

The typology of motion expression between system and usage. A corpus-based variationist analysis of the Latin language

Based on a corpus analysis of displacement events in Classical Latin (a S-F language), this work analyzes which of the sub-components of Path (e.g. Spatial Orientation, Deictic Anchoring, Boundary-Crossing) are preferentially expressed and by means of which morpho-syntactic structures. The comparison with Italian (a Neo-Latin V-F language) allows us to highlight the lines of discontinuity and the phenomena of continuity in a case of typological shift from a S-F to a V-F language. The corpus consists of two Latin works of the classical period (Caesar's *Gallic Wars* and Ovidius' *Metamorphoses*). The contexts extracted from a systematic examination of the displacement events are compared with translations from different temporal phases of the Italian language.

Latin encodes the Path mainly by preverbs, prepositions and cases. The results of our corpus analysis show that the means provided by the linguistic system are not exploited uniformly, and their use depends rather on the particular sub-component of the Path which is expressed.

For Spatial Orientation, Latin mainly uses preverbs, adverbs and prepositions that specify both the relationship between Figure and Ground (e.g. *ante*, *infra*, *post*, *sub*, *super*, *supra*) and the directional contour of the Path (*circum*); most of these elements belong to more than one part of speech. The morpho-semantic bleaching of preverbs gives rise to the formation and use of path verbs (e.g. *surgo* 'to get up' < *sub-rigo*).

For the expression of both Boundary-Crossing and Ground, Latin uses preverbs, prepositions and the ablative case in its original spatial meaning, but the opposition at the system level between the prepositions that govern the ablative for the encoding of Source (*ab*, *de*, *ex*) or the accusative for the encoding of Goal (*ad*, *in*) is in decline (cf. García Jurado 1991, Luraghi 2010). The simple accusative and dative cases are rarely used in the encoding of the Ground. If this is the case, they are mostly used in constructions with bivalent verbs meaning 'approach' (e.g. *appropinquo*) or transitive verbs (e.g. *relinquo*).

The Median Point of the Path is rarely expressed. This component is almost exclusively expressed with nouns in the accusative governed by transitive verbs or by verbs transitivized by means of prefixes expressing 'crossing' (e.g. *trans-* or *per-*), or with prepositional phrases with *trans* or *per* + accusative case. The expression of Deictic Anchoring is not easy to investigate in a corpus of Classical Latin literary texts.

As to the phenomena of continuity and change between Latin and Italian, the main changes concern the encoding of Deixis, Spatial Orientation and Boundary-crossing by the verbal stem, cf. It. *andare* 'to go' / *venire* 'to come' (Deixis); *salire* 'to ascend, go up' / *scendere* 'to descend, go down' (Spatial Orientation); *entrare* 'to enter' / *uscire* 'to exit' (Boundary-crossing). The encoding of Ground shows a substantial continuity between Latin and Italian, since this component is often expressed in the adnominal slot, mainly by prepositional phrases (more frequently used than the absolute case already in Classical Latin). Other factors of continuity between Latin and Italian are a relatively low proportion of Manner encoding in the main verb (an unexpected feature in a S-F language like Latin was) and the presence of verb-particle constructions.

Conclusions: From a variationist perspective, our analysis shows that only through a detailed investigation of the different constructions employed in the expression of (the sub-components of) Path it is possible to investigate properly variation in the encoding of motion, hence to account for the phenomena involved in typological shift. From a more general typological point of view, an investigation of the resources offered by the language system has not proven to be a sufficient condition to provide a suitable description of the strategies (preferentially) used in a language to express dislocational motion (hence for a proper typological classification).

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