

The material VVing construction: A corpus-based investigation

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This paper uses COCA to describe the ‘material VVing construction’ (see also Goldberg 2006 and Matsumoto 2016). This is a high-level construction where V is a **material verb** (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2014), and Ving is a participle that describes a process temporally overlapping with V, see (1)-(2), which show that the construction has **intransitive** and **transitive** variants (see Cappelle 2005).

- (1) a. The toddler went screaming [down the street]_{PP}. (Goldberg 2006)
b. They came strolling [out of the woods]_{PP}. (J.K. Rowling)
c. She came looking [for him]_{PP}. (COCA)
d. He lay gasping [on the ground]_{PP}. (COCA)
e. He lay gasping [for air]_{PP}. (COCA)
f. Faith sat gripping [her saucer]_{NP}. (Frances Hardinge)
- (2) a. The explosion sent glass flying [everywhere]_{AdvP}. (*Longman Dictionary*)
b. Bill took him kicking [into the room]_{PP}. (Goldberg 2006)

Also, the VVing variants can be described in terms of whether any XP (e.g. a PP, AdvP or NP) following Ving is an argument of V, both V and Ving, or Ving only, see (1)-(2), where underlining indicates argumenthood. We will refer to this parameter as **XP-argumenthood**.

In a preliminary investigation with the verbs *come*, *go*, *run* (see Broccias & Torre 2018), the data were classified semantically as follows: **manner of motion**, when Ving is such a verb, e.g. *strolling*, as in (1b); **purpose**, when VVing depicts a specific action with an intended result, e.g. *come looking*, as in (1c); **activity**, when Ving describes a recreational or habitual activity, e.g. *shopping*; **emission**, when Ving depicts the discharge of a substance or the emission of a sound, e.g. *screaming*, as in (1a); **bodily**, when Ving describes a non-emissive bodily process, e.g. *shivering*; **grammaticalized**, when V takes on an inchoative function, e.g. *go missing*. Although in the last case V is not a material verb, such occurrences give a measure of the degree of grammaticalization that V can undergo. Finally, the examples were also coded in terms of XP-argumenthood.

The preliminary investigation seems to suggest that distinct verbs behave differently. For example, *come* is usually found with manner of motion Ving's while *run* prefers emission Ving's, independently of XP-argumenthood. Thus, we surmise that the data are best described by hierarchical/family resemblance models rather than radial networks.

In this talk, we will report on a more detailed investigation, currently in progress, which relies on larger datasets for a greater variety of verbs, both intransitive and transitive.

References

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