

# On the semantics of German particle verbs on *ab-*

Präsentation von Auszügen meiner Masterarbeit:  
*„Zur Semantik der Partikelverben auf ab-. Eine Studie im  
Rahmen der Diskursrepräsentationstheorie“*  
im Rahmen der Institutsversammlung,  
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SS 2009  
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# Overview

- Introduction and overview over the study on German particle verbs on *ab-*
- Discussion of three semantic variants

*ab-* implies interrupting a canal

das Wasser abdrehen

'to shut off the water supply'

*ab-* impedes access

Die Dünen halten das Wasser ab.

'The dunes impede the water.'

*ab-* impedes passage

die Tür abschließen

'to shut the door off'

- Conclusion and further research

# Introduction and survey over the study on particle verbs on *ab-*

## Negative specified proximal region

ab <sub>1</sub>	Leave/separate from proximal region	abdampfen	%to damp-off, 'to leave angrily'
ab <sub>2</sub>	End of support relation	abbrechen (Ast)	'to break off'
ab <sub>3</sub>	Orthogonality	abbiegen	'to bend off'
ab <sub>4</sub>	Change of Possession	abluchsen	%to lynx-off, 'to steal'
ab <sub>5</sub>	Copy	abmalen	%to paint-off, 'to copy'
ab <sub>6</sub>	Interrupt a canal	abdrücken (Luft)	'to squeeze out all the breath'
ab <sub>7</sub>	Impede access	abhalten (Wasser)	'to hold sth. off'
ab <sub>8</sub>	Impede passage	abschließen	'to shut (a door) off'
ab <sub>9</sub>	Movement downwards	abstürzen	'to crash'
ab <sub>10.1</sub>	Ending the Event	abpfeifen	%to whistle-off, 'to end sth.'

## Decrement

ab <sub>10.2</sub>	End of event	abblühen	%to blossom-off, 'to fade'
ab <sub>11</sub>	Decrease of mereol. parts	absuchen	%to search-off, 'to search, scan'
ab <sub>12</sub>	Decrease	abebben	%to ebb-off, 'to ebb away'
ab <sub>13</sub>	Damage	ablatschen	%traipse-off, 'wear until worn-out'

## Affect\_with

ab <sub>14</sub>	Affect with	abdecken	'to cover sth.'
ab <sub>15</sub>	Complete event and result	abgehangen	%hung-off, 'to air-dry (ham)'
ab <sub>16</sub>	Intensivity	abtanzen	'to dance intensively'
ab <sub>17</sub>	Planning	abzielen auf	'to be aimed at sth.'

# *ab-* implies interrupting a canal

(1) jemandem das Wasser abdrehen  
'to turn off the water'

(2) jemandem die Luft abdrücken  
'to squeeze out all the breath'

- During situation *s*, entity *v* moved in one-dimensional region *y* („canal“) *in* (thus: vector) proximal region *z*
- The representation assumes a discourse referent both for the moving object *v* and „canal“ *y*. An argument not found in the sentence is accommodated.

Support for this assumption comes from the alternations of direct object: Moving Object/Canal

(5) das Wasser/den Hahn abdrehen

'to turn off the water/the water tap'

(6) die Luft/die Luftröhre abdrücken

'%to squeeze-off the air/the windpipe'

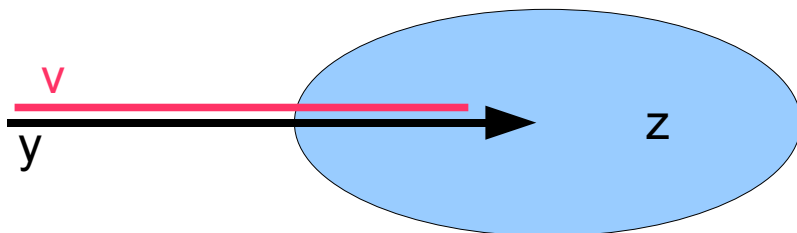
# *ab-* implies interrupting a canal

- The „place of entrance“ separates canal in two regions. One of the regions is z
- Presupposition: In situation  $s^0$ , parts of  $v - v'$  – are in z.
- (3) \* Durch die Leitung floss kein Wasser. Dann drehten sie auch noch den Hahn ab.  
‘No water was running through the pipe. Then, they turned off the water-tap.’
- (4) \* Man drückte ihm nach seinem Ableben die Luftröhre ab.  
‘After his death, they squeezed his windpipe.’
- *ab-* implies that, as result of event e of base verb, situation s ends
- Base verbs: Events which „squeeze“ the „canal“: abbinden, abdrehen, abdrücken, abpressen, abstellen, abklemmen, abschnüren, abwürgen

# *ab-* implies interrupting a canal

$e^0$	$s^0$	$y$
$e^0$ : MOVE( $v$ )		
ALIGN( $v, y$ )		
$res(e^0, s^0)$		
PART-OF( $v, v'$ )		
$s^0$ : $v' \subset z$		

$e$	$s'$	$s''$	$v$	$v'$	$y$	$z$
$e$ CAUSE $s'$						
$s'$ : $\neg$	ACCESS( $y, z$ )					
$s'$ CAUSE $s''$						
$s''$ : $\neg$	PART-OF( $v, v'$ )					
	$v' \subset z$					

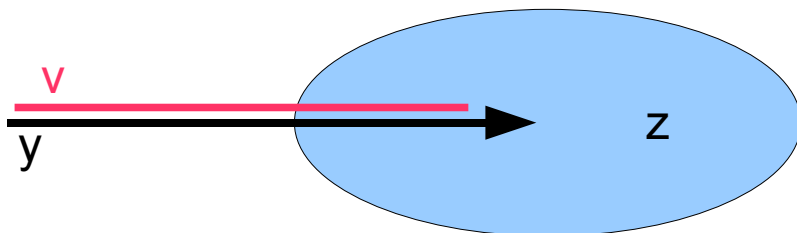


DRS representation of *ab*-variant  
 „*ab-* implies interrupting a canal“

# ab- implies interrupting a canal

$e^0$	$s^0$	$y$
$e^0$ : MOVE(v)		
ALIGN(v,y)		
res( $e^0$ , $s^0$ )		
PART-OF(v,v')		
$s^0$ : $v' \subset z$		

$e$	$s'$	$s''$	$v$	$v'$	$x$	$y$	$z$
$e$ : DREH(x)					Agent( $e$ ) = x		
<b>Leitung</b> (y)					Wasser(v)		
„mir“(z)					e CAUSE s'		
$s'$ : $\neg$							ACCESS(y,z)
					s' CAUSE s''		
$s''$ : $\neg$							PART-OF(v,v')
							$v' \subset z$



DRS representation of  
 „Man dreht mir das Wasser ab.“  
 ‚They shut off the water supply.‘

# *ab-* impedes access

(7) Die Leute hielten das Wasser ab.  
'The people held the water off.'

(8) einen User im Chatroom abblocken  
'to block a user in the chat room'

(9) Der Torwart klatscht den Ball ab.  
'The keeper hits away the ball.'

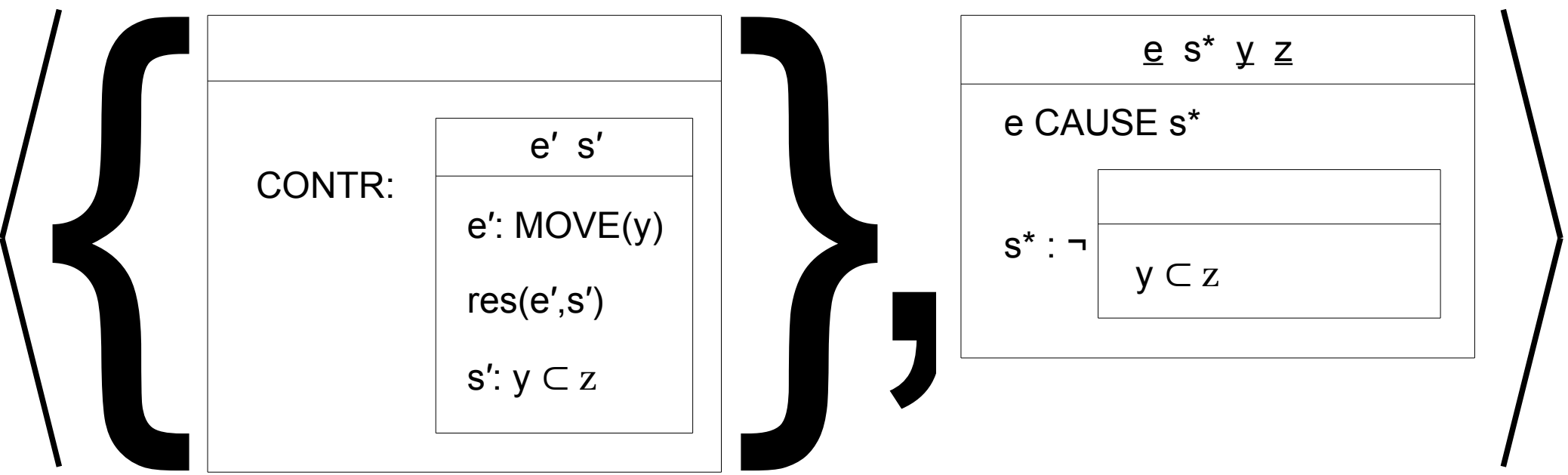
- *ab-* implies that event *e* of the base verb impedes that theme *y* has access to region *z*.
- It is presupposed that in a „contrafactual world“ without event *e*, theme *y* would *move* to region *z*.
- Directedness of the presupposed movement is implied by *ab-*, not by the base verb:

(10)	den Anfängen wehren die Leute abwehren	'to fight against the beginnings' 'to repel the people'
(11)	Hier wimmelt es von Bienen. die rüstige Dame abwimmeln	'Here, it is alive with bees.' 'to get rid of the lusty lady'

- Base verbs: Events that impede a directed movement: blocken, halten, klatschen, schlagen, weisen, wenden, wehren, wimmeln, fertigen, finden, kappen, speisen, fahren, blitzen lassen



# *ab*- impedes access



DRS representation of *ab*-variant  
„*ab*- impedes access“

# *ab-* impedes access

CONTR:

$e' s'$

$e': \text{MOVE}(y)$

$\text{res}(e', s')$

$s': y \subset z$

$e s'' s^* X y z$

$e: \text{HALT}(X, y)$

Leute(X)      Wasser(y)

$\text{res}(e, s'')$

$s'': \neg \text{MOVE}(y)$

**PLACE(z)**

$s'' \oplus s^*$

$e \text{ CAUSE } s^*$

$s^*: \neg$

$y \subset z$

DRS representation of  
 „Die Leute halten das Wasser ab.“  
 ‚The men impede the water.‘

# *ab-* impedes passage

(12) Die Tür abschließen

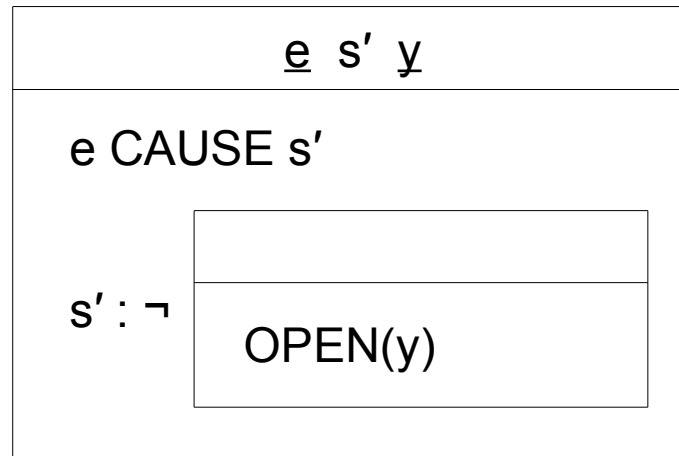
‘to shut the door off’

(13) Die Tür absperren

‘to block the door up’

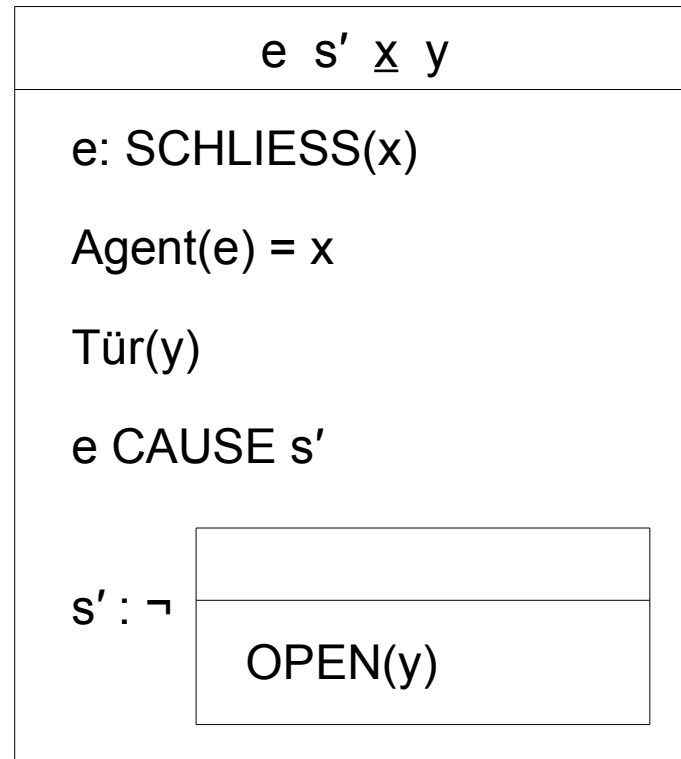
- *ab-* implies with a predicate  $\neg\text{OPEN}(y)$ , that a „place of entrance“  $y$  is not permeable.

# *ab*- impedes passage



DRS representation of *ab*-variant  
„*ab*- impedes passage“

# *ab-* impedes passage

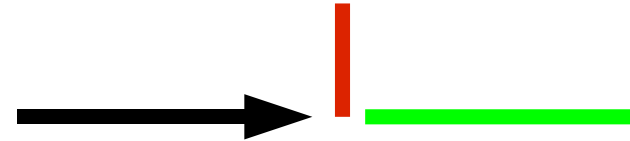


DRS representation of  
„die Tür abschließen“  
,close the door'

# ab- impedes passage

## Discussion

(1) *abschließen* and *absperren* are no instances of „canal“-variant



(14) die Luft abdrücken  
die Ader abdrücken

\* die Lunge abdrücken

%squeeze-off the air/vein/lung

(15) \* die ins Haus rennenden Kinder abschließen  
die Tür abschließen  
das Haus abschließen

%close-off the [in-the-house-  
running children]/door/house

→ Different alternations

(2) *abschließen* and *absperren* are no instances of „separation-from-region“-variant:

(16) **die Zuschauer mit einem Kordel von der Bühne abtrennen**  
% to separate the audience from the stage with a cord

(16) \* die Tür/das Haus von der Straße abschließen  
%close-off the house/door/room/lock from the street

→ No specification of reference region possible

# *ab-* impedes passage

(3) *ab-* implies **affectedness with the result** of an event

*abschließen* → affect with result (telos?) of *schließen*

*absperren* → denominal „provide with barrier“

→ not plausible: different entries for *ab-* for *abschließen* and *absperren*

(4) Oppositions *abschließen/aufschließen* and *absperren/aufsperrern*

→ plausible to assume an entry with a predicate OPEN(x)

# Conclusion and further research

- Four different independent semantic variants of the particle *ab-* (in total, I assume 17 variants)
- Showed: Productive derivation of the semantics of particle verbs in many cases possible
- All four variants discussed are very similar; and include a **negative specified (proximal) region**
- In many cases, derivation with several variants possible: *abblitzen*: „impede access“ or decremental?
- Analysis includes general phenomena of lexical semantics:
  - Figur-ground-relationship
  - Distance regions: proximal region, distance region, inner region
  - Other *ab*-variants: decrement, relations between entities

Further research:

- „semantic phenomena“
- Combine variants into main groups?
- Hierarchy?
- Underspecification?





# *ab-* impedes access

Discussion: Similarities and Dissimilarities of the *ab*-variants „canal“ and „impede-access“:

## Similarities

- It is presupposed that without the event of the base verb, the theme would move to a region z.
- The movement is impeded by event of base verb.

## Dissimilarities

- „canal“: Theme of event of base verb: the „canal“
- „impede-access“: Theme of event of base verb: moving object
- „impede-access“: No alternation Moving Object / Canal:  
Die Leute abwimmeln                      \*Die Tür abwimmeln
- „canal“: In prestate, parts of the moving object are in region z.
- „canal“: Compulsorily demands a one-dimensional object („canal“), in alignment to which the theme moves.