MOTION EVENTS: TYPOLOGICAL SHIFT FROM SATELLITE-FRAMED LATIN TO VERB-FRAMED ROMANCE LANGUAGES

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Since the emergence of cognitive linguistics in the 1970s, one of the central lines of research within this theoretical paradigm has been Leonard Talmy’s typology of event conflation (e.g., Talmy 2000). In this typology, language’s type is based on the surface element that this language commonly uses to express the framing event of the macro-event. For example, consider the macro-event “[the bottle moved in to the cave] during-which [it floated]”. English commonly expresses it as The bottle floated into the cave, while Spanish as La botella entró flotando en la cueva (literally, ‘The bottle entered (moved-in) floating to the cave’) (Talmy 2000: II: 49). English pattern places the framing event (i.e., path of motion) in the satellite into, making English a satellite-framed language. In contrast, in the Spanish pattern, the framing event is lexicalized in the main verb root in entró, making Spanish a verb-framed language.

In addition to English, other satellite-framed languages are Latin, Slavic and other branches of Indo-European except Romance. In addition to Spanish, verb-framed languages include other Romance languages, Semitic, and Polynesian (Talmy 2000). This distribution is noteworthy: (a) verb-framed Romance languages constitute an exception within the predominantly satellite-framed Indo-European family; (b) verb-framed Romance languages developed from a satellite-framed language (Latin).

The goal of the present study is to answer the question: How and why did the typological shift from predominantly satellite-framed Latin to predominantly verb-framed Romance languages take place? Publications that have addressed this question (Stolova 2008, 2010, 2015) have discovered that the typological shift in question is part of broader word-formation and morphosyntactic trends attested on the way from Latin to Romance. The present study expands on these findings by focusing on key trends involved. The study employs a Pan-Romance empirical base. More specifically, in addition to Classical Latin and Late Latin, it relies on data from a wide range of Romance languages (including lesser known ones): Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Catalan, Occitan, Sardinian, Raeto-Romance.

References