

## Are events that are expressed in verb-framed languages using non-characteristic patterns really macro-events? An examination of motion expressions in Sidaama (Sidamo).

This study shows that when verb-framed languages appear to deviate from their characteristic pattern of expressing events, the events may not actually be macro-events, presenting data on motion expressions in Sidaama, a Cushitic language of Ethiopia.

Talmy's (1985, 1991, 2000) typology of event integration, which investigates patterns of expressing a macro-event (a complex event conceptualized as a unitary event; e.g. motion event) consisting of a framing/main event (e.g. motion along a path) and a co-event/subordinate event (e.g. manner of motion, means of causation), classifies languages into two major types, depending on whether the framing event and the co-event are expressed characteristically by a main verb and an adverbial or a non-main verb, respectively (verb-framed languages), as in the Sidaama example (1), or by a satellite or an adpositional phrase and a main verb, respectively (satellite-framed languages), as in the English gloss for (1).

- (1) tulló-te                      wor-í-ra                      dod-d-e                      dirr-it-ino.  
mountain-GEN.F   bottom-GEN.M-ALL   run-3SG.F-CON   descend-3SG.F-PEF.3  
'She ran down to the bottom of the mountain.'

However, it has been reported that even in verb-framed languages, manner of motion verbs serving as main verbs can sometimes take path complements, though this is not their major expression pattern. Some researchers attribute this to atelicity in aspect (Aske 1989) or the non-occurrence of boundary crossing (Talmy cited in Slobin & Hoiting 1994). However, neither analysis can explain why verb-framed languages normally follow their characteristic pattern when they express an event of ascending/descending or moving around with no participating ground object where the vertically-oriented or circular path is not bounded and does not involve boundary crossing (e.g. *dod-d-e dirr-it-ino*. 'She ran down.').

The present study examines cases where motion expressions in Sidaama, which predominantly exhibit the verb-framed pattern, do not follow it, and shows that at least some motion events that are expressed in verb-framed languages using non-characteristic patterns are, in fact, not macro-events because their main events are not the figure's translational motion through space.

First, manner of motion verbs and means of causation verbs in Sidaama can take expressions for 'toward, in the direction of ...' and 'up to ...', as in (2).

- (2) tulló-te                      wor-i                      wid-í-ra/geešša                      dod-d-ino.  
mountain-GEN.F   bottom-GEN.M   direction-GEN.M-ALL/up.to   run-3SG.F-PEF.3  
'She ran in the direction of/up to the bottom of the mountain.'

Second, almost any manner of motion verb and any means of causation verb in Sidaama can take goal or source complements, as in (3) (without *hig-g-e*).

- (3) tulló-te                      wor-í-ra                      (hig-g-e)                      dod-d-ino.  
mountain-GEN.F   bottom-GEN.M-ALL   turn-3SG.F-CON   run-3SG.F-PEF.3  
'She ran to the bottom of the mountain.'

In such a case, the path of motion verb, *hig-* ‘turn’ (self-agentive/non-agentive motion) or *k’ol-* ‘cause to turn, direct’ (agentive motion), can be used as a non-main verb, as in (3) (with *hig-g-e*), which means the same as but is more common than (3) (without *hig-g-e*).

Third, for events involving a VIA path, which is expressed with a locative noun phrase and *hig-* ‘move via’ (self-agentive/non-agentive motion) or *k’ol-* ‘cause to move via’ (agentive motion) often used as a non-main verb, a co-event is usually expressed with an additional non-main verb if another path verb (e.g. ‘cause to pass’) serves as a main verb, but may be expressed with a main verb, as in (4).

- (4) kaasé    hutt’-ú    t’ullo    giddo-o-nni    k’ol-t-e    ol-t-ino.  
 ball.ACChedge-GEN.Mopening(GEN.F)    inside-L-LOC cause.to.move.via-3SG.F-CON    throw-3SG.F-PEF.3  
 ‘She threw the ball via the opening in the hedge.’

In any of the three cases above, the figure object’s completion of its translational motion to, away from, or via the ground object, which would be the framing event of a motion event as a macro-event, is not an issue. It is the manner of motion or means of causation that is the most important component of each event. Thus, it is questionable whether such events are actually what Talmy calls macro-events.

This seems to apply more or less to at least a few other languages, including Japanese, and also has implications for other types of events that are expressed in verb-framed languages in non-characteristic ways. Matsumoto (forthcoming) found that when verb-framed languages express a type of fictive motion event, axial motion of the line of sight (e.g. English: *He looked into the valley.*), they usually use not path of motion verbs but verbs of looking as main verbs, and express paths with constituents that are not main verbs, as in (5).

- (5) balé-te    giddo-ra    k’ol-t-e/hig-g-e    la’-’-ino.  
 hole-GEN.F    inside-ALL    cause.to.turn-3SG.F-CON/turn-3SG.F-CON    look-3SG.F-PEF.3  
 ‘She looked into the hole.’

This may also be because this type of event is not a macro-event, either, because the most important component of it is the occurrence of visual perception, rather than the figure’s motion.

In sum, data on Sidaama and other verb-framed languages suggest that when these languages express events differently from their characteristic pattern, the expressed events may not be macro-events, because their main events are those that would be co-events if they were macro-events.

## References

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