

From lexical meaning to functional role: the case of complex noun-verb phrases

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German so-called 'Funktionsverbgefüge' (FVG) are complex noun-verb phrases in which placement verbs (PLVs) are favored, e.g. Germ. *zur Verfügung stellen* ('to make available'), *in Bewegung setzen* ('to put into motion') etc. These FVGs have often been described as fixed grammaticalized units in which the noun carries the main meaning and the verb has just a functional role and is considered to be semantically empty (see among others Fleischer 1997, Helbig and Buscha 2001, Eisenberg 2013).

The use of these verbs is however not arbitrary. In FVGs the original spatial semantics of PLVs is replaced by aspectual and/or temporal semantics ('Aktionsarten'), like inchoativity and causativity (compare von Polenz 1963, Herrlitz 1973, Eisenberg 2013). An analysis of data in the framework of Cognitive Linguistics shows that the selection of these verbs is linked to specific conceptualizations and semantic image-schemas like CONTROL, EXPOSURE, START OF PROCESS, to name just a few. We will describe the use and motivation of PLVs in FVGs, thereby questioning the grammaticalization idea. The conceptualization of prepositions and nouns that are combined with the PLVs is also examined as they sustain the verbal semantics.

These phrases, in which PLVs do typically appear in German, are also quite common in another Germanic language, namely Dutch. A contrastive analysis of these FVGs in both closely related languages German and Dutch will allow us to revisit the original typological class 'Germanic languages'. Both languages have three main PLVs: Germ./Dt. *stellen/stellen* ('to put in standing position'); *setzen/zetten* ('to put in a sitting position'); *legen/leggen* ('to put in a lying position'). The use of PLVs, which at first sight seems very similar in both languages, is characterized by some important differences. For instance, Dutch *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') is less frequently used than its German formal equivalent *stellen*. Dutch tends to generalize the use of *zetten* ('to put in a sitting position') and to make it to a default causative verb (Lemmens 2006). This imbalance does not apply to German, where *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') and *setzen* ('to put in a sitting position') are used to the same extent. However, a contrastive study in the framework of Cognitive Linguistics and with data from the German DeReKo corpora and Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands further shows that these differences do not occur in the same way in complex noun-verb phrases. So does Dutch *stellen* ('to put in a standing position') still appear frequently in highly grammaticalized and lexicalized FVGs. An in-depth analysis of these phrases will show that a perfect analogy between German and Dutch cannot be assumed at all.

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