



Motivation

- German particle verbs (PVs) are compositions of a particle (P) and a base verb (BV), such as *an + strahlen* 'beam' = *anstrahlen* 'beam at'.
- We understand Ps as spatially grounded concepts, which are resolved into meanings through the BV and its verbal context.
- Example: The concept of *auf* is UP.
auf + steigen 'climb' = *aufsteigen* 'climb up'
zum Gipfel aufsteigen 'climb up to the peak'
→ UP concept is resolved in **spatial** domain as upward direction meaning.
die Karriereleiter aufsteigen 'climb the ladder'
→ UP concept is resolved in **social** domain to increase/improve social status.
- PV meanings emerge from semantic shift adjustments of P-concept, BV and verbal context meaning, in order to achieve/maintain consistency.
- Coherence of concreteness/abstractness of BV and verbal context not only determines concreteness/abstractness of PV but also the (non-)literalness of PV meanings.

Conceptual Abstraction

P-concept + concrete BV + concrete context = concrete PV

no/small adjustment shifts → **literal**

e.g. UPWARD + *steigen* 'climb' + *Gipfel* 'peak'
→ *zum Gipfel aufsteigen* 'climb up the peak'

P-concept + concrete BV + abstract context = abstract PV

adjustment shifts → **non-literal**

e.g. IMPROVE + *steigen* 'climb' + *Karriereleiter* 'career ladder'
→ *Karriereleiter aufsteigen* 'social improvement'

P-concept + abstract BV + abstract context = abstract PV

no/small adjustments shifts → **literal**

e.g. INCREMENT + *zählen* 'count' + *Probleme* 'problems'
→ *Probleme aufzählen* 'creating an inventory of problems'

P-concept + abstract BV + concrete context = ??? PV

e.g. INCREASE + *werten* 'assign value' + *Schmuck* 'jewellery'
→ *Schmuck aufwerten* 'upgrade the jewellery'

Particle Concepts

ab: spatial perception of alignment with gravity → DOWN
auf: spatial perception of overcoming gravity → UP

Examples of P meanings in concrete contexts

ab: downward, decrease of proximity, separation
auf: upward, attachment (on surface higher than ground) from above

Examples of P meanings in abstract contexts

ab: value decrease, value assignment, quantification (by consumption: incremental separation of segments)
auf: value increase, value assignment, quantification (by construction: incremental approaching to a maximal state)

Particle Verb Neologisms

Insights into the meaning composition process through generation of PV neologisms (neoPVs).

NeoPV Data Collection

Sentence generation experiment for systematically composed particle verbs (5 particle types × 5 semantic base verb classes).

P-concept + concrete BV + concrete context

UP + *stricken* 'knit' + *Schal* 'scarf' → **concrete neoPV**: *aufstricken*

Der Schal ist zu kurz, deshalb werden noch einige Zentimeter aufgestrickt.
'The scarf is too short, therefore some more centimeters are added by knitting until the intended length is reached.'

DOWN + *stricken* 'knit' + *Pullover* 'pullover' → **concrete neoPV**: *abstricken*

Der Pullover hat mich so viel Zeit gekostet und nur wegen einer Fehlmasche muss ich nun alles wieder abstricken.
'The pullover was so time consuming and only because of a wrong stitch I have to de-construct everything again by a reverse knitting process.'

P-concept + concrete BV + abstract context

UP + *stricken* 'knit' + *Lüge* 'lie' → **abstract neoPV**: *aufstricken*

Ich habe dir eine Lüge aufgestrickt.
'I imposed a lie onto you.'

DOWN + *stricken* 'knit' + *Besuch* 'visit' → **abstract neoPV metaphor**: *abstricken*

Nach dem was Du gerade angestellt hast, kannst Du Dir den Besuch abstricken.
'After what you just did, you can forget about the visit.'

Analogy to attested metaphorical reading of *abschminken* '[ab] + put on make up' in an abstract context.

P-concept + abstract BV + abstract context

UP + *reden* 'talk' + *Wille* 'will' → **abstract neoPV**: *aufreden*

Er redet dem Jungen seinen Willen auf.
'He imposes his will onto the boy by talking.'

DOWN + *reden* 'talk' + *Idee* 'idea' → **abstract neoPV**: *abreden*

Diese Idee werde ich ihm wieder abreden.
'I will talk to him until he drops this idea.'

P-concept + abstract BV + concrete context

UP + *reden* 'talk' + *Kleid* 'dress' → ??? neoPV: *aufreden*

Eigentlich wollte sie das Kleid nicht kaufen; sie hat es sich aufreden lassen.
'Actually, she didn't want to buy the dress; she was convinced by dominant talking with the goal to impose this desire on her.'

DOWN + *reden* 'talk' + *Haus* 'house' → ??? neoPV: *abreden*

Ich habe gestern meiner Schwester das Haus abgeredet.
'I talked the house off my sister.'

Contradicting P and BV concepts

UP/INCREASE + *kürzen* 'shorten/decrease' + *Kleid* 'dress' → **concrete neoPV**: *aufkürzen*

Das Kleid ist zu lang, ich glaube ich muss den Saum noch etwas aufkürzen.
'The dress is too long, I think I have to shorten the seam until the length reaches the intended length, which results in a higher location of the seam.'

auf-concept is not resolved as an INCREASE regarding the dress, but is resolved as INCREASE of a NEGATIVE property of the dress → shortened parts + increase of seam height

DOWN/SEPARATION + *nageln* 'nail/attach' + *Bild* 'picture' → **concrete neoPV**: *abnageln*

Ich nagele das Bild von der Wand ab.
'I detach the picture from the wall.'

DOWN/SEPARATION + *nageln* 'nail/attach' + *Vorstellungsgespräch* 'job interview' → **abstract neoPV metaphor**: *abnageln*

Das Vorstellungsgespräch lief gar nicht gut, die neue Arbeitsstelle kann ich mir wohl abnageln.
'the job interview did not go well, I think I have to forget about the new job.'

Known metaphor pattern: SEPARATION + ATTACHMENT BV + abstract context → 'forget about sth.'