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REGULATIONS ON USE

Stephen C. Levinson and Asifa Majid

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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.

Contact

Email us via library@mpi.nl

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

P.O. Box 310, 6500 AH, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Caused Positions

(Formerly known as “The Lüpke-Hellwig Caused motion task”)

Design: Birgit Hellwig and Friederike Lüpke

1.0 GENERAL

- **Relevant projects:** Space project, in particular the sub-project on **positional verbs**, Event Representation project.
- **Nature of the task:** elicitation task.
- **Priority:** mid to low.
- **Number of consultants:** at least three consultants.
- **Motivation:** the task is designed chiefly to elicit descriptions of inceptions of positions, either through some identifiable agent or ‘spontaneously’. Figure and Ground are varied, as are visibility of end state. In section 2.0 a more elaborate description of the motivation for this task is given, as well as an overview of all the scenes. Note that the task does not exhaustively contrast all the possible parameters. Rather, it is exploratory in nature and where contrasts are found, the researcher may decide to investigate.
- **Technical:** to run on a (laptop) computer using Windows Media Player.
- **Material:** a CD labeled “Caused Positions” contains 46 very short video clips, to be shown in the order given. They can be shown on a (laptop) computer using Windows Media Player. They are also on N:\animations\fieldmanual2001\
- **Recording:** Neither video nor audio recording are necessary in the elicitation task. However, if you do just take notes, make sure that you write down the entire utterance and not just the positional verb used.
- **Duration:** allow for 1 hour including on the spot transcription and discussion. If you are recording the session without transcribing as you go, it should take approximately 20 minutes.
- **How to run:** Ask the consultant for a description of the scene. After each initial description, you may prod the consultant for other possibilities. As indicated, this is an exploratory task and you may wish to look further by giving related scenes when watching the clips, e.g. ‘imagine this was a whole bunch of sticks...’ or you may act out additional scenes yourself.

2.0 SPECIFICS

This task follows up on two previously developed tools for the elicitation of static locative descriptions. The first of these, the BowPed picture book task, was designed to elicit static locative descriptions for the most basic topological relations using single Figure objects in relation to single Ground objects. The results obtained through this task showed that in many languages, the verbal element in these descriptions gave information on the orientation of the Figure and/or the Ground. Many languages used verbs like ‘sit’, ‘stand’ or ‘lie’ in the descriptions of the scenes. The Ameka picture book task sought to examine in more detail the expression of Figure and Ground orientation in static descriptions. It had pictures of multiple Figures oriented in different ways and less obviously canonical relations between Figures and Grounds. Neither, however, addressed the role of an external agent bringing about the configuration in which Figure and Ground are in a topological relation to each other.

Our tool is designed to examine the role of an external agent and dynamism in the use of positional verbs in locative constructions. In each video clip, a locative state comes into being, either through active interference by a human, or spontaneously. For the latter, the clips were edited to change from a state in which the Figure is absent to a state in which it is present. The Figures are either in their canonical position, e.g. a bottle is upright, or not, e.g.

a bottle on its side. For languages that do have positional verbs in the static locative descriptions, the task will show whether positional verbs are used in causative locative descriptions also, and if so how the two sets are related. For languages that do not have positionals in the static locative descriptions, this task may reveal whether this was due to the absence of a human actor, as for instance in Tidore where we found that a positional verb occurs only when a human agent is said to bring about the locative state. It is not possible to say 'the egg stands on the plate of rice' but it is possible to say 'he put the egg so that it stands on the plate of rice'. Yet, it may also be the case that it is not the presence of a human agent but the dynamic nature of the event itself that allows for the use of positional verbs. If positional verbs inherently refer to the inception of a specific orientation, they may be compatible both with the scenes in which there is a human agent and the scenes in which the locative relation simply 'appears'.

In addition to the sudden appearance of a configuration versus a causative construction with an agent, a number of other variables have been introduced. There are contrasts between the canonical versus non-canonical orientation of the Figure, a visible versus invisible end state (in the box), and different topological relations are examined (support by surface, containment, forked between, leaning and hanging).

file name	description
01_cloth1_table.mpg	A; F table cloth; G table
02_rope1_incho.mpg	-A; F rope; G branch
03_beans_incho.mpg	-A; F beans; G table
04_balls_table.mpg	A; F two balls; G table
05_beans_table.mpg	A; F beans G table
06_rope_incho.mpg	-A; F rope; G table
07_kassava_box.mpg	A; F cassava; G box
08_pot_tree.mpg	A; F pot; G tree/branches
09_beans1_table.mpg	A; F beans in bowl; G table
10_bottles_table.mpg	A; F 2 bottles; G table
11_ball_incho.mpg	-A; F ball; G table
12_cloth_table.mpg	A; F table cloth (folded); G table
13_stick_tree.mpg	A; F stick; G tree/earth
14_bottle_table.mpg	A; F bottle; G table
15_ball_table.mpg	A; F ball; G table
16_bottle1_tree.mpg	A; F bottle; G tree/earth
17_ball_tree.mpg	A; F ball; G tree/branch
18_pot2_incho.mpg	-A; F pot; G tree/branches
19_rope_table.mpg	A; F rope; G table
20_bottle1_table.mpg	A; F bottle; G table
21_cloth1_incho.mpg	-A; F table cloth; G tree branch

file name	description
22_bottle1_incho.mpg	-A; F bottle; G tree/branch
23_kassava2_tree.mpg	A; F cassava; G tree/earth
24_ladder_tree.mpg	A; F ladder; G tree
25_bottle_incho.mpg	-A; F bottle; G table
26_kassavas_table.mpg	A; F cassavas; G table
27_rope_box.mpg	A; F rope; G box
28_bottle2_table.mpg	A; F bottle; G table
29_kassava1_tree.mpg	A; F cassava on rope; G branch
30_stick_table.mpg	A; F stick; G table
31_kassava_tree.mpg	A; F cassava; G tree/branch
32_ball1_incho.mpg	-A; F ball; G tree/branch
33_pot_table.mpg	A; F pot; G table
34_pot_incho.mpg	-A; F pot; G table
35_kassava_incho.mpg	-A; F cassava; G table
36_pot1_table.mpg	A; F pot; G table
37_cloth_box.mpg	A; F cloth (folded); G box
38_rope_tree.mpg	A; F rope; G branch
39_kassava_table.mpg	A; F cassava; G table
40_pot1_incho.mpg	-A; F pot; G table
41_stick_ground.mpg	A; F stick; G ground
42_cloth_incho.mpg	-A; F cloth; G table
43_bottle_tree.mpg	A; F bottle; G tree/branch
44_stick_incho.mpg	-A; F stick; G table
45_pot2_table.mpg	A/ -A; F pot; G table
46_ladder_ground.mpg	A; F ladder; G ground

NB: A = Actor (-A = no actor), F = Figure, G = Ground