

The Expression of Motion Events in Japanese and English Narratives: A Developmental Approach

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Keywords: motion, narratives, language acquisition, Japanese, English

Research on narratives has helped provide insight into a wide range of questions regarding language acquisition and use. Of these, many researchers have worked on the expression of motion, working with Talmy's (1991) typology of *verb-framed* and *satellite-framed* languages which focuses on the means of expression of the path of movement. In *verb-framed* languages path is expressed by the main verb in a clause (e.g., 'enter', 'exit'), while in *satellite-framed* languages, path is expressed by an element associated with the verb (e.g., 'go in/out/up').

In addition, Slobin (e.g., 1996, 2004) proposed a manner-saliency hypothesis, explaining how *satellite-framed* languages tend to be high-manner-salient, with *verb-framed languages* being low-manner-salient. Over the years, a substantial amount of research has been conducted on motion events in narratives in many languages including English, Spanish, Hebrew, and Turkish (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994; Slobin, 1996, 2004). In addition, Ohara (e.g., 2002) and Kita (e.g., 1997) have worked on Japanese. This study uses a developmental approach to compare the acquisition of expressions of motion events in Japanese (*verb-framed language*) and English (*satellite-framed language*).

The data for this study comes from existing collections of elicited oral narratives based on the Frog Story from: (1) Japanese children ages 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and adults from Nakamura (e.g., 1993) and (2) the English-Slobin database in the Frog Corpora in CHILDES. In addition, written Frog Story narratives were newly collected from 100 Japanese adults and 100 English-speaking adults. The use of the Frog Story methodology allows for crosslinguistic comparisons based on the same motion events.

Regarding both languages, from an early age, children demonstrated use of language-appropriate forms to describe motion, with Japanese-children using forms typical of a verb-framed language such as *haitte-iku* 'to go into' or *hikkuri-kaetta* 'to fall over' and the English-speaking children using satellite forms in path-of-motion expressions such as *into*, typical of a satellite-framed language. Language-related differences were noticed in the depiction of motion events, such as the frequent use of manner morphemes, or ideophones, such as *gororin* (to flop down) and *dotsunko* (to bang into) by all Japanese age groups, adding manner elements to depict motion events. A comprehensive analysis of the types of ideophone expressions was conducted. In addition, age-related differences were also observed in the relative proportion of different linguistic strategies to describe motion. Results are discussed in terms of Slobin's "Thinking for Speaking" hypothesis, in which our experiences are filtered through language into verbalized events, to explain the process by which children and adults use the tools they have in their language to verbalize their thinking (e.g., Slobin, 1987, 1996).

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