

Fictive motion of the line of sight and the use of the verbs for turning
in Sidaama (Cushitic, Ethiopia)

The present study shows that Sidaama, a prototypical verb-framed language, much more commonly expresses visual fictive motion events based on lateral motion of the line of sight than axial motion along the line of sight, perhaps because the construction for lateral motion uses the converb forms of the verbs for turning/directing (transitive: *k'ol-*, intransitive: *hig-*). It also points out that this construction is much more frequently used for onset-causation events than extended causation events or putting events, despite the difference between lateral motion of the line of sight and onset-causation.

According to Talmy (1996, 2000), there are two types of visual fictive motion that can be linguistically expressed: axial motion along the line of sight (e.g. *Pat looked into the valley*), where the experiencer emits a probe from himself/herself along the line of sight, and lateral motion of the line of sight (e.g. *Bobby looked up from the book*), where the experiencer shifts the orientation of his/her line of sight. In English, the two types of visual motion can appear in a single sentence, for example, *I quickly looked down into the well*, where *into* and *down* express axial motion and lateral motion, respectively (Talmy 2000:111). Matsumoto (2011) points out that even verb-framed languages express path in a visual motion event with a non-head constituent. Sidaama also follows this type of pattern, where the verbs of turning/directing (especially, the transitive one *k'ol-* with its object *ille* ‘eye’ omitted) take their converb forms and the verb of looking is used as the main verb, as in (1).

- (1) ... beetto min-ú giddó-ra k'ol-t-e
 child.NOM.F house-GEN.M inside-ALL turn-3SG.F-CON
 la'-'-a-nni no.
 look-3SG.F-INF-MANNER/INS come.to.exist.D.PERF.3
 ‘... the girl is looking into the house.’ (Subject 1, A9-51)

As Table 1 shows, out of 42 instances (three video clips, 14 subjects) of ‘looking in’ events, this construction was most frequently used.

In lateral motion of the line of sight, the experiencer keeps his/her line of sight under control. Thus, it is quite different from onset-causation, where the agent initiates agentive motion, but does not maintain control over the moving entity for the rest of the event. Nevertheless, the construction with the converb of *k'ol-* was more frequently used for ‘kicking’ events (e.g. (2)) than ‘carrying’ events (extended causation events) or putting events, as shown in Table 2.

- (2) jaal-i-'ya kaasé ané = wa
 friend-NOM.M-1SG.POSS ball.ACC/OBL 1SG.GEN=place
 k'ol-ø-e gan-ø-i.
 turn-3SG.M-CON hit-3SG.M-RECENT.PERF.3SG.M
 ‘My friend directed the ball to me, and kicked.’ (Subject 14, A9-31)

Different interpretations can be given to this. Visual motion may not be a macro-event, which Talmy’s typology concerns. In visual motion, the main event component is looking, rather than path. Moreover, lateral motion of the line of sight is not translational motion, but self-contained motion, to which Talmy’s typology is irrelevant. Unlike in extended-causation events or putting events, where the moving entity is an entity physically separate from the agent, in visual motion events of this type, the moving entity is the experiencer’s line of sight, which originates from him/her.

Table 1: Frequencies of constituents used for visual paths

Constituent used for path	Number of instances
Converb of <i>k'ol-</i> ('turn/direct' [transitive])	21 (50%)
Converb of <i>hig-</i> ('turn/direct' [intransitive])	3 (7.1%)
Adverb (short form of adverb and converb of <i>hig-</i>)	1 (2.4%)
Allative suffix on noun	1 (2.4%)
Path not expressed	16 (38.1%)
Total	42 (100%)

Table 2: Frequencies of the construction with the converb of *k'ol-* used for different types of agentive events

Type of agentive motion	Number of instances of the <i>k'ol-</i> construction
'Kicking' events	66 out of 126 instances (9 clips, 14 subjects) (52.4%)
'Carrying' events	4 out of 42 instances (3 clips, 14 subjects) (9.5%)
'Putting' events	3 out of 42 instances (3 clips, 14 subjects) (7.1%)

References

- Matsumoto, Yo. 2011. Motion typology reconsidered: Path coding in different event types. Paper presented at the 11th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference at Xi'an International Studies University on July 14, 2011
- Talmy, Leonard. 1996. Fictive Motion in Language and 'Ception'. In Bloom, Paul, Mary A. Peterson, Lynn Nadel and Merrill F. Garrett, eds. *Language and Space*, 211-76. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press/Bradford.
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