

Typology of motion event descriptions:  
Manner, Path and Deixis across and within languages

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In this talk I will discuss the issues related to the typology of motion event descriptions (Talmy 1991, Matsumoto 2003, Slobin 2004, Croft et al. 2010, etc.) in terms of data collected through Ninjal Project on Motion Event Descriptions. This project covering 18 languages with 20 coworkers has examined the data elicited through the identical video clips depicting various motion events. Unlike most of the previous studies, this study has looked at variations of not just manner and path but also deixis, adding to the complexity of sentences examined. The results suggest 1) Languages differ markedly in how often their speakers refer to manner/path/deixis, though some common patterns of intralinguistic variations are found among languages. 2) Languages very often express deixis in a position different from other path categories, and the special treatment of deixis results in different classifications of languages in terms of motion event typology. 3) Languages differ markedly in terms of the complexity of sentences describing a motion event, with not all languages integrating aspects of motion events into a single clause. These findings are discussed in relation to revised versions of the typology of motion event descriptions.