Historical English Word-Formation and Semantics

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WARSAW

On the history and analysis of V-P nouns

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the history and derivation of bare nouns that consist of a verb plus particle (type *lookout*). Tangentially, P-V nouns (like *outlook*) are also treated. It is argued that particles of different types (aspectual, spatial, scalar, etc.) originate in different positions. Purely functional particles do not license conversion to a noun. The various syntactic positions of particles with lexical content determine whether the converted noun has a V-P or P-V structure. The earliest V-P nouns were structurally simple and took no complements. A more complex event and argument structure developed over time.

Keywords: Distributed Morphology; conversion; head movement; particles; argument structure; English morphology; history of English

1. Introduction

This paper is about the origin, history, and derivation of bare V-P nouns, that is, nouns that consist of a verb plus particle (type *lookout*). Tangentially, P-V nouns (like *outlook*) are also treated.[1]

With minor modification (§3), it is generally agreed, since Emonds (1972) and Jackendoff (1973), that adpositions and verbal particles constitute, respectively, transitive and intransitive members of the same category (cf. Svenonius 2004, §3.2.1). Following den Dikken (2003: 4), PARTICLES can be preliminarily defined as "intransitive heads (of category P) exhibiting unergative syntax by default and shifting to unaccusativity as a function of the syntactic context". Prepositions are their case-assigning counterparts. Verbal prefixes encompass both subcategories plus several defined below.

Additionally, adpositions are Ground-introducing elements expressing a spatial relation; particles are Figure-introducing (Svenonius 2004). Unlike their prepositional counterparts,[2] particles can enter into derivation, e.g. *to **up** the prices*, ***up(p)-ity***, *RAM suck-**uppage*** (*Information Weekly* newsletter 10/23/06: thanks to Russ Nekorchuk, p.c.).

In spite of the fact that V-P nouns became productive only in English, they have received exceedingly little attention in the literature, the main exception being Roeper (1999). The largest study known to me is that of Bradgon (2006), extensively utilized (and updated) here. What is missing in Bragdon's very useful data-collection is analysis.

To analyze V-P nouns, I will be using a version of Distributed Morphology (e.g. Embick and Noyer 2007; Levinson 2007), but most syntactic models (e.g. Ramchand 2008) could also work, though slightly less naturally. The rationale for a syntactic model of word formation is twofold: (i) the objective is to predict occurring word forms rather than stipulate them, as in lexicalism (e.g. Berg 1998) or construction grammar (e.g. Booij 2010), and (ii) the model makes correct predictions for the data under discussion.[3]

This paper differs from some other syntactic accounts of V-P nouns (e.g. Roeper 1999) in arguing that particles have several different functions and syntactic positions. Those that originate in functional projections do not license conversion to a noun. The various syntactic positions of particles determine whether the converted noun has a V-P or P-V structure. Since this is predictable from the hierarchical configuration, Roeper's rebracketing is not needed.

2. Prepositional prefixes

Before getting into the core discussion, it is important to mention some types that will not be discussed in this paper. One of those involves prepositional prefixes.

In the process of P-incorporation (Baker 1988), prepositions are prefixed to a verb, never suffixed or stranded. This is naturally explained as leftward adjunction. However, denominals like *imprison* behave the same way, and in

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2   That *-ward(s)* has been reanalyzed as a postposition, as in *coastward(s), eastward(s), cityward(s)*, etc. (Andrew McIntyre, p.c.), has no bearing on the fact that adpositions do not themselves enter into derivation. The point is, nothing is derived from core adpositions, i.e. excluding Maling's *worth* (1983).

3   This paper contains several technical derivations in a modified version of Distributed Morphology. The novice is directed to Rolf Noyer's UPenn website <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~rnoyer/dm/>.

this case leftward adjunction cannot apply, or the result should be *prisonin*[4].

Modern English has only residues of P-incorporation, as in *the river <u>over-flowed</u> its bank*, from *the river <u>flowed</u> <u>over</u> its bank* (cf. Iwata 2004: 273). This explains the observation (e.g. Lieber 2004: 131) that spatial *over* prefers intransitive verbs and adds an argument. In Old English the process could apply to nearly any preposition; cf. (1).

(1) P-incorporation (Old English)
  a) *gif hine mon on wōh onfeohteð* (Laws of Ælfred 76 §42.6)
     if him man wrongly on.fight.3SG
     'if a man fights against him wrongly'

  b) *þonne mōt hē feohtan on hine* (Laws of Ælfred 76 §42.4)
     then can he fight.INF on him
     'then he can fight against him'

In (1b) the full PP occurs, while in (1a) the P is incorporated into the verb. See (2).

(2)
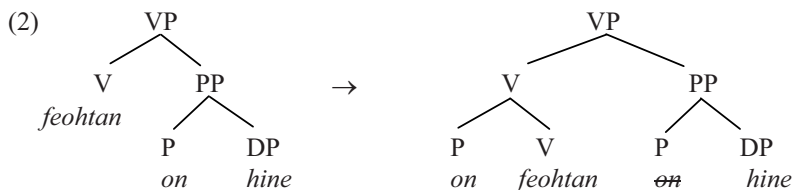
In general, with P-incorporation, the object is stranded from the preposition by adjunction of the preposition to its c-commanding verb (Baker 1988), as in most (especially older) Indo-European languages (Miller 1993).

The *imprison* type, in which the preposition has a complement, has never allowed a postposition. Even in postpositional languages, like Japanese and Korean, there is nothing equivalent to *prison-in* (Miller 2010: ii. 36). The linearization that yields *imprison* will be argued to be typical of non-verb-categorizing functional heads in word formation.

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4 In the paper the following sigla will be used: * (ungrammatical); ? (questionable); % (accepted by some speakers); # (pragmatically difficult; acceptable only in restricted senses).

3. Brief particle typology

Different kinds of particles are now generally distinguished, only one of which is an intransitive preposition. Specifically, the types in (3a-c) are discussed by Dehé et al. (2002) and McIntyre (2004, 2007), to which at least the types in (3d-e) have been added.

(3)   Particle types
       a)   Spatial (*walk through*, *throw the ball down*)
       b)   Aspectual
             1) Transitivizing (*think the problem through*)
             2) Telic (*drink up*)
             3) Non-transitivizing / Non-perfective (durative, ingressive, punctu-
                alizing)
                (a) *fight* (**battles/enemies*) *on*
                (b) *sing* (**songs*) *along*
                (c) *type* (**the essay*) *away*
                (d) *play* (**the guitar*) *on/around/along*
       c)   Non-spatial and non-aspectual (*tell someone off, work off* (*a debt*),
             etc.)
       d)   Scalar / Evaluative (*overeat, overestimate, undervalue*) (Rousseau
             1995b; McIntyre 2003: 131ff.)
       e)   Comparative (*outcook, outeat*) (Miller 2003; cf. McIntyre 2003:
             122f.)

For den Dikken (2003), the fundamental distinction is between aspectual and thematic particles. From the morphological point of view, I will argue that this is on the right track and that the particles in (3) have different properties and originate in different positions.

    All particles to this point are themselves intransitive. That is, even *through* (3b-1) does not license its own argument in syntax, as is clear from *I'll see it through*, where *see* can be transitive but the particle never creates a double object verb. This brings us back, essentially, to the basic typology that prepositions are transitive and particles intransitive, even if not all particles are of the same category as prepositions.[5]

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5   Alternatively, on Basilico's (forthcoming) account, some verbs are basically in-
     transitive and complements are introduced by particles / affixes. This of course
     does not make the particles transitive *per se* since the NP is licensed in the parti-
     cle's specifier position.

Since scalar/evaluative and comparative particles are invariably adjoined (prefixed) to the verb (*outcook, outeat*, *overcook, overeat,* etc.), these make only P-V or no nouns, and will not be treated in this paper.

4. Perfectivizing particles

To account for the aspectual meaning of *up*, as in *I ate up the food*, the simplest solution would merge it in some functional head position, e.g. Aspect (cf. Borer 2005b: 157f.; Thompson 2006: 214). Specifically, perfectivizing particles / affixes are associated crosslinguistically with high transitivity and generally also telicity, and require an obligatory verb complement, as in the a)-sentences in (4) and (5), versus the non-completive examples in the b)-sentences (Basilico, forthcoming, w. lit).

(4)　a)　*they are eating up *(their lunch) (in an hour / *for an hour)*
　　　b)　*they are eating (lunch)*

(5)　a)　*Vanja napisal　*(pis'mo)　(za čas / *čas)*
　　　　　'Vanja wrote up　*(letter)　(in an hour / *for an hour)*

　　　b)　*Vanja pisal (pis'mo)*
　　　　　'Vanja was writing (a/the letter)'

Conversion of a V-P verb to a bare noun is licensed only when the particle has lexical (as opposed to exclusively functional) content, hence the absence of the V-P nouns in (6), where *up* is aspectual.

(6)　a)　**a drink-up* (*of water*)
　　　b)　**a chew-up* (*of food*)
　　　c)　**a finish-up* (*of the work*)
　　　d)　**a starve-up*
　　　e)　**an eat-up* (*of food*)

Apparent exceptions, as in (7), occur only when the particle admits a literal spatial / directional or figurative interpretation. This is expected since the particle has lexical rather than purely functional content.

(7)　a)　*blowup*: only figurative senses, e.g. 'explosion' [1807], 'blow-out' [1809], *a picture blowup* [1945]; the type **the blowup of the towers* is unattested in the *OED* online.

b)   *blowout* 'abundant feast' [1824], 'outbreak of anger; quarrel' [1825],
     'eruptive force' [1873], 'bursting of a rubber tire' [1908], 'gush from
     an oil well' [1916], 'fiasco' [1925], 'sweeping victory; crushing de-
     feat' [1933], etc.

c)   *a take-up* (**of time*); only figurative and spatial meanings, e.g. 'a
     tuck in a dress' [1825], 'process of winding up' [1850]

d)   *fill-up* [1853] 'fill-in' (*fill-in* [1918] 'substitute', [1946] 'briefing';
     fill-out [1838]); cf. *I filled the tank up to the top* vs. **I ate the food
     up to the top*

e)   *roll-up*: figurative, of food types, e.g. a rolled up snack [1856], ciga-
     rettes [1950]), earliest in the sense of a type of stocking [1739]

f)   *clean-up*: figurative, e.g. 'collection of the valuable product' [1866],
     clean-up batter (baseball) [1909], *financial clean-up* ('profit')
     [1878], *corruption clean-ups* [1930]; the literal sense 'cleaning; act
     of cleaning up' [a1889; rare], as in *the house clean-up took five
     years*, suggests the cleaning of a major mess and therefore *up* is not
     simply aspectual (Jon Keane, Russ Nekorchuk, p.c.).

g)   *a quick fix-up* (cf. *a quick fix*); only figurative uses, e.g. 'dose of a
     narcotic' [1867]

h)   *a dry-up* (**of the land*) (cf. 'the drying up after rain' [1873]); only
     figurative uses, e.g. 'this dry-up of talent' [1940]

i)   *push-up* [1897] (literally directional)

j)   *mark-up* 'added cost' [1920], 'finalization of legislation' [1962],
     'correction of proofs or copy' [1973], 'tagging system for text
     markup' [1980]; 'disfiguring' (modern vernacular use 'a disfiguring'
     not recognized in *OED*)

k)   *paint-up* [not in the *OED*]: implies use of more than one color or,
     like *mark-up*, a disfiguring

l)   *a build-up* (**of houses*) (good only in the sense of 'accumulation'
     [1927]); *build-up* is unaccusative (e.g. *dirt builds up*), hence figura-
     tive *build-up* (*of dirt* etc.)

m)   *a smoke-up* (**of cigars*); only figurative meanings, e.g. 'notice that a
     student's work is not up to standard' [1927], but note *smoke-up*
     mugs on Google.

n)   *a wrap-up* (**of the gift*): ungrammatical because *up* would be purely
     perfective but in *a wrap-up* (or *sum-up*) *of the chapter* the *up* is part
     of an idiom and has more than aspectual content; note also *wrap-up*
     'easy sale' [1938], 'summary, conclusion' [1960].

o)   *%a beat-up*; figurative uses only, e.g. 'process of overuse' [1940;
     rare]

p)   colloquial *fuckup* [c.1945], *screwup* [1960], etc.: exclusively figurative

To conclude this section, V-P verbs license conversion to a V-P noun only when the particle has lexical / semantic content, and is therefore not merged in Aspect.

Prefixed deverbal nouns typically take a complement, as in (8), but aspectual particles apparently license neither conversion of a verb to a noun nor complements, hence the exclusion of (9).

(8)   a)   *the output of energy*
       b)   *the outbreak of problems*

(9)   a)   **an upeat (*of food*)
       b)   *an eat-up (*of food*)

The difference between (8) and (9) follows straightforwardly on the assumption that the particles originate in different positions. For Roeper, the absence of the constructs in (9) is necessarily accidental and idiosyncratic.

5. V-P and P-V nouns

This section focuses on the formation of V-P nouns (type *breakup*) with notes on P-V nouns. For V-P nouns in an inflected language with right-edge morphology, the construct must be zero-derived and the P-word inflected, or any inflection ignored.

Swedish has a few very opaque constructs like *sväng-om* [turn-around] 'dance' (§8), exclusively on uninflected roots (Gunlög Josefsson *apud* Bragdon 2006). In English, P-final nouns (apart from the possible *gravup* [1324] 'a spade?' and one other dubious example [§9]) did not appear until the end of Middle English, e.g. *runabout* [1377] (as a name!), *lean-to* [1453–4] (Bragdon 2006). Loss of morphological marking and exclusive VX order permitted these to become productive in English.

Derivationally, V-P nouns constitute one of the most difficult aspects of English word formation. The problem has been augmented by attempts to create a unified analysis of particles (e.g. Roeper 1999). While this is a reasonable goal, a unified account does not entail that all particles originate in a single place, Roeper's CLITIC POSITION. In fact, accounts of that type have complicated the issue by making it impossible to rule out certain noun formations resulting from conversion or to adequately predict whether the converted noun will have a V-P or a P-V structure.

This and subsequent sections argue that the form of the noun (V-P or P-V) is entirely contingent on the hierarchical structure. In conformity with most work on phrase structure morphology, I assume, following Kayne (1985, 1994), Roeper (1999), and others, that left-adjunction is the norm.

English is notoriously unique even among the Germanic languages (§8) in productively forming V-P nouns of the type *lookout* beside P-V *outlook*. Some of the pairs to be explained are laid out in (10); cf. Roeper (1999: 35f.).

(10)	a)	*startup*	[1517]	:	*upstart*	[1555]
	b)	*lookout*	[1699]	:	*outlook*	[1667]
	c)	*layover*	[1777]	:	*overlay*	[1456]
	d)	*breakout*	[1820]	:	*outbreak*	[1562]
	e)	*setup*	[1841]	:	*upset*	[1390_A, c.1425_N]
	f)	*layout*	[1852]	:	*outlay*	[1563]
	g)	*hangover*	[1894]	:	*overhang*	[1853]

As a first observation, in most cases the P-V noun antedates its V-P counterpart, as is expected from the historical point of view, given that Old English had only the P-V type. Secondly, some of the early V-P nouns are matched in other Northwest Germanic languages (§8). Third, while (10) contains matching pairs, nouns like *cookout, knockout*, and *sit-in* have no matching **oútcook* (only comparative *outcoók* 'cook more / better (than someone else)', which is exclusively P-V and derived differently), **oútknock, *ín-sit*.[6] The exclusion of these should follow structurally, as I will argue.

Certain P-V nouns in (10) are strictly irrelevant since (i) a P-V verb can only pair with a P-V noun, e.g. *upset* (cf. *Djoković upset Nadal*), (ii) V-P nouns cannot be formed from P-V verbs, e.g. *takeover* (*of the train*) patterns with *they took over the train*, not with *they overtook the train*, and (iii) of the entries in (10e), neither can be synchronically derived from the other because *set-up* pairs with the verb *set up* and *úpset* pairs with the verb *upsét*. There is no way semantically to derive *upset* (noun or verb) from *set up* synchronically. As a generalization, P-V verbs typically make P-V nouns and V-P verbs typically make V-P nouns by conversion (Berg 1998; Farrell 2005: 103, 105), but there are many exceptions that point to derivational differences.

The main relevant type is (10d) because *outbreak* (e.g. of a disease) patterns with a verb *break out* (e.g. *a major disease broke out* /**outbroke*). This raises two questions: (i) if V-P verbs typically yield V-P nouns, why do they ever make P-V nouns, and (ii) what are the proper domains of V-P nouns?

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6   Beside *workout*, there are residues of the more archaically formed *outwork* [c.1615] 'outer defense', [1793] 'outdoors work'. Especially the latter meaning is completely obsolete today.