Complex Motion Predicates in German - At the Interface of Auxiliary Selection and Nominal Structure

Modern German complex motion predicates (*reiten, fliegen and fahren*) offer an intriguing puzzle at the interface of nominal structure and auxiliary selection: (i) Is *Auto* (3) a DP or NP? (ii) Why is *Auto* restricted to *sein* (4)?

(1) Peter ist dieses Auto gefahren
    Peter is this car driven

(2) Peter hat dieses Auto gefahren
    Peter has this car driven

(3) Peter ist Auto gefahren
    Peter is car driven

(4) *Peter hat Auto gefahren
    Peter has car driven

(i) Previous accounts (Frey 2015) (Booij 2009): Since only plural and mass nouns can be bare arguments in German (Longobardi 2005) i.e. DPs, the nominal *Auto* is argued to be an NP licensed by incorporation. Topicalization (6) and negation (5) exhibit intervening material, rendering incorporation i.e. N-to-V head movement, unfeasible.

(5) Peter fliegt nicht Flugzeug
    Peter flies not aeroplane

(6) Flugzeug ist Peter geflogen
    Aeroplane is Peter flown

(i) New Proposal: Evidence suggests that *auto* is shifted to mass and thus has DP-status: cf. distribution of *viel* (7) and the *kein/keinen* alternation (9), (10) two phenomena restricted to mass nouns:

(7) Peter ist viel Auto gefahren
    Peter is much car driven

(8) Peter hat viel *Apfel\Fleisch gegessen
    Peter has much *apple\meat eaten

(9) Peter fährt doch gar kein/enPorsche
    Peter drives but at all no Porsche

(10) Peter fliegt doch gar kein/enHubschrauber
    Peter flies but at all no helicopter
(11) Johannes isst doch gar kein* (en) Apfel
    Johannes eats but at all no tank

(12) Silvie isst doch gar kein/en Fisch
    Silvie eats but at all no fish

(ii) **Auxiliary-distribution** is explained following Ramchand (2008):
[InitiatorP[Initiator][Init][Init°][ProcP[Undergoer][Proc°][Path]]]]: *Sein* co-occurs with an
*initiator*/*undergoer-subject*; *haben* co-occurs with an *initiator-subject*. Since undergoer positions
must be filled, object-DPs will yield *undergoer-readings* i.e. a mass denoting object yields a
“cargo”-reading:

(13) David hat Milch/ Auto nach Bayern gefahren
    David has milk/ car to Bavaria driven

The interpretation of *Auto* (3) results from insertion as a *path-argument*. Paths cannot be of
category D with *haben* because *proc°* can assign case to but one DP, i.e. to the obligatory
undergoer. In the *sein* paradigm *proc°* can assign case to path-arguments since the undergoer-DP
moves to SpecInit receiving case from *T°*.

**Booij, G. (2009):** A Constructional Analysis of Quasi-Incorporation in Dutch. In Gengo Kenkyu
(135), pp. 5–27. **Frey, Werner (2015):** NP-Incorporation in German. In Olga Borik, Berit Gehrke
(Eds.): The syntax and semantics of pseudo-incorporation. Leiden, Boston: Brill (Synt &
meaning and the lexicon. A first-phase syntax. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
(Cambridge studies in linguistics, 116).