# The relation between motion verbs and motion constructions – lexicogrammatical attraction and productivity

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A verb such as the Swedish manner of motion verb *springa* 'run' can be constructed in many different ways. Consider the following examples in (1) where the verb occur in two constructions that are used to describe translocative motion scenes in Swedish (e.g. Olofsson 2014):

(1)  a. Jag sprang   iväg  till bussen
        1SG run-PST  off    to bus-DEF
        'I ran off to the bus'
     b. Jag  sprang  till bussen
        1SG  run-PST to bus-DEF
        'I ran to the bus'

In (1a) the verb is combined with the directional adverb *iväg* 'off' and a prepositional phrase denoting the GOAL of the motion. Hence this construction can be called [VERB-*iväg*-PP]. (1b) is an instantiation of a somewhat similar construction that can be called [VERB-PP]. The two constructions can extensively be used with *springa* to denote similar scenes. Let's consider *älga* 'to moose' in the following examples, which is another manner of motion verb in Swedish, with the meaning 'moving with big strides':

(2)  a. Jag  älgade       iväg  till posten
        1SG  moose-PST off    to post.office-DEF
        'I moosed off to the post office'
     b. ?Jag  älgade        till posten
         1SG  moose-PST to post.office-DEF
        'I moosed to the post office'

The examples in (2) instantiate the same pair of constructions as in (1). Even though *springa* 'run' and *älga* 'moose' are semantically similar in the sense that they both denote some kind of self motion, the latter does not really fit with the [VERB-PP] construction.

In my presentation, I will approach this problem with two possible explanations. The first takes the perspective of statistical attraction between a verb and argument structure construction (e.g. Stefanowitch 2013; Schmid & Küchenhoff 2013), such as the ones in (1-2). I will show a corpus investigation of 40 verbs, of which most are known motion verbs in Swedish, and their occurrence in the two motion constructions illustrated in (1-2). The frequency data will be discussed in relation to semantic differences between the investigated verbs. By dividing the verbs into fine-grained semantic groups, I investigate how much of the relation between the verbs and the constructions that depends on the semantic compatibilities (fit) and how much it depends on frequency of use.

The second explanation concerns productivity, that is, the possibility of using the constructions with novel verbs (cf Barðdal 2008; Bybee 2013). For instance, in the above corpus investigation, the [VERB-*iväg*-PP] is considered more productive than [VERB-PP], based on type frequency and the amount of rare verbs that occur in them. Accordingly, a verb such as *älga*, which is relatively new in Swedish, is more likely to occur in the [VERB-*iväg*-PP] construction.

**Keywords:** motion verbs, motion constructions, productivity, lexicogrammatical attraction, Swedish

## References

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