

# A corpus-based study of EGO CENTERED Motion Metaphors of Time in Modern Standard Arabic

Asma Dhifallah  
University of Turku, [asdhif@utu.fi](mailto:asdhif@utu.fi)

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Using a corpus-based methodology and a Cognitive Linguistics approach, this study looks at the distinction of Ego vs. speaker and Ego's now vs. the speaker's present in Ego-centered Motion metaphors of Time (EMT) as expressed by eleven COME and GO verbs in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). To do so, it investigates three variables: 1. the syntactic-semantic and "deictic" composition of the verbs, 2. the 'Veridical' tense/ aspect system, and 3. properties of the EGO-CENTERED motion scenario. Generally known as expressions that describe temporal imminence using metaphorical spatial proximity (or distance) and using an Ego- perspective, EMTs are divided into Moving Time metaphors as in *Summer is coming* and Moving Ego metaphors as in *We are approaching summer*. Despite the attention they received in the last two decades, EMTs have mostly been analyzed for their metaphorical and grammatical components, while the deictic reference of the entity canonically termed 'Ego' is largely overlooked. On the one hand, this study builds on the literature on EMTs by providing a close analysis of Arabic as an understudied language system and by using a corpus-based methodology, thus highlighting the large scale of variability of the EMT constructions. On the other hand, it builds on the literature of MSA motion verbs: namely, the GO verbs (*dahaba* (go), *maḍā* (go), *adbara* (go), and *marra* (pass),) and the COME verbs (*ġā'a* (come), *atā* (come), *qadima* (come), *iqtaraba* (approach), *danaa* (approach), *qaaraba* (approach), *aqbala* (arrive), and *Halla* (arrive)) by offering a classification based on their contexts of use in EMTs. To this aim, this study analyzed 1650 collected lines of EMTs by searching 33 different verb forms on ArabiCorpus and manually selecting 50 EMT lines for each verb form. In addition to the veridical tense and aspect information indicated by the search token itself, an analysis frame was used to manually annotate the corpus lines based on three main categories: 1) the type of EMT: Moving Time or Moving Ego, 2) the type of Temporal Entity used within the EMT construction (e.g. *summer*, *the elections*, etc.). Here three types are identified: calendric references (e.g. *Sunday*, *winter*), anchored events (e.g. *my birthday*, *the elections*), and non-anchored events (e.g. *better times*, *the future*), and 3) the type of the deictic experiencer based on the identification or distinction of Ego and the speaker. This category is divided into four subclassifications: personal experiencer as in *My graduation is approaching*, shifted experiencer as in *Her exam date is approaching*, collective experiencer as in *The elections are approaching*, and imaginary experiencer as in *The past refers to the time that has gone by*. The study concludes that the verb forms are not evenly distributed across the contextual variables which, in turn, highlights the idiosyncratic constructional properties of the motion verbs under study. Additionally, it provides data-driven insights on the variation of deictic categories across EMTs types.