The number and use of manner verbs as a cue for typological change in the strategies of motion events encoding

Claudio Iacobini (Salerno) ciacobini@unisa.it
Concetta Di Biase (Pisa)
Main research project Causes of typological change from Verb-Framed to Satellite-Framed prevalent strategies and vice versa. Which are the linguistic phenomena that favour or induce a change from one type to the other?

Specific object of this paper Number and use of manner verbs as a cue of on-going change.

Background Satellite-Framed languages allow for manner of motion to be encoded in the main verb. The size of manner verbs lexicon is strongly related to the level of attention paid to manner in describing events (manner salience). Satellite-Framed languages tend to have larger lexicon of manner of motion expressions than Verb-Framed languages.

Supporting data Slobin (2008) shows that a strong relationship holds between the preference for Satellite-Framed or Verb-Framed expressions in texts and the size of the manner verb lexicon, as defined by number of types in a sample drawn from ten novels in each language.

**Hypothesis**. Deviation from the correlation shown in the graph may be interpreted as cues of on-going change from one typology (preferred way of encoding motion) to another; i.e. the increase vs. decrease of the lexicon of manner verbs and of their use is related to typological change.
Need for more fine-grained information about manner of motion verbs

Not enough data on cross-linguistic comparison of the lexical stock of manner verbs and their use (syncrony and diachrony)

The Italian language is an interesting research field, because, despite its classification in the V-F type, displays quite a relevant number of manner verbs and other not expected characteristics

- recent emergence of S-F strategies (i.e. phrasal verbs)
- quite frequent use of manner verbs in the expression of directed motion (included boundary crossing events), e.g. saltare fuori ‘jump out, burst out, pop out’, scappare via ‘run away’, correre dentro ‘run inside’
**Data collection** self-propelled individual human locomotion verbs on a horizontal, solid surface (based on the classification proposed by Slobin 2008)

**BASIC LEVEL VERBS**
camminare ‘walk’, correre ‘run’, deambulare ‘walk’, incamminarsi ‘make one’s way’

**VARIETIES OF WALKING**

**RELAXED WALKING**

**LABORED PROGRESS**

**IMPAIRED WALKING**

**TYPES OF RUNNING**
galoppare ‘gallop’, sprintare ‘sprint’, trottere ‘trot’

**RAPID MOVEMENT**

**RAPID MOVEMENT AWAY FROM SOURCE**

**RAPID MOVEMENT TOWARD GOAL**

**FRICTIONLESS / SILENT MOVEMENT**

**PUNCTUATED, REPEATABLE MOVEMENT**
## Cross-linguistic comparison

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(data on English, French, Spanish, Polish, Russian collected by D.I. Slobin, data on German collected by P. Hödl, data on Italian collected by C. Iacobini)
Conclusions and outlook

- Both S-F and V-F languages have a common core of manner of motion verbs specifying major gaits, languages differ in the number of manner verbs and granularity in which different types of manner of motion are lexicalised.

- The high number of manner verbs in the Italian language (both compared to other Romance languages and also to S-F languages) supports a positive correlation between a high number of manner verbs and more frequent and regular use of S-F constructions also in prevalently V-F languages; as a consequence, the number of manner verbs in (prevalently) V-F languages may be interpreted as a sign of change in the preference of encoding motion (reinforcement effect: the more a strategy is employed the more a construction becomes entrenched in the language, the frequent use of S-F constructions leads to an increase in the lexicon of manner verbs). Note that in Italian, some post-verbal particles (e.g. dentro ‘in, into, inside’, fuori ‘out’) can be used with manner verbs also in boundary-crossing constructions.

- Italian verbs show a tendency to “merge” direction and / or deictic information with manner (e.g. eclissarsi ‘to disappear’, gettarsi ‘to hurl oneself’, irrompere ‘to burst into’, scagliarsi ‘to lunge’, sfuggire ‘to escape’, sgattaiolare ‘to slip away’).

- Related questions
  - Are Italian “directional” manner verbs relics of prefixal satellite strategy or basis for the expansion of S-F strategies?
  - Does the expression of directed motion in V-F languages with manner verbs plus particles or PP depend on structural features (different kinds of verbal roots) or on the the interplay of semantic, aspectual and pragmatic factors? (cf. Levin, Beavers, Tham 2009 for a criticism of Alonge 1997 and Folli & Ramchand 2005, among others, structural proposals).

Answers possible only through corpus analysis of context of usage of manner verbs in constructions with a directional reading (written version).