

Microparameters of Cross-Linguistic Variation: Directed Motion and Resultatives

Keywords: microparameter, directed motion, resultative, adpositions, decomposition

1. GOAL: There is an unsettled question in linguistics regarding the status of parameters. An important version of parametric theory, forcefully advanced in Chomsky 1981 and pursued in Baker 1996, 2001, posits a relatively small number of relatively important parameters determining typological properties of languages. A distinct trend, articulated in Borer 1984 and continuing currently in ‘microparametric’ work, holds that variation among languages is restricted to properties of individual lexical items.

The matter is too important to be left unsettled. If there are major parameters, then convincing examples need to be presented in detail (Baker 1996 is just such an attempt). If there are not, then it needs to be convincingly shown that the candidate cases must be reduced to lexical microparameters. This is what we propose to do for one example of an important typological split among languages, the one first identified by Talmy concerning the combination of manner-of-motion verbs with locative expressions. We argue that only a microparametric approach can capture the actual variation observed, and against macroparametric alternatives.

2. THE PARAMETER IN QUESTION. As is well-known from Talmy (1975, 1985, 2000), languages such as English allow manner verbs with goal PPs to have directed motion interpretations (DMMCs, **directed manner of motion constructions**), while languages such as Spanish do not; see (1–2) for examples. Parametric analyses abound (e.g., Mateu and Rigau 2001; Beck and Snyder 2001; Snyder 2001; 2005; McIntyre 2004; Zubizarreta & Oh 2007). Several of these propose to connect DMMCs to resultatives (cf. (3–5)).

3. THE CROSS-LINGUISTIC CORRELATION REVISITED: We demonstrate in this paper that the parametric approach defended in the works cited above cannot account for a broader range of cross-linguistic data. As more languages are investigated in greater detail, counterexamples emerge in each direction; Hebrew Indonesian, and Malayam have DMMCs, but no resultatives (e.g., 6-7), while Korean has resultatives (e.g., 8) but no DMMCs (e.g., 2b). Attempts to refine the parameter in order to accommodate the counterexamples lead to fragmentation of the parameters in question, much as has occurred for other examples of parameters (e.g. pro-drop, OV, V-to-I, V-initial, V2, polysynthesis): it turns out that there are not just two kinds of language, but rather several. We detail two strategies, each for resultatives and directed motion, and show how different languages make use of the different strategies. We identify nine expected combinations and have so far found seven attested.

4. THE SOURCE OF THE VARIATION: Our analysis is based on the ‘constructivist’ assumption that the meaning components that determine Aktionsart and argument structure are independent of conceptual structure (following Borer 2005, Ramchand 2007, and many others). Specifically, we assume that there are four structurally represented components in a resultative or directed motion construction. Each must be ‘lexicalized,’ i.e. licensed by lexical insertion. At the top, there is a processual component, lexicalized by a verb. At the bottom, there is the end state or location, lexicalized by an AP or a PlaceP (in a decomposition of PP). In between, there are two functional projections, one of which is an optional lower component of verbal meaning (Ramchand’s RES for ‘result’), and the other is an uppermost predicative layer for the end state or location predicate (PATH, dominating Place, and PRED, dominating AP). All languages that we have examined have process verbs, adjectives, and Place-denoting adpositions or cases, so variation in the availability of resultative and directed motion constructions must reside in the availability of material to lexicalize RES, PATH, and PRED. For example, we show that a language with a functional element that can lexicalize PRED will allow resultatives with verbs that independently lexicalize RES (e.g., Japanese). Similarly, a language with an independent element to lexicalize PATH will allow directed motion with directional verbs (e.g., Russian). Languages with functional material to lexicalize both RES and PATH will allow DMMCs (e.g., 1). Languages with functional material to lexicalize both RES and PRED will have what are called ‘strong’ resultatives (e.g., *race the horse sweaty* in Eng).

5. CONCLUSION. In conclusion, we show that microparameters are needed to account for the facts in this domain. In arguing against a model constrained to a small set of innately predetermined macroparameters, the microparametric approach must provide an alternative solution to the learnability problem which was so compellingly addressed by the theory of parameters in 1981. We suggest (following e.g. Adger 2003, Longobardi 2006, and others, and in general agreement with Chomsky 1995 inter alia) that the answer lies in the format for parameters: if there are many microparameters, then the range of **types** of parameters must be severely limited. Our suggestion is that parameters are limited to properties of lexical items (à la Borer), especially the formal features on lexical items which allow them to lexicalize the functional structure which forms the skeleton on which meanings are built.

- (1) Satellite-framed languages (e.g., Indo-European except Romance; Chinese)
- a. Mary ran/danced/crawled to the store. (English)
- b. Hans lief/ging/kroch zum Laden.
John ran/walked/crawled to.the.DAT store
'John ran/walked/crawled to the store.' (German)
- (2) Verb-framed languages (e.g., Romance, Korean/Japanese, Semitic)
- a. *Juan bailo/anduvo/gateo a la tienda.
John danced/walked/crawled LOC the store
(bad on directed reading 'John danced/walked/crawled to the store.')
- (Spanish)
- b. *Mary-ka kakey-ey ttwi/kel/ki-ess-ta.
Mary-NOM store-LOC run/walk/crawl-PST-DC
(bad as 'Mary ran/walked/crawled to the store.')
- (Korean)
- (3) a. John pounded the meat flat. b. John wiped the table clean. (English)
- (4) German has both resultatives and DMMCs
- a. Sie haben den Tisch sauber gewischt. b. Die teekanne leer trinken.
they have the table clean wiped the teapot empty drink
'They wiped the table clean.' 'Drink the teapot empty.'
- (5) Spanish lacks both resultatives and DMMCs
- a. *John golpeó la carne plana. b. *John frotó la mesa limpia.
John pounded the meat flat John wiped the table clean
'John pounded the meat flat.' 'John wiped the table clean.'
- (6) a. David rac/zaxal le-tox/ el-tox ha-xeder.
David ran/crawled DAT-inside/ to-inside the-room
'David ran/crawled into the room.' (Hebrew)
- b. John berlari/berjalan/merangkak ke (dalam) ruangan.
John ran/walked/crawled to (inside) room
'John ran/walked/crawled (in)to the room.' (Indonesian)
- c. avaL viiT-iNTe agath-ekke naTann-u
she house-GEN inside-DIR walk-PAST
'she walked into the house' (Malayalam)
- (7) a. *Hari table vritti tuda-ccu b. *Tika menumbuk daging itu penyet.
Hari table clean wipe-PAST Tika pounded meat the flat
'Hari wiped the table clean.' (Malayalam) 'Tika pounded the meat flat.' (Indonesian)
- (8) Inho-ka kkangthong-ul napcakha-key twutulki/nwulu-ess-ta.
Inho-NOM can-ACC flat-KEY pound/press.down-PST-DC
'Inho pounded/pressed down the can flat. (Korean)

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