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Fictive Motion questionnaire

Jürgen Bohnemeyer, based on Talmy (2000: ch. 2)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- **Relevant projects:** Event Representation and Space (joint subproject on Motion); Interaction and Space (joint subproject on Space in Thinking); Space (subproject on Topology and ‘Spatially-Laden Verbs’).
- **Nature of the task:** The questionnaire presents Talmy’s (1996, 2000) typology of Fictive Motion expressions, i.e., expressions of non-dynamic spatial configurations that use morphemes and/or constructions lexicalizing translational motion and/or path relations (cf. (1) below). The idea is to take Talmy’s descriptions of the properties that define the various kinds of expressions that instantiate Fictive Motion and use these as instructions for elicitation scenarios. The question is then, how are the configurations in question expressed in the target language? In particular, do expressions of these configurations necessarily/preferably/possibly involve motion verbs and/or path relators?
- **Priority:** This has high priority for people interested in the special journal issue or edited volume on Motion as Change of Location. It has mid priority for people otherwise interested in the Motion subproject of Space/ER and/or the Space in Thinking subproject of Space/Interaction. People interested in the old Space subproject on Topological Relations and/or the new one on ‘Spatially-Laden Verbs’ may want to pursue this for the sake of completeness.
- **Motivation:** From the point of view of cognitivist approaches to semantics, metaphors like Fictive Motion are clues to underlying conceptualizations. In this sense, crosslinguistic differences in the use of Fictive Motion metaphors are actually crosslinguistic differences in “thinking” – albeit a quite static, “frozen” form of thinking. If such variation is triggered by typological properties of languages, they may well be considered Whorfian effects of sorts (cf. Lakoff 1987: ch. 18). And there’s reason to think that such differences along typological lines exist.

One of the arguments Jackendoff (1983, 1990) gives in defense of his position that path relations are semantic primitives is the occurrence of path relations outside the motion domain, in expressions of extent (cf. (1a)), orientation (cf. (1b)), or as “reference paths” in locative predications (cf. (1c)):

- (1) a. The highway extends from Denver to Indianapolis. (Jackendoff 1983: 172)
 b. The house faces away from the mountains. (Jackendoff 1983: 172)
 c. The firehouse is across the street from the library. (Jackendoff 1983: 167)

The event functions in cases such as (1) are extensions of translational motion along the lines of Talmy’s (1996, 2000) ‘Fictive Motion’.

In the Motion subproject, we’ve been amassing evidence – starting with pioneering work done by Kita and Penny in the early nineties – that suggests that languages in fact differ in the extent to which they treat path relations as primitives. Some languages go a long way in decomposing motion along a path into change of location events and locative relations that characterize their source or target states. This is the topic of the joint publication on “Motion as Change of Location” that is currently in production. If this idea is correct, we should predict that fictive motion plays a lesser role in languages that predominantly frame motion as change of location than it does in English. What is construed as fictive motion in English should be construed either as “fictive change of location” or in fact not by means of a dynamic metaphor at all in change-of-location oriented languages. The goal of this questionnaire is to test this prediction. It seems to be borne out, for example, in Yukatek. Yukatek renditions of (1) might be something like the following:

- (2)
 - a. The highway exits (in) Denver. It extends/reaches as far as Indianapolis.
 - b. The house, the mountains are at its back. / The house is in the straight line of the mountains, but its front is on the other side.
 - c. The firehouse is opposite the library; it's on the other side of the street.

Further evidence for crosslinguistic differences in Fictive Motion construal is presented in Matsumoto (1996).

- **How to run:** Fictive Motion is the metaphoric use of path relators in the expression of spatial relations or configurations that are static, or at any rate do not in any obvious way involve physical entities moving in real space. The goal is to study the expression of such relations or configurations in the target language, with an eye particularly on whether these expressions exclusively/preferably/possibly involve motion verbs and/or path relators, i.e., Fictive Motion. Section 2 gives Talmy's (2000: ch. 2) phenomenology of Fictive Motion construals. The researcher's task is to "distill" the intended spatial relations/configurations from Talmy's description of the particular Fictive Motion metaphors and elicit as many different examples of the relations/configurations as (s)he deems necessary to obtain a basic sense of whether and how much Fictive Motion the target language offers or prescribes for the encoding of the particular type of relation/configuration. As a first stab, the researcher may try to elicit natural translations of culturally appropriate adaptations of the examples Talmy provides with each type of Fictive Motion metaphor.

Since Fictive Motion may be as much a matter of usage and style as it is one of grammar and the lexicon, it will be advisable to work, where possible, with several speakers whose linguistic socialization/enculturation has evolved in independent households.

- **Coding & Recording:** You may directly transcribe responses; however do videotape questionnaire sessions, as paralinguistic information may be of interest. Cross-reference the outline of section 2 in your transcription.
- **Comments:** The questionnaire may be improved by adding further relevant aspects. If you have suggestions, please send a note to the Language and Cognition Group.
- **Conclusions:** If you have run the questionnaire, please let us know. The output will be compared and discussed in the Space/ER subproject on Motion. Contributors to the "Motion as Change of Location" issue/volume may put insights gained from the questionnaire directly to use in their contributions.
- **Citation:** Publications should cite: "Fictive Motion questionnaire, version 1, Bohnemeyer, based on Talmy (2000:Ch. 2), Field Manual 2003, Language and Cognition Group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics". Please let us know of any research project undertaken with this questionnaire.

2.0 Talmy's (2000) typology of Fictive Motion

2.1 The Emanation type

"...something intangible emerging from a source... Factive motion of some elements need not be present for the fictive effect. The fictively moving entity is itself fictive. The fictive effect is observer neutral. What is conceived as fictively moving is an entity [rather than the observation of an entity; *JB*]..." (Talmy 2000: 105-106)

2.1.1 Orientation Paths

"The linguistic conceptualization – and possibly a corresponding visual perception – of an orientation path is of a continuous linear intangible entity emerging from the front of some object and moving steadily away from it." (Talmy 2000: 106)

2.1.1.1 Prospect Paths

“The orientation that an object with a face-type front has relative to its surroundings can be conceptualized linguistically – and perhaps perceived – in terms of fictive motion.” (Talmy 2000: 107)

- (3) The cliff wall faces toward/away from/into/past the valley. (Talmy 2000: 108)

2.1.1.2 Alignment Paths

“The alignment path type of orientation path pertains to a stationary straight linear object with a point-type front. The orientation of such a linear object is here conceptualized linguistically – and perhaps perceived – in terms of something intangible moving along the axis of the object, emerging from its front end, and continuing straight along a prepositionally determined path relative to some distal object.” (Talmy 2000: 108)

- (4) The snake is lying toward/away from the light. (Talmy 2000: 108)

2.1.1.3 Demonstrative Paths

“The demonstrative type of orientation path again involves a linear object with a point-type front from which an intangible line emerges. But here the fictively moving line functions to direct or guide someone’s attention along its path. The particular orientation of the linear object can either be an independent factor that simply occasions an instance of directing someone’s attention, or can be intentionally set to serve the purpose of attentional guidance.” (Talmy 2000: 109)

- (5) a. I/The arrow on the signpost pointed toward/away from/into/past the town.
b. I pointed/directed him toward/past/away from the lobby. (Talmy 2000: 109)

2.1.1.4 Targeting Paths

“In a targeting path, an agent intentionally sets the orientation of a front-bearing object so that the fictive line that is conceptualized or perceived as emerging from this front follows a desired path relative to the object’s surroundings. This fictive motion establishes a path along which the agent further intends that a particular subsequent motion will travel.” (Talmy 2000: 109)

- (6) I pointed/aimed (my gun/camera) into/past/away from the living room. (Talmy 2000: 109)

2.1.1.5 Line of Sight

“Line of sight is a concept that underlies a number of linguistic patterns and perhaps also is a component of perceptual structure. It is an intangible line emerging from the visual apparatus typically located on the front of an animate or mechanical entity. The present discussion deals only with *lateral* motion of the line of sight – that is, with shifts in its orientation. Axial fictive motion will be treated in the section on sensory paths.” (Talmy 2000: 110)

- (7) a. I slowly turned/looked--- // I slowly turned my camera--- toward the door. / around the room. / away from the window. / from the painting, past the pillar, to the tapestry.
b. I quickly looked down into the well. (Talmy 2000: 111)

2.1.2 Radiation Paths

“The linguistic conceptualization of a radiation path is of radiation emanating continuously from an energy source and moving steadily away from it. This radiation can additionally be understood to comprise a linear shaft and to subsequently impinge on a second object.” (Talmy 2000: 111)

- (8) a. The sun is shining into the cave/onto the back wall of the cave.
b. The light is shining (from the sun) into the cave/onto the back wall of the cave. (Talmy 2000: 112)

2.1.3 Shadow Paths

“This is the linguistic conceptualization – and perhaps also a perception – that the shadow of some object visible on some surface has fictively moved from that object to that surface.” (Talmy 2000: 114)

- (9) a. The tree threw its shadow down into/across the valley.
- b. The pillar cast/projected a shadow onto/against the wall.
- c. The pillar’s shadow fell onto/against the wall. (Talmy 2000: 114)

2.1.4 Sensory Paths

“This type of fictive motion involves the conceptualization of two entities, the Experiencer and the Experienced, and of something intangible moving in a straight path between the two entities in one direction or the other. By one branch of this conceptualization, the Experiencer emits a Probe that moves from the Experiencer to the Experienced and detects it upon encounter with it. This is the ‘Experiencer as Source’ type of sensory path. By the other branch of the conceptualization, the Experienced emits a Stimulus that moves from the Experienced to the Experiencer and sensorily stimulates that entity on encountering it. This is the ‘Experienced as Source’ type of sensory path.” (Talmy 2000: 115)

- (10) a. The enemy can see us from where they’re positioned.
- b. ?The enemy can see us from where we’re standing.
- (11) a. We can be seen by the enemy from where they’re positioned.
- b. We can be seen by the enemy from where we’re standing.
- (12) a. I can hear/smell him all the way from where I’m standing.
- b. I can hear/smell him all the way from where he’s standing.
- (13) a. Even a casual passerby can see the old wallpaper through the paint.
- b. The old wallpaper shows through the paint even to a casual passerby.
- (14) I looked into/toward/past/away from the valley. (Talmy 2000: 115-116)

2.2 Further categories of fictive motion

2.2.1 Pattern Paths

“The pattern-paths category of fictive motion involves the fictive conceptualization of some configuration as moving through space. In this type, the literal sense of a sentence depicts the motion of some arrangement of physical substance along a particular path, while we factively believe that this substance is either stationary or moves in some other way than along the depicted path. For the fictive effect to occur, the physical entities must factively exhibit some form of motion, qualitative change, or appearance/disappearance, but these in themselves do not constitute the fictive motion. Rather, it is the pattern in which the physical entities are arranged that exhibits the fictive motion.” (Talmy 2000: 128-129)

- (15) As I painted the ceiling, (a line of) paint spots slowly progressed across the floor. (Talmy 2000: 129)

2.2.2 Frame-Relative Motion

“With respect to a global frame of reference, a language can factively refer to an observer as moving relative to her surroundings... But a language can alternatively refer to this situation by adopting a local frame around the observer as center. Within this frame, the observer can be represented as stationary and her surroundings as moving relative to her from her perspective.” (Talmy 2000: 130)

- (16) I sat in the car and watched the scenery rush past me.
- (17) I was walking through the woods and this branch that was sticking out hit me. (Talmy 2000: 132)

2.2.3 Advent Paths

“An advent path is a depiction of a stationary object’s location in terms of its arrival or manifestation at the site it occupies. The stationary state of the object is factive, whereas its depicted motion or materialization is fictive and, in fact, often wholly implausible. The two main subtypes of advent paths are ‘site arrival’, involving the fictive motion of the object to its site, and ‘site manifestation’, which is not fictive motion but fictive change, namely the fictive manifestation of the object at its site.” (Talmy 2000: 134-135)

- (18) The palm trees clustered together around the oasis.
- (19) The beam leans/tilts away from the wall.
- (20) Termite mounds are scattered/strewn/spread/distributed all over the plain.
- (21) This rock formation occurs/recurs/appears/reappears/shows up near volcanoes. (Talmy 2000: 135)

2.2.4 Access Paths

“An access path is a depiction of a stationary object’s location in terms of a path that some other entity might follow to the point of encounter with the object. What is factive here is the representation of the object as stationary, without any entity traversing the depicted path. What is fictive is the representation of some entity traversing the depicted path, whether this is plausible or implausible. Though it is not specified, the fictively moving entity can often be imagined as being a person, some body part of a person, or the focus of one’s attention...” (Talmy 2000: 136)

- (22) The bakery is across the street from the bank.
- (23) The vacuum cleaner is down around behind the clotheshamper.
- (24) The cloud is 1,000 feet up from the ground. (Talmy 2000: 137)

2.2.5 Coextension Paths

“A coextension path is a depiction of form, orientation, or location of a spatially extended object in terms of a path over the object’s extent.” (Talmy 2000: 138)

- (25) The fence goes/zigzags/descends from the plateau to the valley.
- (26) The field spreads out in all directions from the granary.
- (27) The soil reddens toward the east.

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