International workshop

Associated motion

Venue and dates

Australian National University, Camberra
15 December 2017
held in conjunction with the 12th Conference of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT)

Organizers

Antoine Guillaume (Laboratoire Dynamique du Langage, CNRS & University of Lyon)
Harold Koch (Australian National University)

Workshop description

'Associated Motion' (AM) is a relatively newly identified descriptive and comparative concept that we define as a **verbal grammatical category, separate from tense, aspect, mood and direction, whose function is to associate, in different ways, different kinds of translational motion to a (generally non-motion) verb event** (e.g. 'go / come / move along and then V', 'V and then go / come / move along', 'V while going / coming / moving along', V while non-subject is going / coming / moving along, etc.).

   AM can be expressed by **verbal affixes, clitics, particles or auxiliaries** which, in different linguistic traditions, receive a wide range of descriptive labels such as 'motion / motion-cum-purpose / purposive / intentional', '(deictic) directional / directive', 'ven(i)tive / andative / itive', 'hither / thither', 'centrifugal / centripetal', '(cis- / trans- / dis- / re-)locative', 'displacement', '(secondary / locative) aspect', etc.

   The category of AM is noteworthy from a theoretical point of view because it shows, among other things, that in some languages **the "fact-of-motion" (Talmy 2007) can be encoded grammatically**, by way of affixes or other grammaticalized elements, and not necessarily lexically, by way of verb roots, contrary to what is generally assumed.

   The phenomenon of AM was first recognized for languages of **Central Australia** since the 1980s (by Koch, Wilkins, among others), then from 2000 in **Western Amazonia** (by Guillaume, among others), and examples have subsequently been identified in Central and North America, Africa, Asia, and Papua New Guinea, but, conspicuously, not (yet) in European languages.

   The most elaborated AM systems, those of the Arandic languages of Central Australia and the Takanan languages of Western Amazonia, express up to 15 contrasting AM values in paradigmatic opposition. Comparative studies of AM systems reveal recurrent properties in terms of the semantic parameters and values that are encoded:

- **moving argument** (subject vs. object or dative)
- **temporal relation** between motion and verb event (prior, concurrent, subsequent)
- **aspectual realization** of verb event (perfective vs. imperfective)
- **path of motion** (towards/away from deictic center, upward/downward, straight/return, past)

A tentative typology of the simplicity vs. complexity of the formation as well as the likelihood of the semantic values being manifested emerges from the Western Amazonian languages (Guillaume 2016):

(1) **motion of the subject > motion of the object** and
(2) **prior motion > concurrent motion > subsequent motion**

From a historical perspective, many of the AM markers **derive etymologically from lexical verbs of motion** used in multi-verbal constructions. And from an areal perspective, AM in Central Australia and Western Amazonia is a **highly diffusible category** through language contact. In the other parts of the world where AM has been recognized, and doubtless in languages where it has not yet been recognized, AM appears to be expressed by much simpler systems (inventories restricted to one or two members), non-dedicated markers (AM is not their primary meaning) or by non-grammatical means (lexical verbs in multi-verbal constructions). These facts may explain why AM has remained unrecognized by linguists before the more elaborated systems were described (cf. the parallel with evidentiality as a comparative verbal concept).

Given the paucity of languages for which AM systems have been described, many questions of a typological nature remain; e.g.:

- What is the geographical distribution of AM systems in languages of the world?
- What are the possible etymological sources of the exponents of AM values?
- To what extent do AM systems diffuse across genetic boundaries?
- Are the semantic parameters identified so far adequate for the description of all AM systems?
- Are the generalizations concerning the hierarchy of parameters replicated in all systems?
- How should AM be best defined?
- What should count and not count as an expression of AM?
- What subcategories of AM should be recognized cross-linguistically?
- How does AM interact with other verbal categories (direction, spatial distribution, posture, static location, tense, aspect, mood, modality, speed, transitivity, voice)
- How does grammaticalized AM evolve into non-AM markers (e.g. aspect, direction, etc.)?
- How does grammaticalized AM interact with non-grammaticalized expressions of motion in the same language?
- What should be the place of AM within an overarching typology of motion expression?
- What are the possible discourse-pragmatic functions of AM forms?
- How does AM in a language correlate with the sociocultural and geographical environment of the speakers?

In organizing this workshop as part of the 12th ALT conference we hope to provide a good forum to:

- bring the AM phenomenon to the wider attention of typologists
- stimulate new descriptive and comparative research on AM in different parts of the world
- initiate new collaborations between language specialists working on AM
- work towards a common understanding of the phenomenon
- (possibly) plan a published volume of papers on AM

The workshop organizers have played a pioneer role in the emergence of the field of AM studies: **Harold Koch**, specialist of Arandic languages of Central Australia and instigator of the term and concept of 'Associated motion' (Koch 1984, 2006); and **Antoine Guillaume**, specialist of Takanan languages, author of the first detailed study of a complex AM system outside of Australia (Guillaume 2006) and author of the first typological and areal surveys of the AM category in Western Amazonian languages (Guillaume 2016).

References

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Call for abstracts

Abstracts must be submitted as part of the ALT 2017 open call (15 Dec 2016 - 31 March 2017) [following this link]. Scholars are encouraged to email the workshop organizers Antoine Guillaume and/or Harold Koch to check that their proposed contributions will fit in with the theme of the workshop.

Program and abstracts

Forthcoming…