

The argument structure of motion verbs in Maltese

This study sets out to investigate argument structure and linking in Maltese, focusing mainly on verbs of motion. Despite the ever-growing body of research focusing on the typology of motion verbs, especially that concerning the S-framing and V-framing dichotomy proposed by Talmy (1991), such studies have not yet been conducted in Maltese. It would be interesting to address such questions keeping in mind that Semitic and Romance languages, with which Maltese had considerable contact, are generally treated as V-framing languages.

In order to establish the type of syntactic framing found in Maltese, a number of speakers will be asked to narrate the events portrayed in *Frog, where are you?*, a picture book by Mercer Mayer (1969). The frog-story has been used in numerous studies on the lexicalization patterns of motion-event descriptions in different (typologically-diverse) languages (cf. Berman and Slobin 1994, and Strömquist and Verhoeven 2004, among others). The data collected from the frog-story narrations will be complemented by examples found in the MLRS corpus of written Maltese. The issue of linking between semantics and syntax will be approached from a construction grammar perspective, by which the construction (and not the verb) is considered to play a central role in sentence. However, it is the interaction of the construction and the verb that bears the whole weight of the sentence (Goldberg 1995). In light of this, this study will examine the relationship between motion verbs in Maltese and the constructions in which they occur.

References

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