

# Deictic Directionals and Associated Motion in Somali and Berber

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# Overview of the talk

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- Point of departure will be Bourdin (2006)'s analysis of Somali directionals and their Associated Motion (henceforth AM) function
- I will then present AM marked by directionals in Berber, based on data from Taqbaylit (Algeria).
- I will focus on the interaction between verb semantics and AM readings, and show that the semantics of the verbs play an important part in triggering these readings.
- These findings will support the typologically semantic and pragmatic nature of the phenomenon, first highlighted by Bourdin.

# Associated Motion

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- A phenomenon found in languages of Australia and Central America whereby an inflection on the verb specifies that the event it encodes is framed within a motion event.
- (1)      **Mparntwe Arrernte** (Australia: Wilkins, 2006)  
          angk-*artn*.alpe-ke  
          speak-Quick:DO&GO.BACK-pc  
          ‘Quickly spoke and then went back.’
- Also quite frequently marked by deictic directionals in some languages of South America (Quechua: Weber, 1989) and a number of unrelated (but geographically close) African languages — Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic (Hausa: Newman, 2005; Pero: Frajzyngier, 1986; Somali, and Berber).

## Associated motion in Somali (Bourdin, 2006)

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- Two directional particles *soo* and *sii*, which mark respectively motion toward the speaker – ventive – and motion away from the speaker – itive.

(2) Subaxkasta      gurig-ii      Cabdi      buu      *soo*      mara  
Every.morning    house-DEF    Abdi      FOCUS:3MS.SG    VEN    drop.in:PRES:3MS.SG  
'Every morning, he drops in on Abdi (on his way to work where I am).'

(3) Subaxkasta      gurig-ii      Cabdi      buu      *sii*      mara  
Every.morning    house-DEF    Abdi      FOCUS:3MS.SG    ITV    drop.in:PRES:3MS.SG  
'Every morning, he drops in on Abdi (on his way to work where I am not).'

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- With non-motion verbs, *soo* gives rise to AM interpretations of the type GO DO AND COME BACK (roundtrip motion in Bourdin).

(4) *soo*        *seexo*  
VEN        sleep:IMPER.2SG  
'Go have a rest (and then come back here).'

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- *Sii* may involve AM of a figure different from the subject of the verb (5). Alternatively, it can also presuppose a motion event directed away from the deictic centre, whose figure coincides with the main verb's subject (6).

(5) *sii* seexo  
ITV sleep:IMPER.2SG  
'Have a rest (until I come back).'

(6) *sii* seexo  
ITV sleep:IMPER.2SG  
'Get some sleep (while you are travelling away from here).'

# Bourdin's analysis

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- '*Sii* and *soo* refer to motion events (M) which take place in physical space. Syntactically they modify a verb which itself refers to a process (P). The relation between P and M may be one of identity, coincidence or contiguity. There is identity if the process designated by the verb is M itself, there is coincidence if P and M are concomitant, and there is contiguity if M frames P.'
- Two sets of semantic constraints for the interpretations of each of the deictics.

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- The semantics of *soo* is governed by the two constraints in (7).

(7) a. **Space-deictic constraint**

*Soo* refers to a motion event which has the deictic centre as its ultimate goal.

b. **Same-subject constraint**

The figure involved in M is also the primary participant in P.

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- The semantics of *sii* is defined disjunctively and negatively, and obeys either of the constraints in (8).

(8) a. **Different-Subject constraint**  
The figure in M is not a main participant of P.

b. **Space-antideictic constraint**  
Refers to a situation which does not have the deictic centre as its ultimate goal.

Bourdin also mentions the role of pragmatic and contextual factors in the interpretation of the directionals

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- Some verbs because of their semantics can only have one interpretation

(9) hilib *soo* iibi  
meat VEN buy:IMPER.2SG  
'Go buy us some meat (and come back)!'

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- TAM carried by the verb also change the temporal relation of the motion event with respect to the verb's event

(10) waan            *soo*            seex-day  
FOCUS:1SG    VEN            sleep-PAST.1SG  
'I took a nap on my way here.' Or 'I took a nap before coming here.'

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- The context of utterance also affects the temporal relation of the motion event.

(11) *soo* seexo

VEN sleep:IMPER.2SG

‘Come sleep over here [face-to-face conversation]’

‘Go get some rest and then we’ll get together [face-to-face conversation]’

‘Get some rest (and then we’ll get together) [phone conversation]’

‘Get some rest while you are travelling towards here! [phone conversation]’

# Summary

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- AM holds different temporal relations to the main verb's event
  - Precedence
  - **Concomittance**
  - **Subsequence**
- Derives a straight path (DO AND COME/ GO) or a complex path (GO, DO AND COME BACK).
- Itive involves 'switch-reference', where the Figure is different to the verb's subject.
- Partly governed by pragmatics.
- Separation between motion verbs and other classes of verbs, whereby motion verbs give rise to directional readings or an 'identity relation' (Bourdin, 2006), while non-motion verbs give rise to AM readings.

# Associated motion in Taqbaylit

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- Deictic directionals are the clitics =*d* (and its allophones), encoding ventive semantics, and =*nn* (and its allophones) encoding itive semantics.
- Both clitics have been proposed to derive from deictic demonstratives, rather than motion verbs (Mettouchi, 2011; Fleisch, 2012), but the ventive also triggers AM interpretations.

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- AM is subsequent or concomitant to the verb's event (depending on pragmatic factors), identifies the figure of motion with the verb's subject, and involves a complex or straight path. Unlike Somali, the ventive can add a motion component even with motion verbs

(12) i-ʕum                      =*d*.  
3SGM-swim.PRF =VEN  
'He went (somewhere) swam and came back.'/ 'He swam and came.'  
\* 'He swam (towards or to the location of the speaker).

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- AM is derived from a variety of verbs, and the distribution of AM readings is not necessarily governed by a motion vs. non-motion verb opposition.
  - But clear tendencies emerge and it is possible to define some coherent semantic classes of verbs which trigger deictic directional readings vs. AM readings.



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- Some verbs of manner of motion

(15) t-jjlb                      =*d*              γr              tabla.  
3SGF-jump.PRF              =VEN              to              table

‘She jumped on the table (in the direction of the speaker).’

- Verbs of contact

(16) t-tf                      =iyi                      =*d*  
3SGF-touch.PRF              =1SG.DAT              =VEN

‘She touched me (here).’

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- Verbs of vision, perception and finding

(17) n-ufa            =*d*            dg        =s            aṭas    n    tlawin.  
2PL-find.PRF =VEN        in        =OBL.3SG    many of women.CS  
‘We found inside it (the room) many women.’

- Verbs of stimulus emission

(18) t-γni                =*d*            taʕcit    kaml!  
3SGF-sing.PRF    =VEN        afternoon whole  
‘She sang the entire afternoon!’

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- Inchoative verbs

(19) *y-vna*                    *=d*            *uxxam.*  
3SGM-build.PRF        =VEN        house.CS  
‘The house got built’.

- Degree achievements

(20) *y-ḥma*                    *=d*            *yimnsi.*  
3SGM-be.hot.PRF =VEN        dinner.CS  
‘The dinner became hot.’

# AM readings

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- Stative verbs (and their causative counterparts)

(21) t-zz-bzgg                      =*d*                      iman                      =is                      yawk.  
3SGF-CAUS-be.wet.PRF    =VEN                      self                      =POSS.3SG                      all

‘She went somewhere, soaked herself and came back’ or ‘She arrived soaking wet (to the location of the speaker)’.

- Activity/ Accomplishment verbs (not motion verbs)

(22) t-γra                      =*d*                      taktaf  
3SGF-read.PRF                      =VEN                      book

‘She read the book somewhere else and came back (to the location of the speaker).’

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- Some manner of motion verbs

(23) a. i-ʕum =*d*.

3SGM-swim.PRF =VEN

‘He went somewhere, swam and came back (to the location of the speaker).’

b. t-cdḥ =*d* di tamyra

3SGF-dance.PRF =VEN in wedding

‘She danced at the party and came back.’

# Semantics of the verb

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- The type of event a verb encodes and its lexicalization pattern play a role in whether the verb is interpreted as a deictic path expression or as a marker of AM.
- Verbs triggering AM seem to lack certain properties shared by the other verbs.
- Oriented, causative motion verbs, inchoatives and degree achievements involve comparable semantic components. One way in which these similarities have been formalised is the idea of scalar change. All these verbs encode scalar change, a change of values in a particular direction along some scale (Hay et al., 1999; RH & Levin, 2010; Beavers, 2011)
  - For motion verbs, the scale is a path or trajectory, and the figure changes location as it moves over this stretch of space.
  - For inchoatives and degree achievements the scale might be one of property: the theme changes its properties as it moves along the scale.

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- Verbs of perception or vision and verbs of emission of a stimulus tend to be conceptualised in terms of motion, and involve ‘fictive motion’ (Slobin, 2004).
  - The ambivalence of the manner of motion class mirrors the ambivalence of this class in other languages (e.g. Germanic, Romance). Some manner verbs seem to describe events which are pragmatically more canonically associated with translational or transitional motion.
  - Berber directionals, at least in Taqbaylit, deictically modify any verb which lexicalises a path and some similar component, like a scale, or encodes an event conceptualised as involving translational motion All other events derive AM readings (cf. Belkadi, 2014).

# Properties of AM marked by deictics

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- The Taqbaylit data corroborate Bourdin's analysis, and further suggest that AM is primarily derived pragmatically, as a kind of 'last-resort' interpretation.
- This pragmatic derivation explains the range of AM interpretations: AM occurs in contexts where motion is required and speakers construct the most appropriate motion event given the context.

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- AM also displays some semantic properties:
    - It is derived from certain semantic classes of verbs
    - The parameters chosen by a particular language are overall consistent. There is a consistent temporal relation between the verb's event and the motion event which is presupposed, and a consistent verb's argument-Figure relation associated with each deictic.
  - Taqbaylit and Somali show a strong association between their deictic directionals and the function of marking additional motion, and show that a similar range of parameters are involved with AM.

## Concluding remarks

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- Not clear how widespread this particular phenomenon is. It seems to be geographically concentrated, so contact might play a role in its development.
- Phenomenon is strikingly similar to the category of AM found in Australian and South American languages (cf. ex.1), which derives from Serial Verb Constructions or verb compounding (Tunbridge, 1988; Austin, 1989; Guillaume, 2006). These inflections occur with verbs of all classes, including oriented motion verbs, but excluding deictic verbs.
- This AM often involves more complex paradigms, and each affix is paired with a specific meaning. However these systems always minimally involves a deictic opposition.

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- The similarity between the two categories alternatively points toward a cross-linguistic tendency for deictic path encoding elements to grammaticalize into markers of AM. A tendency which may develop from their function of locating or framing events in relation with the speech participants.
  - AM also shows the tight connection that can exist in some language-speaking communities between various conceptual events.

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***Thank you!***

