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REGULATIONS ON USE

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Background

The field manuals were originally intended as working documents for internal use only. They were supplemented by verbal instructions and additional guidelines in many cases. If you have questions about using the materials, or comments on the viability in various field situations, feel free to get in touch with the authors.

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Motionland Films (v2)

Referential Communication Task with Motionland Stimulus

design Jürgen Bohnemeyer

- **Relevant Projects: Event Representation, Space** (joint subproject on motion descriptions)
- **Type of Task: referential communication task** – matching motion paths from animation to 2D drawing via verbal description and gesture.
- **Priority: medium-high for researchers interested in the motion subproject; low or undefined for everybody else.** Colleagues who are not specifically interested in the motion description subproject but who have run ECOM or Route Descriptions or have considered running these may want to run Motionland in addition to or instead of ECOM and/or Route Descriptions. Motionland has more complex paths than ECOM; and because the paths are presented in 3D rather than 2D animation and because of the nature of the task (referential communication instead of simple elicitation), Motionland data are potentially more natural than ECOM data. In addition, because of the length of the paths and because of the referential communication task, Motionland may produce more interesting gestural data.
- **Basic nature of the task:** Motionland consists of 5 very short (7-17 seconds) simple 3D animations that show a ball rolling through a landscape with hills, trees, rocks, a lake, a railroad track with a tunnel, etc. The task described here is a referential communication (“director-matcher”) task in which one participant describes the path of the ball in each clip to another participant whose task it is to trace the path with a pen in a 2D picture. However, it is recommended to also use Motionland in a simple one-on-one elicitation task analogous to ECOM and Steve Levinson’s Moverbs stimulus in order to determine the maximum path segments (in terms of the number and types of ground objects) that can be packaged in simple motion event descriptions (e.g. single-clause mono- or multi-verb constructions without coordination).
- **Motivation:** The goal of this task is to study (a) the coding of VIA grounds (i.e. ground objects which the figure moves ‘along’, ‘over’, ‘around’, ‘through’, ‘past’, etc.); (b) the coding of direction changes; (c) the spontaneous segmentation of motion scenarios whose complexity exceeds that of the ECOM clips by 100-300%, in particular where this segmentation is induced by VIA grounds or direction changes; and (d) the gestural representation of motion paths.
- **Technical requirements:** PC laptop with Windows MediaPlayer (see description of Moverbs stimulus for the required specifications and settings; but use the Full Screen option on the View menu (can also be toggled on by ALT+ENTER)); the five files mland1.avi – mland5.avi from Nt04 M:\Animation\Stimulus Archive\Motionland; a video camera; an external microphone if required by the noise level of the environment; an A4 landscape-format colour printout of the first frame of each clip (these are provided below, and can be copied for use by consultants); per clip and pair of participants one transparent A4 plastic folder or binder (this holds the printout with the Motionland setting such that the ‘matcher’ can draw on it); a thin waterproof pen of blue or red colour (other colours won’t show against the Motionland background); a clipboard; two chairs or the like and a table or the like.
- **How to run:** Let’s call the two participants involved in the task ‘director’ and ‘matcher’. The director is the participant who watches the clips on the laptop and describes them. The matcher is the participant who draws the paths shown in the clips on the printouts based on the

director's descriptions. Seat the director next to the table with the laptop. Seat the matcher opposite the director. Director and matcher should be facing each other, but the director should be able to watch the clips on the laptop without the matcher seeing them, and director and matcher should not intrude on each other's gesture space, so they should be more than one meter apart from each other. Do not place the table between the participants (it will impede gesture)! Place the camera at an angle such that it captures both participants and their gestures clearly. If you use an external microphone, place it on the ground between the participants, perhaps closer to the director, or on the table, again close to the director. Insert the printout of the first frame of the clip you are going to show into a new transparent folder. Put the folder with the printout on the clipboard and hand that to the matcher together with the pen. Before you start the clip turn the laptop out of both consultant's sight. When you double-click on the clip's icon, MediaPlayer will start displaying the clip immediately, so click the stop button (dark square). The clip is automatically rewound. Toggle to Full Screen by ALT+ENTER. Now turn the laptop such that the director can watch the clip. Show the clip **twice** (start by hitting the Space bar). Now turn the laptop or the screen such that neither consultant can see the screen. Ask the director to describe the clip such that the matcher can trace the path on the printout. The matcher should wait until the director finishes the description before (s)he starts drawing. The two participants may verbally and gesturally negotiate clarifications before and after the matcher starts drawing. When the matcher is done, (s)he hands the clipboard with the drawing to the director for confirmation. If the director rejects the drawing, (s)he returns it to the matcher and instructs him or her to correct the drawing. Afterwards, insert the next printout into a plastic folder, show the corresponding clip to the director, etc. The task should be conducted, if possible, with a **minimum of three pairs of participants**. A larger number of participants would be desirable.

- **Recording, coding, & analysis:** Recording will take **5-10 minutes per clip and pair of participants**. Cross-reference the clips in the transcript, using the labels MLAND1, MLAND2, etc. Code the linguistic data for clause boundaries; motion verbs (manner verbs, path verbs, neutral); ground objects referred to; and spatial relators (case markers, adpositions, relational nominals). If you code gestures, try to distinguish in particular between path-tracing gestures, path shape gestures, direction gestures, gestures that refer to the figure or the ground objects, and gestures that indicate subevents of departure, passing, or arrival. The Motionland data is intended for cross-linguistic comparison. This comparison will focus on how the motion clips are segmented into macro-event units across languages; how this segmentation is influenced by the packaging of individual subevents of location change with respect to ground objects, direction change, and manner; and what information about the motion scenarios is represented in gesture. In order to assess the morphosyntactic constructions and the semantic construal in your Motionland descriptions, it is vital that you perform the tests suggested for the ECOM data on the constructions featured in the descriptions. These tests are summarized below.

Note: full transcription is *not* a necessary prerequisite of the coding of linguistic and gestural information that provides the input to the cross-linguistic comparison we're aiming at. For this purpose, you may just simply note down how the clips are chunked into clauses and intonation units, what verbs and constructions they feature, and what information is conveyed by gesture during the descriptions. Therefore, don't be discouraged from conducting the task if you feel that you might not have sufficient time to transcribe the sessions and therefore might not be able to contribute to the cross-linguistic comparison.

- **Tests:** For every construction that figures in the Motionland descriptions, the semantic construal conveyed by this construction needs to be assessed. On the formal side, this requires identifying intonation units, clauses, multi-verb constructions, coordinations, elliptical

structures, etc. Clausehood may be assessed by polarity, i.e. the capacity of allowing for negation. For example, *I broke the vase* comprises only one clause, as it allows for only one negation (*I didn't break the vase*), whereas *I caused the vase to break* is a biclausal construction, as it consists of two units that can be negated separately (*I didn't cause the vase to break* vs. *I caused the vase not to break*). On the semantic side, the most important property of a given construction that needs to be tested is whether this construction represents a certain part of the scenario as a single event, i.e. a 'macro-event'. One way in which this can be tested is in terms of the behavior of the event expression vis-à-vis temporal adverbials. Consider (1) (a description of ECOM C6):

- (1) a. The ball rolls to the base of the inside wall of the container, up the wall, over the top and out, down on the outside of the container, and on to the triangle and up to the top.
b. The ball rolls *first* to the base of the inside wall of the container, *then* up the wall, *then* over the top and out, *then* down on the outside of the container, and *then* on to the triangle and *finally* up to the top.
c. *The ball rolls *first* from the hill *then* across the tracks *finally* to the forest.

(1a) is arguably elliptical. By the negation criterion, it only comprises a single clause. However, the use of *first*, *then*, and *finally* in (1b) shows that (1a/b) presents the scenario as a sequence of multiple macro-events. Compare this to the simple motion clause in (1c) where the use of these adverbs is anomalous. In this sense, (1c) encodes only a single macro-event. Another criterion of macro-eventhood may be the extent to which the complex event can be assigned a single overall event structure (in terms of telicity, durativity, etc.).

- **Comments:** If you have suggestions concerning future revisions of the stimulus or task, please send a note to: bohnem@mpi.nl.
- **Conclusions:** Let Jürgen Bohnemeyer know if you have run the stimuli, and what success you had, and any surprises that showed up. The comparison of Motionland descriptions across languages will be undertaken in the Event Representation project when the 2001 field season is completed.

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