

Motion constructions in contact languages: cross-linguistic evidence from APiCS

Category: oral

Data on a wide variety of contact languages from the *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures (APiCS, Michaelis et al. 2013)* show that intransitive and transitive motion constructions often show identical marking of goal (motion-to) and source (motion-from). This is rather different from the situation in the European lexifiers. In French, for instance, the marking of motion-to (*dans* 'in, into') is different from motion-from (*de* 'from') in both intransitive and transitive constructions:

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| <p>(1) a. intransitive motion-to
<i>Je vais dans la cuisine.</i>
'I go into the kitchen.'</p> | <p>b. intransitive motion-from
<i>Je sors de la cuisine.</i>
'I go out of the kitchen.'</p> |
| <p>(2) a. transitive motion-to
<i>Je pousse le carton dans la cuisine.</i>
'I push the box into the kitchen.'</p> | <p>b. transitive motion-from
<i>Je tire le carton de la cuisine.</i>
'I pull the box out of the kitchen.'</p> |

But in a number of contact languages in APiCS the four situations corresponding to (1a-b) and (2a-b) are marked *in exactly the same way* irrespectively of orientation. In Seychelles Creole (Michaelis & Rosalie 2013), for instance, all four constructions are marked by the preposition *dan*:

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| <p>(3) a. <i>mon al dan bwa</i>
1SG go in forest
'I go into the forest.'</p> | <p>b. <i>mon sorti dan bwa</i>
1SG come.from in forest
'I come out of the forest.'</p> |
| <p>(4) a. <i>Marcel ti pus Peter dan trou</i>
Marcel PAST push Peter in hole
'Marcel pushed Peter into the hole.'</p> | <p>b. <i>Marcel ti redi Peter dan trou</i>
Marcel PAST pull Peter in hole
'Marcel pulled Peter out of the hole.'</p> |

Here the hearer must rely on the semantics of the verb to infer the correct interpretation. Other contact languages represented in APiCS that show the same or very similar polysemous marking patterns are, for instance, the French-based Caribbean creoles, Early Sranan, African contact languages (Krio, Sango, Lingala, Fanakalo), the two other French-based Indian Ocean creoles (Mauritian and Reunion Creole), several Chabacano varieties of the Philippines, as well as Tok Pisin and Bislama in the Pacific.

Such cases of source-goal nondistinctness have occasionally been discussed for other languages (Lehmann 1992, Wälchli & Zúñiga 2006), but their widespread occurrence in creole and other contact languages is a new finding.

After presenting data from a range of languages and a world map of 76 contact languages, we will argue tentatively that these marking patterns are not due to simplification strategies during the process of pidginization or creolization, but to substrate influence: The speakers of the various substrate languages (slaves or indentured labourers) have retained these patterns from their native languages in the developing contact languages.

References

- Lehmann, Christian. 1992. Yukatekische lokale Relatoren in typologischer Perspektive. *ZPSK* 45(6). 626–641.
- Michaelis, Susanne Maria, Philippe Maurer, Martin Haspelmath, & Magnus Huber (eds.) 2013. *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures*. Oxford: OUP, to appear.
- Wälchli, Bernhard & Fernando Zúñiga. 2006. Source-Goal (in)difference and the typology of motion events. *STUF* 59(3). 284–303.