn) the throne from you [dative]'

(40)   a.   Dieses schwebende Verfahren *enthebt* ihn der Pflicht, als Zeuge in einem anderen Prozess auszusagen.
'This pending litigation relieves (*ent*-lifts) him of the obligation to testify as a witness in another trial'

    b.   Erst die Eröffnung des Insolvenzverfahrens bzw. die Bestellung eines Insolvenzverwalters *enthebt* ihn von dieser Pflicht.
        'Only initiating bankruptcy proceedings or appointing a bankruptcy trustee relieves (*ent*-lifts) him from this obligation'

    c.   Das Präsidium *enthebt* ihn von seinem Amt und setzt an seiner Stelle Dietmar Ernst (Bochum) ein.
        'The presidium deposes (*ent*-lifts) him from his office and appoints Dietmar Ernst in his place'

Entheben conforms to the privative 'divesting' pattern in (40a) as well, and that reading seems preferable because the abstract nature of an obligation makes it less apt to be read as a spatial LM. (It seems more natural to imagine removing an obligation from a person than removing a person from an obligation.) Things are different in (40b), however, because the *von*-PP suggests that the obligation is a source LM in a 'separation' event with a focal theme. The 'separation' reading is even more difficult to avoid in (40c), since an office lends itself to the role of a spatial source LM.

    The distinction between 'divesting' with an accusative LM and 'separating' with an accusative theme is similarly blurred with *entbinden*. It could be coerced into the privative pattern as an elevated 'divesting' verb, but a 'separation' reading seems more inviting, especially since it commonly takes a *von*-PP rather than a genitive. *Entbinden* also has a lexicalized use for giving birth. In that case it typically takes the child as accusative theme as in (42a). Occasionally, however, the mother appears as the accusative object of *entbinden* as in (42b), i.e., in a 'divesting' pattern that might well be read to have an accusative LM.

(41)   Die Familie Spitz zahlt Xavier aus und *entbindet* ihn von seinem Auftrag.
        'The Spitz family pays Xavier off and releases (*ent*-binds) him from his assignment'

(42)   a.   Hallo, ich habe meine beiden Kinder per Kaiserschnitt *entbunden*.
           'Hi, I delivered both of my children by C-section'

        b.   Zur gleichen Zeit war noch eine Mutter auf der Entbindungsstation und beide wurden beinahe zur gleichen Zeit von einem Jungen *entbunden*.
           'Another mother was in the delivery room at the same time and they both gave birth to a boy (were *ent*-bound from a boy) at almost the same time'

Enteignen can take the whole range of constructions, as illustrated in (43). It can be a normal 'divesting' verb with an accusative LM as in (43a), and the theme can be specified as a genitive object as in (43b). The theme can also be specified in a *von*-PP as in (43c), and that makes an alternative reading with the person as an accusative theme somewhat more inviting. *Enteignen* can also be attested in sentences

like (43d), which clearly have an accusative theme referring to the property that is being dispossessed from an implicit owner. The owner can then be specified as a dative object in a classic 'separating' construction like (43e).

(43) a. Die Nationalsozialisten haben ihn *enteignet* und ausgebürgert.
'The National Socialists dispossessed [*ent*-owned] him and stripped him of his citizenship'

b. Er *enteignet* ihn seines Besitzes.
'He dispossesses [*ent*-owns] him of his property'

c. Eines Tages wird er jedoch von seinem Besitz *enteignet*.
'He is still eventually dispossessed [*ent*-owned] of [from] his property'

d. Monate zuvor hatten die Sandinisten seinen Besitz *enteignet*.
'Months earlier the sandinistas had expropriated [*ent*-owned] his property'

e. Der Marquis *enteignet* ihm das Haus natürlich sofort und auf verbreche-rische Weise wieder.
'Of course the marquis immediately and criminally expropriates [*ent*-owns] his house from him [dative] again'

3.4.2   Von-*PPs vs genitive*

The source of this uncertainty between privative 'diverting' (Figure 9) and 'escaping' with a focal theme (Figure 10) is *von*, which can serve either as a source-path preposition ('from') or as an alternative to the genitive ('of'). When a *von*-PP introduces a source-path LM, it cannot occur in a privative *ent*- verb construction because that role will already be expressed as the accusative LM. The source-path preposition is thus exclusively associated with 'escaping' constructions (although it is less common than dative objects or *aus*-PPs). A genitive object on the other hand is exclusively associated with privative 'diverting' constructions, where it is the traditional way to specify a theme that is not already sufficiently specified in the base verb. The confusion arises because genitive objects generally have come to sound archaic in the current language, and the overall trend is to replace them with *von*-PPs.[64]

(44) a. Sie *entledigte sich* ihres Mantels und der Stiefel, schlüpfte in die Hausschuhe und musste erstmal durchatmen.
'She shed [*ent*-rid herself of] her coat and boots [genitive], slipped into her slippers and caught her breath'

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64. A *von*-PP is particularly apt to replace the genitive with *ent*- verbs that are not historically 'diverting' verbs associated with the genitive (e.g., 'den Körper von Schwermetallen entgiften' or 'den Arzt von bürokratischen Prozessen entlasten').

b.   Friedrich *entledigte sich* von seinem Tank-Top.
'Friedrich shed [*ent*-rid himself from] his tank top'

Given the strong association of *von*-PPs with source-path LMs, their use in 'divesting' constructions can contribute to a reading in which the accusative object is a theme being removed "from" the object of *von* – even though the phrase is originally intended to specify what the accusative object is rid "of". Subtly, (44b) can suggest that the person separates or frees himself *from* the tank top, while (44a) is more apt to suggest that the woman rids herself *of* the garments.

Speaking very broadly, constructions with an accusative object and no oblique specification, or with a genitive object that specifies the theme in a 'divesting' pattern, are read as privative constructions with an accusative LM. Constructions with an *aus*-PP, or with a dative object in the role of *ent*- LM, are read with an accusative theme as 'escaping' – corresponding to intransitive constructions with a nominative theme. Constructions with a *von*-PP are more problematic. *Von* can be a source-path expression, in which case it goes with an 'escaping' reading much as *aus* does; or it can be an alternative to a genitive object, in which case it goes with a privative reading. Even if the reading is basically privative, however, a *von*-PP makes the accusative object seem more theme-like.

3.4.3   *English* of/from *alternations*

There are intriguing similarities between the German *ent*- verbs for 'divesting' and English verbs with similar meanings. Two major English verb classes can take a source LM as their direct object and an *of*-PP if the theme needs to be specified obliquely. One is the group of verbs that Levin (1993:129–30) calls "*cheat* verbs" (e.g. 'cured Pat of pneumonia'). Some of these English verbs, like *rid*, are particularly apt to have an oblique specification in an *of*-PP, i.e., they are exclusively 'divesting' verbs. The English verbs that are particularly associated with *of* include *rid*, *relieve*, *deprive*, *disabuse*, *divest*, *strip*, *void*, and *absolve* – all of which suggest German counterparts with *ent*-.[65]

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65. There is also an interesting alternation between an *of*-PP and one with *out of* (compare German *aus*, which is associated with 'escaping' from the hold of a container). The "*cheat*" verbs that describe a specific manner of getting property away from someone sound better to me with *out of* rather than simple *of* ('swindle/con/bilk/cheat him out of his inheritance'). In fact *cheat* is the only one I would ever use with simple *of* – and then only when what is being gained is vague ('cheated her of her savings/ᵗ$100'). It is also intriguing that these verbs often have German counterparts with *be*- rather than *ent*-. Compare also the deadjectival verb *free*, which fluctuates between an *of*-PP and a *from*-PP in a way that is reminiscent of the German fluctuation between a genitive and a *von*-PP ('freed her of/from her responsibilities', 'freed him of/*ᵗfrom his addiction', 'freed him from/*of prison'). It too corresponds to a German *be*- verb rather than *ent*-.

The other English verb class associated with an *of*-PP that specifies a theme are Levin's (1993: 51–3, 124–5) "*clear* verbs": *clear*, *clean*, *drain*, and *empty*.[66] These verbs alternate between a 'divesting'-style variant that can specify the theme obliquely in an *of*-PP when necessary ('cleared the table of dishes') and a "locative variant" that expresses the theme as an accusative FG and the LM in an oblique *from*-PP ('cleared dishes from the table'). Clearly, oblique source-path themes are being expressed in *of*-PPs (with the source as direct object) and oblique LMs in *from*-PPs (with the theme as direct object). The latter pattern with *from* is relatively more common and is exclusively associated with many English verb classes, including the verbs of "removing" (Levin 1993: 122, e.g. *remove*, *separate*, *delete*, *dismiss*, *extract*, *oust*, *withdraw*), "banishing" (Levin 1993: 123, e.g. *banish*, *deport*, *evacuate*, *remove*), and "stealing" (Levin 1993: 128, e.g. *steal*, *take*, *capture*, *embezzle*, *redeem*, *regain*, *withdraw*, *wrest*). The *of* variant with "*clear* verbs" becomes more attractive when what is being removed is abstract ('clear someone of guilt'/?'clear guilt from someone'), and its use is encouraged by passive (Levin 1993: 52).[67]

4. Frequencies

Table 2 represents a COSMAS search for selected *ent-* verbs in the construction as an infinitive with *zu* (e.g. "zu /w1:1 entkommen"). Using that construction puts some verbs, such as 'originate' verbs like *entstammen*, at a disadvantage, but it is the only reliable way to insure a unique grammatical construction for all verbs.

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66. Although Levin (1993) does not include *strip* as a "*clear* verb", it follows a similar pattern when what is being removed is not sufficiently evident without further specification: 'strip the title from Tyson'/ 'strip Tyson of the title'. Interestingly, *clean*, *empty*, and *clear* are all deadjectival verbs that indicate a resulting state, i.e., they are like the base verbs for the "illogical" deadjectival *ent-* verbs. The English verbs are comparably illogical when used with an accusative FG in the locative variant, since the FG is not the semantic subject of the root adjectives. ('Empty the butts from the ashtray' is odd because the butts do not become empty; the ashtray does.) That oddity is presumably a factor in favor of the "*of* variant".

67. In both languages of course, denominal privative verbs do not normally need any further specification of what is being removed, because the theme is already sufficiently specified in the verb root. Compare the English "debone" verbs (Levin 1993: 131, e.g. *debone*, *debug*, *defang*, *defog*, *defrost*), as well as the bare denominal "pit" verbs (Levin 1993: 130, e.g. *pit*, *bone*, *gut*, *milk*, *peel*, *scalp*, *shell*, *skin*, *weed*, *seed*, *shuck*, *core*, *beard*, *scale*, *vein*).

Table 2. *Ent-* verb frequencies

entwickeln	36,097	entmachten	444	entkorken	52
entscheiden	32,261	entheben	350	entwurzeln	50
entdecken	26,125	enttarnen	338	entlehnen	49
entnehmen	14,044	entgleiten	321	entwachsen	41
entfernen	12,035	entsagen	274	entsteigen	38
entlasten	10,638	entkleiden	243	entschlafen	28
entgehen	7,333	entgegnen	243	entrosten	27
entziehen	6,878	enteignen	228	entschlüpfen	24
entschuldigen	6,163	entblößen	218	entknoten	24
entkommen	5,935	entwerten	205	entringen	21
entschärfen	5,873	entwischen	202	entrechten	18
entlassen	5,165	entfesseln	194	entschleiern	15
entsprechen	3,592	entstauben	172	entehren	14
entstehen	3,309	entschwinden	153	entsichern	13
entfalten	3,301	entweichen	143	entäußern	12
entspannen	3,115	entfremden	135	entlaufen	12
entsenden	2,882	entschließen	132	entsalzen	10
entführen	2,724	entfallen	130	entmenschlichen	8
entfliehen	2,457	entbehren	127	entfärben	7
entkräften	1,958	entzweien	125	entsaften	4
entreißen	1,865	entgiften	124	entlausen	4
entfachen	1,626	entkernen	114	entrahmen	3
entschlüsseln	1,425	enthaupten	110	entfahren	3
entwenden	1,408	entflammen	110	entmächtigen	2
enthalten	977	entleihen	97	entgraten	1
entzünden	812	entstellen	94	enthäuten	1
entbinden	763	entstammen	75	enthumanisieren	1
enttäuschen	736	entspringen	71	entmenschen	0
entwaffnen	711	entrollen	64	entfrosten	0
enthüllen	561	entsinnen	58	entwürden	0
entwirren	533	entwöhnen	55		
entleeren	467	entsetzen	55		

CHAPTER 4

Er-

1. Schematic meaning

Karl Kraus's comment in (1) illustrates the two basic types of construction with an *er-* verb. *Erröten* describes the emergence of a perceptible process or state of affairs indicated by the root *rot* ('red'), and it might be paraphrased as 'begin to be red'. *Ertappen* describes gaining access to or control of an accusative object by doing the activity indicated by the base verb, and it might be paraphrased loosely as 'gain by stumbling upon'. (The base verb *tappen* means to move uncertainly, as in the dark, and *ertappen* has become lexicalized to mean catching someone in the act of doing something.)

(1) Sie hatte so viel Schamgefühl, dass sie *errötete*, wenn man sie bei keiner Sünde *ertappte*.
     'She had such a sense of shame that she blushed [*er*-reddened] when she was caught [*er*-stumbled-upon] not sinning'

(2) Damit der Garten im Frühjahr wieder *erblüht* und *ergrünt*, muss er vor dem Winter geräumt werden.
     'If the garden is to (*er*-)bloom and become green [*er*-green] again in the spring it must be cleared before the winter'

(3) Durch ein Geräusch *erschreckt*, *erwacht* der Mann und schaut nach seinem Doppelgänger, den er nicht *erkennt*.
     '(*Er*-)startled by a noise the man awakes [*er*-wakes] and looks toward his double, whom he does not recognize [*er*-know]'

(4) Freiheit wird *erkämpft*, nicht *erbettelt*.
     'Freedom is gained by struggling [*er*-struggled], not by begging [*er*-begged]'

(5) Mit gerade mal 35 Jahren hatte ich als Frau alles *erreicht*, was ich mir immer *erträumt* hatte.
     'By the age of 35 I had accomplished (*er*-reached) everything as a woman that I had ever (*er*-)dreamed for myself'

(6) Wer eine neue Sprache *erlernt*, *erwirbt* einen kostbaren Schatz.
     'Whoever (*er*-)learns a new language acquires [*er*-solicits] a valuable treasure'

(7)   Neue Märkte zu *erschließen* und bestehende zu *erweitern* gehört mit zu unserem Selbstverständnis.
'(*Er-*)opening new markets and expanding [*er*-extending] existing ones is part of our self-image'

Erblühen and *ergrünen* in (2) are like *erröten*, as is *erwachen* in (3). They describe the emergence of a root process (blooming, being green, being awake). There are also causative variants that result in the emergence of a characteristic process or state indicated by the verb root, as illustrated by *erschrecken* in (3) and *erweitern* in (7).

Erbetteln and *erkämpfen* in (4) on the other hand are like *ertappen*, as are *erreichen* and *erträumen* in (5). They describe gaining access to or control of an accusative object by doing the activity indicated by the base verb (begging, struggling, reaching, dreaming). *Erlernen* and *erwerben* in (6) belong to this type as well, as does *erschließen* in (7) and the lexicalized verb *erkennen* in (3).[68]

Understandably enough then, the most common treatments of *er-* verbs divide them into two seemingly conflicting categories corresponding to the paraphrases 'begin to [base verb]' and 'gain by [base verb]-ing'. According to these accounts, *er-* verbs are either 'inchoative' (the beginning of a process) or 'resultative' (the conclusion of a process). Some of them (e.g. *erröten*, *erblühen*, *erwachen*, *ergrünen*), suggest what Bister-Broosen et al. (1992: 333–4) call "transition into another state of being or the beginning of an action". Others (e.g. *ertappen*, *erreichen*, *erwerben*, *erbetteln*, *erkämpfen*, *erlernen*) "emphasize the achievement of an end or completion of an act."[69]

These seemingly opposed meanings are not really as mutually exclusive as the paraphrases make them sound. As H. Brinkmann (1962: 245–6, 250–6) pointed out, the beginning of a state can be seen as the conclusion of a goal-directed process that causes the new state to emerge. Brinkmann thus finds a core meaning for *er-* in the notion of concluding a goal-directed activity, so that *er-* profiles the moment at which a process has apparent results. The blooming process associated with *erblühen*, for example, is completed when the blossoms become visible. The

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68. *Erschließen* in (7) is actually transitional between the two basic types. The subject actively gains access to the accusative object by performing the base-verb activity, but the object is caused to emerge and begin to be accessible to the public at large. Compare *ermöglichen* or *erzeugen*. A few *er-* verbs are fully lexicalized, such as *erzählen*, *erlauben*, and *erwähnen*, but nearly all of them reflect a meaningful combination of *er-* and the base verb.

69. German descriptions such as these from Schulz and Griesbach (1960: 20) are similar: "Beginn eines neuen Zustands" and "die völlige Erreichung eines Zieles". Stiebels (1996) analyzes the two categories in terms of 'ingression' and 'possession'.

begging process associated with *erbetteln* is completed when the beggar success-fully gains possession of what he wanted.[70]

Building on Brinkmann's insight I propose a core schematic meaning for *er-* as represented in Figure 11. It profiles the moment when a process arrives at a synoptically-construed *goal space*. The goal space is represented by the shaded rectangle. At first, on the lefthand side of Figure 11, we are looking at a goal space that has not yet been reached by the process. We are aware, however, that the process is on its way and we anticipate its eventual arrival. The lefthand side of Figure 11 thus has a dotted arrow representing a *run-up process* – a term bor-rowed from Croft (1998: 74). We know that the run-up process is coming toward the goal space, but it is backgrounded. Then *er-* profiles the eventual arrival of the process at its goal space, as represented on the righthand side of Figure 11 with a darkened arrow present in the space. The whole sequence is construed synoptically with the goal space steadily apparent – first with the arrival of the process only anticipated, then with the effects of the process actually manifest in the goal space.

Figure 11. Schematic *er-*

The semantic FG for the *er-* image is the process indicated by the base verb, for example reddening, blossoming, reaching, or begging. That process is conceived metaphorically to extend – through time and normally also through space – until it ultimately reaches the goal space (much like the literal reaching motion of an arm).

The interpretation of an *er-* verb construction begins with suspense as we await the appearance of the process in the goal space, at which point the suspense is resolved. Imagine sitting in an Olympic stadium waiting for the leader in a

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70. In Brinkmann's words, the *er-*-verb constructions "fassen den Moment ins Auge, in dem ein Prozeß wirksam und deswegen wahrnehmbar wird." (1962: 251) "Der Moment des Beginns (für das Wahrnehmbarwerden) ist zugleich der Moment des Erfolgs." (1962: 246) Compare also Curme's (1922: 436–7) aspectual common denominator of "abstract perfective force, i.e. the idea of point-action", which can be either ingressive (transition into a new state) or effective (result or outcome of an action).

marathon to appear (to reach the goal space). The interpreter expects (*erwarten*) the process to reach (*erreichen*) the goal space and appear there (*erscheinen*). As far as the *er-* image is concerned, the run-up process indicated by the base verb is backgrounded until it reaches the goal space. Then the whole event is construed synoptically as an achievement.

There are two main variations on this core image, corresponding to the usual division of *er-* verbs into inchoative and resultative, which I will call 'emerging' variants and 'attaining' variants. In one, the run-up process takes place somewhere beneath the visible goal space, in which case it seems to emerge from within a host object and become evident on its surface (e.g. *erröten*, *erblühen*, *erwachen*). These variants reflect *er-*'s etymological source (*ur-*), which meant roughly 'from within out, out of'. In the other main type the run-up process takes place overtly somewhere in the larger setting but outside of the goal space, in which case it eventually attains the goal space and gains access to whatever is there (e.g. *erreichen*, *erwerben*, *erbetteln*).

The most consistently applicable implication with *er-* verbs generally is 'gaining access'. In the case of 'attaining' verbs like *erbetteln* or *erreichen* the subject of the process gains access to the goal space, which often implies gaining control of whatever is in the space. (To the extent that the goal-directed activity is deliberate the verbs also entail 'success' at reaching the goal.) In the case of 'emerging' verbs like *erröten* or *erblühen* on the other hand it is the public at large – including the subjective interpreter – that gains perceptible access to the effects of the process. The reddening and the blossoming become apparent to anyone who is looking at the goal space. We could also say that the subject of the process – the blushing person or the blooming garden – has gained a new surface appearance. (Contrast the opposing sense of losing access that is at the core of *ver-*.)

1.1   The focal nouns

The only entities that are directly involved in the maximally schematic *er-* image of Figure 11 are the base-verb process and the goal space. There is one other entity that is necessarily involved, however, namely a focal noun that defines the goal space. In the 'attaining' variants the focal noun is an accusative LM, and the goal space is a vaguely defined setting that provides access to the LM. The subject of the base-verb activity in these variants is only indirectly involved in the *er-* image itself, namely as an agentive participant "in" the profiled extending verb process. This more specific 'attaining' variant is illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12. 'Attaining' *er-*

In the 'emerging' variants the focal noun – or more specifically its visible surface – essentially *is* the goal space, as represented in Figure 13. The focal noun is also the subject of the profiled base-verb process. In its role as goal space the focal noun hosts the emergence of a profiled verb process that originates somewhere beneath its surface, much as the focal noun with *zer-* verbs hosts a process of disintegration. In its role as subject of the base-verb process it becomes characterized by that emergent process. Compare "setting-subject" constructions like the English sentence 'The garden is swarming with bees' (Langacker 1991: 345–51). In these variants the focal noun is a grammatical FG in the *er-* verb construction, and it can appear either as the subject of an intransitive construction or as the accusative object in causative transitive constructions.[71]

Figure 13. 'Emerging' *er-*

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71. As always, the term 'accusative object' is meant to include the subject of passive constructions like (4). There is no convenient term for 'the accusative object if there is one, otherwise the intransitive nominative subject', although that notion is important for constructions with *er-* verbs (and *ver-* verbs and *zer-* verbs). Syntactically, it is the internal argument of the verb. Semantically, it is the entity that is focally prominent at the conclusion of the event construal. In most typical cases a construal begins with the nominative subject as the most focally prominent entity, and if there is an accusative object then the primary focal attention shifts to it at some point during the construal.

Note the subtle distinction between the semantic FG of the prefix *er-* itself, which is the profiled verb process, and the grammatical FG for the larger *er-* verb construction, which in the case of 'emerging' variants is the focal noun. It would be easier to say simply that the focal noun is the FG in the *er-* image, i.e., that (1) describes an event in which the subject of *erröten* begins to be red. That description would be appropriate for constructions that prompt a sequential construal, but it is not precisely accurate for the synoptic construal prompted by an *er-* verb. The distinction between a noun that hosts a verb process and a noun that enters a new state proves necessary to understand the semantic contrasts between *er-* verbs and simple verbs.[72]

1.2   Aspectual implications

The events described by an *er-* verb are intrinsically complex, combining suspense and then the ensuing achievement of the goal in a single synoptic event. Since the whole complex event concludes at the moment when the process reaches the goal space, there is a sense of climactic completion and accomplishment. The construction subtly suggests that the resulting state is achieved only after some complications or difficulty, and it often suggests that the achievement is significant and lasting (not merely the latest location on a sequential path).

Aspectually *er-* verbs are very similar to what linguists call "achievements" (e.g. *recognize*, *notice*), which have a telic endpoint and occur instantaneously. Unlike pure achievements, however, *er-* verbs also imply a gradually extending durative run-up process as part of their meaning. To that extent they resemble "accomplishments" (e.g. 'paint the picture'), except that the run-up process is backgrounded as part of the semantic base and is not visible in the synoptic frame, and the moment of completion is profiled more radically. Following Croft (1998: 74), we can refer to them as "run-up achievements". *Er-* thus provides German with a kind of explicit marking for a run-up achievement that English does not have.[73]

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72. *Erröten* does not mean exactly the same thing as *rot werden* (or 'become (red)'). Adding the prefix *er-* has the effect of demoting the subject noun to the status of a participant "in" the profiled verb process. The semantic FG for the *er-* image in (1) is strictly speaking 'the woman's reddening' (or 'the subject's *tappen* activity'). By the same token, the LM in the 'attaining' variants serves strictly speaking only to define a goal space that provides access to it. It is not an accusative FG that moves into the subject's possession as it would in a sequential construal with a verb like *fangen* (or *auffangen*). In fact, the LMs in 'attaining' constructions are rarely the kind of spatially compact thing that would invite concentrated attention. They are more typically vaguely abstract "spaces" or situations being gained, such as freedom in (4) or *alles* in (5).

73. Stiebels (1996: 126–7) notes that adverbs referring to a length of time are read to be iterative with *er-* verbs ('Sie haben sich 3 Jahre lang den ersten Preis ertanzt'), while time-frame adverbs are not a problem with them ('Sie haben sich in einer Stunde den ersten Preis ertanzt' but §'Sie

When the base verb is an intransitive process such as *betteln*, *wachen*, or *röten*, *er-* converts the activity into a run-up achievement – either attaining a goal (*erbetteln*) or initiating a newly manifest activity or state (*erwachen*, *erröten*). That is the case in nearly all *er-* verb constructions. *Er-*'s contribution is more subtle when the base verb already describes a telic achievement, i.e., with transitive base verbs like *kaufen*, *wählen*, *retten*, *wecken*, *öffnen*, or *freuen*. Such direct contrasts are the topics in Sections 2.2 and 3.

1.3   *Er-* verbs as stylistically marked

In detailed discussions such as Beaton (1996) and Farrell (1977) that compare how *er-* verbs are used in comparison with alternative expressions, it is striking how often the *er-* verbs are said to be marked stylistically as elevated, literary, or formal. Schröder (1992: 123–5) in fact has a category in which he claims that *er-*'s only real purpose is to upgrade the stylistic register. He includes *erheben*, *erretten*, *erschrecken*, *ernähren*, *erwählen*, and *erküren* in the category.

This association of *er-* verbs with elevated style makes sense given the basic meaning of *er-*. It implies a backgrounded run-up process that makes the image more complicated than that conveyed by unprefixed constructions or even by other prefixes. Beyond that, *er-* prompts a synoptic construal that includes more information in a single interpreting frame than there would be in any single frame of a sequential construal. And since the FG for *er-* is a verb process rather than a noun, the construal is intrinsically more abstract than a sequential construal that concentrates on a particular noun FG at particular places and times.

1.4   English counterparts to *er-*

The 'attaining' *er-* verbs rarely have any good English translation. Sometimes the base verb is translated with no explicit counterpart to *er-* (e.g. *reach*, *seize*, *grasp*, *catch*, *climb*, *see*, *learn*). Most typically English resorts to a generic 'attaining' verb such as *gain*, which can then be expanded by an adverbial manner expression such as *by … ing*. There are several English verbs that can serve as the generic 'attaining' verb in this classic "verb-framed" pattern.[74] Several are mentioned in the *American*

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haben in einer Stunde getanzt'). *Er-* verbs become more "accomplishment"-like when the goal is implicitly the endpoint of an explicit pathway (e.g. 'eine Treppe ersteigen', *sich erstrecken*).

74. See Talmy (2000b: 222–33) for an introduction to the general notion of "verb-framed" constructions as opposed to "satellite-framed" constructions. It is fair to say that prefixed verb constructions are the German means of marking a verb-framed style of construction as opposed to the unmarked sequential satellite-framed type.

Heritage Dictionary's set of synonyms for *reach*: "*Reach* connotes arriving at a goal through effort and progress. *Achieve* suggests the successful executing of an important enterprise through skill or initiative. *Attain* may imply great effort and pride in reaching a level or goal. *Gain* connotes arriving at a goal despite considerable effort in surmounting obstacles, often with the implication of deserved satisfaction. … *Accomplish* connotes successful completion." Other potential generic 'attaining' verbs in English include *acquire*, *obtain*, *win*, and *get* – as well as collocations like *get to*, *get hold of*, *gain control of*, *gain possession of*, or *gain access to*. There are also occasional collocations like *catch sight of* or *catch cold*.[75]

The 'emerging' *er-* verbs on the other hand have several common English translation equivalents. *Er-* is historically related to the English prefix *a-*, and *a-* verbs sometimes translate German *er-* verbs (*arise, awaken, arouse, await, amaze, astonish, appear, attain, appoint, allow, acquire, achieve*). However, English *a-* is scarcely felt to be a functioning prefix. Moreover, several other historical sources are now merged in the modern prefix *a-*, so that the great majority of *a-* verbs are not etymologically related to *er-*.

A significant number of 'emerging' *er-* verbs have English counterparts with *re-*. Verbs like *erfrischen* or *sich erholen* for example suggest reviving, recovering, regaining strength, restoring what was there before, being refreshed, rejuvenated, renewed, replenished, renovated. The relation to English *re-* verbs reflects the fact that the qualities were already known to be dormant within the host person and had been manifest before. Generally speaking, one reason to expect a process to emerge in a goal space is that it has been there before and can be expected to return. *Er-* verbs and *re-* verbs often share an element of retrieving ideas from mental storage so that they emerge again into awareness or public availability (e.g. *recognize, remember, recall, recollect, remind, recite, recount*). Other *re-* verbs that commonly translate *er-* verbs include *relieve, rejoice, replace,* and *relax,* and a large number of other *re-* verbs occasionally come into consideration as translation equivalents of *er-* verbs.

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75. In concrete spatial contexts the English equivalent of *erreichen* is most often the transitive variant of *reach*, though English speakers prefer to "catch" moving targets such as busses. English *reach*, even in its transitive variants, does not convey the clear sense of successfully achieving a goal that is evident in *erreichen*. *Erreichen* would be odd in a use such as 'He reached his limit' as most commonly understood (i.e. where the limit is not a deliberate goal). 'Get to' does suggest successfully achieving a goal, but the goal is not a focal direct object and the event is not construed as a holistic transitive act construed synoptically. (One translation of 'bei mir erreichst du nichts' could be 'you won't get anywhere with me'.) When abstract goals imply acquiring something beneficial as opposed to simply gaining entry to a situation, English prefers 'accomplish' or 'achieve'.

Er-'s original "ur-" meaning is sometimes reflected in English verbs with *e(x)-* (e.g. *expect, experience, emerge, expand, excite, exhaust, explain, exhort, extort, erect*). Compare the relation between *er-* and *aus-*. 'Emerging' *er-* verbs can also sometimes be translated by English *en-* verbs (e.g. *encourage, enable, ensue, empower, enact, enrage, embitter*).[76]

Frequently English just translates the base verb with no explicit counterpart to *er-* (e.g. *blossom, shake, shudder, freeze*). Compare also verbs with the particle *up* (e.g. *show up, cheer up*). Deadjectival *er-* verbs often have bare deadjectival equivalents in English (e.g. *tire, pale, gray, warm, cool, open*), but the most common English counterparts have the suffix *-en* (e.g. *freshen, redden, whiten, brighten, lighten, soften, harden, stiffen, sicken, weaken, widen, broaden, lengthen, strengthen, frighten*). Suffixed *-en* verbs sometimes combine with the prefix *en-* (*enlighten, embolden*). Cf also *-ify* (e.g. *clarify*) and *-le* (e.g. *startle, tremble*). Sometimes the extent of the process is marked by an oblique phrase such as *to death*.

2. 'Attaining' *er-* verbs vs unprefixed verbs

2.1 Alternating *er-* verbs and simple verbs

'Attaining' *er-* verbs do not usually contrast directly with unprefixed verbs in the same syntactic frame, i.e., with the goal of the verb activity expressed as an accusative object. They most typically have an intransitive base verb that describes an imperfective activity, and the *er-* verb construction turns that activity into a transitive run-up achievement that successfully reaches a focal accusative goal. The *er-* verb construction serves primarily to transitivize the construction and thus to express the goal more prominently as a focal accusative object, and to imply success in actually reaching the goal. The *er-* verb construction also synopticizes the construal at the goal space, backgrounding everything that happens before the goal space is reached and profiling the moment of achievement.

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76. There is an interesting controversy about how best to translate Martin Heidegger's use of *er-* verbs into English. A recent translation by Emad and Kalary (Heidegger 2006) renders *Ereignis* (and the verb *ereignen*) as "en-owning" in an attempt to capture Heidegger's peculiarly loaded use of the term, and they sometimes extend the use of *en-* to translate other loaded Heideggerian *er-* verbs such as *erdenken*. As I understand it, Heidegger milked the historical notion of an 'event' to suggest an etymologically unfounded link to the word *eigen* ('own'), reading *Ereignis* as a kind of appropriation or as something coming into its own. Whatever Heidegger may have intended, I must say that English *en-* does not evoke much of the meaning of *er-* for me. But then, no other English prefix does either.

(8)   Und weil ich von der Ferne *horche*, *erhorche* ich nichts.
      'And because I am listening from afar I don't hear [*er*-listen] anything'

(9)   a.   Deutschlands silbersträhniger Bundeskanzler *blickte* in den Spiegel und
           fand sich gar nicht schön.
           'Germany's silver-streaked chancellor looked in the mirror and did not
           find himself handsome'

      b.   Und er *erblickte* sich im Spiegel. Sein Kopfhaar war ergraut.
           'And he caught sight of [*er*-looked] himself in the mirror. His hair had
           (*er*-)grayed'

(10) a.   Dieser Les Galantine *ringt* um Anerkennung, sowohl beruflich als auch
           privat.
           'This Les Galantine is struggling for recognition, both professionally and
           privately'

      b.   Unter seiner Leitung hat das Orchester nationale und internationale
           Anerkennung *errungen*.
           'Under his direction the orchestra has won [*er*-struggled] national and
           international recognition'

(11) a.   Männer verfahren sich, anstatt nach dem Weg zu *fragen*.
           'Men get lost rather than asking for directions (inquiring after the way)'

      b.   Es bleibt nichts anderes übrig als den Weg zu *erfragen*.
           'There was nothing left but to (*er*-)ask the way'

(12) a.   So werden aktiv andere Handlungsstrategien probiert, die eher integrativ
           angelegt sind und auf eine gemeinsame Lösung *zielen*.
           'That way other strategies are actively tested that are more integrative in
           nature and aim for a common solution'

      b.   Sollten die 17 Euroländer eine separate Lösung *erzielen* können, verliert
           Großbritannien trotzdem an Gewicht und wird politisch marginalisiert.
           'If the 17 euro countries can achieve [*er*-aim] a separate solution
           Great Britain will nevertheless lose importance and become politically
           marginalized'

In (8) for example, *horchen* describes an ongoing process without specifying a goal. *Erhorchen* describes succesfully gaining access to a focally explicit accusative object by means of the base-verb process. *Blicken* in (9a) similarly contrasts with *erblicken* in (9b). Very often the construction with a simple verb does explicitly mention the goal, but it does so obliquely and it does not entail success at reaching the goal. For example, the construction with *ringen* and an *um*-PP in (10a) does not say anything about whether the goal is actually achieved. It simply describes a goal-directed process, construed sequentially. *Erringen* describes a similar event, but it calls attention to actually attaining the accusative goal. Other base verbs such

as *kämpfen* or *werben* are like *ringen*. Similar verb constructions can also express the target of the activity in a *nach*-PP, as in (11), or an *auf*-PP as in (12).[77]

Spatial paths with a goal phrase like the ones in (13) are a special case because the simple verb construction already implies reaching the oblique goal. Since *er-* is not needed to imply success, the difference between the constructions becomes purely one of subjective construal – a run-up achievement as opposed to a normal sequential path. The sequential construal prompted by (13a) concentrates attention on the leading edge of the extending radiation, tracking it as it occupies each location on its path until it reaches its final location. The goal location is accorded greater prominence than the preceding locations because it is explicitly mentioned, but the construction is also concerned with each preceding location on the way. (13b) by contrast is concerned only with whether the path extends far enough to include the goal in its scope, looking synoptically at the goal space until the radiation arrives.

(13) a. Die Strahlung aus Fukushima *reicht* nicht bis Europa.
'The radiation from Fukushima does not reach as far as Europe'

b. Radioaktive Strahlung aus Japan *erreicht* Kalifornien.
'Nuclear radiation from Japan (*er-*)reaches California'

(14) a. Die 15 Mann starke Truppe war am Wochenende auf den Gipfel *gestiegen*, um ihn von Müll und Unrat zu säubern.
'The 15-man troop had climbed to the peak in order to clean it of trash and garbage'

b. Normalerweise wäre ich dort via Westgrat auf den Gipfel *gestiegen*.
'I would normally have climbed to the peak via the western ridge'

c. Bei guten Verhältnissen kann mit den Skis fast bis auf den Gipfel *gestiegen* werden.
'In good conditions you can climb with skis almost to the peak'

d. Von Färnigen ohne Pause bis auf den Gipfel *gestiegen*.
'Climbed from Färnigen to the peak without stopping'

(15) a. Auf die Frage, wer von beiden zuerst den Gipfel *erstiegen* habe, sagten Tenzing und Hillary immer nur, sie seien gemeinsam auf den Gipfel gegangen.
'In response to the question which of them reached [*er-*climbed] the peak first, Tenzing and Hillary always say only that they went to the top together'

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77. A few base verbs, like *fragen* or *bitten*, are not intransitive, but their accusative object refers to an intermediate agent rather than to the goal. The goal can be expressed in an oblique PP (e.g. *fragen nach*.., *bitten um*..) so that a similar alternation results with the *er-* verb.

b.   Später musste der Bergsteiger einräumen, den Gipfel nicht *erreicht* zu haben.
    'Later the mountain climber had to concede that he did not (*er*-)reach the top'

These contrasting constructions are worth looking at closely, because they nicely reveal the subtle differences between a sequential construal and a synoptic one. Contrast the unprefixed constructions in (14) with the *er*- verbs in (15). The sentences with unprefixed *steigen* all concentrate attention on a moving FG and on each particular location that it occupies along the way. They typically include information about the route taken on the way to the goal (14b), or about the more specific manner of climbing (14c), or about whether the path continued uninterrupted from each location to the next (14d). None of that information would be appropriate with an *er*- verb. *Ersteigen* in (15a) and *erreichen* in (15b) background everything that happens before the goal space is attained. They describe reaching the goal (by climbing), as opposed to climbing to the goal. They report whether the verb process extends far enough to include the goal space in its scope, not whether the subject goes to the location. They answer questions like 'Did they get there?' or 'Did they reach their goal?' – not 'Where did they climb?' or 'How did they climb there?'. The *er*- verbs also imply more strongly that reaching the goal is the ultimate purpose of the path. In (14a) for example, the real functional purpose is not getting to the top; it is cleaning it up once they are at the location. In (15a) and (15b) reaching the top is an end in itself. If the construction with an *er*- verb is negated, as in (15b), it normally means that the presupposed run-up process did take place, but it did not successfully reach the goal.[78]

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78. Sometimes the run-up process takes place on a pathway and the precise goal is the implicit end of the pathway. In a construction like 'die Treppe ersteigen' the goal is understood more specifically to be the implicit top of the stairs. The goal space with verbs like *erleben* or *ertragen* is the implicit end of a temporal pathway indicated by the accusative object. The 'to death' verbs (e.g. *ersticken*) can be understood as a lexicalized construction in which the maximum extent of the base-verb process is a goal space defined temporally as the end of the object's life. There are even a small number of imperfective 'preserving' verbs like *erhalten* or *ernähren* that define the goal in terms of the object's implicit "life" but leave that goal open-ended, so that there is neither perfective 'emergence' nor conclusive 'attainment' of the goal (and access is maintained rather than established). A similar sense of reaching an intrinsic maximum extent on a pathway is linked to 'emerging' variants as well. *Erblühen* for example means that the blooming process reaches its intrinsic maximum extent. *Sich erstrecken* means to extend as far as the object can extend, i.e., to reach the implicit end of an intrinsic pathway associated with it. Verbs like *erhöhen* or *erweitern* are transitional. Their base verb indicates a pathway that the accusative object extends on (i.e., height, width), but the goal space is a contextually determined point on that pathway rather than its intrinsic maximum extent.

Actually, *erreichen* is the only *er-* verb that is commonly used for reaching a purely spatial goal. One says for example 'die Insel erreichen' and not ²'die Insel erschwimmen' or ²'die Insel ersegeln' (and *erfahren* is lexicalized in a different meaning altogether). *Reichen* intrinsically suggests an extending process that is an appropriate FG for *er-*. The base verbs of motion on the other hand call attention to the subject's particular manner of motion and thus to its path before reaching the goal, inviting a sequential construal. The only *er-* verb with a base verb of motion that competes to some extent with *erreichen* is the climbing verb *ersteigen* (or *erklettern*) as in (15a), presumably because *steigen* can imply a goal-directed upward path and does not necessarily profile a manner of motion. And even *ersteigen* is much less frequent than *erreichen* in sentences like (15).[79]

Expressing a goal with an accusative object in a transitive *er-* verb construction can have purely stylistic advantages as well. At times in fact, transitivizing for stylistic reasons may be the primary motivation for using an *er-* verb construction rather than one with a simple verb. In (16) for example *zwingen* (*zu..*) already indirectly implies success at attaining the goal, but the construction with *erzwingen* seems stylistically necessary in (16b) in order to leave implicit exactly who is being forced to provide the information. Or to take a more classic example, *erstreben* in (17c) is stylistically necessary to form a construction with an attributive participle and the goal as its subject. Note that *erstreben* in this situation no longer implies actually attaining the goal the way it normally does in a sentence like (17b). When using the verb is motivated by purely grammatical-stylistic considerations, its full semantic force may be sacrificed.

(16) a. Kann ARGE Vermieter *zwingen*, Auskunft zu geben?
           'Can ARGE force landlords to provide information?'

      b. Wie könnte der Mieter diese Auskunft *erzwingen*?
           'How could the renter (*er-*)force this information?'

(17) a. Wir alle *streben* nach Glück und einem erfüllten Leben.
           'We all strive for happiness and a fulfilled [*er*-filled] life'

      b. Glück kann man nicht *erstreben*!
           'Happiness cannot be gained by striving [be *er*-strived]'

      c. Denn das *erstrebte* Ziel ist: Kosten sparen.
           'For the goal we are striving toward [the *er*-strived-for goal] is: to cut costs'

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79. Google returned 528,000 instances of "Gipfel zu erreichen" and 15,000 for "Gipfel zu ersteigen". ("Insel zu erreichen" had 333,000 hits while "Insel zu erschwimmen" had 5 and "Insel zu ersegeln" 2.)

2.2   Directly contrasting *er-* verbs and simple verbs

Most commonly then, 'attaining' *er-* verb constructions alternate with unprefixed verb constructions that are grammatically different, i.e., that are intransitive (e.g. *kämpfen*) or else have something other than the goal as their accusative object (e.g. *bitten*). In a few relatively rare cases an 'attaining' *er-* verb can contrast directly with a transitive simple verb that has the goal as its accusative object, providing us with a way to look more precisely at the semantic contribution of *er-*. The contrasts arise especially when the base verb describes grasping (*greifen*, *fassen*), choosing (*wählen*) or otherwise acquiring the object (*kaufen*), including cognitive 'grasping' (*sehen*, *hören*, *lernen*). Since these base verbs already imply successfully attaining the accusative object, *er-* serves mainly to turn the event into a run-up achievement. As we wait for the goal to be reached by the run-up process, tension builds and implies difficulty, and when the goal is finally reached the result seems like a more significant and lasting achievement. Generally speaking, the simple verbs are the normal choice and the *er-* verbs make the event seem more abstract, complex and stylistically marked.

(18) a. Suko *griff* nach dem Buch mit dem roten Drachenemblem, schlug es auf und begann interessiert darin zu lesen.
'Suko reached for [grasped after] the book with the red dragon emblem, opened it and began to read with interest'

b. Also habe ich mir einfach das Buch *gegriffen* und im Laden gleich das ganze erste Kapitel gelesen.
'So I just grabbed the book and read the whole first chapter in the store'

c. Da konnte die Königin nicht mehr an sich halten, *ergriff* das Buch und schleuderte es mit Schwung in die Ecke.
'Then the queen could not contain herself anymore, grabbed [*er*-grasped] the book and threw it vehemently into the corner'

(19) a. Eine sinnlose Angst *fasste* mich.
'A senseless fear seized me'

b. Panische Angst *ergriff* mich.
'Panic-stricken fear (*er*-)gripped me'

c. Angst, pure Angst *erfasste* mich!
'Fear, pure fear (*er*-)seized me!'

The simple verb *greifen* for example has developed a transitive variant as in (18b) in addition to its intransitive use in (18a). Even in the intransitive variant that describes reaching for (*nach*) something *greifen* often implies pragmatically that the oblique goal is actually reached, much as *steigen* or *reichen* do, and in the transitive

construction there is no obvious objective difference at all between *greifen* and *ergreifen*. The verbs in (18b) and (18c) differ only in the type of construal. Transitive *greifen* portrays the event sequentially, concentrating attention on the hand as it moves to grasp the target, and then on the fact that the accusative object moves into the hand's control. *Ergreifen* synopticizes the construal as a run-up achievement, backgrounding the grasping activity as a run-up process and profiling the concluding moment when the goal is reached. In (18c) *ergreifen* may suggest some built-up suspense before the subject overcomes her hesitation and seizes the book, and it may also suggest that the consequences are more lasting and functionally important. Generally speaking though, *er-* is superfluous for concrete spatial events such as (18c) and the reason for adding it seems largely one of stylistic register. On the other hand, when the event is one of abstract metaphorical 'seizing' as in (19b) *ergreifen* becomes much more appropriate (Zifonun 1997: 116–7). The same principles apply to *fassen* and *erfassen* (Beaton 337, 748, Farrell 331, Schröder 1992: 141), and *erhalten* is similar (in its pure 'attaining' sense for receiving as opposed to its use for 'preserving').[80]

Similar comments apply to the use of *er-* with other base verbs that describe acquiring an accusative object. *Kaufen* is the normal verb for ordinary purchasing, while *erkaufen* is a marked alternative. (COSMAS: "zu kaufen" 37,318, "zu erkaufen" 548.) *Erkaufen* suggests a period of difficulty (the run-up process) before ultimately concluding the transaction and achieving the goal – hence Duden's definition as "durch Einsatz und Opfer gewinnen" (gain by effort and sacrifice). *Erkaufen* is also typically reserved for abstract purchases, such as victory or the testimony of a witness, rather than straightforward exchanges of possession. *Erborgen* is similarly marked in relation to *borgen*, suggesting additional effort (Eberhard 482: "wobei *er-* zugleich andeutet, es habe Mühe gekostet"). *Ererben* is a slightly archaic and stylistically elevated counterpart to simple *erben*, meaning to inherit cultural customs and sometimes possessions or genetic traits and occurring mainly only as the attributive past participle *ererbt* (Beaton 354). According to Farrell (162) *ererben* emphasizes

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80. COSMAS returned 11,942 for "zu greifen" and 7,666 for "zu ergreifen", and the corresponding totals for *fassen* and *erfassen* were 21,976 to 6,748. More specifically, Google returned 159,000 instances of "greift das Buch", 27,000 of "greift nach dem Buch", and only 3,370 of "ergreift das Buch". *Ergreifen* becomes a more likely choice, however, to describe successfully achieving power ("ergreift die Macht" 137,000, "greift nach der Macht" 90,800, "greift die Macht" 14,000), and truly abstract events call exclusively for *ergreifen* ("von Angst ergriffen" 290,000, "von Angst gegriffen" 0). Unlike *greifen*, simple *fassen* is comfortable with abstract subjects and objects that leave the manner of seizing unexpressed, so that it competes directly with both *ergreifen* and *erfassen* in sentences like (19). *Ergreifen* and *erfassen* both have the stylistic advantage that they can avoid the ambiguity associated with *anfassen* between seizing and touching (Beaton 605).

a more complex "process of passing from generation to generation, rather than the act of reception." *Ersparen* in its use for saving money similarly suggests that the process is relatively complex or difficult in comparison with the unprefixed verb (Beaton 595, Farrell 321). Verbs like *wählen* for selecting an object can also combine with *er-* to make the event sound more like a significant accomplishment and less like an ordinary event of choosing (Farrell 67, Curme 1922: 436).[81]

(20)   Sie haben sein Schweigen *erkauft*, und er wird schweigen.
'They (*er-*)bought his silence, and he will remain silent'

(21)   Die Technik braucht ihre Zwecke nicht zu *erborgen*. Sie findet sie in sich selbst.
'Technology does not have to (*er-*)borrow its goals. It finds them in itself'

(22)   a.   Manchmal muss man einen neuen Beruf *lernen*.
'People often have to learn a new profession'

     b.   Wer diesen schönen, aber anspruchsvollen Beruf *erlernen* möchte, sollte einige Anforderungen erfüllen.
'Anyone who would like to (*er-*)learn this attractive but challenging profession should satisfy several requirements'

(23)   Wir hoffen, dass die Landesregierung unsere begründete Kritik nicht nur hört, sondern auch *erhört*.
'We hope that the state government not only hears our well-founded criticism but takes it to heart [*er*-hears it]'

(24)   Kinder lieben es, ungehindert toben und spielen zu können, die Natur zu *erfühlen*, zu *erriechen*, zu *erschmecken* und zu *erlauschen*.
'Children love to be able to play and run wild freely, to gain familiarity with nature by feeling it, smelling it, tasting it and listening to it (*er*-feel, *er*-smell, *er*-taste, *er*-listen it)'

Cognitive acquisition can also be expressed as a run-up achievement with *er-* added to a transitive base verb. *Erlernen* is sometimes used rather than the more ordinary simple verb *lernen* to mark the event as a more significant accomplishment. (COSMAS: "zu lernen" 39,473, "zu erlernen" 7,206.) As Farrell (183) observes: "When the result is emphasized as complete mastery of the material *erlernen* must be used." Note the contrast between *lernen* and *erlernen* in this clause from Kafka's *Brief an den Vater*: "dass ich wenig gelernt und nichts erlernt habe". *Er-* has a similar effect when added to base verbs for perceptual apprehension such as *sehen* or

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81. Unprefixed *werben* has developed a transitive variant with an accusative goal, namely trying to acquire customers by means of advertising (e.g. 'Teldafax warb Kunden mit günstigen Strompreisen'). It does not imply success as clearly as *erwerben* does (though it does suggest more success than intransitive *werben um …*), and it calls more attention to the literal soliciting or advertising activity while *erwerben* is lexicalized for more general acquiring.

hören. The *er-* verbs suggest a more complex and significant event, with tension created by an implicit run-up process such as inductive reasoning, and they suggest a more conclusive and lasting result such as recognition and full awareness (Beaton 312). *Erhören* in (23) implies that the subject not only hears the words but receives the message at a deeper level and presumably will respond appropriately. The *er-* verbs are also stylistically more literary.[82]

2.3   *Er-* vs *aus-*

Erbrüten as in (25c) follows the basic 'attaining' pattern, in which the subject gains access to the accusative object by means of the base-verb process. Moreover, in this case there are also elements of causing the accusative object to 'emerge' and become accessible to the public at large. (Other *er-* verbs for producing, constructing or creating, such as *erzeugen* or *erfinden*, similarly combine elements of both 'attaining' and 'emerging'.) That means that the event can happen to involve a path out of a source that might also be expressed by an *aus-* verb as an event of developing until fully "hatched". *Ausbrüten* in (25b) describes causing a spatial path in which the eggs hatch, while *erbrüten* in (25c) focuses more abstractly on the achievement – the completion of a production process that just happens to involve emergence from a source.

(25)   a.   Mein Nymphensittichweibchen brütet jetzt schon 7 tage über ihren gelegten unbefruchteten Eiern.
'My female cockatiel has been sitting over the unfertilized eggs she laid for 7 days now'

   b.   Der Hahn *brütet* die Eier in 52–60 Tagen *aus*.
'The rooster hatches the eggs [*aus*] in 52–60 days'

   c.   So sind wir in der Lage, jährlich über 20 Mio Fische zu *erbrüten*.
'That way we are in position to (*er-*)incubate over 20 million fish a year'

(26)   a.   Um schnell an viel Geld zu kommen, hat sich ein Mitarbeiter des Jobcenters in Mühldorf etwas ganz Dreistes *ausgedacht*.
'In order to get a lot of money in a hurry an employee at the job center in Mühldorf came up with [thought *aus* for himself] a really brazen idea'

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82. *Erriechen* and *erschmecken* also occur occasionally to mean recognizing and identifying a smell or a taste rather than just perceiving it (cf *erschnuppern*). *Erfühlen* is used similarly, though it usually refers to emotional feelings rather than the tactile sense (cf *ertasten*). These verbs all begin to imply categorizing what is seen, interpreting it, understanding it – a meaning that is essentially like that of *erkennen*, which means to be able to distinguish something from other things based on the properties that one is already acquainted with (*kennen*) (Eberhard 497).

b. Auch Einstein hat den traditionellen Weg verlassen müssen um seine neue Theorie zu *erdenken*.
    'Einstein too had to leave the traditional path in order to conceive [*er*-think] his new theory'

(27) a. Es sei schwierig, die Chancen für den Ligaerhalt *auszurechnen*.
    'It is allegedly difficult to calculate [*aus*] their chances for staying in the league'

b. Um seinen persönlichen Gasverbrauch zu *errechnen*, müssen viele Faktoren berücksichtigt werden.
    'Many factors have to be considered in order to (*er*-)calculate one's personal gas consumption'

This kind of contrast between an *aus*- verb and an *er*- verb becomes noteworthy with regard to concocting abstract ideas, so that *erdenken* and *ersinnen* can be considered formal synonyms of *ausdenken* (Beaton 720). An *er*- verb such as *erdenken* in (26b) involves an unseen run-up process indicated by the base verb, and that process eventually leads to gaining access to the accusative object; but the accusative object also emerges and comes into existence. The *aus*- verb in (38a) describes a similar event as a spatial path in which an idea is caused to arise, metaphorically, out of a source. The *aus*- verb suggests that the idea is not only "hatched" but is developed to its full extent (Eberhard 522). A similar contrast can be found between *ausrechnen* and *errechnen* as in (27). *Ausrechnen* describes completing a normal calculation, construed sequentially. *Errechnen* is a formal term used in scientific contexts for a long, careful calculation that arrives at a definitive solution (Beaton 122). According to Farrell (53), *errechnen* implies a new discovery, a creative and insightful calculation that is similar to *erzeugen* and *erfinden* (and *erschließen*).[83]

Aus- verbs can also occasionally contrast with 'emerging' *er*- verbs like *erweitern* that describe causing something to extend outward. *Erweitern* is thus very similar in meaning to *ausweiten* (or, much less commonly, *ausweitern*) and *ausdehnen*, much as *erhöhen* is similar to *aufhöhen*. All of these verbs can describe extending spatial things or expanding the abstract scope of things like authority or rights. While the *aus*- verbs describe a straightforward spatial path, the *er*- verb suggests a more complex achievement. According to Eberhard (191), *erweitern* presumes prior limits that need to be set aside in order to increase the object's scope, while *ausweiten* and *ausdehnen* do not suggest any such difficulty (nor do

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83. Both *ausdenken* and *ausrechnen* are established verbs that are considerably more common than the corresponding *er*- verbs. COSMAS frequencies with *zu* and infinitive: *ausdenken* 4,430, *erdenken* 40; *ausrechnen* 2,949, *errechnen* 752. *Aussinnen* and *ausgrübeln*, on the other hand, are not common (*ersinnen* 163, *aussinnen* 4; *ergrübeln* 4, *ausgrübeln* 0).

ausbreiten or for that matter *verbreiten*). As Section 3 shows, the added complexity suggested by the run-up process is typical of 'emerging' verbs in contrast with unprefixed constructions.

(28) a. Sowohl in den USA als auch in Europa haben sie mit Hilfe der Politik ihre Macht *ausgedehnt*.
'In the U.S. as well as in Europe they [lobbyists for firms like Monsanto] have expanded [extended *aus*] their power with the help of politics'

b. Der islamische Religionsunterricht wird an den nordrhein-westfälischen Schulen *ausgeweitet*.
'Instruction in Islamic Religion is being expanded [widened *aus*] in North-Rhine-Westfalian schools'

c. Die Rechte der Polizei werden immer weiter *ausgeweitert*, ohne daß man Belege für die Notwendigkeit vorbringen kann.
'The rights of the police are being steadily expanded [made wider *aus*] without presenting any evidence for why it is necessity'

d. Im Moment wird viel gebaut, um den Flughafen zu *erweitern*.
'At the moment there is a lot of construction to expand [*er*-further] the airport'

3. Contrasts with 'emerging' *er-* verbs

Intransitive 'emerging' verbs like *erwachen* contrast primarily with particle verbs (e.g. *aufwachen*) and with predicate adjective constructions (e.g. *wach werden*). Both *aufwachen* and *wach werden* describe straightforward sequential changes of state. *Aufwachen* is the normal term for ordinary waking up, drawing attention to the positive result in which the subject begins to be active. It is associated with upward paths such as opening the eyes and getting up (compare *aufstehen*). *Wach werden* calls pronounced attention to the subject's new resulting state, while *aufwachen* calls attention to its new resulting activity. *Erwachen* is a marked alternative to both of these constructions. It calls attention to a vague developmental run-up process that takes place within the subject before wakefulness emerges. Where *aufwachen* or *wach werden* concentrate attention on the subject in its new state of alertness, *erwachen* profiles the emergence of the waking process as it becomes manifest. Eberhard (528) senses this role of an underlying developmental process when he characterizes *erwachen* as the cessation of sleep ("das Aufhören des Schlafes") and *aufwachen* as the beginning of wakefulness ("der Anfang des Wachens"). In practice, *erwachen* suggests emerging from a deeper state than the ordinary sleep implied by either *aufwachen* or *wach werden*. *Erwachen* is

appropriate for unusual events such as waking from a coma in (29d) or emerging from a magical state of unconsciousness as in (29e). *Erwachen* becomes the preferred choice generally with abstract and diffuse subjects such as suspicion (29f), including the abstract emergence of things like storms or seasons (Eberhard 528). Generally speaking, the *er-* verb is used primarily in poetic or literary language.

(29) a. Ich bin mitten in der Nacht *aufgewacht* und hatte Durst.
    'I woke up in the middle of the night and was thirsty'

   b. Zu dieser Zeit bin ich fast jede Nacht *wach geworden* und eine furchtbare Panik packte mich.
    'During this period I became awake almost every night and a terrible panic seized me'

   c. Ich bin aus dem Schlaf *erwacht*. Mein Traum lässt mich erschaudern.
    'I (*er-*)awoke from my sleep. My dream makes me (*er-*)shudder'

   d. Kerstin Fritzl ist aus dem künstlichen Koma *erwacht*.
    'Kerstin Fritzl has (*er-*)awakened from the artificially induced coma'

   e. Langsam *erwacht* Brünnhilde und begrüßt den hellen Tag (»Heil dir, Sonne«).
    'Slowly Brünnhilde (*er-*)awakens and greets the bright day (»Heil dir, Sonne«)'

   f. Aber im blinden Geronimo ist das Misstrauen *erwacht*.
    'But suspicion has arisen [*er*-wakened] in the blind Geronimo'

(30) a. Ich besprenkelte sein Gesicht, mit Wasser, um ihn zu *wecken*.
    'I sprinkled his face with water in order to wake him'

   b. Sie wollen zu später Stunde jammen, ohne gleich die ganze Nachbarschaft *aufzuwecken*?
    'Do you want to jam until the late hours without waking up the whole neighborhood?'

   c. Ich hoffe du schläfst noch nicht, aber wenn ja dann sorry dass ich dich *wach gemacht* habe.
    'I hope you aren't still sleeping, but if so then I'm sorry I made you awake'

   d. Nach eineinhalb Wochen wurde die Kleine aus dem Koma *erweckt*.
    'After one and a half weeks the little girl was (*er-*)waked from the coma'

   e. Wer ist der Held, der mich *erweckt*?
    'Who is the hero who (*er-*)awakens me [Brünnhilde]?'

   f. Wer prahlt und sein Können überaus hervorhebt, *erweckt* Misstrauen bei seinen Mitmenschen.
    'Those who brag and overemphasize their ability arouse [*er*-wake] suspicion in other people'

Since causative simple verbs such as *wecken* in (30a) already imply initiating a new state, they provide yet another alternative to describe caused awakening: *wecken*, *aufwecken*, *wach machen*, and *erwecken*. *Wecken* makes *aufwecken* somewhat super-fluous to describe normal events, but *aufwecken* does still occur as in (30b). *Auf-* adds the spatial image of upward motion and thus focuses more explicitly on making the object fully awake and actively alert than *wecken* does (Eberhard 528), and its use is probably encouraged by its association with intransitive *aufwachen*. *Wach machen* is a relatively rare alternative that focuses especially on the resulting state. *Erwecken* is not ordinarily used for normal physical waking, especially since specifying an external cause tends to distract attention away from a run-up process within the object. Like *erwachen* however, it may still occur in unusual cases like (30d) or (30e) when the prior state of unconsciousness is deeper and overcoming it is more of an accomplishment. *Erwecken* is most commonly used to describe arousing abstract psychological forces such as love, hate or suspicion as in (30f), much like *erregen* (Eberhard 529). In that case *erwecken* typically suggests a lasting state such as sus-picion that seems to emerge for the first time, while simple *wecken* suggests a more temporary state that normally comes and goes, such as curiosity or enthusiasm.[84]

The same principles found with *erwachen* and *erwecken* are reflected in a range of other verbs to be discussed in the rest of this section. Generally speaking, the unprefixed constructions all prompt a sequential construal that concentrates at-tention on a noun that moves (metaphorically) from one state into another. The *er-* verbs prompt a synoptic construal that focuses more abstractly on the emergent verb process as FG rather than on the noun. The synopticized event seems more complex, with a run-up process that originates within the host and then emerges in a profiled moment of becoming manifest. As opposed to the more straightforward and routine-seeming changes of state described by the unprefixed constructions, the events described by *er-* verbs seem to involve complex underlying development and the consequences seem more significant and lasting. The *er-* verbs also typically sug-gest elevated style, and they are more apt to be used for abstract nonphysical events (Curme 1922: 436–7).

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84. According to Beaton (772): "*Wecken* may be regarded as resembling *rouse*, *arouse* or *stir* in the sense 'to make a dormant quality active', while *erwecken* suggests bringing it about or to life for the first time, but they are mostly interchangeable." A COSMAS search revealed a clear preference for "zu wecken" over "zu erwecken" with *Begeisterung* (90 to 3), *Neugier* (71 to 5), *Hoffnung* (26 to 1), *Illusionen* (18 to 0), *Bedürfnisse* (14 to 0), *Zweifel* (6 to 1), and *Widerstand* (4 to 0). *Erwecken* becomes more common, however, with *Verdacht* (16 to 9), *Vertrauen* (37 to 27), and *Misstrauen* (12 to 9). *Aufwecken* is not very common in any such metaphorical vari-ants, since it would imply a stronger spatial image with concentrated attention on the emotion as it moves upward. Overall, simple *wecken* is the most frequent choice (10,428), followed by *erwecken* (3,237), *aufwecken* (472), and *wach machen* (14).

3.1 'Emerging' *er-* verbs vs simple base verbs

Situations in which an 'emerging' *er-* verb competes with the corresponding simple verb are not very common. In intransitive constructions the simple verbs describe an imperfective process (e.g. *blühen*, *tönen*, *glühen*, *zittern*, or *wachen* in its core meaning of staying awake and alert), and the *er-* verbs turn that process into an inchoative event. When the construction is transitive there frequently is no established simple verb for the *er-* verb to compete with – especially with deadjectival base verbs (e.g. **ᵃmüden*). Serious contrasts arise only when a causative simple verb such as *wecken* is well established, which is the case for example with *freuen* in (31) and *schrecken* in (32). In such cases the subtle differences between the *er-* verb and the simple verb are essentially like those between *erwecken* and *wecken*.

(31) a. Auch die unverblümte Heftigkeit ihrer Reaktion hat mich *gefreut*.
'The unvarnished vehemence of their reaction delighted me'

  b. Aber das Filmchen hat mich *erfreut*, vor allem die etwas ältere Technik.
'But I was pleased with the little film [it *er*-gladdened me], especially the somewhat older techniques'

(32) a. Ein fürchterlicher Schrei *schreckte* ihn aus seinen Schatzträumen.
'A terrible scream startled him out of his dreams of wealth'

  b. Das, was ich hier zu sehen bekommen habe, hat selbst mich *erschreckt*.
'What I saw here (*er*-)scared even me'

  c. Wie ich die Fotos gesehen habe hab ich *mich erschreckt*.
'When I saw the photos I was shocked [*er*-scared myself]'

Simple *freuen* is used when something occasions joy as a fairly direct and simple reaction, while *erfreuen* is a more elevated term that is used for more complex situations when something produces a pleasant state that emerges from within and is often more lasting. See Curme (1922: 437), Farrell (104–5), Beaton (319). Simple *schrecken* and causative *erschrecken* are very similar in meaning, but again the *er-* verb prompts a more complex image that goes beyond a simple instinctive reaction to an external stimulus. Both verbs mean to 'scare', but *schrecken* is more like 'startle' while *erschrecken* is more like 'frighten', suggesting that the state is caused to emerge from within the person and is more lasting.[85]

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85. There are a few other, more occasional contrasts between causative simple verbs and *er*-verbs. *Erfüllen* for example is most typically used in a lexicalized meaning for fulfilling requirements, but it can also be used as a near synonym of *füllen* for spatial filling. In that case *erfüllen* prompts a more abstract image that looks synoptically at the goal space until it is filled by a diffuse substance, as opposed to concentrating attention sequentially on the leading edge of a physical moving substance. *Erfüllen* consistently suggests abstract functional implications that

3.2   *Er-* vs *auf-*

An *auf-* verb such as *aufwachen* is often the most common option to describe the onset of a process or an adjectival state. The *auf-* verbs typically convey a spatial image with a sequential upward path, and they often suggest getting up on one's feet and generally beginning to be more energetic and active. (Compare English 'wake up', 'get up', 'turn up the heat', 'warm up', 'cheer up'.) They can also sometimes imply seeming to rise up from obscurity into open view. (Compare English 'pop up', 'show up', 'turn up'.) If there is an established *auf-* verb then it is usually the unmarked choice compared with the corresponding *er-* verb. (The *er-* verb is in turn usually more frequent than a construction with *werden* or *machen* and a predicate adjective.)[86]

The usual semantic differences are subtly reflected in the choice of *er-* as opposed to *auf-*. The *auf-* verb conveys the image of an upward path on a scale, construed sequentially with a focal noun as FG, and attention is concentrated on the location reached by the object (or by its leading part if it is extended). The *er-* verb is a marked alternative that describes the emergence of a process from within the object, construed synoptically at the goal space, and it implies that the event is

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go beyond the purely spatial, and it is particularly associated with nonphysical "masses" such as emotions. In Farrell's (127) words, *erfüllen* means "to fill a person, his doings, utterances (as distinct from the localized seat of these) with strong emotion, his thoughts with meaning". *Eröffnen* also has some uses that compete directly with simple *öffnen*. *Er-* then adds a definite sense of an implicit run-up process before emerging. For example, officially beginning a conference or a new business implies a formal ceremony or a speech (Beaton 481). A chess opening implies a few scripted moves rather than just one. Opening a bank account involves several preliminary steps.

86. According to Stiebels (1996: 74), *auf-* is now a much more productive way to express the meaning and *er-* verbs are less productive than they used to be. (*Auf-* verbs do not compete with standard 'attaining' *er-* verbs (Stiebels 1996: 131).) Here are some representative COSMAS frequency counts with *zu* and infinitive: *aufweichen* 1,034, *erweichen* 129, *weich werden* 29, *weich machen* 21; *auffrischen* 2,192, *erfrischen* 356, *frisch machen* 72; *aufheitern* 346, *erheitern* 173, *heiter machen* 2; *aufwärmen* 1,240, *erwärmen* 981, *warm werden* 183, *warm machen* 64; *aufwachen* 697, *erwachen* 489, *wach werden* 182; *aufblühen* 197, *erblühen* 128. There are exceptions to these general trends in relative frequency, however, i.e., situations in which the *auf-* verbs are not as well established. *Aufröten* for example is rare, as is *aufmutigen*. *Aufhärten* is uncommon and seems largely restricted to making water less soft (*erhärten* 265, *hart werden* 43, *hart machen* 13, *aufhärten* 0). *Aufhellen* exists, but it is slightly less common than *erhellen* (660 to 590, with 18 for *hell werden* and 5 for *hell machen*).) A few *er-* verbs such as *erschrecken* are more common than the corresponding *auf-* verb or simple verb. A few verbs like *erregen*, *erwecken* or *erklären* have established lexicalized uses with extended nonspatial meanings. More generally, intransitive verbs for emitting light or sound prefer *er-* to *auf-*, as do verbs for trembling.

more complex, more abstract and diffuse, involves an unseen run-up process, and is typically more of a lasting achievement. The most obvious difference between an *er-* verb and an *auf-* verb is that *er-* implies an unseen run-up process *before* its profiled moment of emergence, while the *auf-* image maintains constant focal attention on a nominal FG that is apparent from the start and whose upward path continues *after* the profiled event has begun.

3.2.1   *Intransitive onset*

The difference between *aufblühen* and *erblühen* is largely just stylistic tone. *Aufblühen* is appropriate for ordinary events and *erblühen* for events deemed more significant or poetic. In careful language, however, there are other subtle semantic differences that reflect the basic meanings of the two constructions. *Aufblühen* suggests a vivid spatial image in which the blooms extend upward and become more prominent. There is also a general sense of heightened activity. *Erblühen* invites a construal that is less purely spatial, a construal that involves unseen deeper run-up processes and then a culmination with lasting consequences. The sequential construal prompted by *aufblühen* invites more concentrated attention on individual flowers or blossoms, while *erblühen* describes a diffuse process that is distributed in a synoptic goal space defined by the host subject. Stiebels (1996: 74) notes that either verb can be used when the whole flower is the subject, but that only *aufblühen* is clearly appropriate with the bud (*Knospe*) as subject.

(33)   a.   Heute ist die erste Rose *aufgeblüht*.
            'Today the first rose bloomed (*auf*)'

       b.   Der Baum *erblüht* in voller Pracht.
            'The tree (*er-*)blooms in full splendor'

(34)   a.   Es ist die erste Generation, welche von klein auf mit den neuen Technologien des digitalen Zeitalters *aufgewachsen* ist.
            'It is the first generation that has grown up from childhood with the new technologies of the digital age'

       b.   Ich selbst bin 51 Jahre und habe zwei *erwachsene* Söhne.
            'I am 51 years old myself and have two (*er-*)grown sons'

       c.   Aus einer verzerrten Wahrnehmung der Realität kann natürlich nichts Gutes *erwachsen*.
            'Of course nothing good can (*er-*)grow out of a distorted perception of reality'

A similar contrast between upward spatial extension and more diffuse goal-directed development is reflected in the difference between *aufwachsen* and *erwachsen*. *Aufwachsen* is the normal German term for growing up, describing a sequential

upward path to a higher level on a scale of size. In (34a) for example it tracks the subject's maximum extent at every stage along the way until the path is finished. *Erwachsen* by contrast focuses synoptically on the goal state, backgrounding the spatial path that leads there. It suggests a more abstract and complex event that involves unseen run-up processes, and the result seems to be a more significant achievement. Where *aufwachsen* describes apparent physical growth, *erwachsen* implies achieving full maturity as an adult with definite nonspatial implications. It occurs most commonly as an attributive adjective as in (34b), and when it is used as a finite verb or an infinitive it usually has abstract subjects as in (34c).

Given the semantic difference between *auf-* verbs and *er-* verbs, it is not surprising that *er-* verbs are preferred when there is no good candidate to be a compact upward-moving FG that attracts concentrated attention (like the person who wakes up or grows up, or the upward-rising blossoms). Trembling for example is an intrinsically diffuse activity that does not attract concentrated attention, and it does not suggest a sequential path with upward motion. On the other hand, trembling does intrinsically involve inner run-up processes that emerge in manifest surface activity, making *er-* a natural candidate to describe the emergent process. Intransitive *er-* verbs such as *erzittern*, *erbeben*, *erschaudern*, and *erschauern* are thus used exclusively rather than *auf-* verbs for beginning to tremble. Similar considerations favor *erschrecken*, although *aufschrecken* does occasionally occur to suggest the sudden motion associated with being startled. (COSMAS returned 750 instances of "zu erschrecken" compared with 90 for *aufschrecken* (and 223 for simple *schrecken*).)

(35) Und plötzlich *erdröhnt* die Erde, bebt und *erzittert*.
      'And suddenly the earth (*er-*)roars, quakes and (*er-*)trembles'

(36) a. Ein kleiner Bolide war in der Erdatmosphäre hell *aufgeglüht*.
          'A small bolide had begun to glow [glowed *auf*] brightly in the earth's atmosphere'

      b. Diese Reaktion ist so stark exotherm, dass der Platindraht eine Temperatur von etwa 1000°C erreicht und dadurch hellrot *erglüht*.
          'This reaction is so extremely exothermic that the platinum wire reaches a temperature of ca 1000°C and so begins to glow [*er*-glows] bright red'

      c. Der ganze Berg scheint in einem inneren Feuer zu *erglühen*.
          'The entire mountain seems to (*er-*)glow in an inner fire'

(37) a. Und wenn dazwischen einmal dezente Walzerrhythmen *aufzuklingen* schienen, so hatte sich eben Verona für ein paar Minuten an die Donau verirrt.
          'And when subtle waltz rhythms occasionally seemed to pop up [sound *auf*] in between, Verona lost herself to the Danube for a few minutes'

b. Die 25 Porzellanglocken waren 1969 zum erstenmal *erklungen*.
    'The 25 porcellan bells had (*er-*)sounded for the first time in 1969'

Er- verbs are also better suited than *auf-* verbs to describe beginning to emit sound or light. Verbs such as *ertönen* and *erklingen* or *erglühen* and *erstrahlen* describe a diffuse process that develops within the subject and then emerges to become manifest and characterize it. The corresponding *auf-* verbs are rare. They come into consideration only when the subject itself becomes perceptible by virtue of its emission. *Aufglühen* in (36a) for example means roughly that the bolide began to be prominently visible because it began to glow. Compare the sense of 'popping up into view' associated with *auftauchen*. The construction with *erglühen* in (36b) by contrast describes a glowing process that emerges from within a wire that was itself already visible and can serve as a goal space. *Erglühen* means roughly: 'As we look at the subject, a process of glowing emerges to characterize it after an unseen run-up process from within'. Another typical difference that is relevant here is that the *er-* verbs suggest more lasting consequences. The bolide might well flare only briefly, while the wire presumably continues to glow. The *er-* verbs also frequently sound more poetic, as in (36c). Things are much the same with the sound emission in (37). In (37a), the waltz rhythms become apparent as they begin to sound, but their new state is not necessarily lasting. (37b) describes the emergence of an activity that characterizes the bells, and it implies a more lasting achievement with a run-up process followed by public emergence.[87]

3.2.2   *Caused onset*

The situation is more complicated with transitive constructions for causing emergence. A simple base verb like *wecken* already implies the onset of a new state, making it unnecessary to add *auf-* for that purpose. Moreover, an outside cause makes it less likely that the event will be construed to have a developmental run-up process within the object that calls for an *er-* verb. These factors make both *auf-* verbs and *er-* verbs somewhat less likely to be used, but both do occur when their particular meanings are appropriate. *Auf-* verbs and *er-* verbs are especially likely when the simple verb is not well established, which is often the case with deadjectival verbs

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87. COSMAS with *zu* and infinitive: *erbeben* 22, *aufbeben* 0; *erzittern* 27, *aufzittern* 0; *ertönen* 76, *auftönen* 0; *erklingen* 47, *aufklingen* 2; *erglühen* 7, *aufglühen* 1; *erstrahlen* 86, *aufstrahlen* 1. The pattern can occur with virtually any non-agentive base verb of sound emission (including *erschallen*, *erhallen*, *erdröhnen*, *erbrausen*, *erklirren*). The *er-* verbs in this category consistently take *sein* as the perfect auxiliary. Other verbs for light emission include *erglänzen* and *erschimmern*. *Erleuchten* occurs occasionally as an intransitive verb, but it is normally transitive. Most *auf-* verbs take *sein* as well, as in (33a), (34a), and (36a), but they are not all as consistent as the *er-* verbs. Verbs like *aufglühen* and *aufschimmern* vacillate between *haben* and *sein*.

(e.g. **frischen*), or when the simple base verb is lexicalized in another meaning (e.g. *weichen*). There are also some base verbs derived from graded adjectives, such as *wärmen*, that can describe the imperfective process of making something gradually warmer without implying a transition to a discrete new goal state, making a construction with *auf-* or *er-* (or *machen*) useful to add a sense of completion.

Aufwärmen and *aufheizen* are used for normal events of warming things such as food or rooms to a new level on the temperature scale. They typically describe straightforward and routine events that can be repeated, such as re-heating food. *Er-* verbs like *erwärmen* and *erhitzen* (or, less commonly, *erheizen*) describe more complex events that involve an internal run-up process and more indirect causation from outside. In (38d) for example, the warmer sea temperatures are a relatively significant achievement (Beaton 335, 776, Farrell 152). Generally speaking, *auf-* calls to mind the sequential image of an upward path to a new level on a metaphorical scale, with a general increase in energy. *Erwärmen* describes a warming process that emerges to characterize the object after a complex and unseen run-up. Not surprisingly, both *erwärmen* and *erhitzen* are commonly used metaphorically to describe states that are symptomatic of internal emotions. *Erwärmen* implies a pleasant state as in (38e), while *erhitzen* suggests excessive energy or agitation (compare *erregen*).

(38)   a.   Sie versuchten Feuer zu machen, um sich zu *wärmen*.
            'They tried to make a fire to warm themselves'

       b.   Eine kleine Küche ermöglicht es, Pizza *warm zu machen*.
            'A small kitchen enables you to make pizza warm'

       c.   Es ist daher verboten, eine vollständig gekochte Speise am Schabbat *aufzuwärmen*.
            'So it is forbidden to heat up [*auf*-warm] a completely cooked dish on the sabbath'

       d.   So entstand die Idee, mit Solarenergie Wasser zu *erwärmen*.
            'That's how the idea originated to (*er-*)heat water with solar energy'

       e.   Nichts *erwärmt* das Herz mehr, als ein Kinderlachen.
            'Nothing (*er-*)warms the heart like the laughter of children'

The difference between *auffrischen* and *erfrischen* is much like that between *aufwärmen* and *erwärmen*. *Auffrischen* is the more common expression, used to describe normal events of freshening up, of reviving and restoring a prior state with more apparent energy. *Erfrischen* is occasionally used for similar events of reviving, but the restorative process is marked to work from within and the event seems like a more significant achievement. *Erfrischen* might sometimes be used for example in the context of resting, eating or drinking, but *auffrischen* is definitely called for

when the means of restoring come from outside and are more superficial, such as putting on clean clothes or touching up make-up or restoring a painting. Neither verb emphasizes the resulting adjectival state as clearly as the construction with *frisch machen* in (39a). Similar comments apply to *erheitern* and *aufheitern* (and *heiter machen*). The *er-* verb portrays the event as subtly more indirectly caused, more internal. *Aufheitern* would be odd in (40c), because it would imply a more direct and immediate causation.

(39) a. Danach ging es ins Hotel, um sich etwas *frisch* zu *machen*.
          'After that it was back to the hotel to freshen up (make oneself somewhat fresh)'

      b. Völlig nassgeschwitzt verließen die Jungs die Bühne Richtung Umkleide, um sich *aufzufrischen*.
          'Completely soaked with sweat the boys left the stage headed for the dressing room to refresh [*auf*-freshen] themselves'

      c. Ein paar Mutige nutzten die erste Gelegenheit, um sich im See zu *erfrischen*.
          'A few brave souls used the first opportunity to refresh themselves in the lake'

(40) a. Die Tränen schienen sie erleichtert und fast *heiter gemacht* zu haben.
          'The tears seemed to have relieved [*er*-lightened] her and made her almost cheerful'

      b. Jonathan gibt Tommy seinen Hund Lassie, um ihn *aufzuheitern*.
          'Jonathan gives Tommy his dog Lassie to cheer him up'

      c. Es *erheitert* mich stets, wenn ich höre, dass immer noch mit den alten Karten gespielt wird.
          'It always (*er*-)cheers me when I hear that people are still playing with the old cards'

3.3   *Er-* verbs vs *werden*/*machen* with adjective

Deadjectival 'emerging' *er-* verbs generally compete with constructions that have a predicate adjective with *werden* or *machen*, as illustrated in (41) and (42) with *müde* ('tired'). The predicate-adjective constructions make the adjective relatively prominent with its ordinary semantic force, so that (41a) and (42a) suggest ordinary states of physical fatigue. *Ermüden* by comparison tends to suggest a slightly more abstract and broader sense of fatigue, involving unseen underlying processes that can seem to be as mental as they are physical. The *er-* verbs also suggest that the tiring is a process that develops gradually before emerging to characterize the host subject (or object). The predicate-adjective constructions by comparison describe a straightforward sequential change as the subject moves (metaphorically) into a new state.

(41)   a.   Denn Sie werden feststellen, Sie beginnen auch abends früher *müde* zu *werden*.
'Because you'll notice that you're starting to get tired earlier in the evening too'

b.   Sie schien weniger schnell zu *ermüden* und war während der Schulzeit aufmerksamer.
'She seemed to (*er-*)tire less quickly and was more alert during school hours'

(42)   a.   Die anstrengende 20-stündige Fahrt im Sitzabteil hat uns *müde gemacht*.
'The strenuous 20-hour trip in a seating compartment has made us tired'

b.   Mein Anliegen dabei ist nicht, die Teilnehmer durch eine Überfülle an Information zu *ermüden*.
'My concern in doing this is not to (*er-*)tire the participants with a flood of information'

(43)   a.   Und nun ist mein Rücken sehr sehr warm geworden, als hätte mein Rücken Fieber und es ist *rot geworden*.
'And now my back has become extremely warm, as if my back had a fever and so has turned red'

b.   Der Mensch ist das einzige Tier das mit Scham *errötet*, oder *erröten* muss.
'Humans are the only animals who blush [*er-*redden] from shame, or need to blush'

(44)   a.   Hallo! Einer unserer Neontetras ist die letzten Tage sehr *blass geworden*.
'Hi! One of our neon tetras has become very pale in the last few days'

b.   König Ludwig II. von Bayern wäre sicher vor Neid *erblasst*.
'King Ludwig of Bavaria would surely have turned pale (*er-*paled) with envy'

That semantic difference between *er-* verbs and the constructions with *werden* is apparent in the contrast between *rot werden* and *erröten* in (43). *Rot werden* simply describes turning red in color, including skin that turns red as a straightforward physical reaction to heat or exertion or anger. *Erröten* describes a more complex event that involves an internal run-up process, especially blushing as a symptom of an underlying emotion such as embarrassment. While either *erröten* or *rot werden* can be used to describe turning red from embarrassment, only *rot werden* is appropriate for purely physical reddening that does not develop as a symptom of inner processes, such as stoplights turning red or hair being dyed red. Similar comments apply to *erblassen* in (44). When the adjectives are being used in their ordinary meanings the constructions with *werden* are generally more common than the corresponding *er-* verbs. The *er-* verbs are often associated with particular meanings, such as *erröten* for blushing from embarrassment. Otherwise, the *er-* verbs are associated with stylistically elevated or technical language.

The constructions with *machen* and an adjective are not as common as those with *werden*, and some causative *er-* verbs have become lexicalized and established as the normal way to express a particular meaning. Sometimes there is a fairly clear division of labor between the *er-* verb and a construction with *machen*. *Erhärten* for example is lexicalized to describe strengthening or "confirming" an argument or a suspicion so that it can resist attack, as in (45d). *Hart machen* by contrast retains a clear sense of physical surface hardening as in (45b), and that more vivid image is called to mind even when the construction is used metaphorically to describe making someone insensitive or more difficult to hurt as in (45c). (The simple verb *härten* as in (45a) normally describes the technical process of hardening things like steel.) Similar comments apply to *weich machen* as opposed to *erweichen*, which is the established way to describe softening a person's heart as in (46b) (Curme 1922: 436).

(45) a. Um *gehärtet* werden zu können, muss ein Stahl mindestens 0,2% Kohlenstoff enthalten.
      'In order to be hardened, steel must contain at least 0.2% carbon'

   b. Dann muss man die Form einen halben Tag lang brennen, um sie *hart* zu *machen*.
      'Then you have to burn the mold for half a day to make it hard'

   c. Das Leben auf der Straße hat ihn *hart gemacht*.
      'Life on the street has made him hard'

   d. Labor, Röntgen und Ultraschall sind oft unverzichtbare Hilfsmittel, um eine Verdachtsdiagnose zu *erhärten* oder zu entkräften.
      'Laboratory tests, x-rays and ultrasounds are often indispensable aides in confirming [*er*-hardening] or refuting a suspected diagnosis'

(46) a. Die rohe Lederhaut wird … anschließend gereinigt, *weich gemacht* und vom letzten Blut befreit.
      'The raw leather is then cleaned, made soft and freed from any blood that is left'

   b. Ein Bild mit einem niedlichen Baby hat schon so manches Wählerherz *erweicht*.
      'A picture with a cute baby has (*er*-)softened many a voter's heart'

(47) is a good example of the semantic distinctions involved. In (47a) there is a clear focus on the full meaning of *leichter* in explicit contrast to *schwerer*, and the adjectives clearly describe a physical attribute pertaining to the noun (*Maus*). *Erleichtern* in (47b) on the other hand does not just say that the rucksack has been made lighter in weight; it implies that a burden has been alleviated and the load is easier to carry. Where *leichter machen* describes the beginning of a new state for the noun, *erleichtern* describes the beginning of a more abstract relation involving

the rucksack, the person carrying the rucksack, and the potential event of carrying it. *Erleichtern* is commonly used even more abstractly as in (47c).[88]

(47) a. Ansonsten bietet sich noch die Möglichkeit, die Maus mit Zusatzgewichten schwerer oder *leichter* zu *machen*.
'Another possibility is to make the mouse heavier or lighter with additional weights'

b. Nachdem man den Rucksack *erleichtert* hatte, ging es gleich weiter zum Hochgolling.
'After (*er-*)lightening the rucksacks we continued to the Hochgolling'

c. Der Reiche *erleichtert* sein Gewissen indem er sich beim Roten Kreuz engagiert.
'The rich man alleviates (*er*-lightens) his conscience by working with the Red Cross'

(48) a. Und das habe die Kinder stark und *mutig gemacht* und ihnen Selbstvertrauen geschenkt.
'And that supposedly made the children strong and brave and gave them self-confidence'

b. Sie *ermutigt* ihn ständig, sich nach neuen Karriereoptionen umzuschauen.
'She constantly encourages [*er*-courages] him to look around for new career options'

A few other *er-* verbs besides *erleichtern* have become especially well established and are much more frequent than the corresponding predicate-adjective constructions. *Ermutigen* for example is the normal verb for encouraging. As (48) illustrates, the lexicalized *er-* verb does not mean the same thing as the corresponding construction with *machen*. *Mutig machen* in (48a) describes causing a change in a basic character trait, as opposed to encouraging someone to perform a particular act.[89]

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88. When *leicht* has its other meaning of 'easy' then its subject is intrinsically more abstract and *erleichtern* is generally a more apt choice than *leichter machen*. The string "erleichtert die Kommunikation" returned 163,000 hits in a Google search while "macht die Kommunikation leichter" returned 745.

89. COSMAS comparisons with *zu* and an infinitive in which the predicate-adjective construction is relatively more common include: *rot werden* 256, *erröten* 69, *rot machen* 1; *müde werden* 276, *ermüden* 168, *müde machen* 54. Comparisons with a more common *er-* verb include: *erhärten* 265, *hart werden* 43, *hart machen* 13; *erblassen* 15, *blass werden* 5, *blass machen* 0; *erbleichen* 6, *bleich werden* 2, *bleich machen* 0; *erkranken* 2,704, *krank werden* 411, *krank machen* 50; *ermutigen* 1,440, *mutig machen* 1; *ermöglichen* 37,854, *möglich machen* 3,742 (many of which have 'so schwer wie möglich'); *erleichtern* 12,467, *leichter machen* 586; *ermächtigen* 191, *mächtig machen* 4. Bare deadjectival verbs like *härten* in (44a) are sometimes an option, but speakers are not usually comfortable forming unprefixed deadjectival verbs (*müden? *leichtern? *möglichen?).

4.   Summary of contrasts

Er- verbs often serve to form a transitive construction with a focally prominent goal. When they contrast more directly with unprefixed verbs in similar syntactic frames, they consistently portray the events as more complex and more abstract. The constructions with unprefixed verbs (including particle verbs and predicate-adjective constructions) typically describe ordinary straightforward events construed sequentially as paths by a noun FG. The *er-* verb constructions prompt a synoptic construal with a run-up process that reaches the goal space, and that verb process serves as the FG for *er-*. The *er-* verb constructions often suggest that the event is more of an achievement, involving some difficulty in the run-up process and more significant or lasting consequences.

5.   Grammatical issues

5.1   Types of base verb

Verbs like *erwecken* that describe caused emergence have transitive base verbs, but otherwise the base verbs with *er-* are typically intransitive processes that do not call for an accusative object (Stiebels 1996: 125). Speaking very broadly we can say that 'attaining' verbs typically have base verbs that indicate a deliberate imperfective activity carried out by the subject (e.g. *kämpfen*, *werben*, *reichen*), while 'emerging' verbs typically have base verbs that indicate a manifest property of the host subject (e.g. *wachen*, *blühen*). Semantically, the base verbs typically indicate an ongoing process that can sensibly be imagined as a run-up process.[90]

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90. *Er-* does not normally occur for example with base verbs for creating or devouring a particular accusative object (e.g. *machen*, *tun*, *backen*, *essen*), or for expressing particular types of content or directing communicative statements at a particular recipient (e.g. *schreiben*, *singen*, *zeichnen*, *sagen*, *schweigen*, *ehren*, *grüßen*). It does not normally occur with base verbs like *nehmen* that describe obtaining an accusative object, or like *schicken* that describe releasing an object. It does not occur with base verbs like *trennen* or *binden* or *laden* or *treffen* or *stoßen* or *waschen* that describe other types of completed transitive event. A few transitive base verbs such as *wissen*, *glauben*, *zweifeln*, *lieben* describe states rather than completed events, but *er-* is still inappropriate. An 'attaining' variant is odd because the state is not normally construed as a deliberate activity that can lead to achieving a goal. Stiebels (1996: 125) notes the inappropriateness of *'Er erhasste sich die Ehrenmedaille für den unliebsamsten Charakter'. There are occasional apparent exceptions to this principle ruling out transitive base verbs, but most of them simply re-construe the base verbs as ongoing activities. In *erlernen* for example the base verb describes a goal-directed activity rather than a completed event of apprehending a particular accusative object. Verbs like *ersingen* or *erschreiben* may occur occasionally with the base verb referring to

The 'emerging' *er-* verbs are often deadjectival. Verbs that describe the emergence of an observable adjectival property include *erwachen, erweichen, erblassen, erbleichen, ergrünen, erblonden, ergrauen, erstarken, erstarren, erlahmen, erblinden, ertauben, erkranken.* Many such deadjectival verbs are exclusively causative: *erschweren, erfrischen, erquicken, erneuen, ermöglichen, erbosen, erbittern, erheitern, ermuntern, ernüchtern, erledigen, ermäßigen, ertüchtigen, erübrigen, ermächtigen, ermutigen, erniedrigen, sich erkundigen, erinnern, erneuern, erweitern, erleichtern, erläutern, sich erdreisten, erfrechen, erkecken, erkühnen.* In some cases the base verb has causative marking in the form of an umlauted root vowel: *erwecken, erfüllen, eröffnen, ergänzen, ertöten, erhöhen, erklären, erröten.* Deadjectival 'attaining' verbs on the other hand do not occur normally. The only candidate I can think of is the lexicalized verb *erledigen.*[91]

Denominal 'emerging' verbs on the other hand are very rare (*ergreisen,* s*ich ermannen,* arguably *erglänzen, erleuchten, erhitzen*).[92] 'Attaining' verbs do sometimes have denominal bases, most typically when the root indicates an instrument that characterizes the verb process. Examples include *ermitteln, erproben, erdolchen, erwirtschaften, ergattern, eräugen, erlosen, erlisten, ereifern, ertrotzen, ersinnen.* The root of a verb like *ergaunern* refers to the role played by the subject in the activity. Nominal roots occasionally characterize the activity by indicating a relation to the goal space (e.g. *erbeuten, erzielen, ergründen, erkunden, erstatten*).[93] Generally speaking, denominal base verbs are not as common with *er-* as they are with other prefixes.

There are also some general categories of intransitive base verbs that do not normally appear with *er-*. *Er-* does not generally occur with base verbs of motion,

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an activity that leads to 'attaining' something such as a prize, without implying that a particular object is created. (Stiebels (1996: 125) notes that the object of the base verb may occasionally be specified in a *mit*-PP: 'Sie hat sich den Literaturnobelpreis mit diesem Roman erschrieben'.) The most serious challenge to the principle about transitive base verbs comes from 'acquiring' verbs like *erkaufen* and *erschaffen,* and from similar verbs like *erretten.* It may be that these verbs are more appropriately considered special cases of causing emergence into a public space, i.e., that they are transitional cases between 'attaining' and causing 'emergence', like *ermöglichen* or *erschließen.* Similar remarks may apply to the lexicalized verb *erkennen.*

91. *Erübrigen* is also lexicalized in a meaning that combines elements of 'attaining' as well as 'emerging'. Cf also *erlangen, erkunden, erobern, ertrotzen, erwidern.*

92. *Erzürnen* and *erschrecken,* and etymologically even *erstaunen,* are quasi-denominal. The base verb for *ergrimmen* was originally a verb.

93. Stiebels (1996: 228) says that productive denominal patterns with *er-* require the base to suggest an activity ('Er ergärtnerte sich den ersten Preis auf der Bundesgartenschau' but *'Er hat sich erpreist').

at least when they describe normal spatial paths. Rather than, say, *erlaufen* or *erschwimmen*, speakers prefer *erreichen* to describe reaching a goal by means of a normal spatial path. The prefix may become appropriate, however, when the base verb refers purely to an intentional manner of moving. In that case the *er-* verb can be like any other 'attaining' verb that describes gaining by means of a deliberate activity (e.g. 'den ersten Platz *erlaufen*', 'einen neuen Rekord *erfliegen*', 'sich eine Erbschaft *erschleichen*', 'Der Heimatforscher *erwandert* sich den Thüringer Wald', '*ertrat* das arme Veilchen'). The only *er-* verb that is used commonly for fairly normal spatial paths is *ersteigen* (or *erklettern*), and it can suggest a goal-directed upward path. See Section 2.1. Otherwise, *er-* occurs with base verbs of motion only in highly lexicalized verbs with nonspatial meaning, such as *erfahren*, *erfolgen*, and *ergehen*.[94]

5.2   Transitivity

The 'attaining' variants are always transitive, with the goal space indicated by the accusative object. In the most typical cases the base verb is an intransitive activity (e.g. *kämpfen*, *betteln*), so that one effect of choosing *er-* is to transitivize the verb construction, providing a focal goal for the verb activity. Since the intransitive activities are imperfective, the *er-* verb construction also serves to make the construal perfective.

The 'emerging' variants on the other hand can be either transitive or intransitive. In fact the simplest way to think of them is to consider them prototypically intransitive, but with common causative variants. The list of intransitive *er-* verbs includes: *erscheinen*, *erklingen*, *erschallen*, *erhallen*, *ertönen*, *erdröhnen*, *erbrausen*, *erklirren*, *erblühen*, *erzittern*, *erbeben*, *erschaudern*, *erschauern*, *erglühen*, *erglimmen*, *erschimmern*, *erstrahlen*, *erstehen*. Since the host subject of intransitive emergence becomes characterized by the emergent process or state, verbs like *erblühen* take a *sein*-perfect. In a few cases the base verb already takes a *sein*-perfect:

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94. Verbs that do not imply an intentional manner of motion, such as *kommen*, *fallen* or *fließen*, do not combine with *er-*. Perhaps for similar reasons, **erwerden* does not occur either. Occasionally an *er-* verb may be needed for grammatical reasons to transitivize a base verb whose manner of motion is important enough to mention, e.g. 'das zu *erfliegen*de Trapez'. *Er-* does not normally combine with modals, although occasional coinages prove that the combination can be semantically interpreted. One online forum participant (forum.dragonballz.de) comments: "Du kannst Träume nicht richtig '*Erwollen*', aber, wenn du vor dem Einschlafen an das Träumen denkst, kannst du dich später besser daran erinnern." Another forum (eltern.de) contained this comment: "Erziehung ist manchmal auch für die Kinder schwierig. Darum heisst es auch "*erziehen*", einen Menschen in die richtige Form bringen. Sonst hätten wir vielleicht das wort '*Erdürfen*' oder '*Erwollen*' in unserer Gesellschaft kreiiert."

erwachsen, *erschwellen*, *ersterben*. Compare also *ergehen* and *erfolgen*. Intransitive verbs with deadjectival bases include: *erröten*, *erblassen*, *erbleichen*, *ergrünen*, *erblonden*, *ergrauen*, *erstarken*, *erstarren*, *erlahmen*, *erblinden*, *ertauben*, *erkranken*. Generally speaking, the most typically intransitive *er-* verbs are those that describe emitting sound (e.g. *ertönen*) or light (e.g. *erglühen*), those that describe changing color (e.g. *erröten*, *erblassen*), and those that involve inner turmoil that becomes manifest (e.g. *erzittern*, *erstarren*).

'Emerging' *er-* verbs can also be used in causative constructions. In that case the accusative object plays the same semantic role played by the subject in intransitive constructions, i.e., it hosts the emergent process and becomes characterized by it. With *erwecken* for example the subject does something unspecified that causes the accusative object to host the root process of becoming awake. *Erwecken* basically means 'cause to *erwachen*'. Quite a few *er-* verbs, including *erschrecken*, *erstaunen*, and *erzürnen*, can be used either intransitively or in causative constructions. Deadjectival base verbs that can be used either way include: *ermüden*, *ermatten*, *erschlaffen*, *erweichen*, *erhärten*, and *erhellen* (and Swiss German *erwahren*). Some base verbs have marked causative counterparts: *erwachen/erwecken*, *ertrinken/ertränken*, *erkalten/ erkälten*, *erwarmen/ erwärmen*.[95]

On balance in fact, the 'cause to emerge' variants are more plentiful than the intransitive verbs for emergent states and activities. A large number of 'emerging' *er-* verbs are used exclusively in causative constructions, and if the state emerges without a specific external cause they take a reflexive construction (with an *über-* PP, an *an*-PP, or a genitive object). The list of deadjectival verbs that normally appear only in transitive constructions includes: *ergänzen*, *ertöten*, *erhöhen*, *erklären*, *erschweren*, *erfrischen*, *erquicken*, *erneuen*, *ermöglichen*, *erbosen*, *erbittern*, *erheitern*, *ermuntern*, *ernüchtern*, *erledigen*, *ermäßigen*, *ertüchtigen*, *erübrigen*, *ermächtigen*, *ermutigen*, *erniedrigen*, *sich erkundigen*, *erinnern*, *erneuern*, *erweitern*, *erleichtern*, *erläutern*, *sich erdreisten*, *erfrechen*, *erkecken*, *erkühnen*. Cf also *erfüllen* and *eröffnen*. The denominal verb (*sich*) *ermannen* also belongs in the exclusively causal group, and compare also *erhitzen*, *erörtern*, *erstatten*, *ermangeln*. Unlike the *erglühen* type with a deverbal base, the originally denominal verb *erleuchten* is normally causative, as are deadjectival verbs for exhibiting light such as *erhellen*.

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95. The pattern with a marked causative verb (e.g. *erwachen/erwecken*, *erkalten/erkälten*) is not very productive, however. The really productive patterns involve auxiliary verbs, either *machen* with an adjective (e.g. 'müde machen') or *lassen* with an activity verb (e.g. 'staunen lassen'). Note also the reverse process in which a reflexive construction can convert a transitive verb into a meaning that is essentially like that of an intransitive verb (and typically would be expressed by an intransitive verb in English). Thus *sich härten* (derived from transitive *härten*) can express virtually the same meaning (cf *hart werden*) that intransitive *härten* can express. Helmut Richter provides a nice summary of the deverbal causative verbs at http://www.lrz.de/~hr/lang/caus.html.

6. Frequencies

A COSMAS search for "zu [Prf]*n" suggests, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, that *er-* verbs are almost as common overall as *ver-* verbs and *be-* verbs – at least in the infinitival construction. Table 3 contains the COSMAS counts for selected *er-* verbs (e.g. "zu /w1:1 erreichen"):

Table 3. *Er-* verb frequencies

erreichen	130,713	erwecken	3,237	erhärten	264
erhalten	84,211	erlauben	3,052	erlaufen	248
erwarten	73,191	ergründen	2,857	ermächtigen	187
erkennen	66,883	erfreuen	2,838	erheitern	169
erleben	39,549	erkranken	2,659	ermüden	166
erfahren	39,093	erstehen	2,624	ersinnen	163
ermöglichen	37,158	erweisen	2,590	erschöpfen	152
erklären	34,333	erpressen	2,429	erblühen	128
erhöhen	34,182	erwirtschaften	2,296	erweichen	128
erfüllen	30,334	erfragen	2,185	erschwindeln	92
erzählen	21,306	erproben	2,064	erstrahlen	86
errichten	20,449	erschweren	2,061	ersteigen	82
ersetzen	18,041	ernennen	2,055	ertönen	76
erwerben	16,961	erwischen	2,015	erstreben	70
erstellen	15,190	erraten	1,981	erröten	68
ermitteln	13,510	erhaschen	1,821	erretten	66
erweitern	12,658	erkundigen	1,778	erschallen	59
erleichtern	12,264	erfolgen	1,757	erklingen	47
erarbeiten	12,277	erkämpfen	1,642	erfordern	46
erledigen	11,672	erregen	1,538	erzürnen	44
eröffnen	11,283	erahnen	1,529	erdenken	40
erinnern	10,222	ermutigen	1,410	erstärken	40
ergattern	8,601	erschüttern	1,205	erschwimmen	33
erheben	8,569	ermorden	1,167	erwählen	32
erzeugen	8,396	erwärmen	955	ertrotzen	31
erkunden	7,783	ergeben	878	ereilen	30
ergreifen	7,666	erbitten	803	erzittern	27
erwähnen	7,552	ersteigern	750	ereignen	25
erlangen	7,429	erschrecken	750	erbeben	22
erlernen	7,206	erwägen	709	erblassen	15
erobern	7,129	erhellen	654	erschauern	14
erteilen	6,902	ersehen	639	erzeigen	12
erfassen	6,748	erliegen	613	ersitzen	11
erschließen	6,414	ergehen	570	erfliegen	10

Table 3. (*continued*)

erneuern	6,141	erkaufen	548	ergrünen	7
erscheinen	5,743	erstarren	509	erglühen	7
ertragen	5,213	errechnen	508	erbleichen	6
erbringen	5,140	erwachen	489	erschaudern	5
ersparen	5,061	erhoffen	398	ermangeln	4
erzwingen	4,733	erwidern	360	ergrübeln	4
ergänzen	4,634	ermahnen	353	erdröhnen	3
erforschen	4,331	ersuchen	351	erglänzen	2
erlassen	3,644	erfrischen	348	erhallen	1
erringen	3,542	ertappen	318		
ersticken	3,534	erhitzen	282		

Zer-

Zerrieselung[96]

Vom Rasenmäher *zerhaut*,
von Pilzen halb verdaut,
in der Sonne *zerblättert*,
vom Wind *zerflättert*,
mit der Zeit aufgedröselt,
beim *Zertreten zerbröselt*,
zersplittert, *zerfallen*, *zerbrochen*,
aufgelöst in die Tiefe gekrochen,
andres nach Tagen verflogen,
aber woanders wieder eingezogen,
tonnenweise *zerstäubt* und fein verteilt
bereichern wir des Bodens Kleid
mit unserem Müll
in Hüll und Füll
ohne je zu enden
mit unserem Verschwenden!

As this poem and the examples in (1)–(15) reflect, *zer-* has a consistent objective meaning. *Zer-* verbs are synoptic counterparts to the sequential image conveyed by English 'to bits' or 'to pieces'. They basically describe entropy, loss of structured order, typically a change from a shaped object to an unshaped collection of pieces, or possibly to an amorphous mass. The disintegration can take the form of decomposing, crumbling, dissolving, tearing apart, shattering, exploding, or being crushed or smashed.[97]

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96. de.poezio.com/poems/258905/Zerrieselung. 'Seepage [*zer*-trickling]: Chopped to bits [*zer*-chopped] by lawn mowers, half-digested by fungi, flaked to bits [*zer*-foliated] in the sun, fluttered to bits [*zer*-fluttered] by the wind, unraveled with time, (*zer-*)crumbled from being (*zer-*)trampled to bits, shattered [*zer*-splintered], decomposed [*zer*-fallen], broken to bits [*zer*-broken], having crawled dissolved into the depths, having flown off as something else days later, but having settled in again somewhere else, atomized [*zer*-dusted] and finely distributed by the ton, we enrich the earth's surface with our garbage in package and in abundance without ever ending our wasting!'

97. Most accounts of *zer-* treat the prefixed verbs as if they prompted a sequential construal, more or less identifying *zer-*'s meaning with that of *auseinander-* or *entzwei-*. They pay relatively less attention to the widespread crushing or flattening variants that do not involve breaking

(1) Wie schnell *zerfällt* Ozon, wenn man es in einer Flasche im Kühlschrank lagert?
'How quickly does ozone disintegrate [*zer*-fall] if you store it in a bottle in the refrigerator?'

(2) Aber der leckere Kuchen *zerkrümelt* mir im Mund.
'But the delicious cake (*zer*-)crumbles in my mouth'

(3) Gute Schokolade *zergeht* auf der Zunge und darf nicht sauer schmecken.
'Good chocolate dissolves [*zer*-goes] on the tongue and can't taste sour'

(4) Und er trank es [Fläschchen] leer, und schleuderte es an einen Baum, dass es *zerschellte*, *zerklirrte*, die Splitter um sich stiebend.
'And he drank it [phial] empty and hurled it against a tree so that it (*zer*-)burst, shattered with the sound of breaking glass [*zer*-clanged], spraying slivers all around'

(5) Der Stoff *zerknittert* leicht, aber ansonsten sind wir sehr zufrieden.
'The material (*zer*-)wrinkles easily, but otherwise we're completely satisfied'

(6) Kaum ist die Mutter gegangen, bricht im Kind eine Zerstörungswut aus: Es *zerschlägt* das Teegeschirr, *zerstört* Möbel, *zerschlitzt* die Tapete.
'The second the mother is gone a destructive rage erupts in the child: It (*zer*-)smashes the tea service, destroys [*zer*-disturbs] furniture, (*zer*-)slashes the wallpaper'

(7) Oskar verfügte über die Gabe, Gegenstände aus Glas *zerschreien* zu können.
'Oskar had the ability to shatter things made out of glass by screaming [*zer*-scream them]'

(8) Mein Drucker *zerknickt* das Papier und hört auf zu drucken.
'My printer (*zer*-)creases the paper and stops printing'

(9) Im Magen wird Säure benötigt, um unser Essen zu *zersetzen*.
'Acids are needed in the stomach to decompose [*zer*-set] our food'

(10) Schatz, kannst du bitte den Kuchen *zerschneiden*?
'Dear, can you please (*zer*-)cut the cake?'

(11) Man kann den Schrank *zerlegen*, er kann mit einem normalen Kombi transportiert werden.
'You can disassemble [*zer*-lay] the cabinet, which can be transported with an ordinary station wagon'

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into identifiable parts that can be tracked in sequential paths. H. Brinkmann (1962: 242): "Bei *zer*- wird immer ein Ganzes vorausgesetzt, das in Teile zerlegt wird (in zwei Teile oder in eine Vielheit)," so that it expresses "Auflösung eines Ganzen in seine Teile". Weinrich's (1993: 1065) formulation is better than most, namely that *zer*- expresses "dass eine Form sich auflöst".

(12) Es ist, als ob man eine Blume *zerpflückt*, *zerstückelt*, um hinter das Geheimnis ihrer Schönheit zu kommen.
'It's as if someone plucks a flower to pieces, dismembers it [*zer*-plucks, *zer*-pieces], in order to get behind the secret of its beauty'

(13) Jetzt müssen die *zerkochten* Kartoffeln *zerquetscht* oder in eine teigartige Masse verwandelt werden.
'Now the potatoes, having been cooked to a pulp [the *zer*-cooked potatoes], have to be (*zer*-)mashed or transformed into a dough-like mass'

(14) Achten Sie darauf, es [Ticket] nicht zu *zerknittern*, zu *zerschneiden* oder zu beschädigen.
'Make sure you do not (*zer*-)crumple the ticket, (*zer*-)cut it or damage it'

(15) Das Gift des Zweifels und des Misstrauens *zerfrisst* sein Wesen, *zerstört* seinen Glauben an die Liebe.
'The poison of doubt and mistrust corrodes [*zer*-eats] his being, destroys [*zer*-disturbs] his belief in love'

Causing something to lose its structural integrity frequently suggests ruining it, and destructive events like (6) can be considered prototypical. Such negative connotations are not necessarily attached to *zer*-, though. Think for example of food melting in your mouth as in (2) or (3), cutting a cake as in (10), intentionally disassembling a cabinet as in (11), or mashing potatoes for cooking in (13).

Zer- verbs are unusual prefixed verbs in that they typically describe concrete physical events. Most individual *zer*- verbs are also less strongly lexicalized than is usually the case with prefixed verbs (Fleischer 1971: 301), so that the semantic patterns tend to apply to the *zer*- verb constructions across the board rather than to more particular sets of compound verbs. In all these ways *zer*- verbs are more like particle verbs than prefixed verbs. Like particle verbs, they certainly have metaphorical uses; but those uses typically reflect systematic metaphors in the language that are not particularly linked to *zer*- verbs. In other words, given the basic physical meaning of a *zer*- verb we can usually understand the metaphorical meaning of a sentence like (15) based on general metaphorical principles. Unlike particle verbs, however, *zer*- verbs prompt a synoptic construal.

1. Schematic image

Zer- prompts a synoptic construal of a whole object as its internal structure disintegrates to the point that it becomes unrecognizable (or at least no longer functionally the same object). It is difficult to capture this schematic meaning in a picture because the *zer*- event does not imply any particular direction of motion,

only the dissolving of prior structural bonds. There may be mutual separation as component parts are separated from each other, as is obviously the case for example with cutting the cake in (10) or disassembling the cabinet in (11) or shattering glass in (7). There may also be inward pressure that crushes the structural bonds and causes component parts to come closer together so that the object loses its shape, for example boiling or mashing the potatoes in (13) or crumpling the ticket in (14). *Zer-* does not distinguish between being broken into identifiable chunks, or being broken into a multiplex of tiny homogeneous pieces that lose individual identity and could be conceived as a mass (e.g. dust, powder, meal), or being dissolved into a more fluid mass, or being crushed into a compacted amorphous mass.

The configuration on the left in Figure 11 is intended to represent an object with defining internal structure, with implicit component parts represented by the circles and internal structural bonds represented by the lines connecting the circles. *Zer-* profiles the loss of those structural bonds and thus the disintegration of the object's overall structure. The image is meant to be neutral as to whether the object is then presumed to fall apart (mutual separation of parts) or to be contracted together. It is also meant to be neutral as to whether the internal component parts are identifiable (a plurality or a multiplex) or not (a mass). The key point is that the overall structure is broken down in the entropic process profiled by *zer-*. Prototypically the component parts will tend to fall when they lose the structural bonds that were holding them in place and the structure will collapse. But *zer-* verbs can also describe exploding into the air as well as collapsing or being smashed together.
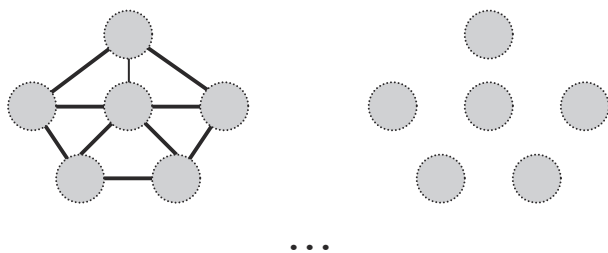
Figure 14. Structure *zer-*

The LM for the *zer-* image in Figure 14 is the original structure of a focal noun that hosts the event – the whole entity and the original configuration of its parts. Essentially, the focal noun is the setting for the event. Like the host settings with 'emerging' *er-* verbs, the focal noun is the grammatical FG for the overall verb

construction and is expressed either as the subject in an intransitive construction or as the accusative object in a transitive construction. The entire event profiled by *zer-* takes place within the host setting at the moment when the bonds of the original structure are dissolved. The profiled semantic "FG" for the *zer-* image is the distributed process of structural disintegration that takes place within the host. Essentially, *zer-* profiles the moment when the structural bonds (the multiplex of connecting lines on the lefthand side of Figure 14) are no longer in effect.[98]

When *zer-* is translated by an English prefixed verb, as opposed to a construction with a goal phrase like 'to bits', it usually corresponds to English *dis-* or *de-* (e.g. *disintegrate*, *dismember*, *disassemble*, *dismantle*, *dissect*, *dissolve*; *destroy*, *decompose*, *decay*, *deconstruct*). In such cases English does not tend to distinguish *zer-* from *ver-*, and the same prefixes often translate *ent-* as well. The *zer-* image is similar in several ways to the one for *ver-*. Both consist of before and after images for a synoptic setting, and in both cases the difference between the two settings is the loss of something. With *ver-* what is lost is a focal noun; with *zer-* what is lost is the overall internal structure of a focal noun. With *ver-* the setting is wholly implicit; with *zer-* the setting is essentially identified with the focal noun (like 'emerging' *er-*).[99] *Zer-* is like *ent-* to the extent that it profiles separation and the loss of connecting bonds. With *ent-* however the theme is an alien substance that occupies the LM and is distinct from it, and it undergoes a path that crosses the bounds of the LM or breaks free from it. With *zer-* the theme is an implicit part of the LM's structure, and there is no sense of crossing any bounds.

2. Grammatical constructions

Zer- verbs can be either intransitive (e.g. *zerfallen*, *zerfließen*) or transitive (e.g. *zerschlagen*, *zerlegen*). In intransitive constructions the host entity whose structure disintegrates in the *zer-* image is indicated by the nominative subject, and in transitive constructions by the accusative object. Generally speaking, intransitive

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98. The host object might be considered a synopticized reflexive-TR, with implicit parts moving relative to other implicit parts. Unlike the usual reflexive-TRs in sequential construals with particle verbs, however, these parts do not attract concentrated attention, and there is no clear path image – only diffuse disintegration. The *zer-* event is distributed throughout the host.

99. *Er-* also has before and after images for a synoptic setting, and privative *ent-* could be read that way as well (i.e., as the accusative LM first with the implicit theme and then without it). The other prefixes have schematic meanings with a path that takes place in an otherwise unchanged synoptic setting.

base verbs remain intransitive with *zer-* and take a *sein*-perfect, while transitive base verbs remain transitive with *zer-* (Brinkmann 1962: 242).[100]

The only *zer-* verbs that are used exclusively in intransitive constructions are those with base verbs of motion, including *zergehen, zerfallen, zerfließen, zerlaufen, zerspringen*, and *zerrinnen*, along with the relatively uncommon verbs *zerschellen* and *zerklirren*. The other intransitive *zer-* verbs can also occur in causative constructions, including *zerbrechen, zerschmelzen, zerreißen, zerschleißen, zerkochen, zerkrümeln, zerbröckeln, zerfasern, zerfransen, zerknittern, zerknautschen, zersplittern, zerknallen, zerknacken, zerknicken*. Even *zerbersten, zerplatzen*, and *zerstieben*, whose base verbs are normally only intransitive, can be attested occasionally in causative constructions (though Duden mentions only the intransitive variants).

Denominal base verbs are common (e.g. *zerfasern, zertrümmern, zerkrümeln, zerstäuben, zerpulvern, zerstückeln, zersplittern, zergliedern, zerbröckeln, zerbröseln, zerfetzen, zerfleischen, zerfransen, zerknäulen, zerknautschen, zerlumpen, zerlöchern, zerstrahlen, zerteilen*). On relatively rare occasions (Fleischer 1971: 301) deadjectival base verbs also occur (e.g. *zerkleinern, zermürben, zerweichen*). In all cases the base root consistently specifies the resulting state of the event, such as crumbs or shreds or dust. Specifying the result in an *in*-PP or a *zu*-PP would be superfluous with these denominal verbs.

When the base verbs do not directly indicate the manner of disintegration or its result, they can indicate a causal activity that makes the type of disintegration pragmatically obvious. Such activities include brute force (e.g. *schlagen, schmeißen, drücken, treten, knüllen*), grinding (e.g. *mahlen*), cutting (e.g. *schneiden, sägen, beißen, kratzen*), tearing (e.g. *reißen, pflücken*), and creasing (e.g. *knicken*). Generally speaking, transitive *zer-* verbs are more common than intransitive ones, and they display a greater variety of specific uses.

One grammatical construction is worth special mention, namely the use of 'shattering' verbs like *zerbrechen* or *sich zerschlagen* with an *an*-PP. The *an*-PP indicates what the subject collides with to cause the breaking, and the subjects are very often abstract "things" of the type generally associated with metaphorical uses of *zer-* verbs.

(16)   a.   Manche Träume *zerplatzen* an der Wirklichkeit.
                'Many dreams (*zer-*)burst when they come in contact with reality'

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100. Intransitive *zer-* verbs with a *haben*-perfect are basically unheard of. Duden does list *zerblättern* ('in einzelne Blätter zerfallen'), however I have been unable to find any examples of intransitive *zerblättern* with a *haben*-perfect. There are intransitive uses of the verb, but none of them are in the perfect, and there are instances with a *haben*-perfect, but they are transitive. The participle occasionally appears with *sein*, but those constructions could be considered attributive (statal passive).

b. Die ökologische Bewegung *zerreibt sich* an den politisch-ökonomischen Machtstrukturen.
'The ecological movement is being ground to bits by [*zer*-rubs itself on] political-economic power structures'

3. Specifying the result

The base verbs with *zer-* very often indicate the specific nature of the disintegration by indicating a generic type of resulting state (to bits, to powder, to mush, etc). Occasionally, the base verb does not make the manner of disintegrating sufficiently clear and it is specified obliquely in an *in*-PP (e.g. 'in kleinste Teile') or a *zu*-PP (e.g. 'zu Staub'). As illustrated in (17), such specifications are most likely to occur when the purpose of the act is not to destroy the old entity but to convert it into a more useful form.

(17) a. Die Nährstoffe werden so in einfache und wasserlösliche Bestandteile *zerlegt*.
'The nutrients are thus decomposed [*zer*-laid] into simple and water-soluble components'

b. Der Künstler *zerspaltet* das Holz in die erforderlichen Stücke.
'The artist (*zer*-)splits the wood into the required pieces'

c. Ein Prisma *zerlegt* Licht in Spektralfarben.
'A prism divides [*zer*-lays] light into spectral colors'

d. Danach kann das Kanna zu Pulver *zermahlen* werden.
'After that the kanna can be (*zer*-)ground to powder'

Constructions like those in (17) seem to violate the principle that prefixed verbs do not take goal phrases, and they are in fact relatively unusual.[101] A goal phrase suggests tracking a FG in a sequential path to a new location, while a synoptic event such as the one profiled by *zer-* does not have a moving FG. In fact I would suggest that the PPs in (17) are not true goal phrases reporting a final location or state for a noun FG, the way they would be with the simple verbs and no *zer-*. They are more like adverbial expressions specifying the manner of the whole disintegration event – just as a verb root would do in a verb like *zerstäuben*. The PPs do not specify resulting locations that lie outside of the original host object that

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101. According to Schrôder (1992: 277–8), an optional result PP is very rare with intransitive *zer-* verbs but somewhat more common with transitives. Beaton (108) notes that the simple verb *schlagen* is usually preferred if the resulting state is explicitly specified, and Google returned 19,200 instances of "in Stücke zu schlagen" and 699 of "in Stücke zu zerschlagen".

indicates the synoptic setting for the *zer-* event. The resulting configuration is being construed as part of an expanded *zer-* event, rather than a sequential continuation of a FG's path. Compare the more extensive discussion in Chapter 6 of apparent goal phrases with *ver-* verbs.

4.   Breaking in two

Zer- describes an event that is distributed throughout the focal object, conveying a diffuse image of general disintegration of the whole rather than one that concentrates attention on a particular part of the object. *Zerschneiden* for example normally suggests multiple cuts rather than a single severing. As a special case though, verbs like *zerbrechen* or *zerreißen* can also describe creating a single fissure that results in exactly two objective pieces, such as breaking a pencil in two or tearing something in two. *Zerreißen* in (18a) for example might describe a single tear, and the other examples in (18) clearly describe 'in two'. Still, the point of *zer-* is that the object has been fragmented as a whole and its structural and functional integrity is irreparably destroyed (Farrell 264). *Zer-* does not invite us to concentrate attention on any specific place within the object.[102]

(18)   a.   Auf seiner eigenen Flucht über einen Zaun hat er sich die Hose *zerrissen*.
'In his own flight over a fence he (*zer-*)ripped his pants'

b.   Da wurde der Vorhang im Tempel von oben bis unten in zwei Stücke *zerrissen*.
'Then the curtain in the temple was (*zer-*)torn into two pieces from top to bottom'

c.   Das Flugzeug ist in zwei Stücke *zerbrochen*.
'The airplane (*zer-*)broke in two pieces'

d.   Die schweren Stiefel ließen selbst dicke Äste *zerknacken* wie dünne Zweige.
'The heavy boots made even thick limbs crack in two [*zer*-crack] like thin branches'

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102.   Both ripping something and breaking a brittle object in two typically involve force applied on each side of the object rather than force directly applied to the location of the break. That may contribute to the impression that the event seems distributed over the whole object even when it involves a single clean break. Sometimes general segmenting terms such as *zerschneiden*, *zerteilen* or *zerstückeln* can have more abstract implications without implying physical destruction or falling apart or even rendering useless, e.g. 'Der Fluss *zerteilt* die Stadt in zwei Hälften'.

5.   *Zer-* vs simple verbs

Zer- is sometimes added to base verbs that already clearly imply breaking or exploding or grinding. In that case *zer-* is largely superfluous, but it does add subtle implications that reflect the difference between a synoptic construal and a sequential one. Where simple *brechen* can describe a relatively limited and localized break, *zer-* implies completely shattering in a way that affects the object as a whole and makes it irreparable and worthless (Beaton 107). The simple 'bursting' verbs *platzen* and *bersten* prompt a sequential construal tracking the pieces as they move outward, while *zer-* holds our attention solely on the disintegration that takes place within the object's original bounds. Again the *zer-* verbs expressly emphasize that the object is completely destroyed (Beaton 114). The difference between a sequential construal of an explosion and a synoptic construal is nicely reflected in (19). The simple verb *sprengen* is basically the causative counterpart to *springen*, suggesting an upward and outward 'jumping' path by an accusative FG. It occurs naturally with goal expressions like 'in die Luft' that track the FG to a new location after the explosion has taken place, as in (19b). *Zersprengen* by contrast does not occur with such expressions because it holds our attention synoptically on the moment of disintegration. (Google returned 765,000 instances of "in die Luft zu sprengen" and 1 for "in die Luft zu zersprengen".) Simple *sprengen* is also commonly used for breaking restrictive bonds (chains, fetters) as in (19c), suggesting that the object is blown out of the way. *Zersprengen* can also describe destroying such bonds, but it is not nearly as common. When it does occur it holds attention synoptically on the destruction of the bonds themselves without suggesting that they are caused to move out of the way. Simple *sprengen* can also describe breaking through more abstract boundaries or limits as in (19d), suggesting a path image of opening the way. *Zersprengen* is not appropriate for such events, because the point cannot very well be destroying the limits per se. ("Grenzen zu sprengen" returned 207,000 Google hits and "Grenzen zu zersprengen" 2.)

(19)   a.   Welche Sprengkraft ist nötig um zwei Granitblöcke die 1km hoch sind, mit einem Durchmesser von 1km in 20 Scheiben zu *zersprengen*?
'How much explosive force is necessary in order to (*zer-*)blast two blocks of granite that are 1km high and 1km in diameter into 20 plates?'

b.   Nach einem Streit mit seiner Frau hat ein 52-Jähriger in Marktheidenfeld gedroht das Haus in die Luft zu *sprengen*.
'After a quarrel with his wife a 52-year-old man in Marktheidenfeld threatened to blow the house up [blast it into the air]'

c.   Feuerdämon Loki hat seine Fesseln *gesprengt* und verheert das Land.
'The fire demon Loki burst his chains and is devastating the land'

d. Musikalische Formen sowie stilistische Grenzen zu *sprengen*, daran auch
    hätte Mahler seine Freude gehabt.
    'Bursting musical forms as well as stylistic boundaries, that would have
    brought Mahler pleasure too'

In all these cases the simple verb is the unmarked term. That is notably the case with
mahlen and *zermahlen*, where simple *mahlen* is the normal way to describe rou-
tinely grinding something such as grain or coffee. *Zermahlen* emphasizes the result
of being completely pulverized when that result is not necessarily predictable.[103]

6. *Zer-* verbs vs particle verbs

Zer- verbs can describe a synopticized version of an event that could also be de-
scribed using *auseinander-* or *entzwei-*, or the "collapsing" sense of *zusammen-* or
ein-, or occasionally also the 'opening' or 'dissolving into the air' senses of *auf-*
(e.g. *auflösen*). It differs from each mainly in that there is no clear direction to the
zer- path and it does not invite us to track the moving parts on further after their
original bonds are severed. The moving parts with verbs like *zusammenfallen* or
einstürzen can be tracked sequentially with an overall path that moves inward (and
typically also downward) after separation. *Auf-* suggests a definite upward direc-
tion. *Auseinander-* is comparably restricted to an overall outward direction, and
both it and *entzwei-* imply a specified goal state. The synoptic image associated
with *zer-* on the other hand does not invite concentrated attention on any moving
parts. The *zer-* parts are diffuse much like the themes with privative *ent-* verbs (or
be- verbs or multi-directional route paths). The synoptic *zer-* event is completed
when the original structure has disintegrated, and the profile remains on the overall
state of the whole object.

(20) a. Er schüttelte etwas den Kopf und *zerriss* das Papier.
          'He shook his head slightly and tore up [*zer*-tore] the paper'

      b. Eileen *riss* das Papier *entzwei* und sah staunend auf das kleine Büchlein.
          'Eileen tore the paper in two and looked at the little book in amazement'

      c. Bei Altbauten ist es nicht notwendig das ganze Haus *auseinander* zu *reißen*.
          'With old buildings it's not necessary to tear the whole house apart'

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103. Adding a phrase such as 'zu Pulver' that specifies the physical extent of the grinding makes
zermahlen the more likely verb choice. Adding a resultative phrase such as 'zu Mehl' on the other
hand does not favor *zermahlen*, because it calls attention to the normal resulting product rather
than to the physical disintegration.

d. Da es im inneren immer noch brannte, entschloss man sich mit Hilfe
eines Baggers das Haus *einzureißen*.
'Since it was still burning inside, they decided to tear the house down
["in"] with the help of a backhoe'

e. In der Nacht vom 15. auf den 16. hat in dem nahegelegenen Neusatz der
Sturm ein Haus *zusammengerissen*.
'In the night of the 16th the storm tore down ["tore together" = caused to
collapse] a house in nearby Neusatz'

f. Statt den Boden *aufzureißen* und sechs Bäume zu beschädigen, wird
unterirdisch an dem Bau der Wasserbetriebe an der Lausitzer Straße
gearbeitet.
'Instead of tearing open [auf] the earth and damaging six trees, construc-
tion of the waterworks in Lausitzer Street is being done underground'

7. Frequencies

Table 4 contains a COSMAS count of selected *zer-* verbs in the construction "*zu*
[infinitive]" (e.g. "zu /w1:1 zerfallen"):

Table 4. *Zer-* verb frequencies

zerstören	6,810	zerbröckeln	75	zerrütten	28
zerstreuen	2,497	zerfließen	72	zerfasern	21
zerschlagen	1,727	zergehen	72	zerhauen	11
zerbrechen	1,519	zersplittern	71	zerlaufen	6
zerlegen	882	zerkratzen	64	zerkochen	5
zerreißen	572	zerfetzen	64	zerschmelzen	4
zerfallen	437	zerdrücken	60	zerschmeißen	3
zertrümmern	389	zermalmen	50	zerkrümeln	3
zerschneiden	283	zerspringen	39	zerschleißen	1
zerkleinern	231	zerhacken	38	zerschrammen	1
zerfleischen	154	zerfressen	37	zerstieben	1
zersetzen	131	zermahlen	35	zerfurchen	1
zerteilen	118	zergliedern	31	zerlassen	0
zertreten	86	zerrinnen	30		

Ver-

1. The difficulties

(1)–(12) contain 18 typical *ver-* verbs. In all 18 instances *ver-* seems to contribute a meaning to the construction, but it is by no means obvious that there is any common semantic thread running through all of the uses. *Ver-* verbs are linked to dying out (1), becoming implicated (2), binding (3), closing (4), covering and concealing (5), blocking (6), displacing (7), distributing (8), consuming (9), leading astray (10), transforming (11), and spoiling (12), and we could easily add other examples that complicate the picture even more.

(1) Als die letzten Töne der Orgel *verklangen*, war die Kirche bereits leer.
     'As the last tones of the organ subsided [*ver*-sounded] the church was already empty'

(2) Es besteht die Gefahr, dass sich das Kind in der Schnur *verwickelt*.
     'There is danger that the child will get tangled [*ver*-wind itself] in the cord'

(3) Das Gesetz *verpflichtet* ihn dazu.
     'The law (*ver-*)obligates him to do it'

(4) Ich habe keinen einzigen Schrank *verschlossen* oder *verriegelt*!
     'I didn't lock [*ver*-shut] or (*ver-*)bolt a single cabinet!'

(5) Sie hält ihren Kopf gesenkt, so dass ihre langen braunen Haare das Gesicht *verdecken*.
     'She holds her head down so that her long brown hair (*ver-*)covers her face'

(6) Ein schweres Eisentor *versperrt* den Weg zur Villa.
     'A heavy iron gate (*ver-*)blocks the way to the villa'

(7) Doch zuvor müssen 15 große Bäume *versetzt* werden.
     'But 15 large trees have to be moved [*ver*-set] first'

(8) Jesus *vertreibt* die Händler aus dem Tempel.
     'Jesus (*ver-*)drives the dealers from the temple'

(9) Wieviel Energie *verbraucht* man für die Heizung?
     'How much energy is consumed [*ver*-used] for heating?'

(10) Arroganz ist eine schreckliche Geliebte, die zu Fehlern *verführt*.
     'Arrogance is a terrible lover that seduces [*ver*-leads] to mistakes'

(11)   Gerüche können *verringert*, *verstärkt* oder *verändert* werden und zuvor
       geruchlose Gase können riechbar werden.
       'Odors can be weakened [*ver*-lessened], amplified [*ver*-strengthened] or altered
       [*ver*-changed], and previously odorless gasses can be smelled'

(12)   Mieterin lässt Zietlow-Haus *verkommen*: Sonja Zietlows Haus im Wert von
       über 200.000 Euro ist *verwüstet* worden, weil eine Mieterin *verwahrloste* Tiere
       im Gebäude zurückgelassen haben soll. [Ihr Mann] erklärt, Wände und Böden
       seien mit Kot *verschmiert*.
       'Renter allows Zietlow house to come to ruin [*ver*-come]: Sonja Zietlow's
       house valued at over 200,000 euro has been trashed [*ver*-laid-waste], because
       a renter is said to have left neglected [*ver*-treated-heedlessly] animals behind
       in the building. [Her husband] explains that walls and floors were allegedly
       (*ver*-)smeared with feces'

Ver- is certainly the most difficult prefix to relate to a single schematic meaning
that might plausibly underlie its range of typical uses. It would seem reasonable to
think, as most published treatments imply, that *ver*- has several distinct meanings
that have little in common with each other and may even seem incompatible with
each other. To take an example from Curme (1922: 438), *verzuckern* may mean 'to
spoil by sugaring too much', 'to cover with sugar', or 'to turn to sugar'. Schröder's
Lexikon deutscher Präfixe (1992: 170–267) lists 28 different senses that *ver*- verbs
may have, and most of them seem only randomly related to each other.

   The most obvious reason for this apparent lack of a clear consistent meaning
is *ver*-'s motley historical lineage, merging three older prefixes corresponding to
Gothic *fra*, *faur*, and *fair* (Latin *pro*-, *por*-, *per*-). (See Leopold (1907) for a de-
tailed account of *ver*-'s history.) Another difficulty in finding something like "the
meaning of *ver*-" is that so many *ver*- verbs are strongly lexicalized – even more
than is the case with other prefixed verbs. When speakers use verbs like *verstehen*,
verlassen, *verlangen*, or *verzeihen* they are presumably not very aware that *ver*- is
making any identifiable semantic contribution. In extreme cases such as *verlieren*,
verletzen, or *vergessen*, the base verb does not even exist as an independent verb.
Of course speakers are dimly aware that even these verbs are also *ver*- verbs, and
their meanings may relate to semantic patterns associated with the prefix, but
generally speaking lexicalized compound verbs do not invite much awareness of
a meaning for the prefix.

   Another trait of *ver*- verbs that works against finding a meaning for the pre-
fix is that *ver*- sometimes seems chosen more for grammatical reasons than for
semantic ones. In sentences like (11) for example *ver*- is added to deadjectival or
denominal bases, and it is not obvious how the *ver*- verb would differ in meaning
from the simple base verb. Such instances prompt several published accounts to

imply that *ver-* can serve simply as a means of deriving such verbs – a primarily or even purely grammatical function. On the other hand, *ver-* is sometimes added to denominal or deadjectival base verbs like *ändern* that already exist as unprefixed verbs, so that speakers are presumably adding *ver-* for reasons that are not purely grammatical.

Similarly, several accounts mention that transitive *ver-* verbs can be formed from intransitive base verbs, suggesting that *ver-* serves a primarily grammatical function here as well. Some transitive *ver-* verbs do of course have intransitive base verbs, for example *verurteilen*, *verspotten*, *verweigern*, and *verschweigen*. We might ask, however, why *ver-* is chosen rather than *be-* or *er-* in order to make these verbs transitive. And if *ver-* is added to intransitive base verbs purely to make them transitive, then why do many intransitive base verbs remain intransitive when *ver-* is added?[104]

Generally speaking then, most of the existing accounts of *ver-* verbs are not very helpful if we want to go beyond a catalogue of attested verbs and come to understand the prefix in any meaningful way. We come away with no real sense of what *ver-* itself typically adds to the meaning of a base verb, of why it is chosen rather than other prefixes, or of why any prefix at all is chosen rather than a simple base verb or a particle verb.

Despite the admittedly considerable difficulties, I believe it is possible to bring some order to the superficially very different meanings in (1)–(12), even if the most basic underlying pattern is so abstract that it strains our usual notion of "meaning". At the most schematic level, the meaning of *ver-* will be a kind of cognitive average, an extremely abstract common denominator built up over countless actual encounters with *ver-* verbs. The most schematic meaning will incorporate just enough information to characterize *ver-* verbs in contrast to other choices that the speaker has, including particles (e.g. *ab-* or *aus-*), other verb prefixes (e.g. *be-* or *er-*), and no prefix or particle at all (the simple base verb). We can think of

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104. Schröder's (1992) first three categories of *ver-* verb are all defined on formal syntactic grounds: those that are used to to form a verb from an adjective, those that are used to form a verb from a noun, and those that are used to form a transitive verb from an intransitive one. Similarly, the Duden *Grammatik* claims that *ver-*, like *be-*, can have a purely syntactic function ("zur reinen Änderung der Valenz") to convert an intransitive verb to a transitive one by a process of argument shift. That is, the object of a complement PP in the valence of the simple base verb is thought to be converted into an accusative object of the *ver-* verb (e.g. 'ihn versorgen' is a transform of 'für ihn sorgen', 'ihn verspotten' of 'über ihn spotten', 'etwas verzögern' from 'mit etwas zögern'). The idea that *ver-* can serve a purely grammatical function is most appealing with a verb like *verursachen*. Here the *ver-* verb does not directly contrast with any other verb, since plain **ursachen* is not a verb and no other prefix occurs with that base verb.

it as the opening pattern associated with *ver-*, a minimal starting operation that is then always elaborated as soon as it is combined with the other elements in the sentence (including the type of base verb, the type of subject or object, and the type of grammatical construction).[105]

The chapter begins by proposing this kind of very abstract schematic meaning for *ver-*, and then briefly surveying its range of more specific meanings in order to show how that meaning might plausibly underlie them. Then we look at the issue of whether the highly schematic meaning is precise enough to distinguish *ver-* verbs from the alternative constructions that German offers them. Why do speakers choose a *ver-* verb rather than a simple verb (Section 5)? Why do speakers choose a *ver-* verb rather than one with a particle such as *aus-* or *ab-* or *weg-* (Section 6)? Chapter 7 addresses the issue of why speakers choose *ver-* rather than one of the other prefixes, such as *be-* or *er-* or *ent-* or *zer-*.

2.   The schematic image

The schematic meaning that I propose for *ver-* has been influenced especially by two prior studies, both of which stand out as serious attempts to get at the semantic core of *ver-*. One is the cognitive-semantic analysis conducted by Belz (1997), which is very much in the spirit of the analysis that is presented here. She posits a "unified" image schema (1997: 151) that is similar to the one that I am proposing, namely a FG moving away from a vaguely specified reference point. The main difference between my analysis and Belz's is that she is still working within the presumptions of a sequential construal. As a result, she posits both a

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105. Methodologically speaking, the goal in proposing a core schematic meaning for the prefix is to make as much sense as possible out of the wealth of actual data for how it is used and interpreted. We want to organize the various specific interpretations associated with *ver-* verbs in a way that captures as much regularity and order as we can find, and in a way that defines *ver-* in contrast to other options offered by the language. It does not really affect the analysis being proposed here, but I believe that speakers' brains actually do something similar. That is, speakers unconsciously build up patterns shared by the range of actual interpretations involving the prefix and form something like a cognitive average or common denominator – mental habits that become associated with interpreting the prefix and allow us to process it with maximum efficiency. Incidentally, claiming that *ver-* prompts a single schematic starting process shared by its more specific variants does not mean that *ver-* is not polysemous. After a common schematic opening the interpretation may well take either of two (or more) mutually exclusive conventional branches that need to be identified in any adequate account of its full meaning.

source reference point and a destination (although she correctly considers the original location to be more important).[106]

The analysis presented here was also significantly influenced by Hennig Brinkmann (1962: 242, 245, 246–9, 419–21, 422–3), who was intuitively a cognitive linguist before cognitive linguistics existed as such. Brinkmann finds a core meaning for *ver-* in the notion of a deviation from what is normal and expected ("Abweichung von dem Geforderten, Erwarteten oder Gewohnten"). He applies that notion not only to the variants with obvious negative connotations of deviation or demise, but also to the more evaluatively neutral 'altering' verbs like those in (11) – noting that such changes violate our general expectation that things will remain the way they are. Brinkmann thus stands out as someone who resists the normal presumption that all construals are sequential and ultimately focus on the final location of a FG.

The core notion underlying *ver-* verbs generally is loss of original status in a synoptic setting. In every example in (1)–(12) a FG becomes no longer accessible or no longer recognizably the same as it was, so that whatever defined it in that situation no longer applies. Put another way, the FG ceases to be a FG – at least in that setting. It may be displaced from its setting, possibly by becoming obscured or hidden, or it may merge with its setting so that it is no longer a distinct functioning FG there, or it may become distorted to the point that it loses its definition. In all cases the setting originally has a FG and then it does not have that FG, at least in its original form and function. Rather than holding the FG constantly in view and tracking what happens to it, we hold the synoptic setting constantly in view and watch it lose its FG.

The extremely schematic core image for the prefix *ver-* involves only one specified element: a focal noun that is expressed as a grammatical FG, most commonly an accusative object but sometimes the subject in an intransitive construction. The focal noun is represented in Figure 15 by the dark ball. Loosely speaking we can refer to the focal noun as the FG in the *ver-* relation. Strictly speaking, however, the focal noun is only a FG at the beginning of the event. By the end of the event, on the righthand side of Figure 15, it is no longer there – or at least it has lost its

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106. Belz (1997) finds it necessary to include a goal location as well as a starting location in order to account for *ver-*'s use to describe transformations and directed transfers. On the other hand, she claims that the precise defining aspect of *ver-* is that the FG ends up away from a reference point location that is not necessarily identified with those other locations. She posits five more particular image-schematic "senses": displacement or separation, "physical integration", "prevention of access", "mistake", and "threshold". She uses much of her discussion to identify metaphorical extensions (e.g. STATES ARE LOCATIONS, A PROCESS IS MOVEMENT ALONG A PATH) that are reflected in *ver-* verbs.

defining properties as an independent FG in the setting. What stays constant in the interpretation is not the FG; it is the implicit synoptic setting (represented by the gray background). In other words, we do not concentrate attention on the FG and hold it constant as we track what happens to it – the way we would in a sequential construal. We establish a synoptic setting that contains the FG, and then we watch that setting lose its FG. In the simplest case, represented in Figure 15, there is a sequence of at least two images. In the first, the setting has a FG centrally located in it. In the last, the setting is unchanged except that the FG is no longer there – at least not in its original recognizable form. What *ver-* profiles is not the FG but the loss of the FG's status in a synoptic setting.

Figure 15. *Ver-* as synoptic displacement

Unlike *ent-*, *ver-* does not entail any actual path away from the original location. There can be no sequence of locations because there are no LMs in the setting that might define a specific location. *Ver-* simply depicts a setting with an apparent FG, that is then transformed into a setting without that FG (at least in its original recognizable form).

The English prefix that corresponds most closely to *ver-* is *dis-* (*displace, dislocate, dislodge, dispose, disappear, distribute, disperse, dispense, dismiss, discard, dispel, dissipate, dissolve, disturb, distort, distend, disarrange, disguise, distract, disclose, discontinue, dislike, disrespect*), together with its historically related variants *di-* (*digress, digest, direct*) and *dif-* (*different, diffuse*). At times *ver-* also corresponds to *de-* (*decay, deteriorate, deviate*) or to *mis-* (*misfire, misspeak*). None of these English prefixes can be consistently identified with *ver-*, however, especially since *ent-* verbs and *zer-* verbs also commonly have counterparts with *dis-* and *de-* (e.g. *discover, disclose, disappoint, disconnect, dispose, defrock, delouse; disintegrate, dismember, disassemble, dismantle, dissect, dissolve, destroy, decompose, deconstruct*). A few English verbs retain the old historically related prefix *for-*, including *forget, forbid, forgo, forsake, forlorn*. English may also resort to particle verbs with *away* (e.g. 'waste away', and the 'twist the night away' type construction), *out* (e.g. 'run out') or *off* (e.g. 'drive off'), as well as *up* (e.g. 'use up', 'eat up', 'burn up').

The image in Figure 15 serves as an extremely schematic opening pattern that can be elaborated in several specific ways. Since the variants reflected in (1)–(12)

differ so markedly from each other, it is more difficult to see how they can all be related to the core schematic image than it was with any of the other prefixes. Before we look closely at the contrasts between *ver-* verbs and simple verbs or particle verbs to explore the precise semantic contributions of *ver-* in detail, Section 3 provides a brief survey of how the schematic image in Figure 15 can plausibly underlie such a wide range of more specific variants.

3. Specific variants

The categories and their labels in this brief survey are not meant to be mutually exclusive. The types often overlap so that a particular verb may suggest elements from several types at once.

3.1 Be displaced (*vergehen*, *versetzen*, *verteilen*)

Several specific types of *ver-* verb can be related straightforwardly to the basic image of synoptic displacement illustrated in Figure 15. In the simplest case a FG simply disappears from a setting, which is the case with *verklingen* in (1) as well as *verschwinden* in (13) or *verwehen* in (14) or *verziehen* in (15). The sun in (16) similarly disappears from view, because it becomes submerged and the sea blocks our visual access to it. As (17) illustrates, if there is an accusative object then it is the focal noun in the *ver-* image and the subject causes it to be displaced from the setting. That is the basic type reflected by *versetzen* in (7), and (18) with *verrücken* is another example. Compare *verlieren*, as well as the reflexive constructions like *sich verkriechen* for removing oneself from a place. In all these cases a synoptic setting originally contains a FG, and then that FG is no longer apparent there. Where the simple verb would describe a sequential path by the FG, the *ver-* verb synopticizes the event at the moment of displacement. The point of (15) for example is simply that the FG is no longer at its original location, and it is irrelevant where it went after being displaced.

(13) Der Zug *verschwindet* in der Ferne.
      'The train disappeared in the distance'

(14) Die Spuren *verwehen* im Wind.
      'The tracks blow away [*ver*-blow] in the wind'

(15) Wenn dann ein Empfänger *verzogen* ist, kommt der Brief an dich zurück.
      'If the recipient has (*ver*-)moved, the letter will come back to you'

(16) Die Sonne *versinkt* im Meer.
      'The sun [*ver*-]sinks in the sea'

(17)   Die Erde öffnete ihren Schlund und *verschlang* sie.
        'The earth opened its gorge and swallowed them up [*ver*-gobbled them]'

(18)   Es ist untersagt, eigenmächtig Tische und Stühle zu *verrücken*.
        '(*Ver-*)moving tables and chairs on your own is prohibited'

Vertreiben in (8) illustrates a common variation on the basic 'displacement' pattern in which the FG is dispelled from a setting. In variants like (19) the FG is dispatched. In (20) a multiplex is being distributed. The synoptic setting can sometimes be expanded to include a recipient, such as the dative objects in (21), in effect building a specified direction into the setting in which the FG is displaced. As reflected in (22), that pattern is common with abstract lexicalized verbs like *verzeihen*, *vergelten*, *verdanken*, *versprechen*, or *vertrauen*. The now very subtle distinction between a synoptic construal and a sequential one is discussed in detail in the section comparing *ver-* verbs with simple verb constructions.

(19)   „Doch er hatte kein Motiv, über ein Jahr lang die anonymen Briefe zu *verschicken*", glaubt der Ermittler.
        '"But he had no motive to (*ver-*)send anonymous letters for over a year", the investigator believes'

(20)   Es schadet nicht, die Handouts schon vorher zu *verteilen*.
        'There's no harm in distributing the handouts ahead of time'

(21)   *Verkauft* oder *verborgt* mir vielleicht jemand das Buch?
        'Will someone perhaps sell [*ver*-buy] or (*ver-*)lend me the book?'

(22)   Psst… soll ich Ihnen ein Geheimnis *verraten*?
        'Psst… do you want me to reveal [betray, *ver*-counsel] a secret to you?'

(23)   Es werden ausschließlich echte und edle Materialien *verwendet*.
        'Only genuine premium materials are used [*ver*-turned]'

(24)   Warum also Zeit und *Geld verschwenden*, wenn es auch anders geht?
        'So why waste [*ver*-dwindle] time and money when there are other ways?'

(25)   Wir haben dort unsere besten Jahre *verbracht*.
        'We spent [*ver*-brought] our best years there'

The 'displacement' image also applies straightforwardly to the common verbs for distributing resources as in (23), or (9) with *verbrauchen*. Such verbs often imply spending or using up the supply and some, like *verschwenden* in (24), further imply that the resource is being wasted. Time is often spoken of as a resource that can be used up, as in (25).

3.2 Be closed off from access (*verbergen*, *verschließen*)

Disappearing by being submerged, as in (16), is similar in effect to disappearing by being hidden as in (26) with *verstecken*, or covered as in (5) with *verdecken*. With verbs like *verdecken* the FG does not go anywhere, but it is rendered no longer visible or otherwise accessible in the setting. The FG may also be disguised (*verkleiden*), and information can be concealed with verbs like *verschweigen*. Where verbs like *verdecken* suggest blocking visual access to a FG, other *ver-* verbs may describe blocking other types of access. *Verschließen* and *verriegeln* in (4), for example, suggest sealing off the FG so that it is no longer accessible from outside. The FG is not moved from its original location, but it is rendered inaccessible there. It is displaced from a situation in which it was vulnerable. (27) with *verbinden* similarly describes adding a protective cover that blocks access to the FG.

(26) Der Attentäter hatte die Bombe in seinem Turban *versteckt*.
'The assassin hat hidden [*ver*-stuck] the bomb in his turban'

(27) Dort wurde ihr der verletzte Arm *verbunden*.
'There her wounded arm was bandaged [*ver*-bound]'

(28) Doch die eigene Partei *verweigert* ihm die Gefolgschaft.
'But his own party is denying [*ver*-refusing] him its allegiance'

(29) Nur das Eingreifen eines Bahnmitarbeiters *verhinderte* das Unglück.
'Only the intervention of a railroad employee (*ver*-)prevented the accident'

Sentence (6) with *versperren* similarly describes preventing access to a FG, but the FG is now a passageway so that an implicit journey is blocked from continuing. Similar images are common for metaphorically denying access as in (28), or preventing an event from proceeding as in (29). Other *ver-* verbs with similar implications include *verbieten* and *vermeiden*.

3.3 Lose independence (*verschmelzen*, *sich verfangen*)

The butter in (30) disappears by becoming indistinct to the point that it loses its identity and merges with the setting. The people who die in (31) do not literally disappear, but they lose their defining functions. The object of *sich versenken* in (32) becomes so absorbed in the setting that it loses its ability to function independently. Compare verbs like *sich vertiefen* or *sich verlieben*. A similar image arises when a FG becomes incorporated into a larger composite as in (33). The FG has not exactly disappeared from the setting, but it is no longer recognizable as the same entity that it was originally. Similar comments apply to the combined entities in (34)–(36), as well as to other *ver-* verbs such as *vermischen*.

(30) Die Butter *verläuft* sofort in der heißen Suppe.
      'The butter immediately dissolves [*ver*-runs] in the hot soup'

(31) Jeden Tag *verhungern* bis zu 100.000 Menschen.
      'Every day up to 100,000 people starve to death [*ver*-hunger]'

(32) Es geht so leicht, dass man gar nicht merkt, wie man *sich* mehr und mehr in seine Arbeit *versenkt*.
      'It goes so easily that you don't even notice how you've become more and more engrossed [*ver*-sunk yourself] in your work'

(33) Wir haben die Seiten Holz.net und Holz.de miteinander *verschmolzen*.
      'We have merged [*ver*-melted] the pages Holz.net and Holz.de with each other'

(34) Für mich ist es völlig normal, Karriere und Familie zu *verbinden*.
      'For me its is completely normal to combine [*ver*-bind] career and family'

(35) Tausende Katholiken *versammeln* sich zum Weltjugendtag in Madrid.
      'Thousands of Catholics (*ver*-)gather (themselves) for World Youth Day in Madrid'

(36) Die so entstandenen Fäden *verschlingen* sich miteinander zu myzelartigen Kolonien.
      'The threads that arise in this way become intertwined [*ver*-loop themselves] with each other to form mycelium-like colonies'

(37) Ein Gleitschirm *verfängt* sich in den Stahlseilen einer Bergbahn.
      'A paraglider gets caught up [*ver*-catches itself] in the steel cables of a mountain railway'

(38) Fekter *verpfändet* unser Land und *verschuldet* die nächsten Generationen.
      'Fekter is (*ver*-)mortgaging our country and encumbering the coming generations with debt [*ver*-debting them]'

As far as *ver-* is concerned, it is a short step from (36) to (37). The glider does not lose its identity as part of a new composite entity, but it does lose its ability to move freely, act independently, and generally be the same functioning FG that it was originally. *Verwickeln* in (2) has a similar effect, costing the FG its ability to move independently. The FG becomes entangled or otherwise bound so that it loses its independent functional identity, i.e., its original status as a normal FG. That implication is commonly involved when a FG becomes metaphorically bound by something such as a social obligation as with *verpflichten* in (3). Compare *sich verloben*, as well as instances like (38). A verb like *verpflichten* admittedly does not come straightforwardly from the 'displacement' image in Figure 15, but it does follow from a chain of extensions that begins with synoptic displacement – a kind of 'submerging' image that entails loss of independent function.

3.4 Become altered (*verändern*)

Sentence (11), with *verringern*, *verstärken*, and *verändern*, illustrates the most abstract *ver-* variant of all. These *ver-* verbs describe events in which the FG is not exactly displaced from the setting or closed off from access there, and it does not really lose its functional independence either. But the FG is no longer recognizably the same FG that it once was. *Ver-* still profiles displacement, but the displacement is now extremely abstract and metaphorical: the loss of the FG's original state, the moment when the FG becomes altered. There is a very subtle difference between a normal FG that moves sequentially into a new state, and a *ver-* FG that is displaced from its old state. That distinction is discussed at some length in Section 5, where verbs like *verändern* are contrasted with verbs like *ändern*.[107]

It may help to think of these 'altering' variants in terms of a 'distortion' image like Figure 16. That image is essentially a variation on Figure 15, provided Figure 15 is understood to be abstract enough to allow for FGs that are no longer recognizably what they were in the original setting. In all cases, the focal noun is in some sense defined by its role as a FG in the original setting, and *ver-* profiles the loss of that defining status.

Figure 16. *Ver-* as distortion

The base verbs in this variant may refer generally to transforming as such (*verwandeln*), or to a general causal process (*verarbeiten*), but the largest group of 'altering' *ver-* verbs has a deadjectival base like the examples in (11). The adjectival roots indicate the direction of the change. *Verändern* is the most general verb in the category, and other verbs, like the ones in (41), indicate the direction of alteration more specifically. Less commonly there are also denominal *ver-* verbs such as *versilbern* and *verchromen* in (42) for coating the FG with the root substance and thus transforming its appearance (as well as protecting its surface from access).

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107. H. Brinkmann (1962: 252) finds alteration (*Veränderung*) to be a pervasive element in *ver-*'s meaning, reflecting a moment of deviating from what is normal or expected: "Fast alle *ver-*Verben führen eine Veränderung vor, weil ihnen das Moment der Abweichung zugrunde liegt. Am stärksten tritt dies Moment auch hier hervor, wenn es sich um Ableitung von Adjektiven handelt: vertrocknen/ dunkeln/ teuern usw."

(39) Wiese oder Rasen in Gartenland zu *verwandeln*, ist ein hartes Stück Arbeit.
'Transforming meadow or lawn into a garden is a hard piece of labor'

(40) Gleichwohl zerlegt er es und *verarbeitet* es zu Wurst.
'All the same he carves it up and processes [*ver*-works] it to sausage'

(41) Zudem können Malmittel hinzugefügt werden, die die Farben *verdünnen* oder
verdicken und ihre Trocknungszeit *verlängern* oder *verkürzen*.
'Additionally, painting agents can be added that make the paints thinner or
thicker [*ver*-thin or *ver*-thicken them] and extend [*ver*-lengthen] or (*ver*-)
shorten the time it takes them to dry'

(42) Kluge Frauen bearbeiten ihre Bilder und Fotos der Delfine mit der Foto
Software Gimp, um die Farben im Bild digital zu *versilbern*, zu *verfremden*,
zu *verchromen* oder einfach zu *verbessern*.
'Clever women edit their pictures and photos of the dolphins with the photo
software GIMP, in order digitally to make the colors appear silvery or unnatu-
ral or chrome-plated [*ver*-silver, *ver*-alienate, *ver*-chrome them], or simply to
improve [*ver*-better] them'

3.5 Be ruined (*verderben*)

A common implication associated with *ver-* is a sense of loss. Any people who
are there in the setting will lose access to or use of the FG. More basically, the FG
loses the status that it had originally, which is often considered to be its normal
expected status or its defining shape or role. People commonly presume that the
way things are is the way they should be, so that displacing the FG amounts to
deviating from the norm or signaling its decline. Brinkmann (1962) in fact traces
the core meaning of *ver-* to a sense of deviating from a norm ("Abweichung von
dem Geforderten, Erwarteten oder Gewohnten"). Such negative connotations
of deteriorating or deviating from the norm are not always there with *ver-* –
none of the verbs in (39)–(42) for example are evaluated negatively. But a great
many *ver-* verbs are associated with coming to ruin, to the point that it may be
considered a prototypical implication with *ver-* verbs. In some cases – such as
verkommen in (12) – those implications are a defining part of the meaning of
the lexicalized *ver-* verb.

A large number of 'altering' events with *ver-* verbs suggest contamination or
decay or damage. *Verderben* as in (43) is a general lexicalized verb in this category,
and other common lexicalized verbs include *vergiften*, *verschmutzen*, *verwahrlosen*,
vernachlässigen, *verwöhnen*, *verzerren*, and *verletzen*. In a great many instances,
such as (44) with *verfaulen*, it is a moot point whether these negative implica-
tions can be attributed to *ver-* itself or to the base verb; but so many *ver-* verbs are

associated with decay and distortion that it can be considered a default aspect of the meaning of the prefix. In sentences like (48) that is clearly *ver-*'s main semantic contribution. The impression that a sense of decline or ruin can be part of the meaning of *ver-* is strengthened by the systematic nature of many of the constructions. Constructions like (45) for example reflect a productive set of denominal verbs in which a root substance is added to the FG and tends to spoil it or contaminate it, and several other more specific patterns can be identified (including the one in (48)).

(43)   Geld *verdirbt* den Charakter.
'Money ruins character'

(44)   Das Obst *verfault* oft auf dem Baum.
'The fruit often (*ver-*)rots on the tree'

(45)   Gerade ist Syrien dabei seine Grenzen zu *verminen*.
'Syria is now in the process of (*ver-*)mining its borders'

(46)   Jedes Wasser *verkeimt*, wenn es länger steht.
'Any water will become germ-infested [*ver*-germ] if it sits for an extended period'

(47)   Durch fehlende finanzielle Mittel *verfällt* das Haus.
'The house falls into disrepair [*ver*-falls] through lack of financial resources'

(48)   Das Steak ist *verbrannt*, die Sauce *versalzen* und die Pasta *verkocht*?
'The steak is (*ver-*)burned, the sauce too salty [*ver*-salted] and the pasta overcooked [*ver*-cooked]'

(49)   Sie demütigt ihn, *verprügelt* ihn, *verhöhnt* ihn.
'She humiliates him, (*ver-*)beats him, ridicules [*ver*-jeers at] him'

(50)   Der Polizist soll einem Gast den Arm *verdreht* und dabei *verstaucht* haben.
'The police officer is said to have (*ver-*)twisted a guest's arm and sprained [*ver*-compressed] it in the process'

3.6   Deviate from a course (*verführen*)

Negative connotations are consistently associated with another special case of displacement, namely literally deviating. In this variant the setting is a course, a linear pathway in a particular direction that the FG is moving on. Losing original status thus means being displaced from that route, going off course. *Ver-* verbs are the normal way to describe losing one's way or going astray or going wrong, both literally and figuratively. This more specific type of displacement can be illustrated as in Figure 17.
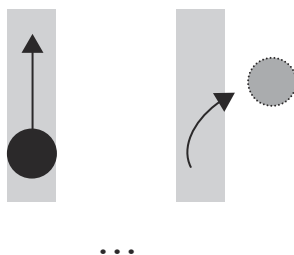
Figure 17. *Ver-* as deviation

Verführen in (10) is a typical example of this type, as is the productive reflexive pattern with verbs like *sich verirren* that is illustrated in (51). Metaphorical extensions are common, including verbs like *sich vergehen*, or *verstoßen* in (52). Such verbs describe deviating from accepted social norms (the straight and narrow).

(51)   Die Piloten hatten *sich verflogen* und die falsche Stadt bombardiert.
        'The pilots had flown off course [*ver*-flown themselves] and bombed the wrong city'

(52)   Die Pest hat Theben befallen, weil Ödipus gegen ein sittliches Tabu *verstoßen* hat.
        'The plague befell Thebes because Oedipus transgressed [*ver*-thrust] against a social tabu'

3.7   Summary

This brief survey does not do justice to the full range of *ver-* verbs, including many that combine elements of several of these variants. Still, a more complete survey will confirm the impression given here. A highly schematic notion of synoptic displacement can be identified as a remarkably consistent pattern underlying the meaning of *ver-* verbs generally. There is a moment when a FG loses its original status and can no longer be recognized or defined in its original role in the synoptic setting.[108]

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108. The most problematic verbs for this account are those that involve an activity sustained over time. That group includes verbs for taking responsibility for maintaining something (e.g. *versehen*, *versorgen*), verbs for maintaining a linear course (e.g. *verfolgen*), and verbs for lingering (e.g. *verweilen*). Some of these verbs might be related to becoming bound by social obligation, or distributing a resource, or preventing and delaying an occurrence, but it is probably best to consider them to be historical vestiges of different uses that resist being assimilated into the prevailing schematic patterns.

4. Grammatical characteristics

4.1 Grammatical types

Ver- verbs are grammatically unrestricted in a way that reflects *ver-*'s minimalist schematic image. The only specified entity is the focal noun that serves as a FG at the beginning of the construal, and that noun can be either the accusative object in a transitive construction or the subject in an intransitive construction. There is no specified LM in the *ver-* image, so an accusative LM is not a relevant issue.

The FG loses its status as far as the meaning of the prefix *ver-* is concerned, but it does serve as a grammatical FG in the sentence. The intransitive *ver-* verbs take *sein* as the perfect auxiliary, reflecting a change in the state of the FG. That is true not only when the base verb itself would take a *sein*-perfect (e.g. *vergehen, verkommen, verfallen, versinken, verfließen, verziehen, verreisen, verschwinden, verwachsen*), but also when the base verb alone would not (e.g. *verklingen, verhungern, verbrennen, verdampfen, verhärten, verkümmern*) or is uncertain (e.g. *verschimmeln*). A couple of intransitive *ver-* verbs have marked causative counterparts (*versenken, verschlämmen*), but more commonly the same *ver-* verb may appear either in intransitive constructions or in transitive ones (*verderben, verbrennen, verwehen, verschmelzen, verschwelen, verkochen, verdampfen, vereisen, verkohlen, verschmutzen, verdrecken, veröden, verdummen, verblöden, verweichlichen, verstädtern, verlautbaren, verschleißen, verlottern, verludern, verlumpen, verknautschen, verweltlichen, verschrammen, verlausen, vertieren, veraschen, verrußen*).

Ver-'s extremely abstract schema also allows it to combine unproblematically with all types of base verb, including complex deadjectival base verbs. Many adjectival bases are comparative, indicating a direction of change (*verbessern, verschönern, vergrößern, verbreitern, verlängern, verkleinern, verschmälern, verringern, vermindern, verfeinern, vergewissern, verschlechtern, verschlimmern, vergröbern, verneuern, verwildern, verallgemeinern, vermehren*). The base adjective is also frequently itself derived, at least historically, by suffixes such as *-ig* (*verbilligen, verfertigen, vereinigen, verlebendigen, verfestigen, verflüchtigen, verflüssigen, verselbständigen, vervielfältigen, vervollständigen, vernachlässigen, verängstigen*) or *-lich* (*verstaatlichen, verwirklichen, verhässlichen, verweltlichen, verleiblichen, verdinglichen, vergegenständlichen, versachlichen, veranschaulichen, verdeutlichen, veräußerlichen, vermenschlichen, verherrlichen, vergöttlichen, verweichlichen*), or others (*verlautbaren, verharmlosen*). The base adjective may also be derived by prefixes such as *un-* (*verunsichern, veruntreuen, vervollkommnen*). At times it even seems as though the base adjective with *ver-* is more apt to be multisyllabic than monosyllabic (*versichern, verändern, verteuern, versauern,*

verbittern, vertrocknen, vergnügen, veralbern, vereinfachen, vereinsamen, ver-zärteln, veredeln, verdunkeln). That is not to say, however, that there are not also many deadjectival *ver-* verbs with a monosyllabic adjectival base, including *verkürzen, verjüngen, verhärten, verklären, verstärken, verschärfen, verfälschen, verschwächen* (all with added umlaut), as well as *veralten, verarmen, verblassen, verflachen, verknappen, verdummen, vergrauen, verdünnen, versüßen, verblöden, veröden, vergilben, verdicken, verdichten, verfremden, verengen, vertiefen, verstei-fen, verbleichen, verbreiten, verstummen*. Although none of these deadjectival types is exclusively associated with *ver-*, it does seem to be the generic prefix of choice for deriving complex deadjectival verbs when the prefix adds little particular objective meaning.

Denominal *ver-* verbs such as *verpflichten* in (3) are also fairly common, espe-cially when the root indicates a mass or multiplex that contaminates the FG (e.g. *vergiften, verminen, verschimmeln, versalzen*). The denominal bases can also be derived compounds (e.g. *veranlassen, verabschieden, verabreden, verursachen*). The denominal bases may indicate the direction of change (e.g. *verfilmen, versklaven, verbuttern*), and some (e.g. *versilbern, vergittern*) transform the object's surface and often make it inaccessible (Brinkmann 1962: 420).

As many of these deadjectival and denominal *ver-* verbs reflect, *ver-* is able to combine with base verbs that already have a stressed prefix (e.g. *veranlassen, veranstalten, veranlagen, veranschlagen, veranschaulichen, verabfolgen, verabreden, verabreichen, verabsäumen, verabscheuen, verab*schieden, *verunglimpfen, verunfal-len, verunglücken, verunkrauten, verunreinigen, verunsichern, verunstalten, verun-treuen, vereinnahmen, vereinsamen, vereinseitigen, vereinfachen, vereinheitlichen, verursachen, verurteilen, vervollkommnen, vervollständigen, verausgaben, veraus-lagen, vergegenständlichen, vergegenwärtigen, verselbständigen, versinnbildlichen, verwirtschaften, verzehnfachen*). Like *be-*, *ver-* can thus function as a kind of ge-neric prefix to form such verbs.

4.2   Aspectual issues

Figure 15 describes a perfective event with a built-in completion, namely the mo-ment when the FG no longer has FG status in the setting. As Section 5 makes clear, this aspectual trait of *ver-* verbs is often important in distinguishing them from constructions with the corresponding unprefixed verb. We do need to be precise about what we mean by terms such as 'perfective', however. Most discussions mis-leadingly imply that *ver-* verbs are perfective in the usual sequential sense that they focus on an ultimate resulting location or state for the FG. The synoptic *ver-*image does not profile a completion in terms of a new state for the FG; it profiles

a moment when the setting has been altered by the loss of the FG.[109] Section 7 examines a noteworthy grammatical implication of this distinction, namely speakers' reluctance to use *ver-* verbs with goal phrases that indicate a new location for a FG.

5.   *Ver-* verbs vs simple verbs

In a great many cases *ver-* adds a definite image of displacement or demise or deviation that is not conveyed by the base verb alone. *Vergehen* for example lends an obvious sense of disappearance to the notion of *gehen*; *verkommen* adds an obvious sense of coming to ruin; *sich verfahren* is an established 'going astray' construction; and so on. In some cases *ver-*'s displacement image has implications for the direction of a transfer. *Verkaufen* or *vermieten* for example specify that the transaction is one of displacement (selling) rather than acquiring (*kaufen*, *mieten*), and *verleihen* and *verborgen* similarly specify the direction of a transfer with base verbs that may be unclear without the prefix. In cases like these it is obvious enough why speakers are adding *ver-* to the base verb.

In a great many other cases however, *ver-*'s semantic contribution is less objective and more subtle, particularly when the base verb already suggests an objective meaning that is associated with *ver-* verbs. For example, simple verbs like *gießen* or *senden* already describe initiating a path and thus moving a FG from its original location. Simple verbs for devouring or consuming (*schlingen*, *brennen*) imply that the FG disappears. Simple verbs may describe submerging (*sinken*), entangling (*wickeln*), mixing together (*mischen*), connecting (*binden*), closing (*schließen*), covering (*decken*), displacing (*rutschen*, *rücken*), granting what is due (*danken*, *trauen*), going astray (*irren*, *locken*), or blocking or distorting a path (*sperren*, *hindern*, *meiden*). Moreover, deadjectival base verbs that suggest a particular direction of change (*ändern*, *kürzen*, etc) already describe altering an accusative object, so that it is not at all obvious what *ver-* adds to these bases. In all of these

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109. The Duden *Grammatik* says that most *ver-* verbs involve reaching the end of a temporal course ("das Ende eines zeitlichen Ablaufs"), particularly a new resulting state, and Weinrich (1993: 1061–2) agrees that they describe "den vollständigen Verlauf der Handlung bis zu ihrem Abschluß." Curme (1922: 440) similarly implies reaching the end of a sequential course when he says that *ver-* can convey "pure effective force, so that it indicates that the activity is sustained to the end, meets with successful issue, or is directed with energy to a certain goal or end", and that it may also convey "pure ingressive force, so that it denotes a change, transformation into a state or thing indicated now usually by some adjective or noun which forms the stem of the verb". To say simply that *ver-* makes the construal perfective, without distinguishing exactly how the point of completion is defined, will inevitably fail to distinguish *ver-* from *er-*.

cases the objective information conveyed by *ver-* can seem semantically appropriate but superfluous, and we need to look very carefully at exactly why the prefix is being added. As usual, the answer lies primarily in the difference between a synoptic construal and a sequential one.

5.1   'Altering' contrasts

The constructions where *ver-* seems to make the least semantic contribution are the deadjectival 'altering' constructions, and most accounts consider *ver-* to have a purely grammatical function (deriving the the deadjectival verb). Interestingly, however, the unprefixed base verb frequently occurs as well, and an adequate account is obliged to explain why speakers might sometimes add *ver-* and sometimes not.

5.1.1   Verändern *vs* ändern

The main difference between *ändern* and *verändern* is often taken to be the extent of the change, i.e., whether the whole object is affected (*verändern*) or only parts of it (*ändern*). Thus *ändern* typically means to make different by adding or taking away or by modifying parts of a whole (Beaton 146) (Duden: "durch Veränderung von Details abändern"). *Ändern* is the normal verb for altering things such as clothes, or for making changes in written documents or agreements such as wills or laws. It is also used with objects like *Einzelheiten* that refer explicitly to detailed parts. *Verändern* on the other hand typically implies a more general change in the appearance or the basic nature of the object as a whole (Duden: "im Wesen oder in der Erscheinung"). According to Beaton (147), *verändern* "often implies a more substantial or fundamental change than does *ändern*. With some nouns such as *Verhältnisse*, *Verhalten*, *Leben*, or *die Lage*, both *ändern* and *verändern* occur, but *ändern* suggests a less drastic or radical change."

These observations account for many typical instances. It is misleading, however, to characterize the difference between *ändern* and *verändern* essentially in terms of how extensive the change is. Simple *ändern* may frequently express partial modification, but it is by no means limited to that type of event. It can also be used for substantial changes to a whole object (Farrell 63). As Beaton (146) acknowledges, "the degree of change varies from slight to considerable to more or less complete." 'Sie hat ihr Kleid geändert' for example could refer to minor localized alterations, but it might also describe major changes that transform the dress as a whole.

Ändern can even be used for replacing one FG completely with another, a meaning that *verändern* cannot express. *Ändern* is used for example for changing things such as passwords by replacing the old one with an entirely new one,

as in (53a). As an online forum participant (forum.wordreference.com) puts it: 'die Geheimnummer ändern' means to replace it by another PIN, while 'die Geheimnummer verändern' might mean to swap two of the digits. More precisely, the *ver-* verb construction in (53b) focuses purely on the fact that the old PIN has been altered and is no longer functional. The simple verb *ändern* profiles the modification process, a sequential activity that can continue indefinitely. Simple *ändern* may concentrate attention on particular parts of the object that are being modified, or it may concentrate attention on the whole object as a FG being converted into a new state, and it may even go on to entail complete removal of the original FG and replacement by another. Similar distinctions arise in (54), where the (a) variant probably implies replacing the old name with a new one and the (b) variant is completed as soon as the old name is no longer recognizable.

(53) a. Der Ausweisinhaber kann die Geheimnummer durch Eingabe der bisherigen Geheimnummer und zweimalige Eingabe der neuen Geheimnummer *ändern*.
'Someone with authorized access can change the PIN number by entering the old PIN and then entering the new PIN twice'

b. Anschließend hat er/sie dann dein Passwort *verändert*, sodass du dein Account nicht mehr nutzen kannst.
'Subsequently he or she then (*ver-*)altered your password so that you can no longer use your account'

(54) a. Nachdem Sie Ihren Namen *geändert* haben, wird Ihr neuer Name von Facebook kontrolliert.
'After you have changed your name your new name will be monitored by Facebook'

b. Geschichten von Menschen, deren Namen *verändert* oder zumindest abgekürzt sind, damit Kollegen und Chefs sie nicht identifizieren.
'Stories about people whose names are (*ver-*)altered or at least abbreviated so that colleagues and bosses can't identify them'

Farrell (63) puts the matter most accurately when he says that the unprefixed verb must be used when only localized changes to certain parts of an object are involved, but that either *ändern* or *verändern* can be used for more extensive changes. Put another way, simple *ändern* is an unmarked general term (Farrell 63, Beaton 146) that can be used for changes of any extent, including those that are restricted to particular parts of the object. *Verändern* is marked and can be used only for distributed changes that characterize the object as a whole. *Verändern* also involves an intrinsically defined point at which the event is completed, namely when the accusative object as a whole can no longer be said to be the same entity that it was.

Ändern describes a sequential activity of making changes in the accusative object, and there is no intrinsic point at which that activity can be said to be completed. (The *ändern* event proceeds until the subject arbitrarily stops it, or until it has been removed and a new FG has taken its place.)

There is actually another semantic factor that distinguishes *ändern* from *verändern* more reliably than does the extent of the change, namely whether the change is construed to involve an intentional agentive act. As Farrell (63) observes, *ändern* "is the most usual term in reference to a deliberate or a sudden change", while *verändern* is "mostly used to denote the result of an unconscious process of change in human or external nature".

(55) a. Gott gebe mir die Gelassenheit, Dinge hinzunehmen, die ich nicht *ändern* kann, den Mut, Dinge zu *ändern*, die ich *ändern* kann, und die Weisheit, das eine vom anderen zu unterscheiden.
'God grant me the serenity to accept things that I cannot change, the courage to change things that I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two'

   b. Nicht nur die Stimmung, auch die Lage hat *sich verändert*.
'It's not just the mood, the objective situation has also changed [*ver*-altered itself]'

(56) a. Wenn der andere enttäuscht oder verärgert ist, weil Sie Ihr Verhalten *geändert* haben, dann ist das nicht Ihre Schuld.
'If the other person is disappointed or annoyed because you have changed your behavior, then that is not your fault'

   b. Wie die Technik unser Leben *verändert* und was sie sonst noch bewirkt.
'How technology is (*ver-*)altering our lives and what other effects it is having'

(57) a. Du mußt dein Leben *ändern*.
'You must change your life'

   b. Er hat mein Leben *verändert* und seitdem ist nichts mehr wie es vorher war.
'He (*ver-*)altered my life and since then nothing is like it was before'

(58) a. Bin mir jetzt nicht 100% sicher aber der Dom scheint *geändert* zu sein?
'I'm not 100% sure but the cathedral seems to be changed?'

   b. Durch Kriege und politische Wirren ist der Dom *verändert* worden.
'The cathedral has been (*ver-*)altered by wars and political turmoil'

(59) Das Bild des Controllers hat sich im Zuge der Globalisierung und der *geänderten* Unternehmensanforderung stark *verändert*.
'The concept of a budget analyst has (*ver-*)changed considerably in the wake of globalization and the firm's modified requirements'

When referring to changes in people *sich ändern* normally refers to a change in character, attitude or behavior (Farrell 63), and it usually implies a behavioral change for the better (Beaton 147). The simple verb says little about the extent of the change, but it is consistently used for changes that can be deliberately controlled. *Verändern* on the other hand consistently reports more or less involuntary changes in a person, especially changes in appearance caused by aging or health or environmental factors.[110] *Sich verändern* might also occasionally refer to a person's character or behavior (Beaton 147), but if so it does not imply a conscious decision to change the way *sich ändern* would. *Sich verändern* suggests that the change just happens, without calling attention to any particular external cause or intentional act other than a given environmental setting. In this respect it makes sense that *verändern* is relatively more apt to occur in reflexive constructions than in constructions with an independent external subject (Farrell 63). The sentence with *verändern* in (57b) does not imply that he deliberately changed my life, but Rilke's directive with *ändern* in (57a) definitely does imply deliberate change. (58b) is a typical use of *verändern* describing a change with large and amorphous causes, while (58a) subtly implies that the changes to the cathedral are intentional modifications rather than the result of something such as weathering.

    Ändern also involves intentional control in its common use for changing (and often replacing) attitudes that have a definite shape in one's mind (e.g. *Meinung*, *Ansicht*, *Entschluß*, *Plan*, *Richtung*, *Kurs*, *Strategie*, eine *Politik*, *Taktik*, *Ton*, *Bedeutung*, *Sinn*) (Beaton 147). *Verändern* on the other hand is more associated with "large and often amorphous things like *Welt*, *Verhältnisse*, conditions, *sein Leben*, *die Situation*, not clearly outlined as with *ändern*" (Beaton 147). Such objects are not likely to be controlled by deliberate activity. In (59), the firm's requirements are the result of a conscious policy decision and so they are *geändert*, but the image of the budget analyst just evolved (*sich verändert*). Note also that a lack of agentive control over the change means it is less likely that it can be undone later, making the result of a *verändern* event seem somewhat more permanent.

    Frequency data confirm these observations. Generally *ändern* occurs more frequently than *verändern*. *Verändern* becomes relatively more frequent as an attributive participle however, focusing more on the lasting result of being altered than on the causal process. The odds of choosing *verändern* are also better in reflexive

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110. An online forum participant (cosmiq.de) states the difference nicely: "Wenn ich mich verändert habe, dann kann das einfach so passiert sein – durch das Alter, die Umstände etc. Wenn ich mich geändert habe, dann habe ich bewußt an mir gearbeitet, um anders zu werden, als ich war. Sprache verändert sich mit der Zeit. Sprache wird geändert z.B. durch die Rechtschreibreform." (If I have *verändert* myself then it just happened – from aging, conditions, etc. If I have *geändert* myself then I have consciously worked on myself in order to be different than I was. Language *verändert* itself with time. Language is *geändert* for example by the spelling reform.)

constructions that do not specify an external cause. Unprefixed *ändern* is decidedly more common with objects such as *Meinung* that are consciously changed, but *verändern* becomes the statistically preferred choice with large objects such as *Klima* or *Welt* that are not apt to be agentively changed. Predictably, an adverb like *nochmals* that suggests a repeatable agentive act favors *ändern*. Adverbs like *völlig* or *total* on the other hand imply that the object is affected as a whole, and they favor *verändern*.[111]

Summarizing then, it is fair to make several general observations about the semantic difference between *verändern* and simple *ändern*.

– *Ändern* is consistently associated with deliberate changes caused by the activity of an agent. *Verändern* is associated with changes that have a vague cause. *Verändern* is more apt to suggest that the event just happens in the natural course of things, without inviting us to concentrate attention on any specific causal activity.

– *Ändern* can be used to describe changes of any extent, beginning with localized changes to specific parts and perhaps going on to include more extensive changes and even complete replacement of one FG by another. *Verändern* always describes events that are completed when the FG as a whole loses its prior identity.

– Because *verändern* describes a completed event that affects the whole FG and is typically not subject to deliberate control, it can subtly suggest that the effects are more lasting. If I have changed because of a vague natural cause such as aging (*verändern*), then the effects are probably irreversible. If I have deliberately decided to change my appearance or behavior (*ändern*), then I might decide to change it back again. For similar reasons, *verändern* is more apt to occur as an attributive participle to describe the resulting state of the FG as a relatively stable characteristic.

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111. Automated searches with deadjectival verbs like *verändern* and *ändern* are hampered, as are those with *verkürzen* and *kürzen* or *härten* and *verhärten*, because neither COSMAS nor Google reliably distinguishes between *ändern* and *andern* (or *kürzen* and *kurzen*). Using forms with *-t* is also problematic, since *verändert* can correspond either to *ändert* or *geändert*. Finally, the construction with *zu* and infinitive generally favors the unprefixed verb to some extent given the frequent association of that form with agentive purpose, while the past participle generally favors the prefixed verb to some extent. Nevertheless, these COSMAS returns are reasonably indicative of the relative frequency: "zu ändern" 36,624, "zu verändern" 15,269; "sich geändert" 6,845, "sich verändert" 5,387; "geändert ist" 919, "verändert ist" 661; "verändert hat" 9,138, "geändert hat" 7,982; "einem veränderten" 840, "einem geänderten" 345; "Meinung zu ändern" 228, "Meinung zu verändern" 3; "Klima zu verändern" 18, "Klima zu ändern" 7; "Welt zu verändern" 403, "Welt zu ändern" 40; "nochmals geändert" 142, "nochmals verändert" 71; "völlig verändert" 997, "völlig geändert" 205; "total verändert" 437, "total geändert" 114.

–   The distinction between *ändern* and *verändern* illustrates the essential differences between a sequential construal and a synoptic one. The unprefixed verb prompts us to concentrate attention on a succession of particular locations and particular moments in sequence. That sequence typically begins with a causal activity that is associated with a focal agent and a particular manner of activity, and it then continues on to focus on how that activity affects the accusative object – an effect that may range anywhere from momentary impact to converting the object into a moving FG that engages in a subsequent path of its own. The sequentially construed process keeps moving from one location in space-time to the next, with no intrinsic endpoint unless one is specified obliquely as a goal. The *ver-* verb on the other hand invites us to maintain a holistic overview of the entire event, and it ends when the FG has lost its original identity. The *verändern* construal is distributed to include the whole FG and its setting without concentrating attention on any parts, and it does not especially call attention to anything that happens before or after synoptic displacement – either a causal activity or a subsequent path for the FG. The *ver-* event concludes when the FG is no longer the same FG that it was originally in the synoptic setting.

5.1.2   Verfälschen, verärgern

Many other 'altering' *ver-* verbs contrast with their simple base verbs the way *verändern* does. The simple verb *fälschen* for example is used when the sequential causal process is salient, while *verfälschen* profiles the synopticized moment when the original object becomes distorted and can no longer be considered the real thing. As Farrell (120) puts it: "If there is any distinction between the two terms … it is that *verfälschen* denotes more the result, *fälschen* the action." Since *fälschen* concentrates attention first on the causal activity, it implies that the activity is deliberate. *Verfälschen* has no such implication, and it is the appropriate verb to describe unintentional falsifying (Beaton 280). That is the case for example in (60c), and presumably also in (60d). Moreover, the sequential construal prompted by simple *fälschen* is necessary when the accusative object indicates a new counterfeit product that is being created. In (60a), for example, *verfälscht* could not replace *gefälscht* because the FG did not already exist at the beginning of the event. *Verfälschen* would imply that existing Protocols were distorted, not that new ones were created. (Compare the use of *ändern* but not *verändern* when a PIN is replaced by a new one.)

(60)   a.   Es ist heute erwiesen, daß die 'Protokolle [der Weisen von Zion]" *gefälscht* sind.
             'Today it is a proven fact that the "Protocols" are fake [falsified]'

b.   Die Herren, die hier beschuldigt sind, sollen 49 Millionen Liter Wein
verfälscht haben.
'The gentlemen who are being accused here are said to have adulterated
[*ver*-falsified] 49 million liters of wine'

c.   Um das Ergebnis nicht zu *verfälschen*, ist in der Wartezeit Rauchen, Essen
oder die Verwendung eines Mundsprays verboten.
'So as not to distort [*ver*-falsify] the results, smoking, eating or using a
mouth spray are forbidden during the waiting period'

d.   Wie Hollywood die NS-Geschichte *verfälscht*.
'How Holywood distorts [*ver*-falsifies] Nazi history'

Verärgern is not deadjectival, but it is an 'altering' verb and the difference between
ärgern and *verärgern* is parallel to that between *ändern* and *verändern*. The simple
verb suggests an ongoing activity that operates on the object with no intrinsic
point of conclusion. *Ärgern* can describe a fairly minor or "partial" annoyance.
The *ver-* verb by contrast implies that the change is distributed to affect the whole
person, so that the person is displaced from an original state and is now no longer
the same. *Verärgern* thus suggests a relatively more lasting effect than does simple
ärgern. *Ärgern* does not suggest that the state of annoyance lasts very long after
the causal activity has ceased to operate. *Verärgern* on the other hand describes a
completed event that alters the FG, making its meaning in (61) subtly but clearly
different from that of simple *ärgern*. Farrell (16) says that *verärgern* suggests "an
attitude or at least something more than a momentary outburst," and Beaton (34)
that it suggests "a higher degree of annoyance than *ärgern*, a state that lasts longer
and has more consequences." *Verärgern* is more common as an attributive past
participle that implies a lasting state, and it often has a relatively vague environ-
mental cause.[112]

(61)   Auf der anderen Seite scheinen Männer sich intensiver zu *ärgern*, während
Frauen dazu neigen, länger *verärgert* zu sein.
'On the other hand men seem to get angry [make themselves angry] more
intensely, while women tend to be annoyed [*ver*-angered] longer'

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112.   COSMAS returned 3,632 instances of "zu ärgern" and 746 of "zu verärgern", 843 of "geärgert
hat" and 199 of "verärgert hat"; but 528 of "verärgert ist" and only 14 of "geärgert ist". Unlike
verändern, *verärgern* is restricted to human FGs and so it is rarely used in reflexive constructions
that would suggest an agentive subject. COSMAS returned 20,689 instances of "ärgert sich" and
only 4 of "verärgert sich".

5.1.3 Verkürzen

Ver- is somewhat less semantically appropriate when the verbs have an adjective that specifies a particular type of state, as opposed to the vaguer 'something other than the original state' sense of *anders* (*ändern*) or even *falsch* (*fälschen*). When the resulting state is salient and specific it is more likely to attract focal attention as a goal state that the FG enters at the end of a (metaphorical) sequential path. Still, *ver-* does sometimes occur with such base verbs in order to impose a synoptic construal on the event, and the resulting contrast between the *ver-* verb and the simple verb is essentially like that between *verändern* and *ändern*.

The simple verb *kürzen* suggests an act of cutting off a piece of an object, basically the same meaning as the more colloquial *kürzer machen* (Beaton 633). Like *ändern*, it not only suggests a focal intervention at particular places in the object; it is also consistently associated with deliberate agentive acts. As Farrell (312) puts it: "*Kürzen* strongly suggests direct intervention, particularly, not exclusively, in an unfavorable sense, and generally with a personal subject." *Kürzen* is also commonly used for more abstract deliberate acts such as cutting expenses, wages, etc (Beaton 633), or abridging a written text. *Verkürzen* by contrast describes "an adjustment, not simply the cutting-off of a piece" (Farrell 312). It does not suggest an image of lopping off a part of the FG; it suggests a somewhat vaguer image of reducing its overall extent, transforming the FG as a whole in the direction of becoming shorter. Much like *verändern*, *verkürzen* tends not to involve an agent acting deliberately. As Farrell (312) puts it: "*Verkürzen* often suggests that the reduction is the result of circumstances, habit, or the like, rather than of direct personal intervention." Its subject is normally a thing rather than a person. (62) illustrates the semantic difference between *kürzen* and *verkürzen*. Simple *gekürzt* in (62a) conveys a vivid spatial image of removing part of the FG, strongly implying deliberate causal action. *Verkürzt* in (62b) conveys a more abstract image of reducing the extent of the FG as a whole, and there is no deliberate agent. Temporal variants like (62b) do not normally invite an image of cutting off particular defined temporal segments, and according to Farrell (312) simple *kürzen* would be impossible in temporal sentences such as these. (COSMAS returned 35 instances of "Leben verkürzt" and 1 of "Leben gekürzt".)[113]

(62) a. Bei Mr Greenjeans habe ich die Ärmel *gekürzt* und das Knopfloch etwas kleiner gemacht.
'At Mr Greenjeans I shortened the sleeves and made the buttonhole a little smaller'

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113. Simple *kürzen* generally occurs more frequently than *verkürzen* does but there is a slight preference for *verkürzt* as an attributive participle (COSMAS: "verkürzt ist" 167, "gekürzt ist" 110).

    b.   Zu wenig Schlaf *verkürzt* das Leben.
            'Too little sleep cuts life short life [*ver*-shortens it]'

It is instructive to compare (*ver*)*kürzen* with (*ver*)*längern*. In stark contrast to *kürzen*, the simple verb *längern* scarcely exists at all. *Verlängern* is thus largely unchallenged as the alternative to *länger machen* (which is itself much less common than *verlängern*). Given the meaning of *längern* as opposed to *kürzen*, these facts make sense. Making something shorter invites an image of cutting off a particular segment – an image with focus concentrated on a part of the whole FG that strongly favors a sequential construal. Making something longer on the other hand is relatively more apt to invite an image of extending the object as a whole rather than adding a defined new segment – a more synoptic construal that is compatible with *verlängern*. (It is striking, incidentally, that every last one of the 26 instances of "sich gelängert" returned by a Google search pertained to a *Kette* of some kind (*Steuerkette*, *Primärkette*), i.e., objects with defined chain segments.) Like *verkürzen*, *verlängern* often describes temporal extension rather than lengthening physical objects, and that meaning does not lend itself to an image of adding a new discrete part. As usual, sequential construals invite concentrated attention, while synoptic construals invite a more holistic construal.

5.1.4   Verbessern

Much like *ändern*, the simple verb *bessern* typically describes a deliberate sequential activity with no intrinsic point of completion, so that the FG may be affected only partially. According to Farrell (158), simple *bessern* means to "bring about a limited, but unspecified, degree of improvement" with regard to health, behavior or social conditions, to 'reform to a certain degree but not completely'. *Sich bessern* refers mainly to things like morals that can be deliberately controlled. Where *bessern* describes a process of making something relatively better, *verbessern* describes a completed act. *Verbessern* describes an event in which the FG is displaced as a whole from its original state, construed synoptically, with consequences that seem more distributed and lasting.

  (63) a.   Gerechtfertigte Kritik an meinem Verhalten nehme ich ernst und versuche mich zu bessern.
            'I take legitimate criticism of my behavior seriously and try to improve [better myself]'
      b.   Fachbegriffe wurden genauer erklärt oder gestrichen, Fehler *verbessert*, Ungenauigkeiten korrigiert.
            'Technical terms were explained more precisely or eliminated, mistakes corrected [*ver*-bettered], inaccuracies amended'

5.1.5   'Altering' summary

To summarize, 'altering' *ver-* verbs consistently synopticize the construal as a completed whole event in which the whole FG is displaced from its prior state. They typically suggest vague causes and lasting consequences. The meaning of *ver-* verbs contrasts with the sequential construal prompted by unprefixed verbs. The simple verbs prompt us to concentrate attention first on the causal activity – typically a deliberate agentive one – and then on how it affects the accusative FG in an ongoing sequential process. The simple verbs do not imply any intrinsic point at which the event is completed, so they can describe anything from a slight partial effect on the accusative FG to a complete change that moves it into an entirely new state. The *ver-* verbs on the other hand profile an event that ends when the whole FG is no longer what it used to be.

5.2   *Ver-* verbs vs simple activity verbs

Simple 'altering' verbs like *ändern* call explicit attention to a goal state that the FG moves into, but the sequential construal also implies a preceding causal activity. So even though the verb does not refer directly to a causal activity, the simple verb construction presumes one as a prominent part of the event sequence. Simple verbs like *mischen* or *hindern* concentrate attention explicitly on a prominent imperfective activity (and typically also on an agent that carries out that activity). The *ver-* verbs by comparison focus on the moment of displacement, embedding the causal activity in a synoptic construal and making it relatively less prominent than it would be with a simple verb. The *ver-* verbs generally call attention to the functional consequences of displacing the FG.

5.2.1   *Merging and submerging* (vermischen, versinken)

Ver- verbs can be semantically similar to the simple base verb when the base verb already suggests that the FG loses its prior functional independence. That can occur for example when the FG becomes submerged or lost (e.g. *sinken, schlucken, schlingen, brennen, löschen*), or merged or bound (e.g. *mischen, mengen, sammeln, binden, knüpfen*).

Simple *mischen* typically describes the activity of stirring or tossing salad ingredients or shuffling cards. *Vermischen* is typically used for blending liquids or metals or food ingredients, or more abstract entities such as artistic styles. The key difference between *mischen* and *vermischen* is whether there is an intrinsic point of completion defined in terms of losing prior identity. Simple *mischen* describes an activity that may go on indefinitely, and the things being mixed retain their separate identity as FGs. Normal shuffling of cards for example calls for *mischen* because the

individual cards maintain their identity and there is no intrinsic point of comple-
tion. The FGs with *vermischen* on the other hand lose their independent identity
and become absorbed in a new whole. In (64a) for example the letters and treatises
do not lose their identity to blend with the songs of the Carmina and the simple
verb is called for; but the paint in (64b) blends until it is no longer an independent
FG in the scene. The salad ingredients in (65a) maintain their identity even after
being mixed, while the egg in (65b) loses its independent identity to become part
of a composite. If people from two different ethnic groups mingle together then
mischen is appropriate as in (66a); but if they intermarry and their offspring lose
their prior ethnic identity over time, then *vermischen* is called for as in (66b). The
relationship between *mengen* and *vermengen* is similar. As is usually the case, the
ver- verbs are relatively more apt to profile a lasting functional result rather than a
purely spatial configuration, and they are more apt to occur as past participles.[114]

(64) a. Unter die Carmina *gemischt* sind verschiedene Briefe und zwei Traktate
          in Prosa.
          'Mixed among the Carmina are various letters and two prose treatises'

      b. Die weiße Farbe *vermischt* sich mit den Tönen des Untergrunds.
          'The white paint blends [*ver*-mixes itself] with the tones of the undercoat'

(65) a. Ein Salat besteht aus vielen Zutaten, die durcheinander *gemischt* sind.
          'A salad consists of several ingredients that are mixed together'

      b. Das Ei wird aufgeschlagen und mit den anderen Zutaten *vermischt*.
          'The egg is whipped and blended [*ver*-mixed] with the other ingredients'

(66) a. Singapur ist eine der multikulturellsten Plätze der Erde und die zahlreichen
          aus dem Westen stammenden Menschen *mischen* sich mit Chinesen,
          Indern und Malaien.
          'Singapore is one of the most multicultural places on earth and the
          numerous Westerners mingle [mix themselves] with Chinese, Indians
          and Malays'

      b. Heutzutage leben noch rund 27.000 Ainu in Japan, welche zum größten
          Teil stark mit Japanern *vermischt* sind.
          'Nowadays about 27,000 Ainu still live in Japan, for the most part heavily
          intermixed [*ver*-mixed] with Japanese'

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114. Farrell (221) and Beaton (444) both emphasize that *vermischen* and *vermengen* profile
a thorough, careful process. They are certainly correct to emphasize completeness and thor-
oughness, but it is misleading to characterize *vermischen* or *vermengen* in terms of a deliberate
process. *Mischen* tends to suggest specific manners of mixing such as stirring or shuffling, and
so it is more common as a simple verb than *mengen* is. COSMAS returned 282 instances of
vermengen and only 16 of *mengen* in the infinitive with *zu*, while *mischen* occurred more times
(1,743) than *vermischen* (1,009).

Simple *sammeln* typically means to gather or collect things (berries, coins, donations, facts). *Sich sammeln* can be used when people (or other animals) gather somewhere, either in an organized purposeful way (now mainly in military contexts), or more casually, such as when people assemble temporarily before going somewhere else (Beaton 310–11, Farrell 142). The simple verb conjures a vivid spatial image of individual things congregating at a common destination, typically for a purpose that will occur later, and it does not suggest an intrinsic point of completion (other than a known limit on the supply of FGs). *Versammeln* synopticizes the image of collecting together, describing an event that is completed when the FGs have merged to form a complex functional whole. According to Beaton (311), 'Die Gäste sammelten sich in der Halle' would be used when they were assembling casually before going somewhere else, i.e., forming a spatial collection. If *versammeln* were used instead, the sentence would imply that the event was completed and they stayed there as a functional group. The contestants in (67a) thus gather in a spatial collection, but the result is not a functioning group. The contestants remain a collection of individuals who remain FGs who are about to move on. In (67b) on the other hand, the result is a whole group formed for a collective purpose. Much like *vermischen*, *versammeln* subtly suggests that the individual FGs lose their prior functional identity and become parts of the resulting composite.

(67) a. Die Teilnehmer des Ironman-Wettkampfs 2012 *sammeln* sich am Samstag im Wasser.
'The participants in the Ironman Competition 2012 on Saturday gather [collect themselves] in the water'

b. Tausende Katholiken *versammeln* sich zum Weltjugendtag in Madrid.
'Thousands of Catholics convene [*ver*-gather themselves] for World Youth Day in Madrid'

The same principles apply to 'binding' verbs like *binden* or *knüpfen*. Like *mischen* and *sammeln* (or, for that matter, *ändern* and *fälschen* and *ärgern*), simple *binden* invites a pronounced focus on the causal activity. It profiles the manner of tying or connecting – or at least the specific place where two things are connected. Unprefixed *binden* would not be appropriate in a variant like (68c), which invites a distributed overall view of a larger composite and does not prompt us to zoom in and concentrate attention either on a causal activity or on any individual FG or on any particular point where things are linked (Beaton 364). *Verbinden* also suggests functional implications such as covering, protecting, communicating or forming a new federation. *Verknüpfen* is commonly used as in (69b) to describe more abstract logical assemblies.

(68) a. Die 85 Methoden, eine Krawatte zu *binden*.
'The 85 ways to tie a necktie'

    b.   Dobromil steigt vom Rosse, und *bindet* es an einen Baum.
        'Dobromil climbs from the horse and ties it to a tree'

    c.   Vier Kanäle *verbinden* die Stadt mit der Emsküste.
        'Four canals connect [*ver*-bind] the city with the Ems coast'

(69) a.   Hast Du Lust, neue Kontakte zu *knüpfen*?
        'Do you want to make [tie] new contacts?'

    b.   Es gibt verschiedene Möglichkeiten, Datensätze zu *verknüpfen*.
        'There are various possible ways to (*ver*-)link data sets'

Belz (1997: 216) contrasts sentences like 'den Hund an einen Pflock ketten' ('den Daumen in die Westentasche haken', 'Sie klammerte sich weinend an die Freundin') with those like 'Die verschiedenen Zweige der Volkswirtschaft sind unlösbar miteinander *verkettet*' ('die Finger ineinander *verhaken*', 'Die drei Betrunkenen hatten sich fest *verklammert* und schwankten über die Straße'). Her point is that the entities joined in the *ver*- verb sentences are usually of the same kind, and they lose their separate identity to form a unified whole. The simple verbs by contrast typically describe binding objects of different kinds that retain their status as separate entities and are more usually linked only temporarily.

    The notion of losing independent functional identity carries over to *ver*- verbs like *versinken* or *verbrennen* that describe submerging and becoming extinguished. The simple verb *sinken* describes a spatial downward path by a FG into a mass and has no intrinsic endpoint unless one is supplied obliquely. When the path does end, the result is a spatial location like any other. *Versinken* by contrast describes a completed event of becoming submerged, profiling the moment when the FG loses its prior status in the synoptic setting. Where *sinken* describes a spatial path, the *ver*- verb profiles the lasting functional consequences. *Versinken* often suggests either demise or inability to continue on a prior course. In (70) for example, *sinken* describes a purely spatial path down into the snow, while the shift to *versinken* marks the functional consequences of being immobilized. Like *vertieft*, the participle *versunken* is commonly associated with being mentally absorbed in something as in (71b) to the point that functionality is lost.

(70)   Was sie nun allerdings nicht beachtet hatte, war, dass sie so hinein in den Schnee *sanken* und nun ein guten Meter *versunken* waren. [woman who has pulled husband into snow]
        'But what she hadn't really realized was that they were sinking into the snow and had now (*ver*-)sunk a full meter'

(71) a.   Libyen droht in Blut und Chaos zu *versinken*.
        'Libya is threatening to (*ver*-)sink into blood and chaos'

b. Wenn ich in der Arbeit *versunken* bin, vergesse ich das Trinken und kann wunderbar den Durst verdrängen.
'When I'm immersed [*ver*-sunken] in work I forget drinking and am wonderfully able to suppress [*ver*-shove] the thirst'

(72) a. Jährlich *sinkt* die Stadt Venedig immer weiter.
'The city of Venice sinks further each year'

b. Seit ihrer Gründung *versinkt* die Stadt Venedig immer mehr im schlammigen Lagunengrund.
'Since its founding the city of Venice has been (*ver*-)sinking more and more in the muddy lagoon base'

The contrasting pair in (72) reflects another factor in the decision to construe the event either sequentially or synoptically. *Sinken* in (72a) invites a normal sequential path in which a FG moves downward. But a city such as Venice is an odd candidate to be a FG in a spatial path. It is a large extended entity with no clear spatial boundaries and it is not normally considered to be mobile. Use of the *ver-* verb as in (72b) is thus encouraged, since such FGs are not as apt to attract concentrated focal attention and invite the image of a series of distinct locations. In fact, *ver-* verbs are generally more likely to occur with extended FGs as opposed to compact moving ones.

Similar observations apply to *fallen* and *verfallen* as well. *Fallen* predominates over *verfallen* for falling into a faint (*Ohnmacht*), which is associated with physically falling, but falling into a panic (*Panik*) is more apt to call for *verfallen* since the image is more abstract and does not suggest literal falling. (Google: "fiel in Ohnmacht" 198,000, "verfiel in Ohnmacht" 102; "verfiel in Panik" 7,670, "fiel in Panik" 96.)

Ver- has a similar effect when added to verbs like *brennen* that describe a consuming process. Simple *brennen* is common in intransitive constructions like (73a) meaning to be on fire or be burning – an imperfective process with no particular stopping point other than the obvious pragmatic one when there is nothing left to burn. *Verbrennen*, whether intransitive or transitive, describes an event that has an intrinsic completion – namely the point at which the FG has been displaced from its prior state (consumed as a whole). When an accusative FG refers to fuel as in (73e), *verbrennen* looks very similar to transitive *brennen* in (73b). Subtly though, *brennen* still profiles the imperfective causal activity and the accusative fuel specifies the manner of that activity. *Verbrennen* focuses on how much of the fuel is being consumed (like *verbrauchen*).

(73) a. Erst haben Bücher *gebrannt*, dann Geschäfte, dann Menschen.
'First books burned, then businesses, then people'

b. Wir brennen hier keine Kohlen, wir *brennen* Holz.
'We don't burn coal here, we burn wood'

    c.   Ein 69-jähriger Pensionist aus Grammastetten ist Sonntag Nachmittag in seinem eigenen Haus *verbrannt*.
'A 69-year-old retiree from Grammastetten burned to death [*ver*-burned] in his own house Sunday afternoon'

    d.   Wer hat denn das Haus *verbrannt*?
'Who (*ver*-)burned the house?'

    e.   Wir *verbrennen* jeden Tag 10 Millionen Tonnen Öl.
'We (*ver*-)burn 10 million tons of oil every day'

The devouring verb *schlingen* is much like *brennen*, except that it is transitive. (74a) calls attention to the manner of eating, and there is no particular implication that all of the accusative object is devoured. *Verschlingen* in (74b) describes the same type of objective event, but it portrays it as a synoptically construed holistic action and profiles the displacement of the accusative object as a whole. It "conveys the idea of making a thing disappear quickly" (Farrell 338).

  (74)   a.   Im Stress wird häufig das Essen *geschlungen*.
'Under stress a meal is often wolfed down [gobbled]'

          b.   Die Schlange *verschlang* das kleine Mäuschen und legte sich wieder schlafen.
'The snake (ver-)gobbled the little mouse and lay back down again to sleep'

          c.   Die Erde öffnete ihren Schlund und *verschlang* sie.
'The earth opened its gorge and (ver-)gobbled them up'

5.2.2 *Preventing* (verhindern, verschließen)

Preventing can be construed in several ways that are compatible with *ver-*. It can be conceptualized as deviating from a course that would lead to the outcome (*meiden*), or it can be conceptualized as putting obstacles in the way to keep a process from coming to fruition, whether by impeding the progress of the process (*hindern*) or by closing off access to a passageway altogether (*sperren*, *schließen*). In all these cases a *ver-* verb can contrast subtly with the corresponding unprefixed verb.

    The subject of simple *meiden* deliberately changes course to avoid something. The accusative object is typically either a person or a place or food, and it can also be something associated with a person (such as a glance) (Farrell 32, Beaton 71). In other words, simple *meiden* suggests a spatial path image of avoiding a LM that is already there. *Vermeiden* suggests a more abstract image that suggests preventing an event from coming into existence, as opposed to avoiding spatial proximity. Beaton (71) illustrates the distinction between *meiden* and *vermeiden* this way: "*Ich meide solche Situationen grundsätzlich* means that I do not go to places where such situations (might) exist; however, *Wenn es geht, vermeide ich solche Situationen* means that I do everything possible to prevent them coming about." Farrell (32)

points out another typical trait distinguishing *vermeiden* from *meiden*, namely whether there is prominent agentive intention: "The distinction is that *meiden* stresses the intention, whereas *vermeiden* merely draws attention to the result or indicates an intention without stressing it. *Meiden* therefore suggests more vividly the state of mind of the subject." We might add that the simple verb can be read as an imperfective activity, while *vermeiden* always describes a completed synoptic event with lasting consequences.

Both *verhindern* and simple *hindern* mean to keep something from happening, or to keep people from doing something that they intended to do. Farrell's (259) characterization of the difference between the simple verb and the *ver-* verb sounds much like the difference between *ändern* and *verändern*, or *ärgern* and *verärgern*, or *mischen* and *vermischen*:

> *Hindern* [with a following infinitive] concentrates attention on the act of preventing itself, and is therefore more dramatic and vivid than *verhindern*, which emphasizes not the act but the result. *Hindern* can suggest physical intervention on the part of a person by an act that is characteristically brief and sometimes sudden. With a personal subject *verhindern*, correctly used, suggests less an act of intervention than the mere existence or presence of the person or something about him that acts as a deterrent. The deterrent operates not in one brief act but gradually, after the lapse of time, or permanently though weakly. It is thus appropriate in generalizations about the permanent or repeated operation of a deterrent, or when the deterrent functions indirectly.

Verhindern is thus the more usual choice when the subject is not a person acting deliberately but rather something such as a motive, an emotion, an idea or another event – something that does not attract concentrated attention. *Verhindern* is especially appropriate "when the activity on the part of the subject (i.e. the author of the preventing) is absent or weak" and "when the whole action (both the action of preventing and that prevented) is vast, complicated and indirect" (Farrell 260). *Hindern* is more usual in constructions such as imperatives, questions and with modal verbs, all of which invite more personal or dramatic implications (Farrell 259).

Verhindern is associated not only with non-agentive subjects but with non-agentive objects as well. The accusative object of *verhindern* is nearly always the event that is being prevented, often expressed by an impersonal pronoun (*es*) or a *dass*-clause.[115] The accusative object with simple *hindern* on the other hand is often an active person

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115. COSMAS returned 222 instances of "hindert mich" and only 3 for "verhindert mich". "Verhindert, dass" returned 5,083 while "hindert, dass" had 16. Incidentally, *verhindern* is overall the single most common *ver-* verb in the COSMAS database – at least in the form with *zu* and infinitive. In my most recent search "zu verhindern" had 92,689 hits compared with 4,208 for "zu hindern".

as in (75a), someone being prevented from doing something that can be specified in an *an*-PP. *Hindern* is better suited to call attention to a concrete action carried out by one person on another person to prevent the second person from doing something, while *verhindern* is better suited to call attention to the more abstract result, namely that the planned event is displaced from the realm of (future) reality.

(75)   a.   Gerne möchte das Fußball-Idol auch nach Italien zurück, doch ein Steuerstreit *hindert* ihn daran.
'The soccer idol would very much like to return to Italy, but a conflict over taxes prevents him from it'

   b.   Der Gesellschaftsskandal *verhindert* seine Rückkehr nach Florenz.
'The social scandal (*ver-*)prevents his return to Florence'

   c.   Nur das Eingreifen eines Bahnmitarbeiters *verhinderte* das Unglück.
'Only the intervention of a railway worker prevented [*ver*-hindered] the accident'

Finally, *verhindern* clearly implies that the impeded event does not take place (*Richtig und gutes Deutsch* 142). It thus contrasts particularly with *behindern*, which describes acting on an accusative LM and making its progress more difficult but not necessarily impossible. Simple *hindern* is somewhere in between *verhindern* and *behindern* in this respect. Like *behindern*, it concentrates more attention on the causal activity than *verhindern* does, and it describes an ongoing activity with no intrinsic point of completion. Unlike *behindern* however, *hindern* does imply that the hindered event does not proceed as long as the hindering activity is in effect (at least in the normal cases when the action is expressed in an *an*-PP). But *hindern* does not imply any effects that last after the hindering activity has ceased. Sentences like (75a) describe a temporary situation that will last only as long as the cause remains in effect – the accusative person may well be able to carry out the act later. The *ver-* verb constructions on the other hand prompt a synoptic construal of a completed event, and they imply more lasting consequences. The accusative event loses its status as potentially real, and that is the end of that.

Simple *sperren* is the normal term when an agency such as the police officially blocks a passageway such as a road (Farrell 45). It is also the usual term for deliberately closing access to a service such as electricity or a bank account. Unlike most of the other unprefixed verbs in this section, *sperren* does have an intrinsic point of completion, namely when the blockage has been inserted. So there is no reason to add *ver-* to signal a completed event. *Ver-* can serve, however, to avoid concentrated attention on the causal activity. *Sperren* consistently suggests a deliberate agentive action (both the manner of blocking passage and the power to do so). The subject of *versperren* on the other hand is the obstacle itself, not an agent that places the obstacle in the way.

(76) a. Aufgrund von Bauarbeiten muss die Echterdinger Straße *gesperrt* werden.
      'Echterdinger Road has to be closed because of construction'

  b. Es können Baumstämme hinab gerollt werden, um den Weg zu *versperren*.
      'Logs can be rolled down to (*ver-*)block the road'

(77) a. Der betritt das Zimmer, *schließt* die Tür von innen.
      'He enters the room and shuts the door from the inside'

  b. Zum Zeitpunkt des Brandes war das Haus *abgeschlossen*. Die Feuerwehr musste die Türen aufbrechen.
      'At the time of the fire the house was locked up [off]. The Fire Department had to break the doors open'

  c. Sie empfing von diesem Tage an keine Besucher mehr und hielt ihr Haus *verschlossen*.
      'From that day on she received no more visitors and kept the house (*ver-*) closed'

  d. Sie gibt ihm für alles die Schuld und *verschließt* sich ihm gegenüber.
      'She blames him for everything and (*ver-*)shuts herself off from him [*ver-*closes herself with respect to him]'

The simple verb *schließen* basically means to 'close' in the sense of bringing two parts of something together so that no gap or entryway remains between them. It is the usual term – together with *zumachen* – for closing things such as doors or windows (Farrell 192–3, Beaton 412–3). *Schließen* is thus a typical unprefixed verb that invites concentrated attention on the manner of closing as well as on the accompanying effect of the activity on the accusative object. Like *sperren*, however, *schließen* does have an intrinsic point of completion, namely when contact is achieved and the gap is closed. Moreover, *schließen* describes an intrinsically agentive process, so that *verschließen* cannot suggest an inactive subject the way *versperren* can. That makes *verschließen* generally less useful as an alternative to *schließen*. And in fact *verschließen* is not commonly used for physical closing (Farrell 192–3). *Schließen* is more common than *verschließen* even in most non-physical uses, such as bringing activities to a temporal close. (COSMAS returned 26,139 instances of "zu schließen" overall (and 11,682 of "abzuschließen") as opposed to 1,681 of "zu verschließen".)

Verschließen does prove useful though to call attention to more abstract functional consequences. It is used for example for sealing bottles (or sealing things like fruits in jars) (Beaton 599), thus introducing an added element of preserving. *Verschließen* is commonly used for blocking social approach. In (77c) it does not describe physically locking the house as *abschließen* would; it suggests abstractly shutting the house off from people. *Sich verschließen* can describe concealing one's inner feelings from others as in (77d) or making oneself inaccessible to the ideas

of others (Beaton 412–3). The attributive participle *verschlossen* means being withdrawn and uncommunicative out of caution – contrasting with *versteckt*, which implies hiding ulterior motives (Eberhard 1417).

5.2.3   *Initiating a path* (versenden, verrücken)

Quite a few base verbs like *gießen* or *senden* describe initiating a path, which is objectively similar to displacing. The simple verbs invite us to construe the path in the normal sequential way, i.e., to concentrate focal attention first on the causal activity and then on the accusative FG, tracking it as it moves away from the implicit source location and on to other locations. The corresponding *ver-* verbs synopticize the construal at the moment of displacement. They prompt us to hold our attention at the place where the FG was originally located and to think of the event as concluded when it is no longer there. In other words, the point of the *ver-* verb construction is not where the FG goes; the point is simply that it has been dispatched and is no longer where it was.

Such synoptic construals of an initiated path are marked, and constructions with a simple verb or a particle verb are generally much more common than the *ver-* verbs.[116] The *ver-* verbs are usually associated with situations when the FG's ensuing path is vague enough not to attract any attention, or when the point of the sentence is to report that the subject no longer has possession of or access to the FG. *Verschenken* in (78b) for example focuses on distributing or awarding the FG, without inviting our attention to continue on to its new home the way simple *schenken* would do. *Sprühen* is called for in normal relocations such as (79a) and certainly with effected objects as in (79b), but *versprühen* can be used when the focus is purely on emission with no particular resulting path for the FG as in (79c). *Verschicken* in (80b) profiles the moment of posting the FGs without calling attention to where they go from there. Simple *gießen* is overwhelmingly preferred for normal pouring events as in (85a), but *vergießen* can be used as in (81b) when the point is pure dispersal without tracking the FG on to its new location. *Vergießen* becomes normal when the point is that the FG is lost rather than relocated, for example with objects such as tears as in (81c) or blood as in (81d). (Google: "gießt Wasser" 19,500, "vergießt Wasser" 9; "gießt Tränen" 1,960, "vergießt Tränen" 21,900.) Simple *streuen* is normal in constructions like (82a), but *verstreuen* can be used as in (82b) to call attention more to the fact that the FG is being used up and there is none left. Compare also (73e) above, in which *verbrennen* describes consuming a resource.

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116. COSMAS: "zu gießen" 1,802, "zu vergießen" 290; "zu streuen" 1,746, "zu verstreuen" 148; "zu schenken" 6,538, "zu verschenken" 3,943; "zu schicken" 18,590, "zu verschicken" 1,435; "zu senden" 4,159, "zu versenden" 1,116.

(78) a. Spock *schenkt* ihm das Buch "Die Geschichte zweier Städte" von Charles Dickens.
'Spock gives him the book 'The Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens'

b. Das Unternehmen baufoerdergelder.ch hat diesen Preis *verschenkt*.
'The firm baufoerdergelder.ch awarded [*ver*-gave] this prize'

(79) a. Der wird zum Maler und *sprüht* Farbe auf eine Leinwand.
'He becomes a painter and sprays paint on a canvas'

b. Ein betrunkener Journalist hat ein schwarzes Hakenkreuz an die Feldherrnhalle am Odeonsplatz *gesprüht*.
'A drunken journalist sprayed a black swastika on the Commander's Hall at Odeonsplatz'

c. Trockenes Birkenholz ist das beste Brennholz für einen offenen Kamin, weil es fast keine Funken *versprüht*.
'Dry birchwood is the best wood for burning in an open fireplace because it (*ver*-)sprays almost no sparks'

(80) a. Ich habe zu Weihnachten einem Freund, der im Gefängnis ist, einen Brief *geschickt*.
'At Christmas I sent a letter to a friend in jail'

b. Letzten Freitag haben wir unseren ersten Roma-Netzwerk-Newsletter *verschickt*.
'Last Friday we mailed [*ver*-sent] our first Roma-Network Newsletter'

(81) a. Johannes der Täufer hält in seiner rechten Hand eine Muschel und *gießt* Wasser auf das Haupt von Jesus Christus.
'John the Baptist is holding a shell in his right hand and pouring water on the head of Jesus'

b. Anschliessend geht der Sohn weinend um den Leichnam herum und *vergiesst* Wasser.
'Then the son walks around the body crying and sprinkles [*ver*-pours] water'

c. Anne Hathaway hat bei den Dreharbeiten echte Tränen *vergossen*.
'Anne Hathaway shed [*ver*-poured] real tears during filming'

d. Ach, es sind des Haifischs Flossen rot, wenn dieser Blut *vergießt*.
'The shark's fins are red, when it sheds [*ver*-pours] blood'

(82) a. Häufig werden geröstete Mandelblättchen oder gehackte Nüsse auf den Kuchen *gestreut*.
'Roasted sliced almonds or chopped nuts are often scattered on the cake'

b. Den Rest habe ich auf dem Kuchen *verstreut*.
'I (*ver*-)scattered the rest on the cake'

The verb *rücken* profiles a manner of caused motion, suggesting repeated stops and starts. Adding *ver-* serves to turn the imperfective (iterative) manner of motion into a completed event of synoptic displacement. The *ver-* verb profiles the fact that the FG is no longer in its original position.[117] Similar comments apply to other manner-of-motion base verbs like the intransitive *rutschen*. When *rutschen* calls particular attention to the onset of the sliding motion with no specified direction or destination, as in (84a), then the difference between the two verbs can be subtle. Still, the simple verb concentrates attention on the manner of motion and the sequential path of the FG, while the *ver-* verb profiles dislocation, as in (84b). Similar comments apply to *versetzen* in (7).

(83) a.   Er *rückte* den Schrank wieder sorgfältig an seinen alten Platz.
           'He painstakingly moved the cabinet back to its old position'

      b.   Es ist untersagt, eigenmächtig Tische und Stühle zu *verrücken*.
           '(*Ver-*)Moving tables and chairs without permission is prohibited'

(84) a.   Bemerkt der Fahrer, dass die Reifen seines Motorrades zu *rutschen* beginnen, bleibt meistens keine Zeit mehr, um darauf zu reagieren.
           'If the driver notices that the tires of his motorcycle are beginning to slide, there is usually not enough time left to react'

      b.   Ich denk mal, der Reifen *verrutscht* auf der Felge.
           'I think the tire is (*ver-*)slipping on the rim'

As usual, the *ver-* verbs in this section convey a subtle sense of finality and of lasting consequences that is not shared by the simple verbs. As Beaton (487) observes, simple *weisen* in a sentence like 'Der Lehrer hat den Schüler aus dem Klassenzimmer gewiesen' probably implies that the pupil is temporarily exiled. 'Der Direktor hat den Schüler von der Schule verwiesen' means the student is expelled.

   Verlocken can be mentioned here as well. *Verlocken* is obviously like *verführen* or *verleiten*. Unlike *führen* or *leiten*, however, the base verb *locken* already suggests an element of leading astray, making the difference between *locken* and *verlocken* more subtle. The simple verb *locken* is much more common, especially when there is a strong spatial image of enticing someone to a place (Farrell 344, Beaton 708). *Verlocken* is a marked alternative that becomes appropriate in less spatial contexts when people are enticed to more abstract functional activities – especially when the

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117. Farrell (225) misleadingly says that *verrücken* "points to the result, i.e. the new position, while *rücken* denotes the action of moving." *Verrücken* does profile a "result", but that result is not a new position; it is that the FG has been displaced. It is difficult to see how *verrücken* could profile the new position when the construction rarely specifies what that new position is. If a new location is specified, then the preferred construction is the simple verb *rücken* with an oblique path specification in the classic satellite-framed pattern, as in (83a).

target activity is expressed in an infinitival construction as in (85b).[118] There is also a tendency for the accusative FG with *verlocken* to be a vaguely defined multiplex such as the passersby in (85b), weakening the image of a normal sequential path. As is the case with the other verbs in this section, the simple verb *locken* suggests an active agentive role for its subject, while the subject of *verlocken* tends to be an inanimate situation that entices without "doing" anything deliberately. Also typically, the *ver-* verb suggests lasting consequences. Finally, both Farrell (344) and Beaton (708) mention that *verlocken* might add a stronger suggestion than *locken* that the appeal is to do something wrong, i.e., an association with 'going astray' verbs like *verführen*.

(85) a. Eine junge Frau soll versucht haben, zwei Mädchen in ihr Auto zu *locken*.
'A young woman supposedly tried to lure two girls into her car'

b. Viele Parfümerien lassen ihre Eingangstüren offen stehen, um Passanten zu *verlocken*, einzutreten.
'Many perfume shops leave their doors open to entice [*ver*-lure] passersby to come in'

5.3   Summary: Contrasting *ver-* verbs and simple verbs

Some clear patterns emerge from these contrasts between synopticizing *ver-* verbs and the corresponding simple verbs. The sequentializing unprefixed verb constructions concentrate focal attention on the causal activity (typically an agent acting deliberately) and then on the accompanying or ensuing effect that the activity has on an accusative object. In the majority of cases the activity has no intrinsic point of completion, though a goal can be supplied obliquely. The effect on the accusative object can range from minimal, to substantial, to causing the object to embark on a path of its own. The unprefixed verbs typically convey a clear spatial path image.[119] The *ver-* verb constructions are different in several consistent ways:

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118. Overall, COSMAS returned 9,813 instances of "zu locken" and only 71 of "zu verlocken". The string "dazu verlockt" on the other hand returned 12,300 while "dazu gelockt" had only 795.

119. To say that the unprefixed verbs consistently convey a clear spatial image is not to say that they cannot be used metaphorically. But when they are used metaphorically, an essentially spatial image is being applied in a nonspatial domain according to very general metaphorical patterns. For example, *knüpfen* in (69a) is used metaphorically, but it still invokes a definite spatial image of connecting one thing to another at a particular point. *Sinken* can certainly be used metaphorically, but it conveys a vivid spatial meaning that is then applied to a metaphorical scale with upper and lower levels.

– The *ver-* verbs profile a moment when the event is completed, namely the moment when the FG is displaced from its original position.
– The event is construed as a whole, with the cause and the ensuing state of the accusative FG all included peripherally in the same synoptic frame. Attention is distributed globally rather than being concentrated on any particular part of the event sequence at a given time.
– As a result, the detailed causal activity is less prominent with *ver-* verbs than it is in the sequential construal. The same goes for any implicit ensuing path by the accusative FG. Where simple verbs often emphasize deliberate activity followed by what happens to an accusative FG, *ver-* verbs do not call particular attention to what happens either before or after the FG loses its status in the synoptic setting.
– Because the events described by a *ver-* verb are completed when the FG is displaced, they make the consequences of the event seem subtly more final and lasting. (Even if a sequentializing construction specifies a goal result, that result is just the latest in a sequence of particular locations and the FG may well move on to others. Moreover, results that are caused by deliberate agentive acts of the type generally associated with unprefixed verbs are presumably easier to undo than those caused by the vaguer environmental situations that are often associated with *ver-* verbs.)
– Because focal attention is not concentrated on any particular location in space-time, the synoptic construal tends to be more abstract and diffuse, and non-spatial functional implications are relatively prominent.
– The subject of a transitive *ver-* verb is typically not a compact animate being acting deliberately the way it is in a sequential construal with a simple verb. It is more apt to be inanimate and vaguely abstract. Moreover, the displaced accusative FG in the *ver-* verb construction is not typically a compact physical thing either. And if it is a physical thing, then it is apt to be extended and vaguely shaped (such as a mass or a multiplex).
– The accusative object in the synoptic construal has to be construed as a whole. It cannot be only partially affected, as it may be in a sequential construal.
– Because the synoptic construal has a FG that is displaced as a whole, and the completed event implies lasting consequences, *ver-* verbs often occur as attributive participles.

6. Contrast with verb particles

Like the simple verbs, particle verbs prompt a sequential construal. The only real difference between simple verbs and particle verbs for present purposes is that the particle verbs add more specific information about the path. If they call more

attention to the locus of displacement, as the source-path particles do, then they can become very similar to *ver-* verbs semantically.

Wegreisen and *verreisen* for example are objectively equivalent in (86). The difference is that *weg-* implies a resulting new location for the FG, albeit one that is specified only negatively (somewhere other than here). *Verreisen* in (86b) leaves us still looking at the FG's prior location, which no longer contains him. The construction with *weg-* tells us that the FG has moved on a path to somewhere else, which implies pragmatically that it is not here anymore. The construction with *ver-* tells us that the FG is not here anymore, which implies pragmatically that it has gone somewhere else.

(86) a. Vermutlich haben ihn die Umstände nicht befriedigt, und er ist wieder *weggereist*.
'Presumably the circumstances did not satisfy him, and he went away again'

b. Er sagt der Vermieterin nichts, sondern teilt ihr mit, dass Schmied dienstlich *verreist* sei.
'He doesn't tell the landlady anything, reporting only that Schmied is away on business [*ver*-traveled on business]'

6.1   *Ver-* vs *ab-*

Ab- is especially similar to *ver-* since it adds information about the FG's prior relation to the source LM. *Ab-* profiles separation from the source and often downward motion off of its surface, and these implications are compatible with events that can be described by *ver-*. *Abrücken* and *abschieben* for example can describe events that could also be described using *verrücken* and *verschieben*. Broadly speaking, *abschieben* and *abrücken* portray the events as a sequential spatial path away from the source location – tracking the FG as it separates from the implicit source LM and moves away to a different location, so that the FG is ultimately at some distance from the LM as in (87b). The *ver-* verbs prompt a synoptic construal profiling displacement, holding our attention at the original setting without tracking the FG to a new location or comparing its location to a LM. (87c) simply describes a prior location that no longer contains the FG. Compare English 'move' as opposed to 'move away'. One symptom of the difference is that *ab-* verbs (like *weg-* verbs) commonly occur with a *von*-PP that calls explicit attention to a distinct source LM. They thus make it clear that the FG moves to a new location defined to be distinct from that LM. The *ver-* verbs only very rarely have a specified source LM, since they profile displacement from a vague synoptic setting.

(87)   a.   Wo es möglich ist, werden Sanitärobjekte von der Wand *weggerückt*, wodurch Sichtachsen oder abgeschirmte Bereiche entstehen.
'Sanitation objects are moved away from the wall where possible, so that lines of sight or screened-off spaces are created'

b.   Bestehen Sie darauf, daß das Klavier von der Wand *abgerückt* wird.
'Insist that the piano be moved (off) away from the wall'

c.   Sie konnte keine Spuren finden, wer den Schrank *verrückt* hatte.
'She couldn't find any clues to who had (*ver-*)moved the cabinet'

Abschicken and *absenden* are very similar to the simple verbs discussed above, and the subtle difference from *ver-* verbs is basically the same. *Ver-* verbs direct us to construe the event synoptically as one of displacement, while the *ab-* verbs invite us to concentrate focal attention on the FG as it begins its path away. The relevant construal difference is roughly similar to the English difference between sending something to someone (compare *schicken*), sending something off (compare *abschicken*), and just sending something (compare *verschicken*).

Ab- can also share additional implications with *ver-*. For example, both *ab-* and *ver-* can suggest deviating or being deflected off of a prior course in a new direction. The *ab-* verbs consistently convey a spatial image, however, such as detouring from the normal road as in (88a). The *ver-* verbs suggest more abstract nonspatial deviation as in (88b). Compare also *abändern*, which is like simple *ändern* in that it concentrates attention on precise deliberate alterations rather than the more vaguely caused overall changes suggested by *verändern*. (See Belz 1997: 10, Eberhard 82.) Compare also the deflecting (rejecting) image conveyed by *ableugnen*, which differs from *verleugnen* in basically the same way that simple *leugnen* does.

(88)   a.   Der einmündende Straßenverkehr ist in die vorgeschriebene Fahrtrichtung *abzuleiten*.
'The entering traffic is to be diverted in the prescribed direction'

b.   Viele Piloten hatten in der Villeneuve-Schikane die Strecke verlassen. Die scheint die Piloten stark zum Abkürzen zu *verleiten*.
'Many racecar drivers had left the course in the Villeneuve-Schikane. It seems to strongly entice [*ver*-lead] the drivers to cut corners [*ab*-shorten]'

(89)   a.   Das Gelände um die Schule wurde *abgesperrt*.
'The area around the school was closed off'

b.   Ein schweres Eisentor *versperrt* den Weg zur Villa.
'A heavy iron gate (*ver-*)blocks the path to the villa'

Ab- verbs can also describe sealing off openings in a surface, which often makes them very similar to *ver-* verbs for closing something to access (*verschließen*, *verhärten*) or blocking a passageway (*versperren*). Generally speaking, verbs like *abschließen*, *abhärten*, and *absperren* convey vivid spatial images of locking, bolting,

or erecting protective shields, and they differ from *ver-* verbs in basically the same way that the simple verbs do. The *ver-* verbs typically suggest vaguer or more abstract images that do not invite concentrating focal attention on a manner of closing or on a particular spatial location.

6.2 *Ver-* vs *aus-*

Aus- is not normally as compatible with *ver-* events as either *weg-* or *ab-*, because it usually implies that the FG crosses the bounds of an implicit LM and thus moves from one discrete location to another – a path that strongly invites a sequential construal. At times though, *aus-* verbs can describe events with an outward path direction but no clear crossing of boundaries, in which case *ver-* verbs and *aus-* verbs may describe objectively similar events.

Aus- and *ver-* can be particularly similar when something is being distributed in a general outward direction, i.e. handed out (*austeilen*) or loaned out (*ausleihen*) or sent out (*aussenden*) or driven out (*austreiben*). Generally speaking, the *aus-* verbs profile a spatial path with a clear outward direction, while the *ver-* verbs profile synoptic distribution as such, holding our attention on the supply of the FG being dispersed. (90a) describes passing out the individual cards; (90b) describes distributing a supply of cards. *Ausleihen* in (91a), like simple *leihen*, does not distinguish between lending and borrowing. The particle is purely concerned with a spatial outward path by the FG, not with functional implications. *Verleihen* in (91b) by contrast describes displacing the FG from its current home, distributing a resource, and so it can only describe lending as opposed to borrowing.

(90) a. An jeden Spieler werden zwei verdeckte Karten *ausgeteilt*.
'Two hidden cards are dealt out to each player'

b. Die 32 Karten werden auf drei Spieler zu je zehn Karten und zwei Karten auf den Tisch *verteilt*.
'The 32 cards are distributed [*ver*-dealt] ten cards each to three players and two cards onto the table'

(91) a. Die audiovisuellen Materialien können ebenso wie die Bücher *ausgeliehen* werden.
'The audiovisual materials can be checked out just like the books'

b. Heute *verleihe* ich Bücher und Werkzeuge nur noch sehr selten.
'Today I only rarely (*ver*-)lend books and tools'

Aus- verbs for fading or dying out, such as *auslöschen* (*ausgehen*), *ausklingen*, and *aussterben*, can be almost indistinguishable from *ver-* verbs. Where the *ver-* verbs imply that the FG disappears and loses its status as a functioning FG in the setting, the *aus-* verbs suggest a path out of existence (construed as a container), i.e., a more

vivid spatial metaphor. To the extent that there is any other difference between the two images the *aus-* verbs suggest a protracted or gradual process from deep within the object and the *ver-* verbs focus more on the moment of disappearance. *Verglühen* would not be a good choice in (92a) for example, and *ausglühen* would be inappropriate for the relatively sudden event in (92b).

(92)   a.   Bevor die Sonne in ferner Zukunft als sogenannter Weißer Zwerg langsam *ausglüht*, wird sie etwa vierzig Prozent ihrer Masse abgestoßen haben.
'Before the sun slowly ceases to glow [glows out] in the distant future as a so-called White Dwarf, it will have shed about 40% of its mass'

       b.   Der Satellit *verglühte* beim Eintritt in die Erdatmosphäre.
'The satellite burned up [*ver*-glowed] upon entering the earth's atmosphere'

7.   Locational PPs vs goal PPs

7.1   Normal synoptic displacement

Ver- verbs profile synoptic displacement, in which a FG ceases to be a functioning FG in the synoptic setting. At that point the event profiled by *ver-* is over, and the construction does not invite us to follow the FG on a subsequent path to a new location the way an unprefixed verb would. (After all, the *ver-* FG has ceased to be a functioning FG.) As a result, *ver-* verb constructions typically do not occur with goal phrases such as an *in*-PP with an accusative object. Such phrases normally indicate a distinct new location for a FG, and they are thus strongly associated with a construal that tracks the FG through a sequence of locations. The great majority of *ver-* verbs notably avoid such goal phrases, and that is strong evidence that they do profile synoptic displacement.

Most *ver-* verbs in fact do not mention any location at all that might pertain to the FG's ensuing path after it has been displaced. That is usually the case even when the event pragmatically suggests an implicit destination and the base verb alone would normally take a goal phrase, for example with verbs like *verziehen* or *versetzen* or *verschicken*.

If a potential destination for the FG is explicitly mentioned, it is frequently treated as part of the synoptic setting where the whole synoptic event takes place, i.e., it appears in a locational phrase (e.g. *in* + dative) rather than a goal phrase (e.g. *in* + accusative). The contrast in (93) between *sinken* (with *in* + accusative) and *versinken* (with *in* + dative) is typical, a striking indication of the distinction between a sequential construal and a synoptic one. Several other examples from this chapter provide similar instances in which a *ver-* verb takes a locational phrase rather than a goal phrase, including (2) with *verwickeln*, (37) with *verfangen*, (13)

with *verschwinden*, (14) with *verwehen*, (30) with *verlaufen*, and (26) with *ver-stecken*. These locational phrases with *ver-* verbs are noteworthy because they go against the overwhelmingly normal sequential pattern of marking path destinations in goal phrases. Goal phrases would make objective sense for the events being described by these *ver-* verbs, but speakers avoid them.

(93)   a.   Die Westseite des Berges ist nach weiteren Ausbrüchen zerbrochen und *ins Meer gesunken*.
'After further eruptions the western side of the mountain broke into pieces and sank into the sea'

b.   Die Insel New Moore Island im Golf von Bengalen ist komplett *im Meer versunken*.
'New Moore Island in the Gulf of Bengali (*ver-*)sank completely in the [dative] sea'

c.   Im Greifensee ist am Nachmittag ein 58-jähriger Mann beim Schwimmen im Wasser *versunken*.
'In the Greifen Lake a 58-year-old man (*ver-*)sank in the [dative] water while swimming this afternoon'

Frequency counts reflect consistent patterns in this regard. Verbs such as *versinken* or *versacken* occur almost exclusively with locational phrases rather than goal phrases. *Sich verwickeln* and *sich verstricken* show a strong preference for *in* + dative when describing physical entangling. The 'concealing' verbs *verbergen* and *verstecken* consistently take an *in*-PP (or one with *hinter* or *unter*) that has a dative object. *Sich vergraben* normally takes a locational phrase, whether it conveys a 'concealing' image or one for 'submerging'.[120]

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120.   COSMAS returned 156 instances of either "im Meer versunken" or "versinkt im Meer", as opposed to only 1 for "ins Meer versunken" and none for "versinkt ins Meer". The results for "im Schnee versunken" and "in den Schnee versunken" were 61 to 0. Google results include "im Sumpf versunken" 6,690, "in den Sumpf versunken" 8; "im Morast versunken" 14,200, "in den Morast versunken" 1. By comparison, unprefixed "sinkt ins Meer" returned 9,730 in a Google search while "sinkt im Meer" had only 818. Google results with *versacken* include: "im Morast versackt" 348, "in den Morast versackt" 0; "im Wasser versackt" 9, "ins Wasser versackt" 0. The causative verb *versenken* also prefers locational phrases: "im Meer versenkt" occurred 162 times in COSMAS while "ins Meer versenkt" occurred 14 times. Google results for spatial entangling: "im Netz verwickelt" 374, "ins Netz verwickelt" 24; "im Netz verstrickt" 5,110, "ins Netz verstrickt" 1,080; "in der Schnur verwickelt" 724, "in die Schnur verwickelt" 7. Google returned 129,000 for "versteckt es in einer" and 3 for "versteckt es in eine", 10,400 for "in der Erde verbergen" and 5 for "in die Erde verbergen". Although the Duden *Richtiges und gutes Deutsch* (960) implies that the 'storing' verb *verstauen* can take either *in* + accusative or *in* + dative, a Google search shows that *verstauen* – like *verwahren* – is actually used almost exclusively with locational *in* + dative. Google: "verstaut es in einer" 22,700, "verstaut es in eine" 3.

'Distributing' verbs such as *verstreichen* or *verschmieren* clearly imply prag-
matically that the FG moves to a new location, but again speakers prefer loca-
tional phrases over goal phrases. Constructions like (94) identify a synoptic setting
where the whole distribution event takes place. Verbs like *vergießen*, *verschütten*
or *verstreuen* imply a gap between the causal activity and the result, and thus a
clear objective path from one location to another, making an image with a single
synoptic setting for the whole event less inviting. Yet even these verbs definitely
prefer a locational PP (e.g. *auf* + dative) to a goal PP (*auf* + accusative), as reflected
in (95) and (96), as well as (82b) with *verstreuen*.[121]

(94) Er *verreibt* die Creme auf Ihrem Rücken.
      'He (*ver*-)rubs the cream on your [dative] back'

(95) Ach kacke, jetzt hab ich Wasser auf dem Boden *verschüttet*.
      'Oh crap, now I've spilled [*ver*-poured] water on the [dative] floor'

(96) Man *versprüht* es auf der Scheibe, natürlich nach dem Putzen, und reibt es
      einfach nur noch blank.
      'You (*ver*-)spray it on the [dative] pane, after cleaning it of course, and just rub
      it to a shine'

Speaking very generally then, there are striking tendencies for speakers to avoid
goal phrases with *ver*- verbs – even in situations when a goal phrase would seem
well suited to describe what happens objectively. The most common pattern is not
to specify any subsequent location for the FG at all after its displacement, and if a
potential goal does need to be mentioned then locational phrases are typically pre-
ferred even when the location is objectively a goal. The goal location is construed
to be part of the synoptic setting where the displacement occurs, not a subsequent
new location for the FG.

7.2   Inward-directed paths

As we have seen, verbs like *versinken* or *vergraben* or *verwickeln* consistently take
locational phrases such as *in* + dative if speakers want to specify exactly where a
FG is being physically submerged or entangled, as illustrated in (97a), (98a), and

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121. Google: "an der Wand verschmiert" 45,900, "an die Wand verschmiert" 1. Google returns
for 'sprinkling' verbs include: "auf dem Boden verschüttet" 32,500, "auf den Boden verschüttet"
17,600; "auf dem Tisch verschüttet" 24,100, "auf den Tisch verschüttet" 4,900; "auf dem Boden
vergossen" 10,300, "auf den Boden vergossen" 3,100; "auf dem Boden verstreut" 1,170,000; "auf
den Boden verstreut" 336,000; "auf den Feldern versprüht" 7,830, "auf die Felder versprüht"
1,290.

(99a). Oddly though, the same verbs frequently take *in* + accusative in lexicalized nonspatial variants for descending into an incapacitating state (e.g. depression, absorbing thoughts) or becoming implicated in a messy situation (e.g. scandal, contradictions). The rest of the examples in (97)–(99) are typical of these metaphorical variants. Other verbs that normally express descending into incapacitating states expressed in phrases with *in* + accusative include *sich versenken*, *sich vertiefen* and *sich verstricken*. The highly lexicalized verb *sich verlieben* occurs exclusively with *in* + accusative, as do the other colloquial verbs for falling in love that are modeled on it (*sich verknallen*, *sich vernarren*, *sich vergaffen*, etc). In all these cases the FG seems to descend gradually deeper into a metaphorical mass until it loses the functional independence that it once had.[122]

(97) a. Die AYCROM *versinkt* in dem Sand, auf dem sie gelandet war.
'The AYCROM (*ver-*)sinks in the [dative] sand that it had landed on'

b. Lamazares *versinkt* in eine tiefe Depression.
'Lamazares (*ver-*)sinks into a deep [accusative] depression'

c. Die Welt und mit ihr die Bundesrepublik *versinkt* in eine Wirtschaftskrise.
'The world and the Federal Republic along with it is (*ver-*)descending into an economic crisis'

d. Entweder reformiert sich der Klerus oder er *versinkt* in die Bedeutungslosigkeit.
'Either the clergy will reform itself or it will (*ver-*)sink into insignificance'

e. Petasch wendet sich ab, schließt die Augen, *versinkt* in die Musik.
'Petasch turns away, closes his eyes, (*ver-*)sinks into the music'

f. Tief in seine Gedanken *versunken*, hörte er nicht, wie sich jemand dem Platz näherte.
'Deeply immersed [*ver*-sunk] in his [accusative] thoughts, he didn't hear that someone was approaching the place'

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122. COSMAS returned 36 instances of "versinkt in einer" and 5 of "versinkt in eine", but all 5 of the instances with *in* + accusative had abstract nonspatial LMs. There were 94 COSMAS hits for "versinkt in der" and 9 for "versinkt in die", but all 9 with *in* + accusative had abstract nonspatial objects. The 'entangling' verbs (*sich*) *verwickeln* and (*sich*) *verstricken* take *in* + accusative more consistently in their nonspatial variants than the 'submerging' verbs do. Moreover, these nonspatial variants for becoming implicated in abstract situations are considerably more common than those for becoming physically entangled. COSMAS returned 1,050 instances of "in eine __ verwickelt" and only 19 of "in einer __ verwickelt", 67 for "in einen Skandal verwickelt" and 2 for "in einem Skandal verwickelt", 6 for "in einen Skandal verstrickt" and none for "in einem Skandal verstrickt". Incidentally, another odd aspect of these constructions is that the use of *in* + accusative carries over into statal passives with an attributive participle as in (97f). That would not be the case with normal sequential paths to a destination.

(98) a. Stattdessen zerstückelt er den Leichnam und *vergräbt* ihn im Garten.
'Instead of that he dismembers the body and (*ver-*)buries it in the [dative] garden'

  b. Wie geht Stella damit um, dass Mac *sich* in seine Arbeit *vergräbt*?
'How does Stella deal with the fact that Mac (*ver-*)buries himself in his [accusative] work?'

(99) a. Für das Baby ist das unbehaglich, also bewegt es sich mehr und *verwickelt sich* in der Nabelschnur.
'For the baby this is uncomfortable, so it moves more and gets tangled [*ver*-winds itself] in the [dative] umbilical cord'

  b. Ben Affleck *verwickelt sich* in eine Dreiecksbeziehung.
'Ben Affleck is embroiled [*ver*-winds himself] in a [accusative] love triangle'

  c. Wever wird von Kommissar Haferkamp vernommen und *verwickelt sich* in Widersprüche.
'Wever is interrogated by Commissioner Haferkamp and gets tangled up [*ver*-winds himself] in [accusative] contradictions'

These constructions might seem to be exceptions to the general principle that speakers avoid goal phrases with *ver-* verbs, but if we look more closely at them it turns out that the *in*-PPs are not really goal phrases. That is, they do not specify a new location for the FG after it has been displaced. Think for example of the spatial paths in (100). (100a) does not say that the boys were originally not in the forest and then they were. They are in the forest the whole time. The sentence describes an imperfective path that is directed ever deeper toward the imaginary center of a mass that the FGs were already in. The construction with an *in*-PP is particularly common when the FG is extended in the direction of the path, like the roots in (100b), so that progressively more of it becomes submerged. There are commonly expressions like *tiefer* that indicate how deeply the path extends, and it is probably no coincidence that (*sich*) *vertiefen* is especially associated with *in* + accusative. The *ver-* verbs in (101) even take *in* + accusative when the paths are purely spatial.[123]

(100) a. Für Mario und seine Freunde geht es immer weiter und tiefer in den Wald hinein.
'For Mario and his friends the path goes steadily further and deeper into the forest'

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123. COSMAS returned more instances of "in die Erde versenkt" (78) than of "in der Erde versenkt" (42), and adding the word *tief* to call attention to how deeply the path extends encourages the choice of *in* + accusative even more ("tief in die Erde versenkt" 10, "tief in der Erde versenkt" 0).

b. Alle Pflanzen graben ihre Wurzeln umso tiefer in die Erde, je höher sie
wachsen und werden.
'All plants dig their roots deeper into the earth as they grow and become
higher'

(101) a. Sie waren auch bis zu einem Meter in die Erde *vertieft*.
'They were (*ver-*)deepened up to a meter into the earth'

b. Die Pfähle sollten mindestens 1250mm tief in den Boden *versenkt* werden.
'The stakes should be (*ver-*)sunk at least 1250 mm into the ground'

Given that *in* + accusative can describe an inward-directed path rather than a nor-
mal goal path, we can explain its use with *ver-* verbs by thinking of the path as part
of the original synoptic setting and not as a subsequent location for the FG. That is,
the FG is already sinking or being entangled more deeply when the *ver-* event per
se takes place and the FG loses its prior functional status. Compare the variants for
'going astray' with verbs like *verführen*, which also presume that the FG is already
moving on a directed course when the *ver-* event takes place. Generally speaking
then, we can say that these *in*-PPs specify a direction that the FG is already moving
in at the moment of displacement profiled by *ver-* – not a distinct new location
that the FG occupies after it has been displaced. A similar semantic analysis is ap-
propriate for the 'altering' verbs like *verbessern* or *verkürzen*, where the deadjectival
root indicates a direction in which the FG is moving when it loses its prior status.

7.3   Directed distribution

There are a handful of other situations that complicate the general principle that
ver- verbs do not occur with phrases that specify an ensuing location for the FG.
In particular, some lexicalized 'distributing' verbs can designate a specific recipient
as a dative object. That is the case for example in (21) with *verkaufen* and *verbor-
gen* and (28) with *verweigern*. Examples could easily be added in which lexical-
ized verbs like *versprechen*, *vertrauen*, *verdanken*, or *verschaffen* occur with dative
objects. We can think of these constructions as expanding the synoptic setting to
include the recipient, so that there is a holistic transfer and in the course of that
directed transfer the FG becomes displaced from its original home. To the extent
that *ver-* adds meaning in these lexicalized verbs, it still profiles the moment of
displacement as opposed to a path from one place to another.

That leaves only a few unusual cases such as the construction in (102b) with
an apparent goal phrase. As we have seen, speakers normally prefer to express
such events with locational phrases like those in (102a), but occasionally the gen-
erally more common pattern with a goal phrase does occur, especially if there is
a considerable intervening distance between release of the FG and its subsequent

arrival at the goal. In most cases sentences like (102b) can be considered slightly deviant style, disregarding the fact that the lexicalized verb *verteilen* is a *ver-* verb. Generally speaking, if a *ver-* verb is chosen to call attention to the fact that the money is distributed, then a goal phrase should be avoided. If a goal phrase is chosen to call attention to where the money is now, then the prefixed verb should be avoided and an unprefixed verb such as *austeilen* should be chosen.[124]

(102) a. Brecht das Brot und *verteilt* es unter den Armen.
           'Break the bread and distribute [*ver*-divide] it among the [dative] poor'

       b. Die jeweilige KV bekommt von den Krankenkassen in ihrem Bezirk Geld für jeden Patienten und *verteilt* es auf die Ärzte.
           'The respective Association of Physicians receives money for each patient from the insurance funds in their district and distributes it to the [accusative] doctors'

However we choose to rationalize the occasional use of *ver-* verbs with an apparent goal phrase, the more general and remarkable observation is that speakers do avoid goal phrases with *ver-* verbs in the vast majority of cases. That is true even when a goal phrase would seem objectively appropriate, and the overwhelmingly most common (sequential) pattern in the language would have called for a goal phrase.

8.   Frequencies

According to the Duden *Grammatik*, *ver-* verbs account for 45% of all verbs attested with inseparable prefixes. In terms of the total number of occurrences (as opposed to the number of different verbs), *ver-* and *be-* occur with roughly equal frequency, with *er-* not far behind. At least that was the result of searching the COSMAS database for forms with *zu* and the infinitive. Table 5 has the COSMAS count for selected *ver-* verbs in the infinitive with *zu* (e.g. "zu /w1:1 vergleichen"):[125]

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124. An *an*-PP in a sentence like 'Heute haben wir die Spenden an die Kinder *verteilt*' is a special case, because such *an*-PPs can only have an accusative object. They might be understood more or less like the dative objects with verbs like *verkaufen*.

125. Using the construction with infinitive and *zu* no doubt skews these results some, for example making *verhindern* and *vermeiden* relatively more common than they would be in other forms, and some verbs relatively less common than they would be in participial forms: "verstanden hat" 4,095, "verhindert hat" 1,449, "vermieden hat" 221.

Table 5. *Ver-* verb frequencies

verhindern	94,466	vergrößern	5,080	verfehlen	670
verstehen	68,665	verletzen	4,862	verärgern	625
vermeiden	68,242	verweigern	4,755	verschlafen	607
verbessern	62,704	verfallen	4,720	versperren	572
verlieren	48,002	vernachlässigen	4,535	verreisen	561
verkaufen	39,327	verfügen	4,162	verschlingen	518
verlassen	34,396	verwalten	4,138	verstellen	511
verwenden	27,133	verständigen	3,999	verleiten	499
vergessen	26,351	verknüpfen	3,775	verwickeln	447
verschaffen	19,601	verbrennen	3,166	vergehen	439
vertreten	17,936	verraten	3,017	verlieben	424
vergleichen	17,501	verwöhnen	2,954	vergraben	390
verwirklichen	17,062	verkleinern	2,737	verengen	348
verbinden	16,438	vertrauen	2,699	verblassen	323
versorgen	16,275	vermindern	2,615	verehren	302
verändern	15,989	verschleiern	2,598	vermengen	282
verbringen	14,935	versinken	1,889	verdrehen	280
verdienen	13,916	verschweigen	1,765	verstricken	268
versuchen	13,598	verursachen	1,736	verhüllen	257
verlegen	13,466	verschließen	1,735	vertragen	193
verringern	13,101	vermehren	1,692	verirren	190
verschieben	13,088	verachten	1,665	verhehlen	190
verantworten	12,673	versammeln	1,659	verdünnen	187
verlängern	12,403	verführen	1,507	verschütten	185
verwechseln	10,403	verschicken	1,435	versteifen	183
verstärken	9,890	verkommen	1,369	verdunkeln	171
verbreiten	9,878	versprechen	1,359	verhärten	142
verarbeiten	9,016	verbreitern	1,210	verheddern	141
verstecken	8,863	verheimlichen	1,162	verfangen	104
verlangen	8,535	versenden	1,116	verrücken	97
vertreiben	8,531	vermischen	1,009	verfertigen	87
verwandeln	8,030	verschwenden	982	verknoten	85
versetzen	6,772	verderben	935	verscharren	76
verpassen	6,571	verdecken	863	verlocken	71
verkürzen	6,450	verfeinern	842	verlöschen	60
vertiefen	6,428	verbrauchen	837	verloben	43
verbergen	6,256	verleugnen	808	versteinern	34
verfassen	5,873	verlaufen	802	vergilben	17
vernichten	5,750	verschonen	780	verbrechen	3
verschwinden	5,116	versäumen	776		

The system of prefixes

By far the most striking feature of the system of German verb prefixes semantically is their consistent link to synoptic construals. Much of this book has been devoted to showing how they all contrast with the sequential construals prompted by constructions with simple verbs or particle verbs. In this final chapter it is time to look inside the system of prefixes and see how they contrast with each other.

Since all of the prefixed verb constructions prompt a synoptic construal, contrasting one prefix with another serves mainly to highlight the more objective properties of their meaning. *Über-*, *unter-*, *um-*, and *durch-* profile route paths in relation to a LM, whether the paths are construed to be holistic or multi-directional. *Be-* profiles a diffuse path directed at an accusative LM. *Ent-* profiles either a caused diffuse path separating from an accusative LM or an escape path separating from a more active participant. *Er-* profiles the attainment of a goal space by a process that begins as a backgrounded run-up process, including one that emerges from beneath the surface of a host noun. *Zer-* profiles a diffuse breakdown of a host noun's internal structural bonds. *Ver-* profiles the loss of a FG's status in its original setting.

As usual, the best way to isolate the precise semantic contribution of a prefix is to find situations in which it contrasts as directly as possible with alternative constructions. This chapter examines several cases where one prefix contrasts fairly directly with another – i.e., cases where a prefixed verb functions as either a near antonym or a near synonym of another prefixed verb. Section 9 then summarizes the overall system of German verb prefixes, and Section 10 concludes the book with some theoretical principles that emerge from studying the meaning of prefixed verbs.

1.   *Ver-* vs *ent-*

There are obvious similarities between the synopticized source path described by an *ent-* verb and the synopticized displacement described by a *ver-* verb. In both cases something is displaced from its original relations in the setting, and the event is construed synoptically. The essential difference is that *ent-* profiles separation from a particular LM in the setting, while *ver-* does not involve any particular LM – only the setting itself.

1.1   Near antonyms

Despite the basic similarity between displacement and separation, *ent-* verbs can often describe events that are the reverse of an event described by a *ver-* verb. That is because schematic displacement does not always involve objectively removing the FG from its setting; it can also result from objectively adding something to the setting that obscures the FG or contaminates it, causing it to lose its prior identity or functional usefulness. The FG in a *ver-* verb construction may be concealed (either covered or submerged), or it may become entangled or combined with something, or it may become ruined or contaminated by interacting with something or being occupied. In all of these cases, the situation could be undone by ridding the *ver-* FG of whatever is having that effect on it – an event describable by an *ent-* verb. Covering and concealing (*ver-*) can contrast with uncovering and revealing (*ent-*), submerging (*ver-*) with emerging (*ent-*), entangling (*ver-*) with disentangling (*ent-*), or contaminating (*ver-*) with decontaminating (*ent-*).

(1)   Arabische Frauen sind nicht nur willenlose Wesen, die von Männern *ver-* oder *enthüllt* werden.
'Arab women are not just weak-willed creatures who are veiled [*ver-*shrouded] or unveiled [*ent-*shrouded] by men'

(2)   Sie [die Schönheit] *verkleidet* sich in der Nacht, sie *entkleidet* sich in der Morgendämmerung.
'It [beauty] disguises [*ver-*clothes] itself at night and reveals [*ent-*clothes] itself at dawn'

(3)   … dass alle Flugzeugkabinenfenster oder Teilbereiche davon automatisch *verdunkelt* oder umgekehrt *entdunkelt* werden können.
'… that all the windows in the passenger section of the airplane, or portions of them, can be automatically (*ver-*)darkened or, conversely, undarkened [*ent-*darkened]'

(4)   Möchte man nun eine Mail *ver-* oder *entschlüsseln* reicht ein Klick auf einen Button.
'If you want to encode [*ver-*key] or decode [*ent-*key] an email just click on a button'

(5)   Der Clip ermöglicht es, das Pferd zu bewegen, ohne dass man das Seil *ver-* oder *entknoten* muss.
'The clip makes it possible to move the horse without tying [*ver-*knotting] or untying [*ent-*knotting] the rope'

(6)   Es scheint, als würde ich [meine Füße] nachts immer *verkrampfen* (bzw. ständig *ver-* und *entkrampfen*).

'It seems as though I keep (*ver-*)cramping my feet at night (or constantly (*ver-*) cramp and uncramp [*ent-*cramp] them)'

(7) Kafka *ver-* und *entlobt* sich mehrmals mit Felice Bauer.
     'Kafka gets engaged [*ver-*vows himself] and unengaged [*ent-*vows himself] with Felice Bauer several times'

(8) Wenn sich das Fahrzeug nicht mehr mit dem Schlüssel *ver-* oder *entriegeln* lässt, benutzen Sie den Notschlüssel.
     'If the vehicle can no longer be (*ver-*)locked or unlocked [*ent-*locked] with the key then use the emergency key'

(9) Besonders als Grossstädter ist man permanent damit beschäftigt, sich wahlweise zu *ver-* oder *entgiften*.
     'Especially as a city-dweller one is permanently occupied with the choice of contaminating (*ver-*poisoning) or decontaminating (*ent-*poisoning) oneself'

(10) Wie *vergilbte* Papierfotos wieder "*entgilben*"?
     'How to take the yellow out of [*ent-*yellow] (*ver-*)yellowed paper photographs'

Although the accusative objects in (1)–(10) are objectively parallel, they have subtly contrasting semantic roles. With *ent-* the object is an accusative LM that is being rid of a theme in a privative construction. With *ver-* the accusative object is construed as a FG that loses its prior status.

1.2   Near synonyms

Ent- also has variants with an accusative theme that escapes from something that had a hold on it. In such cases being separated is much like being displaced, and *ent-*verbs and *ver-* verbs can sometimes describe more or less the same objective events.

The essential difference between *ent-* and *ver-* is whether there is a profiled separation from something specific in the setting. *Ent-* implies overcoming the hold of a particular entity – an entity that typically appears as a dative object. *Ver-*describes a more absolute event that does not involve any other specified entity in the setting. Where *ent-* typically suggests that a dative participant loses access to something, *ver-* means that the FG is functionally lost to the setting itself.

1.2.1   Verschwinden *vs* entschwinden

Both *verschwinden* and *entschwinden* imply losing sight of something and can be glossed as 'disappear'. The only generally acknowledged difference between them is that *verschwinden* is the normal unmarked choice while the less common verb *entschwinden* sounds somewhat archaic or poetic. As a participant in a LEO forum puts it: "My advice for non-German-natives: Never use 'entschwinden'.

'Verschwinden' will always be o.k." Given the meanings of *ver-* and *ent-* as developed in Chapters 3 and 6, however, a consistent semantic distinction is evident between the two verbs.

The most obvious superficial difference between *entschwinden* and *verschwinden* is that *entschwinden* typically takes a dative object, as in (11a). That dative object often refers to a person's perception or memory (Beaton 225), as in (11b) and (11c), and similar LMs can sometimes be specified in source PPs as in (11d). The *ent-* verb conveys a complex sense of escaping *from* the hold of something that is there in the setting. Even in unusual cases like (11e) or (11f) that do not specify the *ent-* LM, *entschwinden* consistently suggests that the theme separates from something that is actually present in the setting. In (11e) Brecht's Pirate Jenny is describing her getaway from the town, not just the simpler image of disappearing. In (11f) Saddam does not just disappear; he gets away from the clutches of the US forces. *Verschwinden* by contrast simply describes no longer being apparent in the setting. The FG in sentences like (12) does not get away from anything in particular; it becomes inaccessible generally to anyone who may happen to be viewing the scene – including the subjective interpreter. That makes *verschwinden* – but not *entschwinden* – appropriate to describe ceasing to exist altogether (Farrell 95).[126]

(11) a. Ein kurzer Kuss und sie *entschwindet* ihm.
          'A quick kiss and she disappears from him [dative]'

      b. Manches ist in diesen 50 Jahren dem Gedächtnis *entschwunden*.
          'Much has disappeared from memory [dative] in these 50 years'

      c. Es entfernt sich langsam und *entschwindet* meinen Blicken.
          'It moves away slowly and disappears from my view [*ent*-recedes my glances [dative]]'

      d. Sie grüßt sie zum Abschied mit erhobener Hand und *entschwindet* aus meinem Blickfeld.
          'She gestures goodbye with raised hand and (*ent*-)disappears out of my field of vision'

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126. Another example of the subtle distinction between *verschwinden* and *entschwinden* comes from a scene in *Ole Bienkopp* (23) where Ole is chasing someone wearing a hat – one of two people he and his friends have caught moving a casket – and manages to hit him on the head: "Der Hutmann taumelt, rafft sich auf und *entschwindet*." After that man has gotten away from Ole, he and his friends search for the other fugitive – who is identified as sounding like a Belgian horse when he ran – and find two lines later: "Die Gestalt mit dem Belgierpferdgetrampel ist fort und *verschwunden* – wie von der Erde gefressen." *Entschwinden* would seem inappropriate in the latter sentence, because the fugitive did not disappear *from* the sight of anyone in the scene. He was simply no longer to be found at that location.

e.   Und ein Schiff mit acht Segeln wird *entschwinden* mit mir.
     'And a ship with eight sails will (*ent-*)disappear with me'

f.   Saddam hätte dann praktisch vor der Nase der US- Streitkräfte getanzt –
     um dann zu *entschwinden*.
     'Saddam had practically danced before the noses of the US forces – only
     to (*ent-*)disappear'

(12) a.   Die Sonne *verschwindet* hinter dem Berg und der Weg wird kühler.
           'The sun disappears behind the mountain and the way becomes cooler'

      b.   Ein schmaler Pfad ohne Zeitangabe biegt links ab und *verschwindet* im
           Wald.
           'A narrow path without time marking turns off to the left and disappears
           in the forest'

      c.   Ihr kastanienbraunes Haar *verschwindet* unter der großen pelzumrandeten
           Kapuze ihres schwarzen Mantels.
           'Her chestnut brown hair disappears under the large fur-lined hood of
           her black coat'

(13) Das vermittelt den Eindruck, dass etwas langsam *entschwindet*, sich immer
      weiter entfernt und schließlich *verschwunden* ist.
      'That conveys the impression that something is slowly fading from view [*ent-*receding], moves steadily away and has finally disappeared [*ver-*receded]'

The distinction between simple disappearance and eluding the hold of a particular LM can have subtle aspectual implications. Although *entschwinden* profiles a synoptic event that is completed when the theme is no longer held in its original relation, that event does involve a path away from a LM, and the element of separation makes the event seem slightly more protracted than the simple moment of disappearance profiled by *ver-*. *Entschwinden* thus typically suggests a temporally extended process, suggesting "a slow disappearing from sight" (Beaton 225) or stressing "the stages in which a person or thing disappears from sight" (Farrell 95). In (13) for example, something first fades from the view of someone implicit in the scene (*entschwindet*) and then ultimately disappears from the setting altogether (*verschwindet*).[127]

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127. As a participant in a LEO forum puts it: "*Entschwinden* wird man eher verwenden, wenn etwas langsam oder allmählich unsichtbar wird. Wenn etwas verschwindet, ist über die Art, wie es unsichtbar wird, nichts ausgesagt." In a related observation, one participant in an online discussion (forum.wordreference.com) feels that inert objects such as purses cannot "entschwinden", i.e., that *entschwinden* is almost like *sich verdünnisieren* in the sense that only animate beings can do it. Like most such intuitions this one does not quite precisely capture what is going on, and it is not shared by all speakers, but it does reflect a sense conveyed by *entschwinden* that the FG pulls away from someone's hold on it with some effort.

A similar distinction between escaping from someone's access or awareness and disappearing more absolutely from a setting is somewhat clearer in the case of *entgehen* and *vergehen*. *Entgehen* in abstract contexts describes involuntary escape, so that a dative object misses an opportunity. *Vergehen* describes a more objective and absolute passing that is not limited to any particular dative object. Since time is normally thought to elapse objectively without being "held", *vergehen* is overwhelmingly the verb of choice.

1.2.2   Ent- *and overcoming resistance*

'Escaping' *ent-* verbs suggest overcoming resistance to achieve separation from an active dative participant, and that often implies forcibly tearing away from a dative object's hold. *Ver-* verbs also often suggest that the FG is being displaced from where it should be, but they do not imply overcoming resistance. The *ver-* verbs simply describe the FG's loss of prior status.

The difference between *verführen* and *entführen* for example is essentially that between seduction and abduction. *Verführen* describes causing someone to deviate from the normal expected course (which is the setting for the *ver-* event), but there are no implications of forcefully separating the FG from the hold of anything in the setting and the FG is understood to go voluntarily. *Entführen* describes (forcibly) extracting the accusative object from a place where it was anchored or naturally rooted, as in kidnapping or hijacking. Compare the similar seduction image of *verlocken*. *Entlocken* by contrast describes overcoming the resistance of a dative person and eliciting something such as a confession.

(14)   Die minderjährigen Koptinnen werden *verführt*, *entführt* und zwangsislamisiert.
'The underaged Copt girls are seduced [*ver*-led], abducted [*ent*-led] and forcibly islamicized'

(15)   a.   Die Lebensmittelindustrie findet immer wieder Neues, um zum Kauf zu *verlocken*.
'The grocery industry is always finding new ways to (*ver*-)lure [people] to a purchase'

   b.   Die Gouvernante versucht Miles ein Geständnis zu *entlocken*, unter wessen Einfluss er steht.
'The governess tries to coax [*ent*-lure] a confession from Miles [dative] about who is influencing him'

Verbs like *entstellen* and *entsetzen* imply that the accusative theme is being uprooted from its normal home base, the place or state where it is seated or anchored. They suggest forcibly overcoming whatever was holding the object in its original canonical state, while the corresponding *ver-* verbs do not necessarily imply either that the change requires special force or that the result is bad. *Entstellen* for example

means to disfigure and implies both that the object becomes unrecognizable and that the change is for the worse (Eberhard 1419). *Verstellen* can also sometimes describe distorting or disguising something such as a voice, but it simply means that the object is altered so as to be no longer recognizable, without necessarily implying that the change is bad or does violence to the FG. *Versetzen* does not compete with *entsetzen* in the latter's common lexicalized meaning of 'horrify', which certainly suggests a sense of being forcibly separated from a normal state. *Versetzen* and *entsetzen* can both describe ousting someone from a position, however, as in (17). In that case the *ver-* verb can be evaluatively neutral, but the *ent-* verb suggests uprooting – presumably against the person's will.

(16)   Dies führt z.T. zu Sätzen, deren Sinn *entstellt* oder zumindest *verstellt* ist, da die allgemein häufigste Übersetzung nicht in jedem Fall die passendste ist.
'This leads in part to sentences whose meaning is distorted [*ent*-placed] or at least altered [*ver*-placed], because the generally most common translation is not always the most apt in a particular instance'

(17)   §46 … untersagt, daß ein Richter "aus irgend einer Ursache ohne richterliches Erkenntnis seiner Stelle *entsetzt, entlassen* oder auf eine geringere *versetzt* werde".
'Paragraph 46 prohibits that a judge "be ousted [*ent*-set] from his position, dismissed [*ent*-let] or transferred [*ver*-set] to a lesser position for any reason without a formal judicial ruling"'

The contrast between *verfremden* and *entfremden* is much like that between *verschwinden* and *entschwinden*, or *verstellen* and *entstellen*. Basically, *verfremden* means to make something familiar seem unfamiliar, typically in order to prompt new thinking about it. As used in (18a), it suggests altering the accusative FG in a way similar to the 'disguise' sense of *verkleiden*, but with the more specific deadjectival implication that the FG becomes strange (*fremd*) compared to its original expected state. It follows that *Verfremdung* can describe the positive Brechtian concept of experiencing the familiar in a new frame as something unfamiliar, as in (18b). *Entfremdung* by contrast has consistently negative connotations of becoming divorced from a natural relationship (as conceptualized in the Hegelian/Marxian tradition). (See Bloch (1970).) *Entfremden* is normally used when people become estranged *from* each other or from an idea or a custom, and it suggests uprooting much as *entsetzen* does. Compare also *entarten*.

(18)   a.   Audiotool, das in Echtzeit den Klang der Stimme *verfremdet* und Hintergrundgeräusche unterdrückt oder hinzufügt.
'Audiotool, which disguises [*ver*-alienates] the sound of a voice in real time and suppresses or adds background noises'

    b.   Es ist die Hoffnung, das Selbstverständliche und Normale zu *verfremden* und aus einer leicht verschobenen Perspektive neu betrachten zu können.
        'The hope is to defamiliarize [*ver*-alienate] what is self-evident and normal and to see it in a new way from a slightly different perspective'

    c.   Seine Hartherzigkeit *entfremdet* ihm mehr und mehr seine Frau, bis sie sich am Ende von ihm trennt.
        'His callousness (*ent*-)estranges his wife from him [dative] more and more, until she divorces him in the end'

2.   *Ver-* vs *er-*

The schematic meanings of *ver-* and *er-* are significantly different, to the point that we might not expect much direct contrast between them. *Er-* profiles an extending base-verb process that is not apparent in the goal space at the start of the event and then becomes apparent there. *Ver-* profiles a noun FG that is apparent in its setting at the start of the event and then is not (at least as originally defined). With *er-* there is tension as we wait expectantly for an unseen run-up process; with *ver-* everything that happens takes place visibly in the setting. *Er-* suggests gain; *ver-* suggests loss. The opposed implications of gain and loss occasionally result in near antonyms like those discussed briefly in Section 2.1, but such directly opposed contrasts are not common.

    There is, however, one situation when *er-* verbs and *ver-* verbs can describe events that are surprisingly similar objectively – namely the deadjectival variants when an *er-* verb like *erweitern* describes 'emerging' and a *ver-* verb like *vergrößern* describes 'altering'. The *er-* verbs have a focal noun that hosts an emerging base-verb process and is eventually characterized by it. The *ver-* verbs have a focal noun that undergoes a transformation of some kind, with the direction of change indicated by the base verb. In both cases a focal noun – either the subject in an intransitive construction or the accusative object in a causative construction – is changed in a way indicated by the base-verb process. The resulting contrasts warrant extensive discussion in Section 2.2.

2.1   Near antonyms

In (19), *erblühen* describes the emergence of a blossoming process that comes to characterize the plants. *Verblühen* describes plants that once blossomed but no longer do – which amounts to almost exactly the opposite objective event. Compare *ertönen* and *vertönen*. In (20) the 'attaining' verb *erspielen* describes gaining access

to a LM that indicates the goal setting, by means of playing. *Verspielen* describes displacing the FG by playing, and thus losing access to it. In (21), *ererben* means to gain by inheriting and *vererben* means to bequeath (distribute). *Versteigern* means to sell at auction, *ersteigern* to acquire at auction. Weinrich (1993: 1063–4) provides other examples.

(19) Einige Pflanzen sind schon *er-* und *verblüht*.
'Some plants have already (*er-*)blossomed and withered [*ver*-blossomed]'

(20) Am einfachsten *er-* und *verspielt* man sein Geld an $25 No-Limit Tischen.
'The simplest way to win [*er*-play] and lose [*ver*-play] one's money is at the $25 no-limit tables'

(21) Diese Mutation wird autosomal dominant *vererbt*, d.h. 50% der Nachkommen haben das Risiko dieses Krankheitsbild zu *ererben*.
'This mutation is passed on [*ver*-inherited] as autosomal-dominant, i.e., 50% of the ancestors are at risk to (*er-*)inherit this set of symptoms'

2.2   Near synonyms: 'Altering' (*ver-*) vs 'emerging' (*er-*)

'Altering' *ver-* verbs like *vergrößern* ('enlarge'), *verlängern* ('extend'), or *versteifen* ('stiffen') can describe events that are very similar to those described by 'emerging' *er-* verbs like *erweitern* ('expand'), *erhöhen* ('raise'), or *erstarren* ('solidify'). The *ver-* verbs describe altering a FG in a direction indicated by the root adjective (e.g. *größer*, *länger*, *steif*). The *er-* verbs describe the emergence of a root property (e.g. *weiter*, *hoch*, *starr*) that comes to characterize its host noun. In both cases the focal noun is changed in a way that is expressed by the adjectival root.

Given the obvious semantic similarity between, say, *vergrößern* and *erweitern*, or *verlängern* and *erhöhen*, it is actually remarkable how rarely there is head-to-head competition between *er-* and *ver-*. Generally speaking, the relevant base verbs are all lexicalized with one prefix or the other. There is for example no established verb *?*ergrößern* that competes with *vergrößern*, and there is no established verb *?*verweitern* that competes with *erweitern*. According to COSMAS searches (infinitive with *zu*) these deadjectival verbs all occur exclusively with *ver-* rather than *er-*: *verbessern* (61,627), *verringern* (12,889), *verlängern* (11,884), *verstärken* (9,667), *vertiefen* (6,428), *verkürzen* (6,318), *vergrößern* (4,930), *verkleinern* (2,669), *vermindern* (2,588), *vermehren* (1,635), *verbreitern* (1,210), *verengen* (348), *verfestigen* (304), *versteifen* (183), *verdunkeln* (171). The complementary set of exclusive *er-* verbs includes *erhöhen* (40,830), *erweitern* (17,807), *erleichtern* (15,176), *erschweren* (2,739), *ermutigen* (1,619), *erhellen* (794), *erstarren* (479), *ermächtigen* (206), *erheitern* (200), *ermüden* (197), *erleuchten* (165), *erweichen* (153), *ermäßigen* (93), *erröten* (64), *erstarken* (48).

It is by no means obvious what principles are being followed to decide which prefix will become established with which base verb. There are lexicalized *ver-* verbs for lengthening, shortening, deepening, narrowing, stiffening, thickening, thinning, darkening, enlarging, and reducing in size (*verlängern*, *verkürzen*, *vertiefen*, *verengen*, *versteifen*, *verdicken*, *verdichten*, *verdünnen*, *verdunkeln*, *vergrößern*, *verkleinern*). There are lexicalized *er-* verbs for growing taller, softening, brightening, reddening, and solidifying (*erhöhen*, *erweichen*, *erhellen*, *erleuchten*, *erheitern*, *erröten*, *erstarren*). *Erleichtern* is firmly established for making easier and *erschweren* means to make more difficult. *Vermehren* means to increase in number and *verringern* and *vermindern* describe lessening; but *ermäßigen* is a general lexicalized term for reducing an amount (and making something easier to do). *Er-* verbs like *ermüden*, *erschöpfen*, and *erkranken* dominate for processes that suggest weakening, while *?verschwächen* is rare even though it might seem to be an obvious candidate. *Verstärken* is used for strengthening and *verfestigen* also describes strengthening in the sense of solidifying; but *erstarken* also exists, and *ermächtigen* is used for empowering and *ermutigen* for emboldening. Expanded breadth or width can be expressed either with the *er-* verb *erweitern* or with the *ver-* verb *verbreitern*. Head-to-head competition does arise between *erhärten* and *verhärten* to describe hardening, *verlöschen* and *erlöschen* to describe extinguishing, *erblassen* and *verblassen* to describe turning pale, and *erbittern* and *verbittern* to describe becoming embittered.

All in all then, the distribution of *ver-* and *er-* in these semantic fields seems largely arbitrary, at least at first sight. Stiebels (1996: 228) concludes that deadjectival *er-* and *ver-* are meaningless and serve a pure grammatical function ("bedeutungsleer und fungieren nur als lizensierende Elemente"). And obviously the system does reflect a considerable amount of historical accident. We could easily imagine that verbs like *?ergrößern* or *?verweitern* could have become the established choices rather than the actual *vergrößern* and *erweitern*, and the overall semantic system would not have been greatly affected.[128] On the other hand, the choices that have become the established norm were presumably motivated by the schematic meanings of the prefixes. *Ver-* and *er-* do consistently prompt a slightly different construal – at least to the extent that speakers are at all aware that the verb is a prefixed compound and not a lexicalized whole. If we look carefully at the ramifications of the schematic meanings represented in Chapters 4 and 6, we can bring at least some order to the seemingly random distribution of *ver-* and *er-* in these constructions.

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128. There is in fact some historical confusion involved with these verbs, and dialects may retain the older forms. According to Curme (1922: 440), *ver-* verbs have supplanted the older ENHG *erarmen*, *erfaulen*, *ergrößern*, and *erhungern*; while an *er-* verb has supplanted the older *verschrecken*.

We can begin with a superficial grammatical observation that may suggest a very subtle semantic factor. A striking characteristic of deadjectival 'altering' verbs with *ver-* is that so many of the most common ones have comparative bases (*verlängern, vergrößern, verkleinern, vermehren, vermindern, verringern, verbreitern, verschmälern, verschönern, verfeinern, vergewissern, verschlechtern, verschlimmern, vergröbern, verneuern, verwildern, verallgemeinern*). The root adjectives indicate a direction that the FG is changing in when it becomes altered to the point that it is no longer what it was originally. The adjectives do not indicate a discrete resulting state. Aside from *erweitern* and *erleichtern* on the other hand, non-comparative adjectival bases are clearly the norm with *er-* (e.g. *erstarren, erhöhen, erweichen, ermüden, erkranken, erlahmen, erblinden, ertauben, ermatten, erschlaffen, erfrischen, erblassen, erbleichen, erhärten, erstarken, ermöglichen, erhellen, erheitern, erschweren*). With *er-*, the deadjectival base verbs indicate the process that emerges as the manifest conclusion of an inner development, and there is no particular reason to think of that process as a comparative one. With *er-* the root adjective identifies the emerging process itself; with *ver-* it indicates a direction that the FG is moving in at the moment when it becomes altered.

2.2.1   *Losses and gains?* (verblassen *vs* erblassen)

The emergent states profiled by *er-* verbs often seem to be the predictable results of a natural development. After all, we must have some reason to be looking expectantly at the goal setting before anything has happened there yet. With *ver-* on the other hand the original state of affairs is often taken to be the natural and expected state, which means that the FG's displacement will seem to upset the natural order of things. Subtly then, *er-* is often associated with "positive" natural developments while *ver-* is associated with loss. These connotations are not always applicable, but they sometimes contribute to the semantic difference between *er-* verbs and *ver-* verbs. Darkness for example is often conceptualized as lack of light and brightness as abundance of light, so it makes sense that darkening is associated with *ver-* (*verdunkeln, verfinstern, verdüstern*) and brightening with *er-* (*erhellen, erheitern, erleuchten*).

(22)   a.   In der Nacht sollte das Zimmer *verdunkelt* werden, alternativ kann auch eine Schlafmaske genutzt werden.
'The room should be (*ver-*)darkened in the night, or as an alternative a sleeping mask can be used'

b.   Der Mond zieht vor dem Jupiter vorbei und *verfinstert* ihn.
'The moon moves by in front of Jupiter and eclipses [*ver-*obscures] it'

(23)   a.   Flackernde Kerzenlichter *erleuchten* den Raum.
'Flickering candles illuminate [*er-*shine] the room'

    b.　Ein Blitz *erhellt* die Dunkelheit.
       'A bolt of lightning (*er-*)brightens the darkness'

Erblassen and *verblassen* can both describe becoming paler, but the two verbs are not exactly synonymous. The *ver-* verb in (24a) portrays the event as fading, as loss of color until the host entity has been altered and is no longer functionally the same as it was. As (24a) reflects, *verblassen* is similar to verbs like *vergilben* and *vergrauen*, which also suggest fading and decline. The *er-* verb in (24b) on the other hand portrays the event as gaining a new color, even if that color is evaluated negatively. *Erbleichen* and *verbleichen* are similar, as are *ergrauen* and *vergrauen*. Even if graying is unwelcome, *ergrauen* describes a natural development and there is a sense of acquiring the new color (growing gray). *Vergrauen* on the other hand typically applies to textiles or wood and suggests a process of decay and loss of prior color. *Bleich* is a somewhat more "positive" term than *blass* (i.e., more inclined to suggest bleaching and gaining whiteness than paling and losing color), so we might expect *blass* to favor *ver-* and *bleich* to favor *er-*. That is in fact the case: COSMAS returned 323 instances of "zu verblassen" and only 9 of "zu erblassen", but *erbleichen* was relatively more frequent than *verbleichen* (9 to 3). (*Ergrauen* is similarly somewhat more frequent than *vergrauen* by a margin of 7 to 4.)

(24)　a.　Ihre wertvollen Fotos *verblassen* mit der Zeit oder *vergilben*.
        'Your valuable photos fade [*ver*-pale] or (*ver-*)yellow with time'

     b.　Die Franzosen, die auf dem Schiff schon warten, scheinen vor Neid zu *erblassen*, als sie unser Resort sehen.
        'The French people, who are already waiting on the ship, seem to (*er-*)pale with envy as they see our resort'

(25)　a.　Über 30 Milliarden Fotos *verbleichen* in deutschen Schuhkartons.
        'Over 30 billion photos fade [*ver*-pale] in cardboard boxes in German schools'

     b.　Die praktische Bildung lehrt einen, bei keiner Schuld zu *erröten* oder zu *erbleichen*.
        'Practical education teaches one not to blush [*er*-redden] or (*er-*)pale with guilt'

(26)　a.　Das Ergebnis ist enttäuschend: Die Wäsche *vergraut* sehr schnell und die Fleckenentfernung ist mangelhaft.
        'The result is disappointing: The laundry (*ver-*)grays very quickly and stain removal is insufficient'

     b.　Jetzt ist sie mit ihren 86 Jahren *ergraut* und färbt auch nicht mehr.
        'Now at 86 she has gotten gray [*er*-grayed] and no longer dyes her hair'

2.2.2   *Emerging from within* (er-) *vs being altered* (ver-)

Whether the event is construed as positive gain or as negative loss is not the only issue affecting the choice of *ver-* or *er-* in sentences like (22)–(26), however. The choice reflects whether the process is construed to emerge from within the focal noun or to be imposed purely from outside. Being bright for example tends to be construed as emitting light (like a light bulb or the sun), and that is a process that seems to emerge from within and thus call for *er-*. Being dark typically results from losing an outside source of light, either because the light source disappears (the sun sets or the lights are turned off) or because something blocks the light and leaves the FG obscured. *Verblassen* in (24a) and *verbleichen* in (25a) suggest a change with outside causes. *Erblassen* and *erbleichen* imply underlying processes within the person that develop until they emerge and manifest themselves on the surface. As (25b) illustrates, *erbleichen* is basically like *erröten*.

It turns out that whether the source of the process is construed to be within the object is a much more relevant factor in the choice of *ver-* or *er-* than is the notion of whether the event is construed as positive gain or as negative loss. After all, *er-* verbs are well established to describe apparent "losses" such as becoming weak, tired, sick, or dead. And *ver-* verbs are established to describe apparent "gains" such as increased size or strength. On the other hand 'emerging' *er-* verbs consistently involve an unseen run-up process that develops from within, while 'altering' *ver-* verbs consistently involve a more superficial change of shape or consistency, typically from outside causes.

2.2.2.1   *Change size* (verlängern *vs* erhöhen, vergrößern *vs* erweitern). *Ver-* verbs are generally called for rather than *er-* verbs to express altering the size of a FG, whether that alteration involves loss (e.g. *verkürzen*, *verschmälern*, *verengen*, *verkleinern*) or gain (e.g. *verlängern*, *verbreitern*, *vertiefen*, *vergrößern*). Increases and decreases on a more abstract scale such as time, quantity, mass, or level of intensity are also commonly expressed by *ver-* verbs. In all of these cases the choice of *ver-* rather than *er-* makes sense semantically. Certainly *er-* verbs are not suited to describe contracting or reducing extent, since it is hard to imagine reducing size as emerging from within. And making things larger is normally understood to result from adding to them from outside.

Er- does become a viable candidate to express increasing extent, however, if the enlarging is conceived as growth from within. Two *er-* verbs are in fact lexicalized in that kind of meaning: *erhöhen* and *erweitern*.

Erhöhen seems much like *verlängern*, but it suggests a more complex image than simply adding to a FG's extent and altering its physical form. Raising something suggests the additional effort of overcoming gravity and thus implies more of a causal run-up process before the goal is achieved. There is also a link between

upward extension and an internal process of natural growth. *Erwachsen* for example and even *erblühen* suggest emerging upward as a manifestation of unseen internal processes. Generally speaking then, *er-* verbs are often associated with extending upward (e.g. *errichten*, *erheben*, *erstehen*), and that association presumably motivates the use of *er-* rather than *ver-* in *erhöhen*. Where *verlängern* or *vermehren* suggest relatively simple straightforward events of altering an object's extent, *erhöhen* suggests an upward path that seems to build up from within the object.

(27) a. Demzufolge war die Ringmauer noch im Bau, als man den Entschluss fasste, die Mauer zu *erhöhen*.
'As a result the curtain wall was still under construction when the decision was made to raise the wall [*er*-heighten it]'

b. Die Prämie kann auch *verringert*, *erhöht* oder ausgesetzt werden.
'The premium can also be reduced [*ver*-lessened], increased [*er*-heightened] or suspended'

(28) Um die Einfahrt in das Stadion *vergrößern* zu können, müssen Sie zuvor die Arbeitsfläche *erweitern*.
'In order to (*ver-*)enlarge tbe driveway into the stadium you will first have to expand [*er*-broaden] the work area'

(29) a. Das Rendezvous bietet Kurse für Taucher, die ihre Kenntnisse *erweitern* wollen.
'The Rendezvous offers courses for divers who want to expand [*er*-broaden] their skills'

b. Durch anklicken lassen sich die Fotos *vergrößern*.
'The photos can be (*ver-*)enlarged by clicking on them'

The other notable exception to the link between *ver-* verbs and altered extent is *erweitern*. *Erweitern* is a broad term for expanding generally in any and all directions, not just in width, so that it contrasts more with *vergrößern* than with *verbreitern*. Where *vergrößern* describes straightforward spatial enlarging, *erweitern* suggests a more complex image of expanding, of growing outward and of increasing the scope of the object's reach or capabilities. It makes perfect sense to speak of expanding one's horizon and say 'Horizont erweitern', because the limits are being extended outward to encompass new territory. Enlarging one's horizon ('Horizont vergrößern') on the other hand is an odd image that seems purely spatial, and it rarely occurs. Similarly, it would be odd to replace *erweitern* in (29a) with *vergrößern*, since the issue is scope rather than pure size. Photographs on the other hand are often spatially enlarged (*vergrößern*), but it is odd to think of expanding their scope with a verb like *erweitern*. We might say crudely that *ver-* verbs like *vergrößern* describe altering an object's visible size, while *erweitern* describes extending its reach.

2.2.2.2 *Make stronger or firmer* (verstärken *vs* erstärken*,* verhärten *vs* erhärten). Strengthening is sometimes related to increased size or energy, or to increased solidity, or to increased surface hardening. We might expect such events to be conceptualized as gain rather than loss, but the most common verbs are *ver-* verbs (e.g. *verstärken*, *verfestigen*, *versteifen*, *verhärten*, *verdicken*, *verdichten*). *Er-* verbs such as *erstärken*, *erstarren*, and *erhärten* do occur, but they are generally less common. Broadly speaking, *ver-* is used when an object's physical form is altered from outside, but *er-* is preferred if a process is construed to emerge from within the affected object.

Verstärken suggests adding reinforcement or amplification from outside, altering the FG to make it stronger than it was originally. Even the reflexive constructions in (30d) or (30e) imply adding something from outside that was not already there in latent form. The hurricane acquires new energy from the seas and the suspicion is buttressed by additional evidence. *Erstarken* as in (31a) and causative *erstärken* in (31b) by contrast subtly suggest regaining strength by drawing on inner resources that were already dormant inside, replenishing energy from within. *Erstarken* and *erstärken* are basically like *erholen* or *erfrischen* or *ertüchtigen*, all of which involve restoring inner resources that then manifest themselves in renewed strength or vitality. The *er-* verbs profile a process that emerges to become apparent, while the *ver-* verbs profile a noun FG that is being altered.

(30) a. Wir sollen die Wand *verstärken*, aber wie?
          'We're supposed to (*ver-*)strengthen the wall, but how?'

      b. Deshalb soll die Flotte auch mit Fregatten *verstärkt* werden.
          'Therefore the fleet is to be reinforced [*ver*-strengthened] with frigates'

      c. In dem Fall möchte ich natürlich nur die Stimme *verstärken* ohne die Umgebungsgeräusche.
          'In that case of course I would like to amplify [*ver*-strengthen] the voice alone without the background noise'

      d. Hurrikan Rita hat sich auf seinem Zug durch die Karibik weiter *verstärkt*.
          'Hurricane Rita has intensified [*ver*-strengthened itself] further on its course through the Caribbean'

      e. Verdacht gegen Ecclestone *verstärkt* sich.
          'Suspicion against Ecclestone is intensifying [*ver*-strengthening itself]'

(31) a. Sauron hat eine Niederlage erlitten, ja, aber hinter seinen Mauern *erstarkt* unser Feind von Neuem.
          'Sauron has suffered a setback, to be sure, but behind his walls our enemy is (*er-*)strengthening anew'

b.   Brüning arbeitete mehrere Pläne aus um Deutschland wieder zu *erstärken*.
      'Brüning developed several plans to (*er-*)strengthen Germany again'

Established *ver-* verbs for events of condensing, thickening, or otherwise solidifying include *verfestigen*, *verdicken*, and *verdichten*. *Versteifen* can also be mentioned here as the normal lexicalized term for physical stiffening, although it implies straightening as much as making more internally rigid. The *ver-* verbs describe altering a FG in its physical form, typically with a straightforward external cause. *Er-* does not become a candidate to express solidifying unless it involves a development that seems to emerge from within, especially as a surface manifestation of an internal condition. *Erstarren* for example suggests a process that works from inside out, such as the pewter in (33a). It is commonly used to describe people who become immobile as an emotional reaction as in (33b), in which case it is much like *erlahmen* or *erschrecken* as well as *erstaunen*. On the rare occasions when *verstarren* occurs, as in (33c), it suggests a more purely physical and sudden alteration of the FG that does not involve any internal run-up process. Compare denominal transformation verbs such as *versteinern*.

(32) a.   Ansonsten kannst Du auch ein wenig Mehl nehmen, um die Sahne zu *verdicken*.
            'Apart from that you can use a little flour to (*ver-*)thicken the cream'

      b.   Strecken Sie beide Beine durch und aktivieren Sie die Beinmuskulatur, ohne die Gelenken zu *versteifen*.
            'Stretch both legs all the way and activate the leg muscles without (*ver-*) stiffening the joints'

(33) a.   Das flüssige Zinn *erstarrt* bei der Abkühlung wieder.
            'The liquid pewter (*er-*)solidifies again during the cooling process'

      b.   Nico *erstarrt* vor Schock, obwohl der Unfall glimpflich ausgeht.
            'Nico (*er-*)stiffens from shock, even though the accident doesn't end badly'

      c.   Sie standen beide wie *verstarrt* da und sahen auf ihre Hände.
            'They both stood there as if turned to stone [*ver*-rigidified] and looked at their hands'

(34) a.   Diese chemische Reaktion ist dieselbe, welche Zement *erhärten* läßt.
            'This chemical reaction is the same one that causes cement to (*er-*)harden'

      b.   Der Verdacht *erhärtete* sich, dass Brandstifter am Werk waren.
            'The suspicion that arsonists were at work was confirmed [*er*-hardened]'

      c.   Auch bei der Blutstauungsniere ist die Niere in Form und Konsistenz verändert. Sie ist vergrößert, *verhärtet* und zum Teil geschwollen.
            'Also in the case of blood stasis the kidney is (*ver-*)altered in form and consistency. It is (*ver-*)enlarged, (*ver-*)hardened and partially swollen'

      d.   Denn dein Herz *verhärtet* sich, gegen die Menschen in deinem Umkreis
           und gegen dich selbst.
           'For your heart (*ver-*)hardens [itself], against the people around you and
           against yourself'

Much like *erstarren*, *erhärten* typically occurs with substances such as cement that harden naturally throughout their interior, as in (34a). In extended meanings *sich erhärten* normally describes things such as suspicions that develop to become more substantial and are "confirmed" as in (34b). *Verhärten* is more apt to occur with organs of the body that harden visibly on the surface as in (34c), often implying an unnatural deformation from the object's proper state. Like *verstarren* in (33c), *verhärten* is semantically similar to the denominal verbs *versteinern*, *verknöchern*, and *verknorpeln*. In extended meanings *sich verhärten* normally describes becoming inured or closed off from the outside world. *Verhärten* suggests that an object's surface hardens in relation to the outside world, while *erhärten* suggests that a solidifying process develops within the interior of the object and makes it internally stronger.

2.2.2.3   *Soften or weaken* (erweichen, ermüden). Just as strengthening is related to increased size or energy or firmness or surface hardness, weakening can involve decreased size or energy, decreased internal solidity, or softening. If *ver-* is more common than *er-* for strengthening, then we might certainly expect it to predominate for describing weakening, which is associated with deterioration and loss of functional ability. It turns out, however, that *ver-* verbs only describe such processes when the event is construed as altering the physical state of a FG, with no implied internal run-up process. If weakness or softness is construed to be symptomatic of an inner state, as it typically is, then an *er-* verb is preferred.

    Ver- verbs describe softening or thinning under the same conditions as they describe solidifying. *Verdünnen* is paired with *verdicken*; *verflüssigen* and *verflüchtigen* are paired with *verfestigen*. (Compare also denominal verbs like *verdampfen* and *verdunsten*.) *Ver-* verbs like *verpanschen*, *verwässern*, *verdünnen*, or *verfälschen* are well suited to describe diluting, which involves adding something from outside and also a sense of contamination.

    Erweichen by contrast describes a softening process that seems to originate within, much like the rigidifying process described by *erstarren* or the hardening process described by *erhärten*. (35a) and (35b) imply an internal run-up process that eventually becomes apparent as a manifest symptom. The metaphorical softening in (35c) involves unseen psychological states that will eventually manifest themselves in overt behavior.

   (35)   a.   Weiches Pech *erweicht* bei 40° und schmilzt bei 60°.
              'Soft bitumen (*er-*)softens at 40° and melts at 60°'

b.   Regen und Schnee bei geringer Kälte hatten den Boden *erweicht*.
'Rain and snow with little cold had (*er*-)softened the ground'

c.   Die Musik soll harte Herzen *erweichen*!
'Music is said to (*er*-)soften hard hearts!'

(36) a.   Die niederländische Schauspiel-Legende Johannes Heesters (105) ist vollständig *erblindet*. Im Jahre 2007 *erkrankte* der große und berühmte Entertainer am Grünen Star (Glaukom).
'The legendary Dutch actor Johannes Heesters (105) has become completely blind [has *er*-blinded]. In 2007 the great and famous entertainer became ill [*er*-sickened] with glaucoma'

b.   Grundsätzlich sollte darauf verzichtet werden, einen Fisch vor der Landung völlig zu *erschöpfen*. Dieser sollte nur soweit *ermüdet* werden, bis der Haken problemlos gelöst.
'As a basic principle exhausting [*er*-scooping] a fish before landing it should be avoided. It should only be made tired [*er*-tired] enough to get the hook out without trouble'

Weakening as such is not especially associated with either *ver*- or *er*-. It is apt to be expressed by *entkräften*, or else by unprefixed constructions like (*ab*)*schwächen* or *schwächer werden*. When people become tired or ill or otherwise disabled, however, the most common verbs turn out – somewhat surprisingly perhaps given the apparent sense of loss – to be *er*- verbs. Verbs in this category include *ermüden*, *ermatten*, *erschlaffen*, *erkranken*, *erblinden*, *ertauben*, and *erlahmen*. Rather than being transformed from the prior healthy state, the focal noun is "visited" by an affliction that manifests an underlying condition. The non-deadjectival verb *erschöpfen* can be mentioned as well – compare the 'to death' *er*- verbs in 2.3.1.

The important principle here seems to be that the weakened states are construed to be overt symptoms of unseen internal conditions, and that there is a temporally extended run-up process rather than a relatively sudden alteration. *Ver*- verbs by contrast tend to describe simpler and more superficial events that do not involve unseen underlying processes. *Ver*- might also suggest that the person is more permanently altered by the event, and perhaps ruined, and those implications would not be appropriate for becoming tired or sick.

2.2.2.4   *Relative permanence (*verbittern *vs* erbittern*).* In some cases *er*- verbs and *ver*- verbs may very subtly suggest a different sense of how permanent the consequences are likely to be. In (24a) for example, the changes indicated by *verblassen* and *vergilben* are presumably lasting ones, while *erblassen* typically describes a relatively temporary manifestation as in (24b). Strictly speaking both verbs describe completed events and neither says anything about how long the consequences will last, but *ver*- does typically lend a sense of finality (implying a new defining state

for the FG). *Er-*'s semantic FG by contrast is an extending verb process, and verb processes are often in effect for a limited time.

That subtle temporal connotation seems to be the main difference between *erbittern* and *verbittern*. *Erbittern* describes inducing a temporary state of becoming incensed, while *verbittern* suggests a more lasting state of being embittered (Farrell 102, Curme 1922: 440). Like other er- verbs such as *erröten* or *erblühen*, *erbittern* profiles the emergence of the state without regard to how long it lasts. *Verbittern* profiles displacement from an original canonical state, and since the FG is now simply no longer in its prior state there is a subtle implication that the consequences are lasting. The attributive participle *erbittert* also implies that the state is manifested in acrimonious behavior on particular occasions. It is the normal way to describe events such as arguments or fights. *Verbittert* is usually reserved for more general and absolute descriptions of people, without necessarily implying overt behavior.[129] The general principle here is that *er-* describes the emergence of a manifest behavioral process that chracterizes the host object. *Ver-* describes the alteration of the object itself in its basic identity (shape, consistency, perhaps function).

(37)   a.   *Verbitterte* Menschen sind missmutig und ohne Freude, sie sind oft pessimistisch.
'(*Ver-*)embittered people are sullen and without friends, and they are often pessimistic'

       b.   Nach langem *erbitterten* Streit kommt die Gesundheitsreform in den USA.
'After a long acrimonious [*er*-bittered] battle health reform is coming to the USA'

2.3   Other near synonyms

2.3.1   *Dying* (erlöschen *vs* verlöschen)

There is a productive use of *er-* verbs like *erschießen* or *erwürgen* for carrying out a base-verb process until death results. Such events could certainly also be construed as causing loss of life, and *ver-* verbs such as *vergehen* or *verhungern* do occur to

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129. Google searches reflect a clear preference for *erbittert* to describe fighting (*kämpfen*) or fights (*Streit, Auseinandersetzungen*) or people in behavioral situations (*Feind*), but *verbittert* for more general descriptions of people ("verbitterte Menschen"). A LEO contributor feels it necessary to change 'verbittert ausgefochtene Scheidung' to 'erbittert' as a translation of 'acrimonious divorce'. Similarly, a contributor at newsgroups.derkeiler.com is bothered by "verbitterten Auseinandersetzungen", preferring "erbittert". The finite verb *verbittern* is typically used intransitively ("um nicht zu verbittern").

describe demise and death. Note the use of denominal *vergasen* in (38) in a way that roughly parallels *erschlagen* and *erschießen*. Occasionally a verb like *versaufen* can be used rather than *ertrinken*. Generally speaking though, most 'to death' events are expressed with *er-* verbs. Presumably the use of *er-* is influenced by the image of successfully hunting and 'attaining' an animal (or an enemy) by killing it, and by the fact that most of these *er-* verbs have base verbs that indicate a particular activity that is carried through until it becomes an achievement. That image of carrying out a base-verb activity to its intrinsic end is also involved in *erschöpfen*. The base verb *schöpfen* is related to 'scoop' and *erschöpfen* is lexicalized to suggest metaphorically exhausting a supply of energy (a stronger version of *ermüden*).

(38)   Die Gefangenen wurden *vergast*, gefoltert, *erschlagen*, gequält, gehängt und *erschossen*.
'The prisoners were (*ver-*)gassed, tortured, beaten to death [*er*-beaten], tormented, hanged and shot to death [*er*-shot]'

There is fairly direct competition between *erlöschen* and *verlöschen* to describe intransitive extinguishing. The two verbs are almost synonymous as marked synoptic alternatives to *ausgehen*, and most discussions find the difference between them to be largely stylistic or regional (Beaton 271). Both verbs suggest elevated style, but *erlöschen* is more common and *verlöschen* seems slightly more marked stylistically.[130] Even these verbs, however, reflect subtle differences between the emergence of a verb process and the alteration of a noun FG. The *er-* verb in (39a) describes a process that comes to characterize the candle. The candle itself is still essentially the same, and it could potentially be lighted again. The *ver-* verb in (39b) describes an event that fundamentally alters the candle. It has been used up so that it is no longer a functioning candle and can no longer be used as one. A participant in the forum at Treffpunkt Konjugation remarks that both 'Es verlischt die Kerze' and 'Es erlischt die Kerze' are possible, but *verlöschen* suggests more that the candle has burned completely and is no longer capable of burning, while *erlöschen* simply means that it has stopped burning. Another contributor to the same forum finds *erlöschen* better in contexts when an agent puts out the fire, as opposed to its burning out on its own. ("Man könnte – meiner Ansicht nach – sagen: 'Er drückt

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130. COSMAS: "zu erlöschen" 98, "zu verlöschen" 60. *Erlöschen* is clearly preferred over *verlöschen* with every particular subject that I tested (*Kerze, Licht, Hoffnung, Begeisterung, Ruhm, Leben*). According to one participant in a LEO forum (dict.leo.org) *verlöschen* is "noch ein Quäntchen poetischer", and another contributor agrees that *verlöschen* sounds more metaphorical and is more appropriate with abstract FGs such as *Leben*. Similarly, a participant at Treffpunkt Konjugation (www.konjugation.de) feels that *erlöschen* sounds "moderner" and *verlöschen* more literary. Yet another LEO participant is of the opinion that the verb *verlöschen* does not really exist and is at best "poetischer Unsinn". Some consider it to be dialectal, especially Swiss German.

den Löffel auf den Docht. Die Kerze erlischt.' Ungewöhnlicher finde ich in diesem Fall 'verlischt'.") This intuition reflects the relatively permanent change in the FG's functional state with *ver-*, as opposed to the perhaps temporary emergence of a process with *er-*.[131]

(39) a. Die Kerze *erlischt*, wenn der Sauerstoffgehalt unter etwa 16% sinkt.
          'The candle goes out [*er*-extinguishes] when the oxygen level sinks below about 16%'

      b. Diese Kerze *verlischt* nach einer Stunde, während in einer anderen Zeitzone neue Kerzen entzündet werden.
          'This candle goes out [*ver*-extinguishes] after an hour while new candles are lighted in another time zone'

2.3.2 Vertragen *vs* ertragen

Vertragen is not a very typical *ver-* verb and *ertragen* is not a very typical *er-* verb, but the contrast between them is interesting. *Vertragen* means to successfully endure a situation that is objectively difficult given the person's nature or constitution (Beaton 83, Eberhard 527). It refers prototypically to physically tolerating something such as food or alcohol or cold weather. *Ertragen* means to endure or bear a situation that is emotionally difficult. As one participant in an online forum puts it: 'du verträgst das warme Wetter nicht' means you have a physical reaction such as a headache, while 'du erträgst das warme Wetter nicht' means it gets to you psychically. Eberhard (527) observes that one person may *vertragen* insults out of a sense of honor or pride, i.e., be strong enough to take them, while another may *ertragen* them out of meekness, i.e., suffer through them. Compare *durchleiden*. Similarly, some people cannot *vertragen* prosperity because they become overconfident and make mistakes, i.e., they are not up to dealing with it. Eberhard quotes the stork in the fable: "Weil ihr die guten Tage nicht habt vertragen können, so ertragt nun die bösen." (Because you could not handle [*vertragen*] the good times you'll now have to suffer [*ertragen*] the bad times.) The *er-* verb implies a more complicated event with an unseen internal run-up process while the *ver-* verb describes a simpler and more superficial event.

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131. Some things that expire automatically on their own without outside intervention, such as memberships or contracts, are exclusively associated with *erlöschen* (Google: "Vertrag erlischt" 7,410, "Vertrag verlischt" 1), but their expiration is something that happens with respect to them rather than something that alters their definition. *Erlöschen* is also used exclusively with volcanos (Google: "Vulkan erlischt" 277, "Vulkan verlischt" 0), which remain the same after they stop erupting.

2.4   Summary of *ver-* vs *er-*

In its 'altering' variants *ver-* describes a FG that becomes altered in appearance or function, typically by an outside cause, and it can suggest a relatively permanent change. It describes a straightforward event in which everything that happens is apparent and nothing is hidden. *Er-'s* semantic FG is a base-verb process rather than a noun. In the 'emerging' variants that process begins as an unseen run-up process within the focal noun that defines the goal setting. When the process eventually emerges to become manifest on the surface, the host noun comes to be characterized by its presence. *Er-* verbs suggest a natural development that arises from within the host. They are sometimes also associated particularly with growth, especially upward but also outward. They do not say anything about how long the result will be in effect.

3.   *Ver-* vs *be-*

The difference between *ver-* verbs and *be-* verbs is usually clear enough. *Be-* verbs describe a distributed (typically iterative) process carried out on an accusative LM – with no intrinsic point of completion and no sense that the accusative LM is transformed or moved. *Ver-* verbs describe displacing a FG that can be either the nominative subject in an intransitive construction or the accusative object in a transitive construction, and the event is concluded at the point when the FG no longer has the same status that it originally had in the setting. About the only thing that *be-* and *ver-* have in common is a synoptic construal. As a result, direct competition between *be-* verbs and *ver-* verbs is rare (Günther 1974: 248–51) – notably so considering that they are the two most common verb prefixes in German.

The events described by *be-* verbs and *ver-* verbs are objectively similar only when an additive process consistent with a *be-* verb may also be taken to alter the accusative object, for example by obscuring it or transforming it. In that case the difference between the two constructions is basically that between an accusative LM and an accusative object that is originally a FG. *Be-* verbs describe directing an activity at a LM without substantially altering it, while *ver-* verbs describe making the accusative object disappear from view, or altering it so that it is no longer functionally the same as it was.

In (40) for example *bedecken* is the ordinary term to describe providing an accusative LM with a cover. It does not alter the accusative LM itself, and it does not necessarily cover it completely (cf *überdecken*). *Verdecken* by contrast implies that the ears are hidden and no longer clearly recognizable as such. The construal difference between an imperfective influence and a completed event of alteration is

subtly there even in sentences like (41). The *ver-* verbs imply that the FG is altered by the event (spoiled, misled, made an ass of), while the *be-* verbs describe ongoing processes of applying something to an accusative LM – sullying it perhaps, but not altering it.

(40) Das Tuch *bedeckt* die obere Hälfte der Stirn und lässt nur noch die üppig hervortretenden Schläfenlocken frei, die seine Ohren *verdecken*.
‘The cloth (*be-*)covers the upper half of his forehead and leaves only the amply protruding sidelocks loose, which (*ver-*)cover his ears’

(41) Ich glaube, jedes Volk ist zu jeder Zeit von seinen Politikern *verhätschelt*, *verführt*, *verarscht*, *belogen* und *beschissen* worden.
‘I believe every people at all times has been fawned over [*ver*-coddled], seduced [*ver*-led], taken for a ride [“*ver*-assed”], lied to [*be*-lied] and screwed [*be*-shat] by its politicians’

(42) a. Technisch ist es in einem Wiki jedem nicht gesperrten Benutzer möglich, jede Seite zu *bearbeiten*.
‘Technically it is possible for any unblocked user to edit [*be*-work] any page’

b. Zimmerer Gebhard Siems wird den Hobby-Handwerkern zeigen, wie das Rohmaterial zu *verarbeiten* ist.
‘The carpenter Gebhard Siems will show amateur craftsmen how the raw material is to be processed [*ver*-worked]’

(43) Nein, ich denke, Trauer kann man nicht *verarbeiten*, Trauer muss man *bearbeiten*.
‘No, I don’t think you can finish coming to terms with grief [*ver*-work it]; you have to keep treating it [*be*-work it]’

(44) Doch die Machos der Szene haben die Entwicklung nur *behindern*, aber nicht *verhindern* können.
‘But the macho men were only able to impede [*be*-hinder] the development, not prevent [*ver*-hinder] it’

Bearbeiten is appropriate to describe providing sustained treatment with no intrinsic point of completion, such as giving someone a massage, or working on fingernails with a brush, or editing a wiki page as in (42a). The edited wiki page is still recognizably the “same” wiki page. *Verarbeiten* implies that the thing being worked on is being processed and functionally altered (Beaton 804). The raw material in (42b) is altered into something else. Similarly, *behindern* contrasts with *verhindern* in a way that nicely reflects the basic meanings of the two prefixes. The *ver-* verb describes a completed event in which a FG is blocked from proceeding. If an event is *verhindert* then it does not take place. The *be-* verb describes burdening

an accusative LM with an indeterminate set of impediments, much as a verb like *belasten* imposes a handicap, but it does not describe essentially altering the LM's function. *Behindern* means that the progress of an event is impeded and made more difficult, perhaps delayed, but the impediments do not necessarily succeed in stopping the event from taking place (Duden *Richtiges und gutes Deutsch* 142).

4.   *Ver-* vs *zer-*

The schematic meanings for *zer-* and *ver-* are similar in several ways. Both images involve a focal noun that is a FG in the overall syntactic construction (either an intransitive subject or a transitive object). Both consist of before and after images for the synoptic setting, and both profile the loss of something that was in the original setting. In both cases the focal noun no longer has its original form or function, and the sense of loss often – though not necessarily – suggests demise. Both *ver-* and *zer-* verbs can sometimes be translated by English verbs with *dis-* or *de-* (as can *ent-*).

The difference between *ver-* and *zer-* is whether the focal noun is defined as part of a larger setting before it is lost, or whether the focal noun essentially *is* the setting for the loss of an implicit theme (much as *er-*'s goal setting can be identified with a focal host noun in the 'emerging' variants). With *ver-* the setting is wholly implicit and what is lost is the explicit focal noun (as it was originally defined in the setting). With *zer-* the setting is the explicit focal noun and what is lost is implicit – namely its internal structural connections.

Verfallen and *zerfallen* can thus describe similar events. The *ver-* verb means that the focal noun loses its original functional status, its proper place in the world – typically after a gradual "downward" process of decay. The *zer-* verb means that it loses its structural integrity in a more basic physical sense – typically by a relatively sudden disruption. *Zerfallen* does not involve the noun's relations to the outside world; *verfallen* does. A participant in a writer's forum (autorenforum.montsegur.de) asked whether *zerfallen* or *verfallen* is better in sentence (45). The respondents were unanimous in preferring *zerfallen* here because it describes complete physical disintegration. Generally speaking, if the event clearly involves internal disintegration or segmentation then *zer-* is called for and *ver-* does not really compete (*?verschneiden*, *?verreißen*, *?verbrechen*, *?verspalten*).

(45)   Nein, sie weigerte sich einfach, daran zu glauben, dass Dash ein Vampir gewesen und deshalb nach seinem Tod zu Staub *zerfallen* war.
'No, she simply refused to think that Dash had been a vampire and therefore had disintegrated [*zer*-fallen] to dust after his death'

(46) a. Die Deutschen *zersprengten* den Feind gründlich und verloren selbst nur 2 Mann verwundet.
          'The Germans thoroughly routed [*zer*-blasted] the enemy and had only two men wounded themselves'

    b. Bald gewannen die Bochumer in der nächtlichen wilden Schlacht die Oberhand und *versprengten* den Feind in alle Richtungen.
          'Soon the Bochumites gained the upper hand in the wild night battle and dispersed [*ver*-blasted] the enemy in all directions'

Versprengen and *zersprengen* are very similar in sentences like (46) when they refer to busting up an opposing military force. *Versprengen* can mean to disperse the opposition in the sense of driving it away, like *verscheuchen* or *vertreiben*. *Zersprengen* is very similar in meaning but it describes causing the opposition to disintegrate and fall apart. *Ver-* involves a larger situation, while *zer-* describes more absolute internal destruction.

When a liquid such as ink or paint dissolves and runs, either *verlaufen* (*verfließen*) or *zerlaufen* (*zerfließen*) can be used. *Verlaufen* profiles the blurring of the outlines, which blend together with the rest of the setting and become indistinct from it. The FG literally loses its definition with respect to its environs. Of course such blurring of the outlines is a pragmatic implication with *zerlaufen* as well, but that is only incidental to the meaning of the *zer-* verb. The *zer-* verb profiles the loss of structure within the noun itself. Since the loss of clear outline is usually the salient aspect of such events, *verlaufen* is considerably more common in sentences like (48). ("Tinte verläuft" returned 6,440 in a Google search, "Tinte zerläuft" 314.) *Ver-* is clearly called for in expressions like 'die Grenzen verlaufen', since they intrinsically describe the blurring of distinctions within a larger setting. *'Grenzen zerlaufen' makes no sense and almost never occurs, since borders are inherently relational and cannot just dissolve in isolation from their surroundings.

(47) a. Die Tinte *zerläuft* auf deinem Recyclingpapier!
          'The ink is dissolving [*zer*-running] on your recycled paper!'

    b. Je weniger die Tinte *verläuft*, desto schärfer und desto genauer ist der Ausdruck.
          'The less the ink (*ver*-)runs the sharper and therefore more precise the printout will be'

Ver- suggests lasting consequences, but its effects are tied to a situation (the setting in which the FG was defined). *Zer-* implies that the entropic event is more absolute and irreversible. *Verschleißen* is preferable in (48b) when the pants are being functionally impaired in a relatively superficial way, but *zerschlissen* is better in (48a)

to describe irreparable internal physical damage. *Verkratzen* in (49b) describes contaminating the glasses with superficial scratches so that they are functionally impaired. *Zerkratzen* in (49a) implies deeper scratches that ruin the structural integrity of the glasses and render them unusable and irreparable.

(48) a. Sie trägt ein weißes, wunderschönes Kleid während ich eine abgewetzte Latzhose und ein *zerschlissenes* Hemd trage.
'She is wearing a beautiful white dress while I'm wearing threadbare bib overalls and a tattered [*zer*-split] shirt'

   b. Er empfiehlt, auf eine Jeans während des Fahrens umzusteigen, anstatt die maßangefertigte Hose zu *verschleißen*.
'He recommends switching to jeans while riding instead of wearing out [*ver*-splitting] the custom-made pants'

(49) a. Hab mir den Arm gebrochen und meine Brillengläser *zerkratzt*.
'[I] broke my arm and (*zer*-)scratched my eyeglasses'

   b. Wenn Ihre Brillengläser *verkratzt* sind oder sich Ihre Sehstärkenwerte geändert haben, sollten Sie an neue Brillengläser denken.
'If your eyeglasses are (*ver*-)scratched or your eyesight has changed you should think about new glasses'

5. *Be-* vs route-path prefixes

Be- has much in common with the route-path prefixes *um-*, *durch-*, *unter-*, and *über-*. Most strikingly, they are all very strongly associated with accusative LMs. Moreover, the multi-directional route-path variants involve a multiplex of path vectors that is in many ways similar to the *be-* vectors. (The route-path prefixes do have core meanings with straightforwardly directed paths rather than diffuse ones, and they have corresponding synoptic variants for holistic paths, but the multi-directional variants can be considered their most characteristic uses.) Like the *be-* verb constructions, they imply a diminished role for a moving theme, which is non-individuated and is often expressed as the object in a *mit*-PP or as the root of a denominal verb. The main difference between multi-directional paths and *be-* paths is that the *be-* vectors share an overall direction. *Be-* has both a specified source for the path and a specified goal, while the route-path expressions do not specify either a source or a goal. As a result, they are available for purely fictive motion. Very subtly moreover, the route paths suggest an implicit point of completion when the LM as a whole has been covered, enveloped, or permeated. *Be-* verbs have no intrinsic point of completion.

The route-path prefixes compete with *be-* to express similar objective events mainly when they describe applicative events in their multi-directional variants, i.e., 'covering' with *über-*, 'enveloping' with *um-* or 'interspersing' with *durch-*. The difference between *um-* and *be-* is usually clear for objective reasons, since *um-* conveys a clear spatial image of bending around a curved surface as well as even distribution "all around" the LM. Compare *bekleiden* with *umkleiden*. *Durch-* can sometimes describe fairly random interspersal in the LM space and in that sense it can be closer to *be-*, but it marks the distribution as occurring in the interior of the LM while *be-* typically describes distributing over a surface. Compare *besetzen* with *durchsetzen*. (See Günther (1974: 242–43) and Dewell (2011: 193–4).) *Durch-* also implies thoroughness in a way that *be-* does not. *Durchnässen* in (50b) for example implies soaking thoroughly, while *benässen* in (50a) simply describes applying wetness in a more superficial way. *Über-* can be very similar to *be-*, but it suggests even distribution all over the LM surface and its vectors move horizontally across the surface to form a layer. By comparison, *be-* suggests randomly distributed occupation of a surface and its energy vectors are directed "downward" toward the surface (more like the preposition *auf* than *über*). In (51b) for example, *überstreuen* suggests uniform distribution of the sugar all over the surface of the cake to form a covering layer, while *bestreuen* in (51a) implies more random distribution and calls slightly more attention to the agentive activity at the source of the path.

(50) a. Wischen Sie mit einem feuchten Tuch über die beschädigte Stelle, um sie leicht zu *benässen*.
          'Wipe over the damaged area with a damp cloth in order to (*be-*)wet it slightly'

      b. Schon während dem Einlaufen begann heftiger Regen uns zu *durchnässen*.
          'Already during warmups a heavy rain was beginning to drench [*durch-*wet] us'

(51) a. Oder man *bestreut* den Kuchen einfach mit Puderzucker.
          'Or you can (*be-*)sprinkle the cake with powdered sugar'

      b. Wenn man die Butter gleichmäßig verteilt hat, mischt man Zucker und Vanille-Zucker und *überstreut* den Kuchen gleichmäßig damit.
          'When you have spread the butter evenly, mix sugar with vanilla sugar and cover [*über-*sprinkle] the cake evenly with it'

6.   *Be-* vs *ent-*

6.1   Antonyms

Applicative *be-* verbs and privative *ent-* verbs can often form clear antonym pairs such as those illustrated in (52)–(54). Other contrasting pairs could easily be added, e.g. *entwaffnen* and *bewaffnen*, *entladen* and *beladen*, *entlasten* and *belasten*, *entvölkern* and *bevölkern*, *entflecken* and *beflecken*, *entlüften* and *belüften*, *entstäuben* and *bestäuben*. Both constructions have accusative LMs, and both describe diffuse paths with a multiplex of vectors. Both are generally more common in technical language. Generally speaking, *ent-*'s privative uses are broader than *be-*'s applicative ones (Günther 1974: 244–5). *Ent-* verbs can describe removing things such as peels that never had to be added. Also, several prefixes can compete with *be-* for adding material substances (e.g. *durchfetten*, *verkalken*, *vergolden*), while *ent-* has the privative field more to itself.

(52)   Mit optionalen Komponenten kann *be-* und *entfeuchtet*, erwärmt und gekühlt werden.
'Optional components allow (*be-*)humidifying and dehumidifying [*ent-*humidifying], warming or cooling'

(53)   Sie möchten *begeistern* und nicht *entgeistern*.
'They want to inspire [*be-*spirit], not discourage [*ent-*spirit]'

(54)   Ignorierst Du sie so lange, bis die Vorwürfe gegen ihn *be-* oder *entkräftigt* werden?
'Are you going to ignore them until the charges against him are either confirmed [*be-*strengthened] or refuted [*ent-*strengthened]?'

With more abstract denominals there is some tendency for *be-* to prefer morphologically complex bases with *-igen* while *ent-* prefers the straightforward denominal root. For example, *bekräftigen* is commonly opposed to *entkräften* – though *entkräftigen* also occurs as in (54) and even *bekräften* can be documented occasionally. The same tendencies hold for *bemächtigen* and *entmachten* (as opposed to *entmächtigen*). Generally speaking, the morphologically complex base verbs suggest a more abstract image. Since *be-* profiles a verb activity and there is no theme argument necessarily included in its schematic meaning, it makes sense that it would prefer the more complex base verb. *Ent-* on the other hand does have a theme as part of its schematic image, so *ent-* verbs are more amenable to straightforward denominal roots that refer to that argument. Note the distinction between denominal *entschulden*, meaning to forgive a debt, and deadjectival *entschuldigen*, which is lexicalized for excusing behavior.

6.2   *Ent-* verbs vs *berauben*

Oddly, there is one type of construction in which *be-* verbs and *ent-* verbs seem almost synonymous, namely when an accusative LM is being cheated or robbed. Such events are objectively privative, and an *ent-* verb would seem to be the obvious prefix, but *be-* verbs are consistently preferred when the base verb refers to the act itself as opposed to the theme being removed (e.g. *berauben*, *betrügen*, *beschwindeln*, *beschummeln*, *bemogeln*). In (55) for example, 'ihn seiner Würde berauben' and 'ihn entmenschlichen' are parallel. Apparently cheating and robbing are primarily considered activities that are done *to* a person, with the implicit removal of something *from* the person considered to be only a secondary aspect of the event. ˀ*Entrauben* is very rare and occurs largely only in abstract metaphorical instances like (56), which refers to a painting of Maximilian without his imperial trappings. In other words, the focus is on the resulting state of no longer having the emblems of power, not on the act of robbing him of those emblems. When someone is literally robbed ("bereft") of something, *berauben* is clearly the preferred verb.

(55)   Denn die falsche Vergöttlichung des Eros, die hier geschieht, *beraubt* ihn seiner Würde, *entmenschlicht* ihn.
'For the false idolization of Eros that is going on here (*be-*)robs him of his dignity, dehumanizes him'

(56)   Der Kaiser ist hier aller seiner Insignien der Macht *entraubt*, vom Tod in schonungslosem Realismus zum Niemand *entblößt*.
'The Emperor is divested [*ent*-robbed] here of all of his emblems of power, exposed [*ent*-bared] by death to be a nobody portrayed in merciless realism'

(57)   Die eingescannten Aufnahmen wurden dann von Schmutz und Kratzern *befreit* sowie *entkörnt*, um das Bild zu stabilisieren.
'The scanned pictures were then (*be-*)freed of dirt and scratches as well as de-grained [*ent*-grained] to stabilize the image'

Another *be-* verb that deserves mention in this context is *befreien*. In (57) for example *befreien* (*von*..) is parallel to the normal privative verb *entkörnen*. *Entkörnen* means roughly 'to free of grain', while 'von Schmutz befreien' means roughly 'to free of dirt'. Apparently, freeing something is considered a "positive" act rather than one in which restrictions are removed.[132]

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132.   *Beseitigen* is another odd *be-* verb that describes objective events that are much like those described by *entfernen*.

7.   *Be-* vs *er-*

Both *be-* and *er-* prompt a synoptic construal of a path that leads to a LM goal space, but they are otherwise so different that there is almost never any real competition between them. With *be-* the path is prominently profiled, typically sustained, originates at an explicit external source, and involves diffuse distribution in the accusative-LM space. There is no intrinsic point of completion. With *er-* the approach path is backgrounded as a run-up process that takes place outside of the synoptic setting defined by the accusative object, there is no explicit source, the path cannot be iterative, and there is a definite moment of completion – namely the profiled moment of arrival at the goal.

Every once in a while a *be-* verb can describe influencing an accusative object in a way that is similar in objective effect to causing a property to emerge and characterize the object. *Beruhigen* for example can have an effect that is somewhat similar to that of *erheitern*. In a couple of cases *be-* and *er-* can even contrast directly with the same base verbs to describe roughly similar events. Again, the *be-* verb profiles an ongoing causal activity while the *er-* verb profiles a resulting state that is achieved after a run-up process.

Beleuchten for example is a perfectly ordinary *be-* verb that describes providing something with light from an outside source on a sustained basis. *Erleuchten* can describe very similar events, but it suggests illumination as if from within and focuses on the resulting appearance (Farrell 156, Günther 1974: 246, Fleischer 1971: 300–1). As Beaton (403) puts it, *erleuchten* "gives the impression of an observer seeing bright light in, or coming from, a room, house, town, etc." *Erleuchten* also tends to describe a single original event that seems sudden compared with the ongoing process described by *beleuchten* (Farrell 156). In cognitive uses like (60), *beleuchten* means to 'throw light on a thing' from all sides, while the somewhat archaic and elevated *erleuchten* "denotes the illumination or inspiration of the mind" (Farrell 156) – i.e., a developmental process from within a host object that results in a completed event after a run-up process.

(58)   Riesige Scheinwerfer *beleuchten* das Stadion und lassen es in einem matten weißen Schein *erleuchten*.
'Giant spotlights (*be-*)illuminate the stadium and cause it to shine [*er*-illuminate] in a dull white glow'

(59)   a.   Er wird dieses immer wichtiger werdende Thema *beleuchten* und uns erklären, warum die Energiewende von uns von so großer Bedeutung ist.
'He will shed light on [*be*-illuminate] this increasingly important topic and explain to us why our energy turnaround is so significant'

b. In diesem Moment geht der Geist des Messias in ihn ein und *erleuchtet* ihn.
    'At that moment the spirit of the Messiah enters into him and enlightens (*er*-illuminates) him'

Beweisen and *erweisen* are used almost interchangeably by many speakers to describe proving something, but the schematic meanings of the two prefixes are still distinguishable if a careful choice is being made. *Beweisen* implies satisfactorily proving something by amassing evidence for it, but the *be-* verb construction does not imply any particular point at which the process is definitively concluded. *Erweisen* by contrast describes proving the validity of something once and for all, adding the finality of attaining a goal (and possibly also the added difficulty suggested by the run-up process). Something may be partially *bewiesen*, but if it is *erwiesen* then the matter has been decided. In effect, *erweisen* profiles successfully completing the process described by *beweisen* (Eberhard 493). (*Erhärten* similarly implies confirming so that the validity cannot be challenged.) The distinction between *errechnen* and *berechnen* is similar, with the *be-* verb profiling the process and the *er-* verb the completed achievement.

8. *Ent-* vs *er-*

8.1 Near antonyms

Er- and *ent-*are in some ways opposites. *Er-* describes beginning to occupy a space, while *ent-* describes vacating a space. Occasionally *er-* verbs and *ent-* verbs can in fact describe directly opposing events, as when *ermutigen* describes causing courage to emerge from within a person and *entmutigen* describes causing a person to be drained of courage. Compare also *erhärten* and *enthärten*. Such directly opposing *er-* verbs and *ent-* verbs are not common, however. When the two prefixes occur with the same base verb the compounds are more typically lexicalized to have largely unrelated meanings. Examples include *ersetzen* (replace) and *entsetzen* (horrify), *erstellen* (construct) and *entstellen* (distort), *erschließen* (develop economically) and *entschließen* (decide), *erhalten* (receive, maintain) and *enthalten* (contain).

(60) Allerdings weiß ich nicht, ob mich das jetzt *er-* oder *entmutigt*.
      'Mind you I don't know if I'm now encouraged or discouraged [*er-* or *ent*-couraged]'

8.2   'Originating' vs 'emerging'

Some objective events could be construed either as 'originating' (with an *ent-* verb) or as 'emerging' (with an *er-* verb). An *er-* verb like *erwachsen* in (61) or *erblühen* in (62a) profiles the positive emergence of a process in a synoptic goal space after an unseen run-up process from an implicit source. An *ent-* verb like *entspringen* or *entstehen* in (61) draws attention to separating and developing out of a source and presumes an implicit resulting location for the focal theme after it has separated from its source.

(61)   Der Durst wurzelt im Gefühl, *entspringt* aus dem Gefühl, *entsteht* aus dem Gefühl, *erwächst* aus dem Gefühl.
'The thirst is rooted in feeling, originates [*ent*-springs] out of feeling, arises [*ent*-stands] out of feeling, (*er*-)grows out of feeling'

(62)   a.   BERLIN. Die Grüne Stadt *erblüht* wieder neu.
'BERLIN: The green city (*er*-)blooms anew'

   b.   Aus der einst getrennten Stadt *entblüht* ein wunderschön hässlich, kaltes und zugleich herzlich warmes Berlin.
'Out of the once divided city (*ent*-)blooms a beautifully ugly, cold and at the same time cordially warm Berlin'

Direct competition with the same base verb is not common. Much as there tends to be a lexicalized division of labor between 'altering' *ver-* verbs and 'emerging' *er-* verbs, the choice between 'originating' *ent-* and 'emerging' *er-* usually depends on the base verb. If the base verb suggests that a focal noun is a FG that arises into existence then an *ent-* verb is the normal choice, while an *er-* verb comes into play only if the base verb suggests emerging as a perceptible property that characterizes a host noun. *Ent-* is the normal choice with base verbs for springing up (*entspringen*, *entquellen*), sprouting (*entsprießen*, *entstammen*), or catching fire and flaming up (*entbrennen*, *entflammen*, *entfachen*, *entzünden*), as well as in the lexicalized verb *entstehen*. *Er-* is used with base-verb processes that suggest perceptible resulting activities for the focal noun, such as *blühen*, *glühen*, *klingen*, or *wachen*.

   When an 'originating' *ent-* verb is well established the corresponding *er-* verbs are rare, even when it might also be sensible to portray the event as emerging at a goal space rather than separating from a source. *Erspringen* for example, although it is the historical source of the noun *Ursprung*, is now more apt to mean 'gain by jumping'. *Erstehen* certainly makes sense in the meaning 'arise' (compare *erwachen*, *erblühen*, *erwachsen*, *errichten*) and it does occur to suggest being reborn or restored, but it is rare in comparison with the ordinary word *entstehen*, and it is stylistically marked as elevated. If *er-* verbs like *ersprießen* do occur they tend to be poetic, the kind of word you expect to find in a Wagner libretto.

By the same token, *ent-* verbs rarely compete seriously with established *er-* verbs. *Erblühen* in (62a) for example is the normal way to describe an organic developmental process that emerges from within the focal noun (the city), one that maintains the noun's essential nature. The rare use of *entblühen* in (62b) suggests a new city, implying separation from the past rather than continuity. Berlin in (62b) is a FG that comes into existence, while Berlin in (62a) is a place that comes to be characterized by a newly emerging condition. Similarly, verbs like *entglühen* or *entklingen* occur only if there is marked focus on separating from a distinct source, and that source is typically specified as a dative object or in an *aus-*PP.

Entwickeln holds our attention on the source from which something develops (unwinds), while *erwachsen* directs our attention at a goal space that is eventually achieved by the growth process as it reaches its intrinsic potential. *Erwachsen* contrasts clearly with *entwachsen*, which profiles the moment of separating from a distinct source, outgrowing it and leaving it behind. (*Entwachsen* is like the *über-* verbs for competitive surpassing (outdoing), except that the *ent-* verb profiles separating rather than extending further.)

9.   The system of verb prefixes

According to the Duden *Grammatik* (421) *ver-* is the most common prefix, accounting for roughly 45% of the prefixed verbs. *Be-* is next with roughly 25% of the verbs, then comes *ent-* with 15% and *er-* with 10%. These figures reflect the number of separately attested verbs, however, not the number of times that those verbs occur, and they do not include the route-path prefixes. In terms of total number of occurrences as measured by COSMAS counts in the form with *zu* and infinitive, *be-* and *ver-* are more or less tied as the most common prefixes and *er-* is surprisingly close behind. *Über-* and *ent-* (or *emp-*) are well back, with *unter-* well behind them, and the others (*zer-*, *durch-*, *um-*) bringing up the rear.[133]

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133. A COSMAS search for "zu [prefix]*n" returned 1,083,039 instances with *ver-*, adjusted to 1,074,753 by removing the adjectival forms *verschieden(st)en, vergangenen, verrückten, verlorenen, verbotenen, verletzten, vergessen*. *Be-* had 1,100,408, adjusted to 1,084,052 by removing the unprefixed verbs *beten, beben, beißen, bellen, bersten, bergen, beugen, beißen, betonieren*, as well as the adjectival *beiden, berühmten, besonderen*. *Er-* had 960,340, adjusted to 958,990 by removing *erben, erhaben, erden*. *Über-* had 229,860, *ent-* 215,880, *unter-* 140,991, *zer-* 17,971, *emp-* 17,327, *durch-* 14,291, *um-* 12,444.)

9.1   The synoptic construal pattern

The verb prefixes are very abstract semantically and they occur in a wide range of specific variants, but there is a considerable amount of underlying regularity in the system. The common denominator defining all of the prefixed verbs semantically is that they prompt a synoptic construal. Much of this book has been devoted to comparing prefixed verb constructions with unprefixed verb constructions that describe similar objective events, and those comparisons consistently reveal distinctions that can be traced to a synoptic construal as opposed to a sequential one.

One way to look at the difference between synoptic construals and sequential ones is to think in terms of the overall pattern of directing focal attention to as we build up an interpretation. A sequential construal, i.e., a construal prompted by a verb construction without a prefix, is an essentially analytic process from the general to the particular. The interpretation presumes a general setting, most typically generic space-time. A specific region of the setting is typically designated as the LM. The interpreter then imagines the overall structure of the verb event, to the extent that one is specified, for example the curved path around a LM that is conveyed by the preposition *um* (Figure 4). That abstract path image is situated in the setting relative to the LM. The interpreter ultimately zooms in further to concentrate attention on a FG (typically one that is engaged in an accompanying activity). The FG then instantiates the structured path by occupying each particular location in sequence. The key aspect of the sequential construal is that a noun FG is ultimately focal and is related to an overall path structure, and the path structure in turn is situated relative to a LM and an even more backgrounded larger setting. The overall pattern in a sequential construal is one of establishing backgrounds and then zooming in to concentrate attention on more specific elements within those backgrounds, ultimately focusing on one or more noun FGs and their activities.[134]

Where sequential construals ultimately zoom in to concentrate attention on a noun FG at a particular place and time, synoptic construals ultimately distribute attention and work from inside out. Rather than "opening" the verb event to look

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134. I am obviously simplifying a very complicated process here. The interpretative sequence is a logical one that accounts for the meaning of the constructions, but it does not necessarily correspond to the actual temporal sequence in a speaker's mind in real time. The logical sequence does not necessarily correspond to the order of assembling syntactic constituents either, though it does seem plausible to imagine a progression from "satellites" such as PPs that frame a structured event, to verbs that provide information about how the event proceeds, to nouns that instantiate the event by filling participant roles implied by the verb. Contrast the "verb-framed" progression suggested by a synoptic construal. The essential point, however, is simply that a focal FG presumes a verb structure that it plays a role in, and a focal verb structure presumes a larger setting.

"inside", the synoptic interpretation "wraps" it into a shaped whole, including what-
ever participants and accompanying activities may be involved "in" it. The whole
verb event is then placed in a larger synoptic setting (which is normally defined
in terms of a focal noun that is a part of the setting). The synoptic interpreting
process is essentially holistic as opposed to the analytic process that characterizes
a sequential construal.

The route-path prefixes, as well as *be-*, *ent-*, and 'attaining' *er-*, thus all locate a
structured path relative to a focal LM. *Zer-* and 'emerging' *er-* do too, but the "LM"
also hosts the verb event and can be identified with the setting. *Ver-* relates an event
of displacement to an implicit setting that is identified only as the original setting
for the focal noun. In all cases the synoptic construal ultimately relates a whole
structured verb event to a larger setting, which normally includes a focal LM.

Put another way, the semantic "FG" for the verb prefixes is not a noun with a
profiled role in the verb event; it is the verb event itself, with a profiled role in the
setting. The unprefixed verb constructions ultimately relate a noun FG to a verb
event. The prefixed verb constructions ultimately relate a verb event to a setting.[135]

9.2   The semantic FGs (the verb events)

At the most schematic level then, all of the prefixes relate a whole event to a synop-
tic setting. Their semantic FGs are not nouns but verb processes with an aspectual
contour. Those verb processes can be either paths or momentary events.

In one typical type, the verb processes are conceived as paths (represented
in the schematic diagrams as arrows), and the paths are located with respect to a
focal LM in the setting. That is the case with the route paths (*über-*, *unter-*, *um-*,
durch-), with *be-*, and with *ent-*. The paths can sometimes be linear, as is the case
with 'holistic' route paths and the 'escape' variants of *ent-*, but more typically the
paths are diffuse and consist of a multiplex of vectors. That is the case with *be-*,
with the multi-directional route paths, and with privative *ent-*. With diffuse paths
nothing tempts us to concentrate attention on any particular sequence of locations.

The 'escaping' variants for *ent-* may technically profile a linear path, but they
usually suggest a nearly momentary event – the moment when the theme is freed

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135. Because prefixed verb constructions relate a whole structured verb event to a synoptic set-
ting, they almost universally tend not to occur with goal phrases. At the end of the synopticized
event we are not concentrating focal attention on a FG that might move on to a new location or
state the way we would be in a sequential construal. The occasional apparent exceptions to this
principle (with 'transfer' *über-* verbs and the "loss" prefixes *ver-*, *zer-*, and *ent-*) are remarkably
rare, and careful analysis shows that most of them do not have true goal phrases. See the discus-
sion in Section 7 of Chapter 6 with respect to *ver-* verbs.

from a hold. *Er-* similarly combines elements of both a path and a momentary event. Its semantic FG is an extending path, but the path remains a backgrounded run-up process until the profiled moment when it arrives at a goal space. Strictly speaking then, *er-* relates a momentary event to a synoptic setting. Its schematic diagram shows a before-and-after sequence for the setting, first with the process only anticipated there and then with the process actually apparent there. In that sense *er-* is like *zer-* and *ver-*, except that *zer-* and *ver-* profile moments of loss from a setting rather than gain, and those prefixes do not strictly involve any path. With *ver-* and *zer-* there is no profiled extending path (no arrow in the diagrams), only a sequence of synoptic settings that first contain something and then do not.

9.3 The semantic LMs (the synoptic settings)

The semantic "LMs" for the prefixes are in all cases a synoptic setting. Those settings usually suggest some nonspatial features, so that the setting for the event is not merely generic space-time. (If the setting were purely unmarked, then we would be inclined to background it and zoom in on FGs in a sequential construal.) The settings are normally defined in terms of a focal noun. The focal nouns are most typically accusative LMs that locate a path (with route paths, *be-*, privative *ent-*, 'attaining' *er-*). 'Escaping' *ent-* verbs typically have a dative participant that defines the setting for the event of separation. Focal nouns can also sometimes be essentially identified with the setting, in which case they are expressed as grammatical FGs that host the events (intransitive subjects, or else accusative objects in causative constructions). That is the case with 'emerging' *er-* and with *zer-*. *Ver-* is a special case in which the focal noun is a grammatical FG that is implicitly linked to the setting that it originally appears in.

9.4 Gains and losses

Another basic way to characterize the system of prefixes is whether they profile gain or loss – the presence of a new relation in the setting or the discontinuation of a prior relation. The more "positive" group of prefixes includes *be-*, the route-path prefixes, and *er-*. They all profile a new relation that comes into existence in the synoptic setting, so that the setting gains something that was not there before.

   The other group contains the prefixes that can correspond to English *dis-* or *de-* or *un-*. *Zer-* profiles the loss of an implicit multiplex of internal structural bonds. *Ver-* profiles the loss of a FG from its original defining role in the setting – the moment when the FG ceases to be a FG in that setting. *Ent-* profiles the loss of

a theme from a prior relation linking it to an accusative LM or to something else that was originally exercising a hold on it.

It follows that everything involved in the profiled event is apparent in the synoptic setting from the start with the 'loss' prefixes *ent-*, *ver-*, and *zer-*. That includes the implicit structural bonds with *zer-*, and it is an important factor in the subtle aspectual implications of privative *ent-* verbs. Since the implicit theme supply is apparent throughout the event, *ent-* events have an intrinsic point of completion that is reached when the supply is all gone. With *be-* by contrast a theme supply is not apparent and *be-* events have no intrinsic point of completion.

9.5 Grammatical patterns

9.5.1 *Noun roles*

Prefixes usually have one focal noun as part of their schematic meaning, and that focal noun usually indicates the semantic LM for the relation profiled by the prefix. If there is a second focal noun in the construction it will be the nominative subject, typically an external agent that causes the event profiled by the prefix. In a few cases the grammatical subject indicates the theme for a linear extending path (holistic route paths, 'attaining' *er-*, 'escaping' *ent-*).

The focal noun is very often an accusative LM that locates a path, as is typically the case with *be-*, privative *ent-* and the route-path prefixes *über-*, *unter-*, *um-*, and *durch-*. Most typically, the constructions locate a diffuse multiplex of path vectors relative to the accusative LM, and there is an external agentive subject that initiates the path. The constructions often involve an implicit moving theme that is diffuse and non-individuated. Such themes are often expressly indicated by a denominal root or in an oblique *mit*-PP (or, less commonly, as a genitive object in a 'divesting' construction with privative *ent-*).

The route-path prefixes can also describe linear holistic paths (e.g. *überqueren*), and they generally have accusative LMs in those variants as well. The only grammatical difference is that there is no external agent, so the theme that moves on the path needs to be expressed as the nominative subject rather than being left implicit or specified only obliquely as a denominal root or in a *mit*-PP. That is also the situation with the 'attaining' variants of *er-* verbs (e.g. *erreichen*). Like the holistic paths, the *er-* verb constructions cannot have an implicit theme expressed by a denominal root or the object of a *mit*-PP, because the nominative subject is itself the entity presumed to be moving or extending on the path.

The 'escape' variants with *ent-* (e.g. *entkommen*) also describe a linear path with a theme that serves as the grammatical subject. Now however the path is a relatively momentary one – the moment of separation when the theme is no longer

held in its original position. These *ent-* verbs usually have a second focal noun that serves to indicate the setting, but the second noun is not an accusative LM; it is a participant that loses its hold on the FG and typically appears as a dative object. Since there is no accusative LM, the theme can also be expressed as an accusative object in a causative construction.[136]

The other prefixed verb constructions are the ones whose prefixes describe a truly momentary event rather than a path. They all have only one focal noun, and that noun is a syntactic FG – either an intransitive subject or an accusative object with an external causative agent as subject.[137] In the case of *zer-* and the 'emerging' variants of *er-* the focal noun can essentially be identified with the synoptic setting for the event profiled by the prefix. With *er-*, the host noun indicates the goal space attained by the profiled process. With *zer-*, the host noun indicates the object whose implicit internal structural bonds are lost. In each case the focal noun is semantically a LM as far as the prefix is concerned, but it also hosts the profiled process and comes to be characterized by it, which gives it FG status for the overall construction. Compare Langacker's (1991: 345–51) discussion of "setting-subject" constructions such as the English sentence 'The garden is swarming with bees'.

With *ver-* the syntactic FG is a true noun FG in the setting (as opposed to being either a LM or a host that in effect *is* the setting). The *ver-* FG is only there as such at the beginning of the interpretation, however. What *ver-* profiles is the moment when the FG ceases to have its original FG role in the setting. In a sense the FG does serve to indicate the setting, which is defined only implicitly as the frame in which the FG is originally defined. *Ver-* is the only prefix that does not have a specified LM, so the only other syntactic participant role that it can have is an external causal subject.

The host nouns with *zer-* and 'emerging' *er-* are typically bounded physical things, but otherwise the prefixed verb constructions are inclined to describe abstract events with vaguely diffuse participants. The nouns are not typically concrete shaped things that attract concentrated attention.

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136.   There are also occasional special cases in which lexicalized *über-* verbs and *unter-* verbs have themes that are syntactic FGs and LMs that are implicit in the setting (e.g. *übersetzen*). (Compare also the special 'scalar' constructions with verbs like *überschätzen*.)

137.   The focal nouns with prefixed verbs are internal arguments of the verb, as opposed to agentive external arguments. Semantically, they are the nouns that have primary focal prominence at the conclusion of the construal, and prefixed verbs always profile the final stage of an event. (The synoptic construal does not leave us poised to continue the sequence further downstream.)

9.5.2   *Base verbs*

The type of verb event that is being related to the setting is specified by the prefix. With the route-path prefixes the semantic FG is known to be a path that is either holistic or multi-directional, with *be-* and privative *ent-* it is a multiplex of path vectors, with 'escaping' *ent-* it is a separation path, with *er-* it is an extending verb process, with *zer-* it is a distributed loss of structure, with *ver-* it is a moment of alteration.

The base verbs can further characterize the event in a variety of ways. They may directly characterize the process so that the base verb essentially is equivalent to the semantic FG, particularly when the processes are construed to be extending paths that correspond to arrows in the schematic images (e.g. *erkämpfen*, *erblühen*, *beklopfen*, *entschlüpfen*, *durchwandern*, *umlaufen*). The base verbs may also characterize the theme for the path (e.g. *bewaffnen*, *entwaffnen*, *überzuckern*, *umhüllen*).

When the prefix profiles a momentary event of loss the base verbs do not correspond as directly to the semantic FG. They may indicate an activity that characterizes what is changing (e.g. *verklingen*) or the manner of the change (e.g. *zerkrümeln*). The manner of change often involves a general direction for the change (e.g. *verändern*, *verfallen*, *zerfallen*). The base verbs frequently indicate the cause of the profiled loss (e.g. *zerschneiden*, *entreißen*, *vertreiben*, *verwickeln*, *versperren*).

The prefixes that profile a multiplex of path vectors in relation to an accusative LM are particularly apt to express the theme as a denominal root. That is true for *be-* and the multi-directional route paths, and it is especially characteristic of privative *ent-*. Even when these prefixes have deadjectival base verbs the root adjective tends to be construed metaphorically as a mass theme.

When the semantic FG for the prefix is a linear path on the other hand, i.e. with holistic route paths, 'escaping' *ent-*, or 'attaining' *er-*, denominal base verbs do not normally occur because their subject fills the theme role. With *er-* moreover, the base verb indicates a profiled process that can extend as a run-up process, making a denominal verb inappropriate. 'Emerging' *er-* does, however, occur frequently with deadjectival base verbs that indicate an emerging predicate.

Ver- generally has the fewest restrictions on the type of base verb, since its schematic meaning does not specify anything except a displaced FG. *Ver-* also has fewer morphological and phonological restrictions on which base verbs it can combine with. *Er-* and *ent-* for example do not readily occur with compound base verbs (other than the common types with suffixes like *-lichen* or *-igen*). According to Stiebels (1996: 224), *ver-* and *ent-* are the only prefixes that allow non-native base verbs (*erpolitisieren). In fact, *ver-* functions as a kind of generic prefix when the base verbs already have a stressed prefix (e.g. *veranlassen*, *verabreichen*, *verunglücken*, *vervollständigen*, *versinnbildlichen*). *Be-* can also serve this

kind of generic function with morphologically unusual base verbs (e.g. *bevorzugen*, *beanspruchen*, *beeinflussen*, *bevollmächtigen*, *bewerkstelligen*).

Aside from verbs of motion, the same base verbs that can be used in intransitive constructions with *ver-*, *zer-*, or *er-* can typically also appear in transitive constructions. This behavior prompted Belz (1997: 286) to adopt Janda's (1986) term "para-ergative" in her discussion of *ver-*. In such cases there is little difference between a transitive construction and one with an intransitive verb and *lassen*. Contrast the basically transitive verbs that can be used reflexively to describe nearly the same events as intransitive constructions.

9.5.3   *Aspectual implications*

Be- verbs profile a multiplex of path vectors and describe a process that has no intrinsic point of completion. That is often a key difference between *be-* verbs and simple verbs. Every other prefix besides *be-* does imply an intrinsic point of completion, though some define that point more straightforwardly than others.

Ver-, *zer-*, and *er-* all directly profile momentary (punctual) events. 'Escaping' *ent-* comes very close to describing a punctual event as well. In any event the linear path arrow in *ent-*'s schematic 'escaping' image is like the holistic route paths, i.e., it involves temporal extent but is read as a complete whole event being situated in a setting.

Multi-directional route paths on the other hand are are temporally diffuse, much as *be-* is, and so they are not straightforwardly perfective. The constructions do imply an intrinsic point of completion, however, that is defined in terms of the accusative LM. The events can be considered complete when the whole LM can be said to be covered, surrounded, or permeated. Privative *ent-* similarly involves a diffuse multiplex of path vectors, but unlike *be-* its theme supply is apparent in the synoptic setting. The *ent-* event is known to be complete when all of the theme has been removed from the LM.

While all but *be-* imply an intrinsic point of completion, there are other subtle aspectual differences between the prefixes. Those with path FGs call some attention to temporal extent, so that *ent-* for example may suggest a slightly more protracted event than *ver-* does. *Er-* ultimately profiles a momentary event of arrival at the goal space, but it necessarily involves a preceding run-up process that makes the event aspectually more complex (a run-up achievement). *Ver-* often suggests that its FG is already moving in a particular direction when it is displaced, so that a verb such as *vergehen* suggests a period of motion before the profiled moment of displacement. *Zer-* is often associated with an ensuing path such as collapse after the structural bonds have been broken, so that a verb such as *zerfallen* can suggest that a process with temporal extent accompanies the profiled loss of structure as a kind of adverbial specification.

9.6   Summary

Prefixed verb constructions in German consistently relate a verb event to a setting, with the whole event construed synoptically. Each individual prefix can be understood to reflect a highly abstract schematic meaning, an opening pattern of interpretation that is then elaborated in specific contexts and grammatical variants. The choice of one prefix over another consistently reflects the schematic meanings, sometimes in refined and very subtle ways, and the same goes for the choice of a prefixed construction rather than one with a simple verb or a particle verb.

Über-, *unter-*, *um-*, and *durch-* profile synopticized route paths over, under, around, and through a LM, and those paths can be holistic or multi-directional. *Be-* profiles a synopticized diffuse path directed at an accusative LM. *Ent-* profiles either a synopticized diffuse path separating from an accusative LM or a synopticized escape from the hold of a more active participant. *Er-* profiles the attainment of a synoptic goal space by a process that begins as a backgrounded run-up process, and the process often emerges from beneath the surface of a host noun that can be identified with the goal space. *Zer-* profiles a synopticized diffuse breakdown of a host object's internal structural framework. *Ver-* calls attention to a FG defined in a synoptic setting and then profiles the loss of its original status in that setting.

10. Theoretical implications

To the extent that the comprehensive descriptive account presented in this study is accurate, it implicitly provides evidence for a range of general principles about how the human mind organizes and interprets language expressions. Several of these semantic principles are still not widely appreciated or understood, so it may be appropriate to close by recalling some of them more explicitly.

One basic presumption is that grammatical constructions have meaning in and of themselves (see Goldberg 1995, 2006); i.e., grammatical meaning is distinct from the meaning of a construction's more specific constituents, and it goes beyond assigning purely formal syntactic relations. Crucially, grammatical meaning must be approached in terms of construal rather than objective information. Grammatical meaning serves to organize the interpretation by directing how our attention should be distributed as we imagine the objective scene. In the case of German prefixed verb constructions we are prompted to construe the objective event in synoptic mode, and the meaning of each individual verb prefix needs to be understood in that context.

If we grant that grammatical constructions organize the construal of objective information, then we cannot help but acknowledge a crucial semantic role for the interpreter's imagined perspective (vantage, direction of focal attention). Moreover, that perspective must be conceived as dynamic, as changing in the course of interpreting a single event (see e.g. Dewell 2007a, 2007b). Compare the frequent changes of perspective involved in perception (such as turning the head and eyes to direct focal attention).

The role of a dynamically changing perspective is obvious in distinguishing sequential construals from synoptic ones. It is also crucial for understanding the meaning of all the other constructions that interact with prefixed verb constructions. Even the basic assignment of FG-LM roles can change during a single interpretation. A noun that is first construed as a LM for example can later take on the status of a FG. In fact, the accusative case schematically directs us to shift focal attention to the accusative noun at some point before we have finished interpreting a verb event (Dewell 2000), and that normally means that a LM becomes a FG. (Think of the shifting roles of a baseball that is struck and then flies through a window.) A mobile perspective also plays an essential role in pervasive cognitive processes such as the multiplex-mass transformation that underlies multi-vector paths. Fictive motion is another good example of a phenomenon that cannot be understood without acknowledging a dynamic scanning pattern.

Another fundamental principle is the existence of schematic meanings. Every construction discussed in the book can be understood to prompt an extremely abstract initial pattern of interpretation that distinguishes it from the contrasting constructions in the language. A schematic meaning can be thought of as a cognitive average, an implicit underlying pattern that serves as a common denominator for all of the myriad more particular interpretations that speakers have learned to associate with the construction. It reflects the efficient way that the human brain organizes itself into structured patterns.

Obviously schematic meanings must be extremely flexible so that they can blend with an almost limitless variety of other patterns that may be active in the context. That flexibility comes in part from their extremely abstract nature. The schematic images proposed in this book for example are often neutral with respect to directional orientation and sometimes even for contact, and all of the shapes are subject to manipulation. The schematic *be-* vectors can refer to anything from paths by physical objects to pure directed attention. They ultimately correspond to an interpreter's scanning pattern.

The flexibility of schematic images is intimately related to the notion of prototypicality. Prototypes can be understood as the normally expected continuation of a schematic pattern, i.e., as more particular interpretations that can be assumed in

the absence of any conflicting information in the context. An *um* path for example is prototypically round, but we can adapt that image to allow for a range of altered shapes – as long as the shape does not become too similar to the schematic image of a contrasting construction.

Consider the prototypical meanings of an accusative object of the verb (and the intimately related principle of FG-LM assignment). Accusative objects are typically LMs in the early stages of the interpretation, i.e., prominent parts of the setting that serve to locate the subject and its activity. Then, in keeping with the schematic meaning of the accusative, they receive the primary focal attention before the event is concluded. At that point they prototypically become FGs (such as the ball that is hit through a window). More specifically, they prototypically become themes that move into a new location or state – often as affected patients. These are our default expectations for accusative objects of the verb in the absence of more particular context.

Occasionally however, the context may channel the interpretation away from the prototype. In the special case of accusative LMs for example the accusative object still becomes the primary focal noun at the conclusion of the event, in keeping with the schematic meaning of the construction, but it does not become a semantic FG in the prototypical manner. The reason is that the verb event itself – rather than a noun – functions as the semantic FG. The accusative object can thus become the primary focal noun yet still remain a LM semantically (a prominent part of the setting that serves to locate the verb event).

In a closely related observation, it is fair to say that a prototypical FG is a simple object that can move as a whole. Frequently however we need to override that presumption and distinguish more particular types of FG, including extending objects, extended objects, and objects that host an internal process. The image of an extending object is especially important as the metaphorical basis for verb processes that are systematically construed to extend in time. All of the schematic paths represented as arrows with prefixes like *be-* or *um-* or *er-* reflect that metaphor, and the image is crucial to understanding the semantics of verb aspect generally. Compare also the discussion of incremental themes in Dewell (2011).

In all of these cases we are dealing with pervasive, dynamic mental patterns that are better understood in imagistic terms rather than as propositional labels. There is nothing about a propositional label that suggests an important role for perspective, whereas an imagistic representation at least implicitly reflects a point of view that we can imagine changing. In any event, interpreted meanings are structured cognitive processes that are prompted by symbols. They are not themselves symbols. (If they were, then *those* symbols would require interpretation.)

Interpreted meaning is a dynamic process by an actively constructing interpreter, a process that begins with highly schematic patterns that differentiate one construction from the alternatives that the language offers. Those patterns blend and interact with each other and with prototypical assumptions and with non-linguistic knowledge to form more particular imagined events. Grammatical constructions prompt the interpreter to adopt particular patterns of directing focal attention in order to construe the objective information. Without general assumptions like these we will never gain an adequate understanding of the meaning of individual verb prefixes and of prefixed verb constructions in German. In that sense I hope that this book contributes to our understanding of human cognitive processing.

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