Two Faces of Linguistic Encoding in Thai Motion Events: Evidence from Thai Spoken Narrative Discourse compared with Japanese

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0. Introduction

Recent works in typology, especially the studies of how to express the core schema **path**, have been widely carried out. One of the major findings of Talmy's investigation (1985, 1991) is that many languages of the world fall into either satellite-framed languages, which express path in the form of verbal particles or affixes as English and German do, or verb-framed languages, which encode path in verbs as do Spanish and French. However, little is known about the nature of serial verb languages, e.g. Thai, Vietnamese, and Khmer. The only works concerning this issue that I have encountered so far are "Verb Concatenation in Lahu" by Matisoff (1969) and the diachronic study of Li (1997) on Chinese verb-complement compounds. These two papers provide evidence that certain verbs in the serial verb construction are considered as the secondary verbs, which function like English verb particles. Therefore, Lahu and modern day Chinese are classified into satellite-framed languages, according to Talmy's analysis.

Although I recognize the importance of Talmy's insight, for Thai I find it premature to decide which typological frames the language falls into, because there are two faces for the linguistic encoding of path in Thai motion events. Namely, certain Thai path verbs still maintain their verbhood, while they extend their semantics and functions in order to meet communicative needs. This paper addresses from a cognitive standpoint the idea that certain Thai path verbs have two faces, verbs and verbal particles, for encoding path in motion events. In this paper, the discussion is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the two main typological frames proposed by Talmy (1985, 1991). The second part concerns the evidence from syntax to show the distinct behaviors of Thai path verbs in three different motion events. The last part relates these

findings to rhetorical style in narrative discourse.

1. Two typological frames

Talmy (1985, 1991) proposes two main typological frames for encoding the core schema **path** in a motion event. That is, in satellite-framed languages, **manner** is represented in a main verb and **path** is expressed by the so-called satellites in various forms such as affixes in German and Russian, verb particles in English, verb-complement compounds in contemporary Chinese, and non-head versatile verbs in Lahu. The examples from (1) and (2) below depict the typical linguistic behavior of this frame featuring the English verb particle **into** and Chinese verb-complement compound **jin**, respectively.

Satellite-framed languages

(1) English (cited from Talmy 1991:488)
the bottle floated **into** the cave
Figure Motion+Manner Path Ground

(2) Chinese (cited from Huang Sumiao's data)
瓶子媳潘髁鹘松蕉
ping zi sui zhe shui liu liu jin le shan dong
bottle along with stream flow enter PERFECT cave

On the other hand, verb-framed languages encode **path** in the verbs while **manner** is to expressed by manner adverbial phrases or by gerundive constituents. The distinction can be illustrated with examples (3)-(5), featuring the Spanish verb **entro**, the French verb **entrée** and the Japanese verb **haitte**.

Verb-framed languages

(3) Spanish (cited from Talmy 1991:488)
La botella **entro** flotando a la cueva.
the bottle enter floating in the cave
Figure Motion+Path Manner PREP. Ground

(4) French (cited from Akamatsu's data)
La bouteille est **entrée** a la caverne en flottant

the bottle be enter in the cave in float

(5) Japanese (cited from Takubo's data)
bin-wa ukanda-mama doukutsu no naka ni **haitte** itta
bottle-TOP float-STATE cave GEN inside LOC enter go

The question here is which typological frame Thai tends to fall into. At first sight, it appears to be a satellite-framed type. Consider the Thai equivalents of the above example. Note that both (6a) and (6b) yield the same meaning but they are different in the degree of preciseness in describing an event. In other words, (6a) gives a rough picture of the bottle floating into the cave, whereas (6b) sketches in more details, depicting a picture of the bottle floating into the inner part of the cave.

(6a) khuat^{2} lɵɵy^{1} **khaw**^{3} tham^{3} pay^{1} lɛɛw^{4}
bottle float enter cave go ASP.
Figure Manner V. Path V. Ground Deictic ASP.

(6b) khuat^{2} lɵɵy^{1} **khaw**^{3} pay^{1} nay^{1} tham^{3}
bottle float enter go in cave
Figure Manner V. Path V. Deictic LOC. Ground

Intuitively, in both these examples **khaw**^{3} functions like English verb particle **into** or the so-called satellite. However, it would be false to claim that Thai is a genuine member of satellite-framed languages based on the above example alone. This question will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

2. Investigation into Thai data[1]

2.1 Data

The Thai data cited here are mainly the elicited texts of 11 Thai subjects who narrated the Swiss animation video tape entitled "Pingu no hitori tabi", an episode from the Pingu stories. The Japanese data are provided by Kozue Takubo. Table 1 shows the details about subjects and recording styles for the Thai and Japanese.

Table 1. Details about the subjects and recording styles

	Thai subjects	Japanese subjects
Number of subjects	11	11
Age range	8-40	23-30
Native language	standard Thai	standard Japanese
Recording style	on-line	post-view

2.2 Subcategorization of Thai motion domain

Returning now to the question of the behavior of Thai path verbs, I will focus on the two faces of Thai path verbs, which can be observed in the three subcategorized motion events. They are spontaneous motion events with volition of a figure, spontaneous motion events without volition and caused motion events. Each subcategory is discussed in the following subsections, moving from the highest degree of verbhood to the lowest degree.

2.2.1 Spontaneous motion events [+Volition]

In spontaneous motion events with a volitional figure, some Thai path verbs are realized as main verbs. This property is a characteristic typical of verb-framed languages. This can be attributed to the possibility of manner verb omission, as shown in (7'). But this is not possible with path verb deletion, as (7") shows.

(7) lɛɛw^{4} kɔ^{3} dəəl^{1} ʔɔɔk^{2} caak^{2} hɔɔng^{3}naam^{4}
and CONJ. walk exit leave:FROM toilet [Th 1A:21]
'And then (Pingu) walked out of the toilet.'

The possibility of manner verb deletion

(7') lɛɛw^{4} kɔ^{3} (dəəl^{1}) ʔɔɔk^{2} caak^{2} hɔɔng^{3}naam^{4}
and CONJ. (walk) exit leave: FROM toilet
'And then (Pingu) went out of the toilet.'

The impossibility of path verb deletion

(7") lɛɛw^{4} kɔ^{3} dəəl^{1} *(ʔɔɔk^{2}) caak^{2} hɔɔng^{3}naam^{4}
and CONJ. walk (exit) leave: FROM toilet