Expressing motion events without deictic motion verbs:
The case of Tagalog

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Tagalog is a western Malayo-Polynesian language of the Austronesian language family and is spoken in and around the Metro Manila region of the Philippines. This language has been receiving much attention in the literature of linguistic typology because of its complex voice and valency-changing system, commonly known as the focus system. But it is not well known that Tagalog has another linguistic feature of interest: namely, this language lacks deictic motion verbs, such as English *come* and *go*. A question that arises in connection with this fact is, how are motion events expressed without deictic verbs in this language? In this paper, I answer this and related questions by analyzing data that were collected through the NINJAL project on motion expressions led by Yo Matsumoto.

There are four major claims I argue in this paper. First, deictic information is expressed by means of adverbial expressions in Tagalog. Although it lacks verbs specialized for deictic motion, this language can express such information by combining demonstratives with adverbial participles.

Second, deictic information is the most frequently coded in the case of motion toward the speaker. Adverbial expressions that code deictic information rarely appear in descriptions of motion neutral to and away from the speaker.

Third, the position of Tagalog in the typology of motion events (Talmy 1991) varies according to the type of Manner. Path is more often coded in the main verb than Manner in the WALK type. By contrast, Manner is more frequently expressed in the main verb than Path in the RUN and SKIP types. Thus, the Tagalog data provide support for the Prominence Hypothesis (Matsumoto et al. 2013), which predicts that Manner/Path/Deixis are more likely to be expressed when they are prominent.

Lastly, there is no significant difference with regard to frequencies and coding positions of Manner, Path, and Deixis between agentive and causative motion events. In particular, even in descriptions of causative motion events, deictic information is expressed by means of adverbial expressions and is the most frequently coded in the case of motion toward the speaker.

References

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