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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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Motion Verb Stimulus, version 2

MOVERB FILMS v2 – Notes on the contents of each subdirectory or series
design Steve Levinson

1.0 GENERAL

- **Relevant Projects: space and event representation projects – motion description**
- **Nature of Task: elicitation task** – open-ended, semi-systematic variants
- **priority** – depends on whether you already have the information via other more complex tasks, but it would be very useful to have your language for comparative purposes (MID)
- **basic nature of the task**

This task consists of **96 very short** (few seconds) **films**, very simple 3D animations, which can be easily replayed and contrasted in various orders. It is designed to get linguistic elicitations of motion predications under contrastive comparison with other animations in the same set.
- **motivation:**

This task attempts in one large set of stimuli to get people ‘up to speed’ on **the semantics of the motion verbs** in the language under study, and more completely the semantics of *motion predications* complete with adjuncts. It contains a number of specific sub-components, many of which were the target of earlier full-length tasks of their own. In addition, unlike earlier tasks, these stimuli are focussed on inanimate figures (basically a ball).

 - (a) come/go verbs: testing for precise deictic content
 - (b) enter/exit: testing for semantic content: are your verbs of the type ‘durative translocation’ or ‘change of locative relation’ vs. ‘change of position’.
 - (c) complex paths: ‘going onto/off from’, ‘ascending/descending’, ‘going amidst’, ‘going along’, ‘going across’, etc.

If you run this task you should be able to answer many of the basic questions about motion verbs that have come up in discussions in the L&C group. It should prove a useful resource for later projects.
- **Technical:** to run on a laptop, you will need a relatively new laptop (PC type). You need Windows Media-Player 6 (not version 7), MPG4 codec version II, which is what you should get on a TG-installed laptop. (Don’t use the Player version 7 from the net, the right Codec will be there, but Player 7 forces the rewind of each movie which is not what we want, and it has other irritating features. If you install it, it is hard to remove!) Use the following Player settings: (1) Click on VIEW, then OPTIONS, then PLAYBACK, and set ‘Playback’ to ‘1 time’, and *don’t* check (click on) ‘Rewind when done’. (2) Click VIEW- OPTIONS- PLAYER: make sure the box ‘Use same player for each media file’ has been selected. You should launch the movies from Windows Explorer, clicking the file names in the numerical order. The directory order will not match the order of presentation for each series suggested below – so follow the order below.
- **How to run:**

Just ask your consultant to give a **quick, short description** of each scene, followed if necessary by a ‘fishing’ for whether the expected/relevant verb can also be used for this scene (the relevant concept is specified in a ‘read.me’ file in each subdirectory). Most scenes will not require multiple clauses, and you may as well type in the responses straight away – but get the whole clause with adjuncts. Each viewing and response cycle will be over in seconds, but if you are transcribing rather than recording allow say three hours per consultant.

You can also use the scenes for a more general elicitation of related scenes (e.g. ‘Suppose it was a man and not a ball going, how would you describe it...’), but for comparative purposes it is the short descriptions that are important.

We recommend at least **three consultants** – three is the golden minimum to make sure you have a definite trend. There would be no point in doing more than ten, but even one

consultant would be a useful diagnostic for comparative purposes.

To **load the films** click on the file in your file manager; to play, click on the player 'play' button (make sure the player settings leave a blank screen after the film has played (see 'Technical' above) – otherwise you will need to explain that the jumping back to the beginning is not part of the stimulus.). You can replay the movie just by clicking on the movie window – you can repeat the movies freely.

You may get elaborate descriptions at first – but try to keep a forced pace, which will keep the descriptions short. Sometimes it will be unclear to the consultant how to describe objects – you can feed suggestions, as nothing much will depend on this. But the main motion figure – mostly a ball – should be just that and not an animate figure. In addition, before playing the films you should read the Series Descriptions below which correspond to each sub-directory– these give you the precise motivation at hand, and you may need to 'fish' for the desired response. For example, in the Enter/Exit set, you may need to say: "When the wall grows around the ball, can we say "it entered?"".

- **Coding & Recording**

Key your transcription to the name of the directory, the film number and name. If recording the session, say this on the sound track. (It is not clear that there is much point in recording these sessions, unless you are specifically interested in intra-clausal intonation or gesture. Recording will though minimize consultant time if that is at a premium. Longer stimuli with a bit more 'story' are likely to be better for gesture elicitation.)

The crucial variables in this stimulus are how many scenes can fall within one description – e.g. in addition to a ball rolling into an enclosure falling under "enter", does a ball dropping into an enclosure also count as "enter"? Or in addition to a ball running under a cloth as "going under", what happens when the cloth moves on top of the ball – can it still be said to have "gone under"? So the coding basically consists of:

- which films in the relevant set (subdirectory) were described using the same (target) motion verb?
- which films were not so described initially, but on 'fishing' the consultant agreed that they could be so described?

- **Comments**

These films could be much improved in systematic contrasts. If you have suggestions, please send a note to: Levinson@mpi.nl

- **Conclusions**

Let Steve Levinson know if you have run the stimuli, and what success you had, and any surprises that showed up. We can then form an interest group for further analysis.

- **Citation**

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2.0 SPECIFICS

Each series is in its own subdirectory following the labelling below:

1. COME/GO SERIES

These films reproduce the core scenes in Wilkins' Come/Go Questionnaire (MPI May 1993), which contains 20 scenarios for the investigator to instantiate in local terms. That instrument remains the better tool, but these films will yield a quick first take on your core motion verbs. The scenes basically indicate a ball rolling towards or away from the viewer/speaker, or across

the line of sight, or on a diagonal across the sight-line. They vary in whether the ball runs from a source object to a goal object or one or the other or neither. Thus they test e.g. whether a ball running towards the viewer but stopping mid way, or coming diagonally across the line of sight, counts as ‘coming’.

The numbers of the films maintain the “Scene Numbers” in the original Wilkins Questionnaire, to allow easy comparison, and the number sequence (which is intermittent) omits scenarios that have proved less useful. Incidentally, MOVERB scenes meet all the same requirements as the Wilkins scenes (Spkr and Addressee close, same scale throughout series, time of event as close as possible to time of speaking), except that the figure is inanimate and the scale is small. For comparative material, and for how to code and how to present your results, see Max Planck Gesellschaft Jahrbuch 1995:307-312.

The films are designed to investigate the detailed semantics of core ‘come’/ ‘go’ predicates, and how strict they are about source/goal constraints and deictic conditions. You will already have candidate come/go verbs, and you may need to focus the consultants’ attention on these rather than e.g. ‘rolling’ verbs, but try the films first ‘cold’ without correction (you may get ‘rolling hither’ forms for example which may be interesting anyway).

To run the films, proceed as for all the other MOVERB stimuli, with consultant by your side, and ask for first descriptions, then if necessary ‘fish’ for the verbs (or ‘hither’/ ‘thither’ affixes) you have already identified as your ‘come’/ ‘go’ equivalents. You can play the films repeatedly – we suggest twice before asking.

See Wilkins & Hill 1995 for some results, where the following issue is discussed: are the ‘go’ forms unmarked for deictic direction, picking up their ‘away’ meanings by pragmatic opposition to the deictically marked ‘come’ verbs (i.e. are they semantically in privative opposition, supplemented with pragmatic oppositions).

There are some additional perspectival variants in the FIGURE_GROUND subdirectory, films 1-4.

(2) ENTER_EXIT

These movies are the ‘lite’ version of the ENTER-EXIT animation, involving a man walking in/out of a house. The original movie was designed by S. Kita and described in Kita, 1999, ‘Japanese Enter/Exit verbs without motion semantics’. *Studies in Language*, 23, 317-40. These films though add a number of additional manipulations, including variant figures and grounds, growing enclosures, double enclosures, hesitant boundary behaviour, slow boundary crossing, etc.

The idea behind the series is that languages seem to have different semantics for these verbs:

- (i) Durative translocation – where motion is construed as durative movement of the figure over time from X to Y (English, Dutch)
- (ii) Change of location – where motion is construed as the figure leaving or arriving at a new location, in this case crossing a boundary in a punctual way (Yucatec)
- (iii) Change of locative relation – where motion is conceived of as a Figure-Ground constellation at time T1 changing to another Figure-Ground relation at time T2, with no constraints on how the new relation is arrived at (Japanese).

This series is designed to tease these options apart, although distinguishing (ii) from (iii) is harder than distinguishing (i) from (ii)/(iii). To test (i) vs. (iii) we oppose movement of figure vs. movement of ground to achieve the same new configuration (e.g. ball rolling into enclosure,

enclosure moving around ball). To test (ii) vs. (iii), the 'beaming in' scenes show the ball fading away outside and appearing inside the enclosure, and vice versa – since the punctual boundary-crossing is not visible the scenes may resist a type-(ii) description. (These beaming in scenes may also resist a type-(i) description, since the durative motion is not visible.)

There is a set of double enclosure movies. These test the idea that type(ii) semantics might be linked to unclear specification of whether an adjunct is Source or Goal – if a ball is leaving one enclosure to enter another inner one, it may be impossible to describe this as 'the ball entered from/to the circle'.

There are also a set of 'bullet' entering movies – a long figure takes time to pass a boundary, making a more durative scene. This may make type(ii) semantics less compatible. There is also a variant from 2D to 3D enclosures here. Finally there are two scenes of motion into/out of a 'forest' of cylinders – not an enclosure at all strictly, but which may receive 'enter' / 'exit' semantics.

There are further enter/exit scenes in the series TRIADS below, including scenes testing vertical entry.

(3) FIGURE_GROUND

These somewhat miscellaneous scenes carry on the ENTER/EXIT idea, namely trying to find whether the semantics of further specific motion verbs care about how the resulting spatial configuration comes about. They do this by (a) moving the figure vs. moving the ground, (b) beaming the figure, (c) growing the ground. There are the following target motion types:

- (i) GO ONTO / GO OFF
- (ii) APPROACH (arrive)
- (iii) ASCEND
- (iv) PIERCE/ENGULF
- (v) BECOME ENCIRCLED

The last set (v) explores the ambiguities of encirclement – is the figure or the ground moving into the relation, what if the ground is tracing an encirclement path in motion?

(3) TRIAD SCENES

These scenes semi-systematically oppose three ways to get into a locative relation – figure moves horizontally, figure/ground falls vertically, ground moves or ground comes into being. There are three target verbal notions:

- (i) ENTER
- (ii) ASCEND
- (iii) GO UNDER

(4) PATHS

The sequence begins with two (omissable) 'warm up' scenes of a ball running/beaming into landscape, then proceeds to the main scenes. These scenes explore miscellaneous complex paths, known to be of interest. The notions explored are (in order):

- (i) GO ACROSS
- (ii) GO ALONG
- (iii) GO PAST
- (iv) GO UP

There are beaming variants, and variations in ground types. Additional manipulations include curved paths, stop-start trajectories, weak vs. strong landmarks (dip vs. lake), etc.

(5) MANNER

These 4 films just give you variants of GO ON, GO IN, GO ACROSS, GO ALONG, with a different 'Manner of Motion' – namely bouncing instead of rolling. Run them immediately after (4) PATHS. See Tomato Man movies and Hedda Lausberg's variant ECOMS for more systematic Manner variations.