

Path Coding in Hungarian: Focus on preverbs

Kiyoko Eguchi (Osaka University)

Abstract:

In this presentation, I will show how Hungarian native speakers describe motion events based on that data from the NINJAL Project on Motion Event Descriptions across Languages. Hungarian is often treated as a prototypical satellite-framed language (e.g., Slobin 2006), in which path notions (path schemas) such as UP and [TO.IN](#) are described in elements (such as *be-* in *be-fut (to.in-run)*) that are in sister relation to the verb root (Talmy 2000: 222). Such satellites are called preverbs in Hungarian linguistics. In addition to preverbs, however, path notions are also coded by other elements that are external to the main verb root but are not in sister relation to the main verb root, such as postpositions and case markers (Eguchi 2017). These can be grouped together as “head-external” elements (Matsumoto 2017). Such elements have been shown to be consistently used in Hungarian for describing paths in self-motion, caused-motion, and visual motion events (Eguchi 2017).

Notwithstanding the high degree of confidence in Hungarian’s status as a language for expressing path notions using head-external elements, the issue of path-coding position in Hungarian is still complex. First, path notions can be described with any one or more of those head-external elements. Head-external elements can be grouped into “adverbial” elements such as adverbs and preverbs and “adnominal” elements such as postpositions and case affixes. As will be seen, path coding in Hungarian can vary between three patterns: coding 1) only in adnominals, 2) only in adverbials, and 3) in both adnominals and adverbials. This prompts the question of what conditions the choice in path-coding pattern. Second, there is only one preverb position with respect to a head verb, and this raises interesting issues. In the description of events where more than one path notion is potentially describable (e.g., jumping down into a box), the speaker’s choice of one preverb from several potential preverbs becomes an issue. Another issue arising out of the single preverb restriction is its compatibility with adnominals. In the description of a complex trajectory (e.g., running out of a house into a garage), more than one adnominal can occur with a verb, but the choice of a preverb can be an issue.

This presentation focuses on the path representations in preverbs. It first considers motion events containing a single path notions in Experiments A and C and identifies which path notions are represented by preverbs. I focus on the competition between path and deixis for expression in the preverb position and the role of telicity in using a preverb. Second, I discuss the choice of preverbs when motion events involve more than one path notion in Experiment C, which involves horizontal and vertical complex trajectories with multiple path notions (e.g., a dog running out of a soccer goal, under a bench, and into a cage; a man jumping down off a table onto a bench, etc.). The research interest here is which path notions tend to be represented by preverbs and which do not, and whether the scenes can be described in one clause or not. It will be shown that Hungarian preverbs code only certain path types and that Hungarian exhibits a property different from Germanic languages.