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