

# A Contrastive Componential Analysis of Motion Verbs in English and Swedish

RITA KOULIKOVA



L I M S

Linguistics in the Midnight Sun • Report no 6

Luleå University of Technology  
Department of Languages and Culture

**ENGLISH C**

Supervisor: Ulf Magnusson





# C - EXTENDED ESSAY

*A Contrastive componential analysis of motion verbs  
in English and Swedish*

Rita Koulikova

Department of Languages and Culture

ENGLISH C

Supervisor: Ulf Magnusson



---

Linguistics in the Midnight Sun, Report no 6

---

Reports from the Department of Languages and Culture no. 7

# Contents

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Introduction   | 1    |
| 1.1 Background  | 1    |
| 1.2 Aim   | 1    |
| 2. Theory, method and data  | 3    |
| 2.1 Semantic structure of a word                                  | 3    |
| 2.2 Method of componential analysis                               | 4    |
| 2.3 Definition of a semantic domain of motion                     | 4    |
| 2.4 Properties of the lexemes chosen for this study               | 5    |
| 3. Semantic structure of motion verbs                             | 6    |
| 3.1 Common characteristic features of the analyzed verbs          | 6    |
| 3.2 Suggested set of components of motion verbs                   | 7    |
| 3.2.1 Direction as an indication of movement                      | 8    |
| 3.3 General and distinctive features of the selected verbs        | 9    |
| 4. Component structure of motion verbs in English and Swedish     | 10   |
| 4.1 Meaning components of motion verbs in English and Swedish     | 10   |
| 4.2 Contrastive description of the sets of motion verb components | 12   |
| 4.3 Comparison of the component content of motion verbs           | 15   |
| 5. Conclusion   | 17   |
| List of works cited or referred to                                | 19   |
| List of abbreviations   | 20   |
| Appendix  | 21   |
| Table 1. The component content of English motion verbs            | 21   |
| Table 2. The component content of Swedish motion verbs            | 22   |

## 1.Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The work presented in this C-essay has been carried out as part of the project "Linguistics in the Midnight Sun" at the department of Language and Culture, Luleå University of Technology.

Contrastive component analysis followed by the analysis of the use of motion verbs will be conducted in this research.

Words are built up of smaller components of meaning which are combined differently to form different words. The componential approach to semantics has been developed by Katz, Fodor and Jackendoff as well as many other authors in the last quarter of the XX century. Semantic components help to define different lexical relations, grammatical and syntactic processes. Certain units of meaning can be shared by different lexical items. As a consequence two verbs might share a semantic concept, *e.g.* "motion" or "cause". In recent years there has been increasing interest in the semantics of the verb classes and especially in the use of verbs, which belong to the most central part of the mental lexicon. Motion verbs were subjects to various types of contrastive studies, such those made recently by Seppälä (2004), Mora Gutiérrez (2001), Wilkins (1998), Tsujimura (2003), Sarda (2005) and Sandström (2005).

A similar study of the semantics of motion verbs has been made by me before. I have compared the component structure of motion verbs in the Russian, English and Latvian languages. English and Swedish are related languages, they have structures which are similar, but there are differences as well. In the present follow-up I update my previous results and concentrate on the new material, dealing with a comparison of motion verbs in English and Swedish.

### 1.2 Aim

The aim of this paper is to find out what results can be achieved by the component analysis method in the study of motion verbs and if component analysis can be considered a reliable method for this sort of lexical studies. In the process of contrastive research of motion verbs the following tasks will be dealt with:

- establishment of the common characteristics of the semantic field/domain of motion,

- definition and description of the content groups of motion verbs whose components are semantically close,

- description of the lexical semantic variants of motion verbs in English and their comparison to Swedish.

I will concentrate on coverage of connections between the semantics of motion verbs, the similarities and differences of these signs in English and Swedish.

Motion verbs are in the core of vocabulary in all the languages and are frequently used in speech. Therefore they are important in foreign language studies. Results of the research can be put in practice in foreign language teaching, especially to the students for whom both English and Swedish are foreign languages.

The abbreviations in this work refer to the following dictionaries: ORO- Oxford Reference Online, SO - Svensk ordbok, WOLD - Webster's On-line Dictionary.

As primary sources unilingual, defining and bilingual dictionaries and examples from the press are used. To make the data comparable, two papers of a similar character were selected: *Dagens Nyheter* and *The Sunday Times*. Using this method of selection makes data more reliable.

## 2. Theory, method and data

### 2.1 The semantic structure of a word

In linguistics it is lexical semantics, that examines the lexical meaning of words, their semantics. It should be mentioned that meaning is a concept used in many other sciences, but the study of meaning is particularly supported by achievements in philosophy, logic and psychology. That is why semantics is not accepted as a linguistic field by all theoreticians. Besides, linguistics at present is not able to offer a definition of meaning which is all conclusive and widely accepted. However, many agree upon the basic principle that lexical meaning is the realization of concept or emotion by means of a definite language system and its use in the language.

Before we proceed to the analysis of meaning it's necessary to define notions composing the meaning of a word. Words can be analyzed and described in terms of their semantic components. As it is known, a word presents a complex semantic structure. The utmost unit of the lexical semantic level is a lexical- semantic variant which can be decomposed to more elementary units of meaning, components. The component of meaning proper to the word as a linguistic unit, i.e. recurrence in all its forms. As a result, a word's semantic structure is seen as a structural multitude of its possible lexical- semantic variants. The whole word meaning structure is founded by several conceptions such as

- basic nominative meaning: *run* 'move at a speed faster than a walk, never having both or all the feet on the ground at the same time' (ORO),
- lexical- semantic variants: *run* as a 'sport or for exercise', 'compete in a race', 'enter (a racehorse) for a race', 'sail straight and fast directly before the wind' (ORO) etc ,
- realized variants: *I run every morning*.

Concept of semantic feature and semantic component are units of different levels. The first belongs to a higher level of abstraction. It shows qualitative difference between the lexical meanings of a word. A semantic component of a word is the smallest unit of level of content included in the feature and is its bearer in a specific lexical meaning of the word. Accordingly, semantic features inherit some specific components of the meaning forming their structure.

Consequently, the semantic structure of a word is treated as a system of meanings. Therefore analysis in terms of components, when the total meaning of a word is seen in terms

of a number of distinct elements or components of meaning, is not sufficient but can help to define the meaning of word formed by a number of semantic signs.

## **2.2 Method of componential analysis**

Componential analysis developed from anthropological studies describing and comparing kinship terminology in different languages. The lexical decomposition (or componential) approach to lexical semantics became one of the most influential in the 1960-1970s. In this theory, word meanings were broken down into semantic primitives or semantic features and their specifications.

Componential analyses of lexical meanings have been conducted both in Europe and America by various linguists and in particular by scholars working within the framework of transformational grammar: Hjelmslev, Katz and Fodor, Lakoff, Pottier (see Mora Gutiérrez 2001).

Componential analysis has never achieved real respectability in theoretical semantics, as researchers faced many unsolved problems such as finding a complete and stable set of semantic primitives by way of cross linguistic research on lexical universals. Despite that, component semantics is still included in most modern structural semantic approaches. Today, a variety of theorists (Jackendoff, Pustejovsky, Wierzbicka) (Murphy 2003: 87) use more complicated componential approaches than the earlier ones. We can speak of “componentialist renaissance” (Murphy 2003: 87).

Before starting the description of the semantic structure of motion verbs in terms of componential theory it is necessary to delimit the area of the material chosen for the research task.

Verbs and other parts of speech can be put into a semantic field where they can share a lexical set of semantically related items. Here “semantic field” is seen as a distinct part of the lexicon defined by some general term or concept: ‘Motion’, ‘Possession’, ‘Cause’ etc.

Distinction of the limits of semantic field would help us to separate and delimit semantic determinatives, components founding a domain of motion. Later, sub-lexical semantic components combined to form lexical meanings will be identified.

## **2.3 Definition of the semantic domain of motion**

Studies of lexicology by the method of semantic field are used widely in linguistics. Componential analysis is often used for the description of semantic fields. A semantic field (or lexical field), sometimes also called “domain”, is an area of meaning which can be

delimited from others in a language. Two or more languages can be compared to see how they divide a particular field. In almost all the cases, the words referring to items in a particular class dividing a semantic field, are incompatible: “the incompatibility of terms within a linguistic field is often clearly indicated in the language” (Palmer 1996: 69).

The most common kind of semantic field is a field of paradigmatic type, whose units are lexemes, belonging to the same part of speech and united by one or several categorical senses in the meaning. The theory of semantic fields asserts that the meaning of a word depends partly on the other words it is related to in meaning. The most common relations are those of a paradigmatic type: synonymic, antonymic, gender, aspect etc. Such fields are often called semantic classes or lexical-semantic groups. Relations between the items of a semantic field can differ by their scope and type.

An example of a minimal semantic field of the paradigmatic type may be a synonymic group of motion verbs. This field is formed by verbs like *move, proceed, go, pass, walk etc.* The semantic field of motion verbs can be presented as a combination (amalgamation) of synonymic rows: *move - proceed- advance- pass; run- cover-pass over, sprint, race; walk- advance- proceed- move- go- wend- step; gå- vandra, promenera, stega, flanera, röra sig etc.*

The subject of this study is a semantic field united by the two most common features:

- 1) movement in space
- 2) agent of action: animate /inanimate subject .

Some scientists also believe that the items in the field are unordered because there is no natural way, “as far as their meaning is concerned” (Palmer 1996: 70), to arrange them in any kind of order.

## **2.4 Properties of the lexemes chosen for this study**

Motion verbs are very numerous as they name widely-distributed actions in reality. Most semantic theories assume that complex meanings should be represented in terms of simpler ones. The issue of the suitable representation of the meaning of verbs is not a simple task. Semantically, verb classes are characterized by a greater capacity of the semantic structure and more flexible range of meanings than any other part of speech. Verbs of motion are no exception.

Preliminary analysis of the structure of the domain of motion was based on the material in English. The terminology used in the research paper in many cases corresponds the Russian linguistic tradition, even if the Russian scholars (Arnold, Apresyan, Maslov etc) often disagree on the details. That is why it seems important to submit for consideration the

problem of description parameters of motion verbs semantics and common characteristic features of the analyzed verbs.

For the reasons of space, a comparatively limited number of verbs has been chosen, which denote a general, abstract concept of motion in space. Depending on the context in which they are used each of the verbs gets a specific meaning. Only those verbs are chosen for this study whose meanings correspond to the purposes of the research and the following parameters:

Motion verbs denoting movement of a subject or animated object in the horizontal plane along a firm surface were analyzed. The verb's stylistical neutrality and possibility of interpretation with the help of the same verbs are indispensable condition for inclusion into this group: *run* 'move at a speed faster than a walk'; *walk* 'move at a regular pace, travel ... on foot', *go* 'move from one place to another; travel' (ORO); *springa* 'förflytta sig framåt med snabba steg' (SO).

The task of the semantic analysis consists in exposure of features of the lexical-semantic group and components of meanings, containing universal characteristics, therefore it seems important to define general characteristics of semantic structure of motion verbs.

### 3. Semantic structure of motion verbs

#### 3.1 Common characteristic features of the analyzed verbs

In the linguistic literature motion verbs are defined in various ways. There is no simple characteristic nor common terminology for this group, nor general agreement on how to classify and delimit in verb groups. In this study, all the verbs meaning this: physical action of transference, shift, displacement of animated or unanimated objects in space are placed in this group.

Verbs *come*, *move*, *go*, *run*, *walk* are included into the thousand of most used words and are the most frequent among motion verbs. The meanings of words *walk*, *run*, *go* and *move* have definitely something in common. This distinctive feature we call a semantic component. In this case the semantic component is that of movement. We can name firstly verbs containing components of movement in their basic meaning: *go*, *come*, *move*, *walk*. Secondly, there are verbs with spatial prepositions and postpositions: *go to*, *go out*, *go through*, *come in* etc. It should be mentioned that the issues of postpositions or adverbial prepositions is an arguable point as there is no general opinion on their existence as independent part of speech.

But it is evident that they carry a different semantic loading than adverbs and change the meaning of the verb generating the entity.

To give a more or less full picture of the meaning of a word, it is necessary to include in the scheme of analysis additional semantic components.

### 3.2 Suggested set of components of motion verbs.

The set of components of motion verb content is rather wide, but both dictionaries and component models attempt to define lexical items using a limited metalanguage. However this works only when there is a clear distinction. Not all the verbs are easily decomposed into features, because natural actions are usually “difficult to describe in words, but easy to point out” (Jackendoff 1990: 88).

The first component of movement puts the verb into the semantic domain of motion. The meaning of the other motion verbs can often be interpreted by means of *come*, *move*, *go*. This corresponds to the essential part of component theory tending to use "a limited number of lexical items that are deemed to be semantically primitive" (Saeed 1997: 237).

We can distinguish the following types of movement:

a) movement as a consequent change of position. This common feature is found in almost all the motion verbs:

*run*: ‘move with quick steps (faster than when walking)’

*walk*: ‘move by putting forward each foot in turn not having both feet off the ground at once’

*gå*: ‘röra sig genom att växelvis flytta den ena foten framför den andra’.

The other verbs can be described with help of verbs, similar to those mentioned, which are in their turn determined through *move*, e.g.: *stride*: ‘walk with long steps’.

b) movement away from an observer, interpreted in English by means of the verb *go*, the so-called verb of external motion (Jackendoff 1990: 89):

*cross*: ‘to go over to the other side’; *korsa*: ‘röra sig tvärs över (ngt) för att komma över till motsats sida’(SO). Similar movement is expressed by *drive*, *lead*, *slide* etc.

c) movement towards an observer, interpreted by means of verbs, whose meaning is defined by the verb *come*: *bring*: ‘to carry or cause to come with one or towards someone’

In Swedish it is seen clearly in the definition of *komma*: ‘vara framme efter förflyttning till talarens närhet’(SO).

Redundancy rules predict the relationships between components. Therefore, a possible correlation can be suggested: *come* :: *go* = *arrive* :: *leave*. The semantic component is DIRECTION of movement: arrival or leaving.

If the main orientation is defined by reference to an observer, more precise definitions are expressed through the component of direction.

### 3.2.1 Direction as indication of movement

Transference or movement usually happens in some direction, as transference without some direction is impossible. Verbs denoting this action are distinguished depending on in what way their meaning contains indication of movement in a concrete direction. Movement directed to some goal in space is described by the verbs, indicating a concrete action, realized at a certain moment, e.g. *go* and *come*; *komma* and *gå*. Some researchers call them the “verbs of inherently directed motion” (Sandström 2006: 22) When we speak about a motion in a given direction, the following additional features, forming the meanings of the verbs, can be identified:

- a) moving object or agent of the motion
- b) manner of motion, it's character (*springa, åka, gå*)
- c) general direction of the motion. They are mainly verbs of approaching (*come*) or departure (*go*), included in the semantics of the verb. It is a particular characteristic of componential analysis to see components in terms of opposites like *come* - *go*. In this it gives "emphasis to the relation of complementarity" (Palmer 1995: 111).
- d) Localization, which is any entity or place in reference to which transference happens (*ut, in, hemma, hem, dit etc*).

A part of verbs do not carry information about the direction of transference, but denote "pure" movement, for example, *röra* and verbs like *slide, run, march..* Direction can be expressed by change of position and placement, with help of adverbs and prepositions:

(1) *You can walk freely around the grounds and into the Painted Hall and Royal Naval College chapel.*

(2) *När middagen var klar hann familjen äta innan han kom ut från sitt rum en timme senare.*

Verbs like *carry, slide, creep* do not carry an indication to the component of direction in their structure, possibly because they specify another particular component, a component of manner.

The task of the semantic analysis is to expose distinctive features of the lexical-semantic group and its components of meaning, carrying universal features. Therefore general and distinctive characteristics of motion verbs will be described next. Lexical relations can then be stated again in terms of the components.

### 3.3 General and distinctive features of the selected verbs

For the systematic study of lexicology it is necessary to find out what unites or, in terms of component analysis, amalgamates and distinguishes lexical units, i.e. distinguishes their general and distinctive features, *e.g.*:

*go* [+ move] [+ at a regular pace] [+ travel]

*walk* [+ move] [+ on foot] [+ at a regular pace] [- having both feet off the ground at once] [+ travel]

*run* [+ move] [+ on foot] [+ having both feet off the ground at once] [+ at a regular pace] [+faster than *walk*] [- travel]

*gå* [+ förflytta] [+ till fots] [+ tidvis kontakt med marken]

*springa* [+ förflytta] [+ till fots] [- tidvis kontakt med marken] [+ snabbt]

It's a binary system: a meaning component is either present in a word or not. There is an advantage in such binary terms that we can choose only one as the label and distinguish this in terms of pluses and minuses.

Here [move] is a general feature, sometimes also called 'semantic marker' which binds the vocabulary together and responses for the lexical relations. [On foot] and position of feet [on/off the ground] are distinctive features or 'distinguishers'.

There will be in addition a set of redundancy rules for these components which reduce the number of components stated for each item, *e.g.*:

*walk* [+ on foot] [+ at a regular pace] [- both feet off the ground at once]

*run* [+faster than *walk*] [+ both feet off the ground at once]

*promenera* [+ gå] [+ tidvis kontakt med marken] [- snabbt]

It's evident that *walk* combines components found both in *promenera* and *gå*.

This corresponds to the essential part of component theory tending to create a semantic language through the identification of semantic components. Such language can consist of sub-lexical semantic features or uses a limited number of lexical items that are supposed to be semantically primitive. But it would be a mistake to suppose that if we use such terms to define a common word that resultant phrase is semantically identical.

After the analysis of the semantic content of the studied verbs and the direction of the possible research, we can point out the actual components that form semantic sub-structure of motion verbs and determine its functions.

#### 4. Component structure of motion verbs in English and Swedish

Apart from the above internal components, motion can also be accompanied by other events, which reflect the manner or even the cause of the movement. There are different elements included such as trajectory of the movement, characteristics of space, environment, in which movement takes place, indication of closed/ opened space etc.

##### 4.1 Meaning components of motion verbs in English and Swedish

As it was shown, in many cases there is an appropriate term in the language to label a component. From the wider perspective, the question arises if these components are psychologically real. Some linguists believe that these elements play a role in our thinking and "by identifying them correctly we are establishing meaning"(Saeed 1997: 261).

The symbols representing sense structures with so called "semantic markers" were developed by Katz and his colleagues. The markers refer to features that the word has in common with other lexical items, and a distinguisher differentiates it from all other words.

This is how these structures represent "senses" of the verbs *follow* and *chase*:

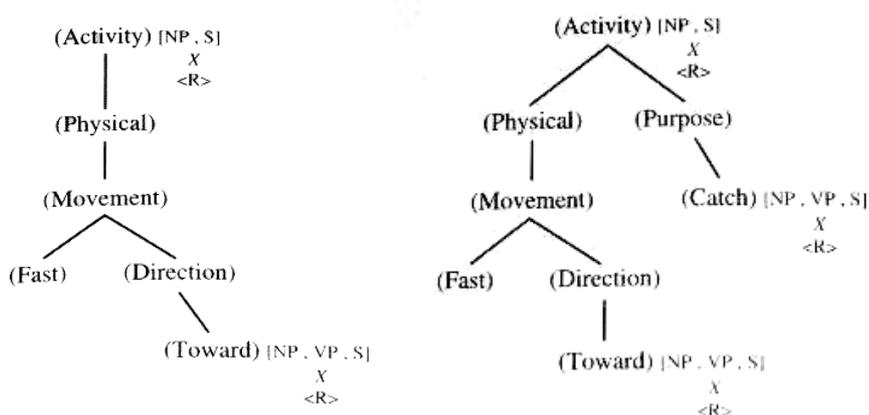


Fig.1 Katz's (2004:156) tree-structures for *follow* and *chase*

These are same- rooted trees showing that both *chase* and *follow* share the same semantic markers. The syntactic information in the brackets to the right specifies the semantic representations. The tree structure of *follow* is superordinate of *chase*.

Similarly, in the sentence *He, too, crawled under the train* in terms of Katz's symbolism we can define how the semantic markers are subordinate to each other in the sense of the verb *crawl*:

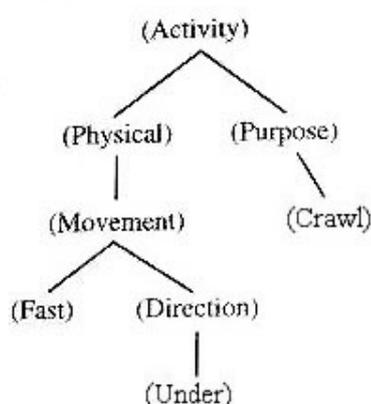


Fig.2. A tree-structure for *crawl*

The same tree of semantic markers would represent the sense of the Swedish verb *krypa*.

The projection rules used these trees to structure the amalgamation of word meanings into phrase meanings, and then phrase meanings into the sentence's meanings (Saeed 1997: 225).

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the linguistic typology for motion events in the cognitive perspective (Talmy 1975, Slobin 2004, Pourcel 2004). According to psycholinguistic researches on how people speaking different languages describe a motion event, it may include the following basic semantic elements:

- FIGURE (moving object )
- MOTION (event of motion or location itself)
- MANNER of motion
- PATH (the course followed or place occupied)
- GROUND (the reference object)

Slobin (2004) also speaks of such ground elements as SOURCE, MEDIUM , WAY-STATION and GOAL. All these basically correspond to the semantic component content of motion verbs given in 3.2 but involve a deeper analysis of a phrase, with special attention to context.

## 4.2 Contrastive description of the sets of motion verb components

### Component (Manner) of movement

This component is typical for motion verbs in satellite-framed languages, as English and Swedish. It expresses all the possible kinds of horizontal motion. Motion verbs can be placed in oppositions depending on how transference in space is denoted in each of them:

a) manner of movement stated clearly in the component content and definition, *like in gå* ‘växelsvis flytta den ena foten framför den andra, som då hålls kvar mot underlaget’ or ‘by drawing the body along the ground’ like in *crawl*;

b) manner of movement characterized by some means or transport: *drive/ köra/ åka, ride/rida,, slide/glida*;

c) manner, depending on the agent or object of motion: *drag/dra/ pull*: ‘to use force to cause something to move toward oneself or after oneself’.

In the verb *åka* ‘färdas ... normalt utan egen arbetsinsats’ comparing to *köra* both b and c variants are combined:

(3) *I sommar ska jag åka iväg på utbildning .*

Verbs containing indication of the power causing an action form a semantically close group: *push, drive, pull, ride, drag*. In these motion verbs we find indication to the source that causes the action.

In some cases all these elements can be combined: *slide*: ‘to move or cause to move over a surface, while keeping continual contact’; *push*: ‘to use pressure in order to move somebody or something away’.

Often indication to the manner of movement is stated twice: in the component structure of the verb and in the context as general ability to move in some special way:

(4) *If you want to skate, you have to book in advance. He is learning to walk again.*

(5) *Man har fått lära sig gå, springa, hoppa allt på nytt.*

As it is seen from the given examples verb definitions often contain clear indications to the other components, forming the structure of the semantic domain of motion, such as pace, environment and force that causes motion.

### Component (Pace)

The semantic component of time in combination with the space seme (distance that has been covered) gives us a component (pace). Among verbs of motion many specify particular pace of motion in their definition: *dra* ‘förflytta (sig)ofta tämligen långsamt och under längre tid’ (SO); *race* ‘to move at full speed’.

The speed component is essentially included into the component content of such verbs as *rush/rusa* (quickly), *speed/fräsa* (very fast), *creep/krypa* (slowly) etc.

The speed of motion is subjective for every moving body. One and the same action subject can move with different speeds. Here we can also note the existence of oppositions, involving the verbs *go* and *come* which usually do not specify the pace of motion: *walk - march - run*.

Clear oppositions are distinguished between verbs involving fast motion, which are synonyms of *run* and verbs involving slow motion like *creep*.

If we compare this with a third correlation *run :: walk = go :: drive*, we get the other distinctive features contrasting manner, speed etc. The existence of correlated oppositions shows that these elements are recognised by the vocabulary.

Time characteristics of motion can be seen not only as a time of proceeding action but as time of observation:

(6) *I said to myself: "It would take 15 minutes to walk."*

(7) *Gick ner till stranden klockan sex och tog en promenad i en timme med Ebba Forsbergs "Daybreak" i lurarna.*

### Components (Goal) and (Force)

Behavior is usually goal-driven, therefore any result of change of place can be described also as (goal) or (reason):

(8) *When my father went drinking, he wouldn't always come home and my mother would send me to fetch him: 'Go down and tell your father his dinner is ready.*

(9) *En av damerna som arbetar i köket hänger av sig förklädet och kommer ut i sin arbetsrock för att sjunga.*

This component is often noted in the verbs denoting transition across some border, e.g. body, environment, space: *cross/korsa* , *pass/passera*:

(10) *You'll pass through thick karri forest and coastal heathland, skirting attractive coves such as Monkey Rock and Lights Beach.*

(11) *Nu är den polisiära närvaron påtaglig och vid varje hotell tvingas gästerna passera genom en metalldetektor och visa innehållet i sina väskor innan de släpps in i lobbyn.*

In the definition of these motion verbs goal is expressed by reference to another action or power pursued through the transference: *push* 'to use sudden pressure in order to move'; *move* 'to cause to go or pass from one place to another with a continuous motion'; *rulla* 'få (ngt) att förflytta sig på ett underlag genomvridning'.

The next sentence gives an example of motion events combining a power component with a concrete goal:

(12) *If Fahey was going racing, Winston polished his shoes and when he learned to drive, he would run the 10 miles into the local village to drive those who were drinking home from the pub.*

### **Component (Path)**

Under the component of (path) we can distinguish two physical phenomena: direction of the movement in a specific moment or direction in which happened subjects transference/shift took place:

(13) *Lee Hunt, an Underground driver who'd been on his tea break at the depot at Edgware Road, had come down when he heard the explosion.*

(14) *So I'd go down to the Cardiff Inn and say 'Daddy, Mammy wants you to come home for dinner, she's going mad up in the house.'*

In the first sentence, correlation with another fact (explosion) points to a certain moment of action. In the second sentence, there is statement of transference of the subject in a specific direction.

In many situations there is more than one relevant reference point. Typically, these reference points (or grounds) are components of the path, namely the source (or origin) of the path, the goal (or end-point), a milestone (a salient feature along the path), or even the medium making up the path (Mora Gutiérrez 2001). All these is typical for satellite-framed languages like Swedish and English which tend to present more detailed path descriptions:

(15) *Från Ulriksdals station är det lätt att promenera dit. Det tar tio minuter, på vägen passerar man en golfbana.*

(16) *Walk straight on for a view across one of London's most varied stretches of riverside, with the Royal Naval College to the east a stark contrast to the silos further downriver towards Woolwich.*

The verb *stroll* in intransitive senses names an action without a concrete purpose: ‘aimless, without a clear - cut goal’ the same as *ströva* ‘vandra omkring långsamt utan mål’, in transitive senses it receives an opposite meaning ‘to go from place to place in search of work or profit’(WOLD). In the context, the verb often receives additional meanings too:

(17) *Next morning, stroll to the Old Fremantle Prison for a fascinating tour of Australia's penitentiary past.*

After the possible components forming semantic structure of motion verbs were defined, a systematization of the data of the componential analysis in the two languages will follow.

### **4.3 Comparison of the component content of motion verbs**

During the current research, the following observations involving analysis of the semantic situation in which a motion verb was used were found. A directed motion event refers to a situation in which an object, the figure, moves with regards to a reference point, the ground, following a trajectory, the path:

(18) *Trains run from Bank, Tower Gateway, Canary Wharf and Lewisham. Linear alternative: start at Cutty Sark DLR and finish at Blackheath where trains run to London Bridge, Waterloo East and Charing Cross.*

The trajectory of action suggests presence of certain “visibility” of motion and can also have a component of path’s complexity:

(19) *Come out of Greenwich DLR station and turn left, walking through an archway to the main road, then turn left again to see the Cutty Sark ahead.*

(20) *Efter intervjun åkte jag på världens utskällning och sprang därifrån.*

In theory there are no limits for components that can be established. Any piece of information can work as marker. These may be found either lexicalized separately from each other:

(21) He'd        crawled        underneath    the train.

FIGURE MOTION+MANNER    PATH    GROUND

or variously combined in the meaning of single words:

*move*: '(cause to) change position; cause to be in a different place or attitude; (cause to) be in motion' ( MOTION POWER PATH)

Both Talmy and Jackendoff observed a strict correlation between the meaning components "clustered within a verb root and the verb syntactic properties" (Eagles 1999). Another extensive study on the correlation between verb semantics and syntax has been provided lately by Levin (Sandström 2005: 21).

The following lines are comments to the tables given in the Appendix:

There is no component expressing motion itself, a general feature of the studied verb group in the table, as it is presented in the semantic structure of all the motion verbs. A component (pace) was considered present if any sort of information about the speed was found in a verb's definition. Sets of components containing indication to the directional sema and (path) of the motion, seen here in a broad sense as a surface, way and conditions of a motion event.

The components in the table present just a part of the semantic features of the unanalyzed verbs. Other combinations of components are possible.

Motion verbs name a kind of physical action which by its nature is characterized by a certain pace, time of action/elapse, path line (trajectory) where some point can be marked out, for example initial and final, direction and result, for instance, movement in space.

The tables and analysis of the studied material showed that English and Swedish verbs are close in their component meaning. There may be some minor differences found in the usage of some verbs. One of them is noticed, for example, between the verbs *come* and *komma*, translated in to English by *get* in the phrases like

*Jag kan inte komma in i huset - I cannot get into the house;*

*I didn't get to London until midnight - -jag kom inte fram till London förrän vid midnatt etc.*

That allows us to admit a broader directional component content of *komma*, where presence of the components as (path) can be suggested. (Path) also tends to be encoded by elements

associated with the main verb such as verb particles and affixes, which is typical of satellite languages.

Furthermore, a (goal) component is often found in a directed motion in English and Swedish expressed by manner of motion verbs. In such cases information of some kind of force causing an action is supposed. Therefore additional components can be suggested in words like *drive*, *ride*, *roll*. The more components a verb of motion has, the more it's distinct and self-sufficient. Most verbs have only few components, but the usage of verbs in the context allows us to realize available components and/or add missing ones. For example, a directed motion is often accompanied by another action which activates a component even if it was not present in the meaning structure of a verb.

The diversity of meanings and nuances that sometimes differentiate the meanings of closely related verbs, makes it complicated to find a small set of components that account for all possible meanings. A problem of limitless number of components therefore becomes actual. The componential approach seems not to provide precise definitions of word meanings.

## 5. Conclusion

Componential analysis is an attempt to describe the meaning of words in terms of a universal range of semantic components and their possible combinations. Such basic parameters of description of transference as pace, direction, goal, manner and conditions accompanying the action can be included into the semantic structure of motion verbs. These are the main components forming the characteristic semantic set of motion verbs. The verbs of semantic domain of motion verbs are united by the semantic marker «movement» and distinguished by differential features, such as (path), (direction), (manner), (goal) and (pace).

Componential analysis appears to be an attractive way of handling semantic relations. This approach has its advantages and semantic components can help to define different lexical relations and grammatical and syntactic processes. But verbs definitions received in the process of componential analysis are not exact.

Componential analysis is appropriate in the research of carefully selected examples fitting into clear-cut semantic groups, such as kinship terms or words denoting colors. It is less satisfactory in other cases, as there is no clear schema to limit the semantic contrasts.

Most of the studied verbs possess only some of the components. As it was shown by the text examples, realization of a specific component often depends on context. For the motion verbs in English and Swedish their sentence context is of principal importance. Context influences the most part of components characterizing the semantic domain of motion. In theory, an infinite set of components can be established, because any piece of information may be used to resolve an ambiguity of the sentence. Therefore I cannot agree with the componentialists' suggestion that we can retrieve the meaning of a sentence from the meaning of the words it contains.

Modern linguistics is characterized by a cognitive approach to language, where all the phenomena of meaning are seen as a complex of reality and science where extra-linguistic factors are important. Structural linguistics and component analysis as a method within delimited language is abstracted from reality and mechanisms of mental perception that causes "lack of psychological evidence for lexical decomposition" (Saeed 1997: 260); that's why nowadays the method is often considered as irrelevant to the world.

Componential analysis has been used to bring out the logical relations that are associated with it, but it does not handle all semantic relations well. Despite that, this approach is still incorporated in works ranging "from the transformational-generative struggles with the semantic component of the grammar" (Kay 1998: 56) to recent works in cognitive linguistics. Componential semantics continues to appear in many modern structural semantics approaches, "whether or not they make claims for the mental representation of the structures they describe" (Murphy 2003: 68).

## List of works cited or referred to

### Primary sources

- Dagens Nyheter: [www.dn.se/](http://www.dn.se/) (21.10.2005)  
 The Sunday Times: [www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,2086,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,2086,00.html) (21.10.2005)  
 Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary & Thesaurus: [www.m-w.com/](http://www.m-w.com/) (21.10.2005)  
 Multitran automatic dictionary: [www.multitran.ru](http://www.multitran.ru) (21.10.2005)  
 Oxford Reference Online: [www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com) (21.10.2005)  
 Svenska akademiens ordbok: <http://g3.spraakdata.gu.se/saob/> (21.10.2005)  
 Svensk ordbok (1986) Stockholm: Esselte studium, Norstedts

### Secondary sources

- Arnold I. (1986) *Lexicology of the modern English language*. Moscow: Vysshaja Shkola.  
 Apresyan J. (1974) *Leksicheskaya Semantika (Lexical Semantics)*. Moscow: Nauka.  
 Jackendoff R. (1990) *Semantic structures*. Massachusetts: MIT Press  
 Kay C. (1998) "Historical semantics and historical Lexicography". / *Lexicology, semantics, and lexicography: selected papers from the fourth G. L. Brook Symposium*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 53-69  
 Katz J. (2004) *Sense, reference, and philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford UP  
 Maslov J. (1985) "An outline of contrastive aspectology" / *Contrastive Studies in Verbal Aspect*. Heidelberg: Groos, 1-44  
 Murphy M. Lynne. (2003) *Semantic relations and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP  
 Palmer F. (1995) *Semantics*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP  
 Saeed J. (1997) *Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publ.  
 Seppälä H. (2004) *Betydelsen hos det finska verbet tulla 'komma speglad i översättningar till svenska*. C-uppsats. Uppsala University  
 Sandström K. (2006) *When motion becomes emotion*. D-Essay. Luleå University of Technology  
 Talmy L. (1975) "Semantics and syntax of motion" / J. P. Kimball, ed., *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 4, 181–238. NY: Academic Press.
- Eagles Lexicon Group (1999) Preliminary recommendations on lexical semantic encodings. Instituto di Linguistico Computazionale: [www.ilc.cnr.it/EAGLES96/rep2/node9.html](http://www.ilc.cnr.it/EAGLES96/rep2/node9.html) (21.10.2005)  
 Mora Gutiérrez J. (2001) Directed motion in English and Spanish: <http://elies.rediris.es/elies11/> (21.10.2005)  
 Wilkins D. (1998) On the subclassification and semantics of motion verbs in Arrernte: [www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/motion/](http://www.anu.edu.au/linguistics/nash/aust/motion/) (21.10.2005)  
 Pourcel S. (2004) Motion in language and cognition: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/s.s.pourcel/0075-0092-Pourcel.pdf> (21.10.2005)  
 Tsujimura N. (2003) Motion Verbs, Telicity, and Argument Projection: [www.msu.edu/~jk13/Abs.Tsujimura.pdf](http://www.msu.edu/~jk13/Abs.Tsujimura.pdf) (21.10.2005)  
 Slobin D. (2004) Linguistic representations of motion events: [ihd.berkeley.edu/iconicityandlinguisticrepresentationofmotionevents.pdf](http://ihd.berkeley.edu/iconicityandlinguisticrepresentationofmotionevents.pdf) (21.10.2005)  
 Sarda L. (2005) Transitive Motion verbs in French and in Korean: [www.lattice.cnrs.fr/article.php?id\\_article=268](http://www.lattice.cnrs.fr/article.php?id_article=268) (21.10.2005)

**List of abbreviations**

NY New York

ORO Oxford Reference Online

SAOB Svenska akademiens ordbok

SO Svensk ordbok

UP University Press

WOLD Webster's On-line Dictionary

## Appendix

Table 1. The component content of English motion verbs

( Direction )

| Verbs        | (Departure) | (Arrival) | (Path) | (Goal) | (Pace) | (Manner) | (Force) |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|----------|---------|
| <i>come</i>  | -           | +         | -      | +      | -      | -        | -       |
| <i>creep</i> | -           | -         | -      | -      | +      | +        | -       |
| <i>cross</i> | -           | +         | +      | +      | -      | -        | -       |
| <i>drive</i> | +           | +         | -      | +      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>drag</i>  | -           | -         | +      | -      | +      | +        | +       |
| <i>go</i>    | +           | -         | -      | +      | -      | -        | -       |
| <i>move</i>  | -           | -         | -      | +      | -      | -        | +       |
| <i>pass</i>  | +           | -         | +      | +      | -      | -        | +       |
| <i>race</i>  | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | +        | +       |
| <i>roll</i>  | -           | -         | -      | +      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>run</i>   | -           | -         | +      | +      | +      | +        | +       |
| <i>rush</i>  | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | -        | +       |
| <i>ride</i>  | -           | -         | -      | -      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>walk</i>  | -           | -         | +      | +      | -      | +        | -       |

Table 2. The component content of Swedish motion verbs

(Direction)

| Verbs            | (Departure) | (Arrival) | (Path) | (Goal) | (Pace) | (Manner) | (Force) |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|----------|---------|
| <i>komma</i>     | +           | +         | +      | +      | -      | -        | -       |
| <i>krypa</i>     | -           | -         | -      | -      | +      | +        | -       |
| <i>korsa</i>     | -           | +         | +      | +      | -      | -        | -       |
| <i>köra</i>      | +           | +         | +      | +      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>dra</i>       | -           | -         | -      | -      | +      | +        | +       |
| <i>gå</i>        | +           | -         | -      | +      | -      | +        | -       |
| <i>åka</i>       | -           | -         | +      | -      | -      | +        | -       |
| <i>röra</i>      | -           | -         | -      | +      | -      | -        | +       |
| <i>passera</i>   | +           | -         | -      | +      | -      | -        | +       |
| <i>löpa</i>      | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | +        | +       |
| <i>rulla</i>     | -           | -         | -      | +      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>springa</i>   | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | +        | -       |
| <i>rusa</i>      | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | -        | +       |
| <i>rida</i>      | -           | -         | -      | -      | -      | +        | +       |
| <i>promenera</i> | -           | -         | -      | +      | +      | +        |         |