

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)
 瓶子孀潘課鵲松蕉
 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) khuat² ləəy¹ **khaw**³ tham³ pay¹ ləəw⁴
 bottle float enter cave go ASP.
 Figure Manner V. Path V. Ground Deictic ASP.
- (6b) khuat² ləəy¹ **khaw**³ pay¹ nay¹ tham³
 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 data¹

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

	<u>Thai subjects</u>	<u>Japanese subjects</u>
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) $\text{ɛɛw}^4 \text{ kɔ}^3 \text{ dɔɛl}^1 \text{ ʔɔɔk}^2 \text{ caak}^2 \text{ hɔɔng}^3 \text{ naam}^4$
 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') $\text{ɛɛw}^4 \text{ kɔ}^3 \text{ (dɔɛl}^1) \text{ ʔɔɔk}^2 \text{ caak}^2 \text{ hɔɔng}^3 \text{ naam}^4$
 and CONJ. (walk) exit leave: FROM toilet
 ‘And then (Pingu) went out of the toilet.’

- The impossibility of path verb deletion
 (7'') $\text{ɛɛw}^4 \text{ kɔ}^3 \text{ dɔɛl}^1 \text{ *(ʔɔɔk}^2) \text{ caak}^2 \text{ hɔɔng}^3 \text{ naam}^4$
 and CONJ. walk (exit) leave: FROM toilet

‘And then (Pingu) walked from the toilet.’

It is worth noting that (7'') can be both natural and grammatical, but its meaning is distinct from both (7) and (7') since (7'') simply states the starting point of movement but does not include information about the direction of movement. Thus, it is clear that Thai path verbs still maintain their verbal properties. Likewise Chinese and Japanese also encode path in a similar way. That is to say, path is represented in a main verb, for instance Chinese *chu* in (8) and Japanese *dete* in (9). According to this fact, Thai and Chinese may be grouped together with Japanese as members of verb-framed languages.

(8) 然后之后出来之后 [Tape4]
 ran hou zhi hou chu lai zhi hou
 ‘And then after (Pingu) came out.’

(9) de senmenjo kara dete kuru-to [Tape 2]
 discourse toilet from exit come-LINK
 ‘Then (Pingu) came out of the toilet.’

2.2.2 Spontaneous Motion Events [-Volition]

Rather than being a main verb as shown above, a path verb spontaneous motion event verbs tend to lose some verbal properties. In the following example (10), it sounds somewhat unnatural when a manner verb is omitted.

(10) khuat² ləəy¹ ʔɔk² caak² tham³
 bottle float exit: OUT leave: FROM cave
 ‘The bottle floated out of the cave.’

(10') ʔkhuat² (ləəy¹) ʔɔk² caak² tham³
 bottle (float) exit: OUT leave: FROM cave
 ?‘The bottle went out of the cave.’

Again, a comparison with Chinese and Japanese is made. In the same way as the Thai does, the Chinese sentence in (11) sounds unnatural when the manner verb *liu* ‘to float’ is

‘pəət² ʔɔk²’, equivalent to the English ‘open out’, and **long**¹ in ‘say² (NP) long¹’ which is equivalent to the English ‘put (sth.) down’.

(13) mya³ phing¹ngu² pəət² kraʔ² paw⁵ ʔɔk² maa¹
 when Pingu open bag exit: OUT come [Th 3A:69]
 ‘When Pingu opened up his bag.....’

(14) nia³ mɛɛ³ day³ say² tuk⁴ka¹taa¹ long¹
 INTERJ. Mother ASP. put doll DOWN

pay¹ nay¹ kraʔ²paw⁵ hay³ lɛɛw⁴ [Th 3A: 67]
 go in bag give ASP.
 ‘Oh! I have already put the doll into your bag.’

2.3 Extended functions of Thai path verbs

Closely related to this issue is the linguistic encoding of change of state. Namely, in verb-framed languages, the change of state is implied by the inherent semantics of the verb, whereas in satellite-framed languages, the so-called satellite is needed to supply this sense. This distinction is shown in (15) Thai and (16) Japanese.

Thai: via both deverbal markers and resultative verbs.
 (15) nɔŋg⁴ kɔ³ ləəy¹ tyyn² khyn³ maa¹ rɔŋg⁴hay³
 y.brother CONJ RESULT M. wake UP come cry [Th4 A:15]
 ‘His younger brother then woke up and cried.’

Japanese: via the inherent semantics of verbs.
 (16) akachan-ga okite shimaimasu [J4:15]
 baby-NOM wake-LINK finish
 ‘The baby was awakened.’

On the grounds that Thai needs some deverbal markers to mark a change of state, this evidence supports the idea that Thai is similar to English. In (15) above, Thai needs

the deverbal path marker **khyn**³ to mark the change of state, that is, **tyyn**² **khyn**³ or 'wake up', whereas (16) illustrates the Japanese situation with the implication of change of state in the inherent semantics of the verb **okite**.

However, though the details may differ, both English and Thai have a pattern similar to the one Japanese. Namely, in order to describe the final phase of eating, Japanese uses the complex predicate **tabe-owaru** or 'eat-finish', Thai uses the serial verbs **kin**¹ **set**² or 'eat-finish' and English uses **finish eating**. Note that in all three languages the same verb is considered the head, that is, Japanese **owaru**, Thai **set**² and English **finish**.

- (17) phoo¹ phing¹ngu² thaan¹ khaaw³ set² [Th 8A:29]
 when Pingu eat rice finish
 'When Pingu **finished** eating his breakfast,....'
- (18) de kondo tabe-owattara [J1:99]
 discourse M. now eat-finish
 'After (Pingu) **finished** eating,....'

Taking these two styles of linguistic encoding into consideration, it seems reasonable to investigate the rhetorical styles of each language.

3. Observation of rhetorical styles

It is necessary to look more carefully into the rhetorical style in order to grasp the character of Thai from a typological viewpoint. Recent investigations such as Otori (1997) and Ohara (1999) of English and Japanese, and Slobin (1996) of English and Spanish, have shown the general rhetorical tendencies of these two typological frames. Namely, satellite-framed languages tend to be clause-compacting, to use a dynamic perspective, and to use fewer verbs. On the other hand, verb-framed languages tend to be clause-chaining, to depict events from a static perspective, and to use more verbs. Keeping this in mind, let's compare Thai and Japanese.

3.1 The optional encoding of a manner verb

The first point that requires clarification is the optional encoding of a manner verb. Table 2 shows the number and percentage of motion verbs in terms of both types and tokens from eleven subjects for each language.

Table 2. Number of motion verbs: types/tokens

	<u>Thai</u>	<u>Japanese</u>
Number of verb tokens	367	193
Number of verb types	54	44
Type-token ratio	.15	.23
Number of manner verb types	14	6
% of manner verb types	30%	14%

If we look at Table 2 we see that Japanese has more variety in verbs than Thai in terms of the type-token ratio for these two languages. But Thai is apt to use manner verbs more frequently than Japanese, based on the percentage of manner verb types. The example in (19) illustrates the higher frequency in the occurrence of manner predicates. Conversely, (20) features a Japanese example in which a manner predicate is omitted.

(19) ləəw⁴ kɔ̌³ dəəŋ¹ ʔɔ̌ɔ̌k² caak² hɔ̌ɔ̌ŋ³naam⁴ [Th1A:21]
and CONJ. walk exit leave: FROM toilet
'Then (Pingu) walked out of the toilet.'

(20) de sono basuruumu-kara dete [J1:28]
discourse M. that bathroom-FROM exit-LINK
'Then (Pingu) went out of the bathroom.'

3.2 Linguistic behavior of path in a journey

3.3

Next, I will turn to the linguistic behavior of path on the so-called journey. Slobin (1996) defines this term as *the extended depiction of motion across clauses and to go beyond the simple motion event*. In other words, I will focus on the

way the speaker depicts at least two ground elements in a clause. Unfortunately, I cannot find a good example of a long journey from my collected spoken narrative texts, so in this section I use examples from the written narrative texts instead. It should be noted that for these written texts, the Japanese is the original version, while the English and Thai are translated versions.

- (21) ki-ga tsuku-to kuruma-wa itsunomanika
notice-LINK car-TOP unawares

hankagai-wo nuke juutakugai-wo
shopping area- ACC pass through residential area-ACC

nuke yamanote-e sashikakat-te-ita [p.13]
pass through hilly area-DIR approach-LINK-PAST

- (22) With so much merriment, hardly anyone noticed that the car had already **passed through** both the shopping district and the residential area of Hanaura and **had started to enter** the hilly area of the town. [p.15]

- (23) ban¹ya¹kaat² phaay¹nay¹ rot⁴ khryyn⁴khreeng¹
atmosphere within car merry

maak³ con¹ may³ mii¹ khray¹ sang⁵keet²
very until NEG. have who notice

waa³ phaan² yaan³ kaan¹khaa⁴ lɛʔ⁴
say: THAT pass area shopping and

kheet² thii³yuu²?aa¹say⁵ thii³ naa⁵nɛɛn³
zone resident REL M. be dense

ʔɔɔk² maa¹ nɔɔk³myang¹ mya³day¹ [p.19]
exit: OUT come suburb when

Examining the ways to depict a journey in these three languages makes it clear that Japanese tends to use more verbs than the other two. Thai uses the combination of the verb **phaan²** with **ʔɔɔk² maa¹** which means to pass through from the speaker's viewpoint. English also uses two verbs to depict this journey. This may be because English has no satellite equivalent to the word **sashikakat-te ita**. Alternately, the result may be influenced by the original text.

3.3 Dynamic vs. static perspectives

Table 3. Number and percentages for sentences

	<u>Dynamic</u>	<u>Static</u>
Japanese	14 30%	33 70%
Thai	45 98%	1 2%

The next point to be brought up has to do with the dynamic and static perspectives. These two perspectives adopted here are defined as follows. The former is a description of an event using a spatial movement pattern. The latter focuses on expressing where an action takes place without mentioning the spatial movement. Based on my analysis, it is obvious that Japanese often uses a static perspective to depict an event, whereas Thai tends to describe an event from a dynamic perspective, as shown in (24) and (25) respectively.

(24) de michi-no wakaremichi-de phingnguu-wa
discourse M. road-GEN crossroad-LOC Pingu-TOP

sono torakku-kara orite [J7:3]
that truck-from get off-LINK
'Pingu got off that truck at a crossroad.'

(25) con¹ thyn⁵ thaang¹yεεk³ thii³ caʔ² pay¹ baan³ paa³

until arrive crossroad REL M. MODAL go house aunt
 ‘Until they came to (Th: arrived at) a crossroad that
 leads to Aunt Penguin’s house.’ [Th2:54]

The same phenomenon can be seen in the Chinese verb **dao** (到) in (26) as well.

- (26) 然后到路口之后 (Pingu:Chinese)
 ran hou dao lu kou zhi hou
 and then arrive intersection after
 ‘Then... after (they) came to an intersection...’

However, it’s worth noting that Japanese can also express this scene in a dynamic style, but then the notion of a crossroad is left unmentioned. Rather, Japanese is apt to use the NP *tochuu-made iku*, which means ‘to go halfway’. Compare (24) with (27) below.

- (27) **tochuu-made iku-n desu-ne** [J9: 29]
 halfway-until go-EMPHASIS POLITE-PARTICLE
 ‘They went halfway.’

In order to describe the same event from a dynamic perspective, Japanese has to use the verb **iku** or ‘to go’ instead, together with the word **tochuu** ‘halfway’.

In this connection, Ohori (personal communication) suggests that a plausible reason why Japanese tends to use the phrase **tochuu-made** or **tochuu-de**, which means halfway, instead of the verb **tsuku** ‘arrive’ is that it expresses the speaker’s viewpoint. In other words, the Japanese verb **tsuku** ‘arrive’ is used to mark a destination, whereas Thai verb **thynɡ⁵** and Chinese verb **dao** (到) are used to mark not only a destination but also a place on the way to the destination. Thus the former has a broad scope, whereas the latter two cases have a narrower scope. This property enables Thai verb **thynɡ⁵** to be used in a concessive sense². The image-schema of **thynɡ⁵** is given below.

X does something or is at state Y
 with a further reference to point Y'
 X-----Y-----_Y'

3.4 Degree of Transitivity in introducing new information

The next point, also related to the problem of perspective, is the degree of transitivity used in introducing new information. Ohori (1997) says that in a high transitivity rhetoric *a new entity is introduced with reference to the human subject in English*, while in a low transitivity rhetoric *it is done with reference to the whole situation (as in Japanese), with the human subject only implied by the context*.

In this paper, I will refer to the high transitivity pattern with the term **finding** and the low transitivity pattern with the term **existing**. In my interpretation, the data³ shown in Table 4 indicate that Japanese tends to use the existing pattern, while Thai tends to use the finding pattern in order to introduce new information.

Table 4. Degree of transitivity

	[finding]	[existing]
Japanese	11 28%	28 72%
Thai	37 71%	15 29%

- (24) ato-wa tochuu-de akachan-ga iru
 later-TOP halfway-LOC baby-NOM exist

o-uchi-ga atte [J4: 32]

POL.-house-NOM exist-LINK

‘After that there existed a house where a baby was lying.

- (25) pay¹ cəə¹ baan³ lang⁵ nung² lɛɛw⁴
 go find house CLF. one and

ko³ thak⁴thaay¹ kap² dek² [Th 1A: 51-52]

CONJ. greet with baby

'(Pingu) then found a house and said hello to a baby.'

4. Conclusion

In the early part of this paper the question addressed was which typological frame, i.e. satellite-framed or verb-framed languages, does Thai fall into? To give a satisfactory answer to this question, this work set out to investigate the linguistic encoding of the core schema *path* in three different motion events and to clarify the rhetorical style based on the oral narrative texts.

To sum up the main syntactic point, certain Thai path verbs have two faces in the motion domain. That is, they maintain their verbal properties in spontaneous volitional motion events, but they behave similar to English verb particles in spontaneous motion events without volition and in caused motion events. In other words, their function in the latter two domains is to encode change of location or state.

In addition, the evidence from narrative discourse can be summarized as follows. It is possible to consider Thai path verbs as satellite-like entities. This is because Thai tends to use a clause-compacting pattern and adopt the dynamic perspective in rhetorical style, characteristics of satellite-framed languages. Meanwhile, Thai is likely to use fewer specific manner verbs compared to English and to use a path verb as the head verb in a clause, while a manner verb can be omitted, as in verb-framed languages. In my opinion, this makes it difficult at present to treat Thai as a typical member of either of these two frames. To conclude, it seems appropriate to remark that at present Thai seems to stand between the two frames, but nearer the English pole.

Satellite-framed _____ **Verb-framed**

English
Chinese

Thai

Spanish
Japanese

Abbreviations

ACC	Accusative
ASP	Aspect
CLF	Classifier
CONJ	Conjunction
GEN	Genitive
LINK	Linker
LOC	Locative
NOM	Nominal
POL	Polite
REL M.	Relative Marker
RESULT M.	Resultative Marker
TOP	Topic

Notes

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¹The transcription keys for Thai texts are as follows.

ə = schwa; central vowel	ʔ = glottal stop
ɛ = open-mid front vowel	ɔ = open-mid back vowel
y = close-back vowel	ng = velar nasal

Tones are represented by numerals:

1 = mid-flat, 2 = low, 3 = falling, 4 = high, 5 = rising

²Kessakul R. and T. Ohori (to appear) discuss the use of **thying**² in a concessive sense, among others, from a cognitive viewpoint.

e.g. **thying**⁵ **yang**¹ **dek**² **khaw**⁴ **kɔ**³ **mii**¹
although **still** **child** **s/he** **CONJ.** **have**

khwaam¹ rap⁴phit²chɔɔp³

NOMINAL be responsible

'Although he is still a child, he has a sense of responsibility.

³The data in Table 4 are derived from the analysis of the Thai and the Japanese elicited texts for five scenes. The scenes are the appearance of a painter penguin, a house, a baby, a postman and Pingu's teddy bear.

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Data

The data in Chinese, French, Japanese and Thai, which correspond to Talmy's examples are cited from the collective data from Prof. Ohori's 1998 academic year graduate seminar. The elicited texts are from Pingu's stories in Thai, Japanese and Chinese. The written texts are from the original texts entitled "Futari-no Iida" along with a translated version in English and Thai.

"Futari-no Iida" by Miyoko Matsutani, Kodansha (1995 [originally published 1976])

"Two Little Girls Called Iida" translated by Pauline Bush, Kodansha English Library (1985)

"Dek² Ying⁵ Ii¹ da²" translated by Pusadee Nawawichit, Butterfly Publishing Ltd. (1996)

