

Placement and removal events in Modern Uyghur: A typological perspective

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While motion is a fundamental aspect of human experience, the way it is expressed across languages shows a great deal of variation (e.g., Talmy, 2000), and in this study, I extend this line of inquiry to an underrepresented Turkic language, i.e., Modern Uyghur (henceforth Uyghur). Specifically, I take, as my point of departure, that Uyghur is a typical verb-framed language, as established in previous work in the context of spontaneous (Tusun & Hendriks, 2019) and caused motion (Tusun & Hendriks, 2022), and investigate whether and to what extent the language displays the same typological traits in the domain of placement and removal events. My data consist of twenty-five Uyghur native speakers' verbalisations of the standard elicitation material for placement and removal events developed by previous researchers (e.g., Bowerman, Gullberg, Majid & Narasimhan, 2004). In the light of previous findings on a large number of languages (cf. Kopecka & Narasimhan, 2012), I focus on the following three aspects of the data: 1) how different semantic components of the events (e.g., path, cause, goal of motion, source of motion) are lexicalised and packaged within motion constructions, 2) semantic specificity of motion verbs, and 3) the (a)symmetries in lexical resources and the encoding of ground information in placement versus removal events. The results show, first of all, that in encoding placement and removal events, Uyghur speakers typically conflate cause and motion in the main verb and express path via satellite devices (i.e., case marking) in a single clause. The exception to this is when they describe events involving boundary crossing (e.g., 'put into', 'take out of'): they express path and cause (via causative suffixes) in the verb alongside additional path information (e.g., source/goal of motion). Uyghur speakers also tend to use semantically general verbs, although this tendency is more pronounced with removal events than with placement events. Finally, speakers tend to include more ground information with placement events than with removal events. In this presentation, I aim to shed light on issues including intra-language, intra-typological and inter-typological variations in encoding motion events. In terms of intra-language variation, I will discuss my findings in relation to those from previous studies on motion expression in Uyghur to determine whether the language shows a consistent typological profile, or whether it exhibits variation as a function of event type (voluntary motion vs. caused motion vs. placement/removal events). In relation to intra-typological and inter-typological variation, I will discuss the findings in the context of relevant studies on verb-framed languages (e.g., Spanish, Hindi) and satellite-framed languages (e.g., Swedish). I will conclude by reflecting on the status of Uyghur in motion event typology and on the nature of the typology more generally.

References

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