
Morphologie

A Prosodic Approach to Particle Verbs

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1 Introduction

In the Germanic languages, there exists a class of verbs that combine with a particle to form a lexical entry. Typical examples are *to look up* in English, or *voorschrijven* ‘to prescribe’ in Dutch. Without the particle, these verbs have a different meaning: *to look* does not mean the same thing as *to look up*, *schrijven* ‘to write’ does not mean the same as *voorschrijven*. This suggests that the particle+verb combination is a morphological construction. However, syntactically, particle verbs sometimes behave in ways that would not be expected if they are indeed morphological. Verb and particle are sometimes separated from each other, and it is possible to modify the particle alone.

For these reasons, the morphosyntactic analysis of particle verbs is problematic. It is not clear whether they belong to morphology or to syntax. In this paper, I argue that the properties of particle verbs follow from their prosodic structure. Morphosyntactically, they have a hybrid character, which means that the mapping to phonology has a choice between creating a morphophonological or a phrasal phonological structure. Additional phonological factors in some cases disable the phrasal option so that a morphophonological option necessarily arises.

2 Background

The analysis to be presented in section 3 assumes a *bare phrase structure* approach to syntax and a system of mapping rules that map syntactic structures onto phonological ones. In this section, I discuss both these assumptions.