How do languages encode motion events? A contrastive analysis between Chinese, Spanish, and English

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Regarding how languages encode motion events, the "lexical doublets" (Talmy 2000) and constructionist proposals (Goldberg 1995; Pedersen 2016), which argue that satellite-framed languages (S-languages) and verb-framed languages (V-languages) follow two different rules, do not offer a completely satisfactory explanation. Furthermore, in the Chinese serial verb construction "C1 (Constituent 1: Manner verb) + C2 (Constituent 2: Path word)", since C2 lacks inflectional morphology and currently has both verb and complement uses, the typological classification of Chinese remains highly controversial: Shi (2014) consider that C2 is a Path complement so that Chinese belongs to S-language type; Tai (2003) proposes that C2 is the predicative center of the serial verb construction and Chinese belongs to V-language type; Slobin (2004) consider that C2 is also a verb and Chinese belongs to a third type of language: E-language (equipollently-framed language).

To try to shed light on these two issues, based on the data of Chinese, Spanish and English, which could represent E-language, V-language, and S-language, respectively, this article proposes that human languages obey the same General Principle of Motion Event Encoding (GPMEE). Only when the execution of the verbal action in the real world can imply (for self-agentive motion events) or generate (for agentive motion events) the Figure's displacement does the corresponding verb co-occur with the direction marker to generate the Directional Path of motion events. We can illustrate it with the verbal action *dance*: when someone dances in the real world, it is possible to perceive the Figure's displacement (therefore, the nondirectional path), for this reason it can co-occur with the direction marker (which only encodes Direction) *into* of English (1a) and *hacia* 'toward' (1b) of Spanish to generate the Directional Path of the motion event:

(1) a. She danced into the house.
b. *Ella bailó hacia la habitación*.
'She danced toward the room'

Instead, if the execution of the verbal action is only perceived at a fixed point without displacement, like *John laughed* in (2a) and (2b), due to the lack of a possible displacement (and nondirectional path), the verb cannot co-occur with the direction marker *into* (2a) and *hacia* 'toward' (2b) to describe the Directional Path of the motion event:

(2) a. *John laughed into the house.
b. **Juan se rió hacia la habitación*.
'Juan laughed toward the room'

When a sentence is headed by nondisplacement verbs, like 'they chatted/shivered' in (3a), some languages can resort to additional resources (like the adverbial phrase *all the way* added in (3a) or the Way Construction in (3b)) so that their verbal actions that do not imply displacement per se can be executed in the context of displacement, thus obeying the GPMEE and cooccurring with the direction marker:

(3) a. They chatted/shivered **all the way** to school.
b. Talk/argue/sing/smile **one's way** out of prison. (Narasimhan 2003)

Regarding the Chinese serial verb construction, given that C1 obeys the GPMEE and functions as syntactic (verb) and semantic core (which encodes Displacement and nondirectional path), while C2 does not adhere to the GPMEE and functions as a complement that is only capable of providing the meaning of Direction to the construction, we argue that Chinese belongs mainly to the S-language type rather than to the V-language or E-language type.

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