# Prefixes and T-Features 

Petr Biskup<br>Universität Leipzig

In this paper, I argue that prefixes and prepositions are identical elements. More specifically, if a homophonous preposition and verbal prefix appear in the same sentence, they are two spelled-out copies of one element. There are several reasons for this claim. Firstly, it is a wellknown fact that verbal prefixes and prepositions in Indo-European languages have the same source. See Russian and Czech (1)-(4) with fourteen randomly chosen prefixes. Almost all prefixes have a prepositional counterpart. Secondly, lexicosemantic properties of prefixes and prepositions are also very similar, compare (5a) and (5b). Thirdly, prefixes can be combined with a homophonous preposition (6). And finally, there is a semantic parallelism in behavior of prefixes and prepositions (P-elements) in sentences. The first parallelism concerns localization. Localization regarding Ps as prepositions: The Figure argument is located with respect to the Ground argument. Localization regarding Ps as prefixes: Reference time is located with respect to event time. The second parallelism concerns definiteness. Definiteness regarding Ps as prefixes: There is a presupposition of a definite reference point on the event path (see Ramchand 2004). Definiteness regarding Ps as prepositions: PPs (and arguments with a non-structural case) are islands for extraction because there is a relation between nonstructural cases and definiteness (presuppositionality); see e.g. Starke (2001). Given these facts, I will argue - building on Pesetsky and Torrego (2006) - that prefixes and prepositions (P-elements) bear a valued Tense-feature and that semantic effects of P-elements with Tensefeatures depend on their syntactic position in a sentence.

## Examples

Russian:
(1) prefixes: do-, iz-, na-, nad-, ot-, pere-, po-, pod-, pri-, pro-, s-, v-, vy-, za-
(2) prepositions: do, iz, na, nad, ot, po, pod, pri, pro, s, v, za

Czech:
(3) prefixes: do-, z-, na-, nad-, od-, pře-, po-, pod-, při-, pro-, s-, v-, vy-, za-
(4) prepositions: do, $z$, na, nad, od, přes, po, pod, při, pro, s, v, za

$$
\begin{align*}
& \text { a. za-jít }  \tag{5}\\
& \text { behind-go } \\
& \text { 'to get behind } \mathrm{x} \text { through going' } \tag{6}
\end{align*}
$$

b. za domem
behind house-instr
'to be behind the house'
za-jít za dům
behind-go behind house-acc
'to go behind the house'

## References

Pesetsky, D. \& Torrego, E. (2006), Probes, Goals and Syntactic Categories. In: Otsu, Y. (ed.), Proceedings of the Seventh annual Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics.
http://web.mit.edu/linguistics/people/faculty/pesetsky/Probes_Goals_Pesetsky_Torrego.pdf
Ramchand, G. (2004), Time and the event: The semantics of Russian prefixes. Nordlyd 32.2, special issue on Slavic prefixes, ed. P. Svenonius, 323-361.
Starke, M. (2001), Move Dissolves into Merge. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Geneva.

