

*On verbal elasticity: the stative-eventive alternation in perception verbs in Germanic*

Basing on previous unpublished work, I discuss a—to my knowledge—hitherto undescribed event-structure alternation affecting perception verbs in Germanic languages. It can be illustrated with the English verb *feel*:

- (1) a. Stacey felt the pocket.  
b. Stacey felt into the pocket.

(1a) is compatible with a scenario where Stacey is just an experiencer and does not feel the pocket deliberately. This interpretation is totally incompatible with (1b), where the addition of a directional PP (or a directional particle like *around*) induces eventivity (and also agentivity).

I explore the syntactic and semantic properties of this alternation in several Germanic languages and show how some prominent generative approaches to argument/event-structure would have difficulties in explaining it, either because they rely on generalized lexical marking—as in lexicalist approaches like Gisborne's (2010), and also in approaches like Ramchand's (2008, 2018)—or because they take directional PPs to be mere modifiers, rather than structurers, of the event (Borer 2005). I argue that phenomena like that in (1) favour theories on which roots are ordinarily free to be merged in different configurations and where syntax, including directional PPs (and particles), dictates how verbs are interpreted (Acedo-Matellán 2016, Wood & Marantz 2017).

*References*

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