
Reflexive Binding, Order and Change of State in certain German Prefix and Particle verb types

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We present an analysis of the change of state interpretation of German verbs that feature one of the inseparable prefixes *durch*, *über*, *um* or *unter* or the separable particle *zu*. Accordingly, the prefix verb types are restricted by a relation to a directional adverbial structure (*build on*, *build around*), cf. the applicative structure in (1a) and adverbial structure in (1b).

- (1) a. Man umbaut [die Anlagen]_{Theme} (mit Sandburgen).
one surrounds the facilities with sand.castles
b. Man baut Sandburgen [um die Anlagen]_{Goal}.
one builds sand.castles around the facilities

The prefix verb structure (1a) presents the THEME argument as affected in an eventuality that involves it as well as the GOAL, cf. (1b) as entailed by (1a). Reflexive binding of the element providing the eventuality's endpoint thus derives a perfective (totalized, result state) property predicated of the THEME. Surprisingly in view of fundamentally different particle verb syntax, *zu* produces types partaking in the same constructional pattern (1a) also without corresponding adverbial structures, cf. the types in (2).

- (2) *zutexten* 'overtext', *zusammen* 'molest (close off) with spam' (cf. *zumüllen* 'litter'), *sich zudröhnen* 'get high on drugs' (cf. *sich besaufen* 'get drunk', *sich zusaufen* 'get completely drunk deliberately')

zu mimics the prefix verb structure (1a) following Brandt (2019, §3.2.2, §4.2.1) in that it marks the illegal reflexivization of an asymmetric relation (directional or comparative). The resulting contradiction (symmetry | asymmetry) effects the *ex situ* interpretation of an object property, falsely signalling manipulation of the internal THEME role as identifying prefix verb structures and providing access to the pertinent configurations.

References Brandt, P. 2019. *Discomposition Redressed. Hidden Change, Modality, and Comparison in German*. Tübingen: Narr. Open access: <https://elibrary.narr.digital/content/pdf/10.2357/9783823392439.pdf>