

Nicole Dehé. 2002. *Particle Verbs in English. Syntax, information structure and intonation*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: John Benjamins. [Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today, 59].

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Nicole Dehé's book, *Particle Verbs in English. Syntax, information structure and intonation*, analyzes a well-known structure of the Germanic languages, the "particle-verb construction" (hereafter PV construction), also known as "phrasal verb", "separable (complex verb)" or "particle verb" (p. 1). An example of a PV construction in English, the language on which Dehé focuses, is "Sam turned down the radio" (p. 1) and, with a slight variation in word order, "Sam turned the radio down". These two variants of a PV construction reveal an alternating word order. The former variant, with the particle *down* immediately following the verb *turned* and preceding the verb complement (or DP-complement) *the radio*, shows the *continuous order*. The latter variant, with the particle *down* immediately after the DP-complement *the radio*, shows the *discontinuous order* (p. 3).

The general goal of Dehé's book is to "propose a syntactic structure for regular PV's in English that accounts for the word order alternation possible with the construction and the factors that determine the alternation" (p. 13). Specifically, the syntactic framework in which the study takes place corresponds to the Minimalist Program outlined in Chomsky (1993, 1995). In turn, the evidence provided by Dehé for her syntactic analysis is drawn from experimental work in the areas of speech production (Chapter 3) and intonation (Chapter 4). Dehé then suggests a syntactic structure that will account for the pragmatic role in the word order of the PV constructions. She provides an EVPA type of analysis in Chapter 5. Finally, it should be noted that in writing this book, Dehé assumes a familiarity with the Minimalist Program but not with the theory of information and the theory of intonation. In the corresponding chapters, Dehé thus provides a thorough introduction of the relevant aspects of both theories.

In what follows, I provide a brief summary of the six chapters of Dehé's book and conclude with some general observations.

In Chapter 1 (called "Introduction", pp. 1–14), Dehé sets the terminological and conceptual framework of the book. In particular, she presents the different verb classifications proposed in the linguistic literature. Three types of PV constructions in English are characterized: compositional PV constructions (as in "She carried in the tray"), idiomatic PV constructions (as in "She showed

off her car”), and aspectual PV constructions (as in “She drank up her beer”). Specifically, the meaning of the compositional PV constructions is made up of the sum of the literal meaning of the verb and the particle. By contrast, the meaning of the idiomatic PV constructions cannot be fully derived from the literal meaning of verb and particle but is better characterized as a single unit. In turn, the particle adds an aspectual interpretation to the verb in the aspectual PV constructions (see for instance the particle *up* that telicizes the event expressed by verb).

In this study, Dehé is concerned only with “regular PV constructions”, that is with PVs that can undergo word order alternation. She thus does not deal with the idiomatic PV constructions, that show either the continuous (“give up the ghost” [to die] vs. *“give the ghost up”) or the discontinuous word order (“sing one’s heart out” vs. *“sing out one’s heart”) (p. 13).

In Chapter 2 (“Overview of the syntactic analysis for particle verbs in English”, pp. 15–74), Dehé presents a survey of the numerous and diverse syntactic analyses of PV constructions in the literature dealing with English and other Germanic languages. The analyses proposed are classified in five distinct groups: the so-called traditional analyses, the small clause analyses, the extended-PV-analyses (EPVA), particles as functional categories and a fifth group that she generally labels as ‘others’. The first two groups of analyses as well as the one called ‘the particles as functional categories’ are explicitly rejected and various shortcomings of the other two approaches are explained. In particular, Dehé points out that previous analyses imply that the choice between the continuous and the discontinuous word order is optional (p. 70). According to Dehé, however, the continuous word order underlies PV constructions in English (as will be shown in Chapter 3). The choice of the word order is thus not optional, but depends on the context in which the PV construction is embedded. Specifically, it is “in a high degree driven by the information structure of the context in which the PV construction occurs” (p. 71).

In Chapter 3 (“The neutral order of transitive PV constructions in English, pp. 74–102), Dehé determines whether the continuous or the discontinuous word order underlies English PV constructions. First, the factors that have been suggested in previous studies as governing PV word order are presented. Second, contrary to previous works that set the underlying structure in the discontinuous word order, Dehé assumes that the continuous order underlies English PV constructions. Thus, the discontinuous word order is derived from the continuous word order by means of various syntactic transformations. As support for this hypothesis, Dehé provides important and convincing

evidence not only from the syntactic behavior of PV constructions from an experiment carried out by Hunter & Prideaux (1983), but also from an experimental study on speech production that she carried out herself (and also reported in Dehé 2001). In short, Dehé's study shows that in a context-free situation, the continuous word order is produced much more frequently than the discontinuous one.

Chapter 4 ("The choice of word order: The role of information structure and intonation", pp. 103–207) is the most elaborate and can therefore be characterized as the heart of Dehé's book. In this chapter, Dehé focuses on the choice of word order, and she considers the following questions: Why do speakers choose one of the possible PV constructions in English over the other? When do they use the continuous order or the discontinuous order and why (p. 101). In answering these questions, Dehé argues that the word order in English PV constructions is dependent on the information structure of the surrounding context, and specifically on the information status of the DP-complement. If the DP-complement is new, it follows the verb and the particle and the continuous word order is realized ("Sam turned down the radio"). In turn, if the DP-complement is given, and thus refers to something that is already known by the speaker/writer, it immediately follows the verb and the discontinuous word order is used ("Sam turned the radio down"). Once again, this analysis is based both on the discussion of previous linguistic works and on new experimental studies through which Dehé provides new insights on the intonation patterns of PV constructions. It is interesting to note that Dehé's analysis builds on proposals that are in some cases quite old (see in particular Van Dongen 1919) (p. 123). In the very small paragraph "Particle verbs and information structure in the literature" (p. 122–125), she further cites Erades (1961), Bolinger (1971), Chen (1986), and Olsen (1996, 1997, 1998b). Without explicitly mentioning the concept, these studies proposed some factors related to information structure to account for word order alternation in PV constructions. Interestingly, at the end of the chapter Dehé returns to the various criteria that have been proposed to explain the alternate word order of PV constructions in English and other languages, and she demonstrates that all the criteria proposed can be explained in light of the theory of information structure.

While Dehé's analysis in Chapter 4 is quite revealing, it is important to note that word order alternation in English PV constructions can also trigger a difference in meaning and is therefore not necessarily related to a difference in the information status of the DP-complement. One example of this case is the following: "You may bring me your rings now, and I will look them over", where

the meaning “to examine” is realized, and “You may bring me your rings now, and I will look over them”, where the sense “to protect” is realized.

Chapter 5 (“A syntactic analysis for PV constructions in English”, pp. 209–278) builds on the results of the previous chapters, and Dehé returns to the syntax of PV constructions. Specifically, she suggests a syntactic structure that will account for the pragmatic role of PV constructions in English word order. The analysis given is an extended-PV type of analysis. Dehé mentions that the verb and the particle undergo the regular syntactic movement operations as a complex head whenever possible. Three cases are considered for the continuous word order: maximal focus (A: What happened? B: [Nate put away the phone]), non-minimal focus (A: What did Nate do? B: He [put away the PHONE]), and minimal focus (A: What did Nate put away? B: He put away [the PHONE]). Dehé demonstrates that, when the DP-complement is given in the context, the complex verb is separated. This separation triggers the discontinuous word order. The particle is stranded in its base V position within the VP as the focus domain in order to bind the [+F] focus feature and to meet the condition of focus domains. The stranding of the particle leaves the nominal object in a position between the verb and the particle.

The structure Dehé proposes integrates a focus feature. The assignment of this feature to the relevant element of the PV construction triggers the stranding of the particle in the position following the object-DP, thus leading to the derivation of the discontinuous word order. The discussion of Chapter 5 is thus centered on the overt object movement in English in general and on the PV constructions in particular.

The proposal slightly modifies a previous syntactic analysis suggested in Dehé (2000) (p. 131). Contrary to her earlier proposal, the discontinuous word order is derived not by the movement of the nominal object, but by the stranding of the particle. Specifically, it is not the preposing of the object that creates the discontinuous order but the non-preposing of the particle which does not pied-pipe along with the verb to a functional head position.

In Chapter 6 (“Conclusion and outlook”, pp. 279–283), Dehé closes the book by providing a summary of her findings, discussing some counter arguments to her proposals, and suggesting topics for further research. In particular, she reveals the need to focus on the PV constructions in Norwegian and Icelandic, two languages she believes could benefit the most from her account of the PV constructions in English.

To conclude this review, I would like to outline what I believe are the most important contributions of Dehé’s book. First, Dehé’s approach for explaining

the alternating word order in English PV constructions is both illuminating and convincing. She combines evidence from both theoretical and experimental research, which makes the book very rich. I was particularly struck by how well Dehé masters different linguistics theories. Her book is at the crossroads between syntax, prosody and pragmatics. And although it requires some knowledge of Chomsky's Minimalist Program, Dehé's book is very accessible.

While employing Chomsky's Minimalist Program, Dehé supports her claims with concepts related to the theories of information structure and phonology. From an empirical point of view, then, I found the evidence provided in Dehé's empirical studies to be very well presented and very revealing. For instance, in Chapter 3, in support of the claim that the continuous word order underlies PV constructions in English, Dehé provides evidence based on a study of speech production. Her findings are consistent with the primacy of the continuous word order not only for compositional PV constructions, but also for the idiomatic and the aspectual PV constructions.

A second asset of Dehé's book is the strategy of using authentic empirical evidence in a syntactic, generative approach. In contrast to numerous syntactic studies, Dehé's analysis relies upon both constructed and authentic examples. Dehé employs a corpus of 13 works of fiction that are quoted in several parts of the book. The use of authentic material greatly reinforces her proposals.

In light of her novel approach and proposals, Dehé's book will be essential for anyone conducting research on PV constructions in any of the Germanic languages. Her account of PV constructions in English is very well presented and very convincing. Dehé's book will also be important for linguists working in the Minimalist theory framework. Finally, this book will be of use to linguists interested in the theories of phonology and information structure, as her account of the placement of the DP-complement according to its information status is very illuminating.

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