TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FICTIVE MOTION EVENTS: REVIEW OF EXISTING PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATION OF NEW PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on a specific subtype of motion, known in the field as* fictive motion. *In our analysis, we have discovered that the* MOTION metaphor, *in combination with metonymy and image-schemas, underlies the semantic configuration of fictive motion events. Taking these ideas as a starting point, our analysis of the corpus has allowed us to revise the existing typologies of fictive motion events (Matlock 2004). We prove that the existing typologies are not accurate, since they do not account properly for the linguistic realization of fictive motion events. In our proposal, we depart from the previous assumptions and we propose a typology of fictive motion events based on the number of arguments that the verb may take. We also analyse the role that metonymy, in combination with metaphor and image-schemas, has in the semantic configuration of fictive motion events.*

Keywords: Cognitive Linguistics, fictive motion, metaphor, metonymy, image-schema, typology of fictive motion constructions.

Resumen: *El presente trabajo aborda el análisis de un subtipo de movimiento, conocido en el campo como* movimiento ficticio. *Dicho estudio refleja cómo la metáfora del movimiento, en combinación con la metonimia y los esquemas de imagen, subyace la configuración semántica de los eventos de movimiento ficticio. Tomando estas ideas como punto de partida, el análisis del corpus nos ha llevado a revisar las tipologías de eventos de movimiento ficticio existentes (Matlock 2004). Este análisis nos ha permitido probar que las tipologías existentes no son precisas, ya que no dan buena cuenta de la realización lingüística de los eventos de movimiento ficticio. En nuestra propuesta nos alejamos de estas teorías para proponer una tipología basada en el número de argumentos que el verbo en cuestión puede regir. Esta propuesta se complementa con un análisis del papel de la metonimia, en combinación con la metáfora y los esquemas de imagen, en la configuración semántica de todos los tipos de evento de movimiento ficticio.*

Palabras clave: *Lingüística Cognitiva, movimiento ficticio, metáfora, metonimia, esquema de imagen, tipología de construcciones de movimiento ficticio.*

1. Introduction: Fictive motion in Cognitive Linguistics

Many different authors have paid attention to the conceptualization of motion in English. However, the analysis of *fictive motion* has received greater attention within the field of Cognitive Linguistics. Fictive motion has received different labels in the previous linguistic literature, such as *fictive motion* (Talmy 1983, 1996, 2000), *abstract motion* (Langacker 1987), or *subjective motion* (Matsumoto, 1996a, 1996b). We prefer to use the term "fictive" since it is the preferred and accepted term in the field nowadays.

(1) The fence goes from the plateau to the valley. (Talmy 2000: 99)

In the example reproduced above we find the expression of non-real motion in terms of the actual occurrence of motion in the world. In this kind of expressions we find the elements that we would find in any motion event (i.e. source, destination, trajector, path, and motion along a path), but the motion that is depicted in these expressions cannot take place, since our

experience in the world enables us to know that a fence cannot move from a source to a destination.

One of the first authors who have dealt with this issue within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics is Talmy (2000) with his analysis of sentences which depict motion with no physical occurrence, as we have seen in example (1).

In order to account for this phenomenon, Talmy proposes the pattern of *general fictivity*. Following this pattern, a sentence like *This fence goes from the plateau to the valley* (Talmy 2000: 99) has two discrepant representations: factive and fictive representations. The factive representation, which is based on our beliefs, presumes that the fence is stationary and does not move, whereas the fictive representation presents the fence as moving. These discrepant representations are regarded as two opposite poles of the same pattern.

Talmy states that his theory should exclude the study of metaphorical motion events like the one exemplified in (2) *Her mood went from good to bad* (Talmy 2000: 103), and proposes *general fictivity* (2000: 103) as the superordinate framework within which metaphor can be explained.

Another important linguist who has devoted her research to the study of fictive motion (following the line of research pioneered by Talmy) in Cognitive Linguistics is Matlock (2004a, 2004b). In her work this author argues that we construct models that resemble physical space and simulate the movement of objects in this spatial model in order to understand and process fictive motion expressions.

Matlock (2004b) argues for the existence of a typology of fictive motion constructions, and proposes a distinction between:

(a) Fictive motion constructions which make use of paths ordinarily associated with motion and which tolerate manner verbs.

(3) *The highway crawls through the city* (Matlock 2004b: 231).

(b) Fictive motion constructions in which the trajector has no association with motion.

(4) *The table goes from the kitchen to the sliding door* (Matlock 2004b: 232).

However, we do not completely agree with this typology. There are cases in which manner verbs are used (e.g. to run) and in which the trajector is not associated with motion, as we can see in examples such as (5) *The fish pond runs along the fence* (Matlock 2004b: 227) or (6) *The ivy crawled up the walls and slipped in through the broken windows* (Google search).

What is interesting in the typology proposed by Matlock is the fact that this author mentions the idea that type (a) of fictive motion constructions involves the metonymy MOTION ALONG A PATH FOR THE PATH. Nevertheless, our data reveal that the role of metonymy is not restricted either to this type of fictive motion constructions or to fictive motion in general.

2. Our account of fictive motion events

(7) This fence goes from the plateau to the valley (Talmy 2000: 99)

(8) The road goes from Capitola to Aptos (Matlock 2004b: 227)

In expressions of this kind (i.e. fictive motion expressions) we find the elements that we can identify for factive motion events, but the motion that is denoted in these expressions cannot take place. Our world knowledge enables us to know that a fence or a road are not moving objects. So, what we have is a situation in which motion cannot take place which is conceptualized as if motion could take place, i.e. a state ([- dynamic], [- control]) is interpreted as a process ([+ dynamic], [- control]) (Dik 1997).

As we have already pointed out, Talmy (2000: 103) states that his theory should exclude the study of metaphorical motion events (see example (2)), and the notion of general fictivity is proposed as the superordinate framework within which metaphor can be explained. We also believe that the study of fictive motion should not be confused with the study of metaphorical

motion. They represent two different ways in which the motion event can be conceptualized, and as we have explained in a previous section, they occupy a differentiated position in the *motion continuum* (Jiménez Martínez-Losa 2005). But the consideration of fictive and metaphorical motion as different phenomena should not necessarily mean that the cognitive theory of metaphor should not be taken into account in order to explain this cognitive phenomenon. Talmy (2000: 103) argues that whereas general fictivity can apply to both visual and linguistic representations, metaphor is "more suitable for language alone". However, metaphor is not merely linguistic phenomenon. As has been evidenced in much of the Cognitive Linguistics literature (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987, 1993; among many other studies), metaphor is a powerful cognitive mechanism which is not restricted to language. Metaphor is a cognitive operation, and language is the linguistic representation of such a cognitive mechanism.

In our account of fictive motion we depart from these assumptions, and we argue that metaphor (more specifically the *MOTION metaphor*), in combination with other Idealized Cognitive Models (metonymy and image-schemas), underlies the semantic configuration of fictive motion. The explanatory potential of ICMs can be used in order to account for the fictive motion event, and in order to relate the different subtypes of motion events (which have been arranged into a continuum).

In fictive motion expressions (examples 7 or 8) a situation in which motion cannot take place is conceptualized as if motion could take place, i.e. a state ([- dynamic], [- control]) is conceptualized as a process ([+ dynamic], [- control]). The conceptualization of fictive motion in terms of factive motion is licensed by the *MOTION metaphor* (Jiménez Martínez-Losa 2005). The different structural elements of the factive motion event are mapped onto the corresponding elements of the fictive motion event. The factive motion event (source domain of the MOTION metaphor) is a concrete domain which can be experienced in the real world since it has a parallel in reality. The fictive motion event (metaphorical target domain) is more abstract because it is only conceived in our imagination, i.e. it has no parallel in reality (a *road* cannot move along a path) and the only possible way to conceptualize it is by means of a mental image (which is grounded in reality and world knowledge).

(9a) A road connects Capitola and Aptos
(9b) John goes from Capitola to Aptos by road
(9c) The road goes from Capitola to Aptos (Matlock 2004b: 227)

The sentences reproduced above (examples (9a), (9b), and (9c)) account for the different conceptual and linguistic transformations that must take place in order to obtain and process a fictive motion expression. Example (9a) depicts the situation, state of affairs, or setting in which the factive and fictive motion events can take place. In example (9b) we find what Talmy would refer to as the factive representation of a fictive motion event, i.e. a representation which can be assessed to be veridical and in which the trajector can 'veridically' move along a path from a source to a destination. In sentence (9c) we find a representation of the motion event in which the trajector (*the road*) is presented as if it could move along a path (*from Capitola to Aptos*).

The conceptualization of fictive motion in terms of factive motion is licensed by the MOTION metaphor. The different structural elements of the factive motion event (exemplified in example (9b)) are mapped onto the corresponding elements of the fictive motion event (example (9c)). The factive motion event (source domain of the MOTION metaphor) is a concrete domain which can be experienced in the real world since it has a parallel in reality. The fictive motion event (metaphorical target domain) is more abstract because it is only conceived in our imagination, i.e. it has no parallel in reality (a *road* cannot move along a path) and the only possible way to conceptualize it is by means of a mental image (which is grounded in reality and world knowledge).

The source domain of this MOTION metaphor corresponds to factive motion (e.g. *John goes from Capitola to Aptos by road*) and it is made up of the following structural elements of the factive motion event: trajector, source of motion, destination, path, and motion along this

path. In the source domain we have a factive motion event in which a trajector (*John*) moves (*goes*) along a path in order to change its location from a source (*Capitola*) to a destination (*Aptos*). The word *road* makes reference to a specific type of path along which the motion of the trajector takes place. These structural elements are mapped onto the corresponding structural elements of the metaphoric target domain (i.e. the fictive motion event; e.g. *The road goes from Capitola to Aptos*). The linguistic expression of factive motion depicts the trajector's movement towards a destination, and in the linguistic expression of fictive motion what we have is the PATH that a trajector would move along in a factive motion event. The trajector of the factive motion event does not coincide with that of the fictive motion event. In the fictive case, the factive trajector is omitted and one of the landmarks of the factive motion event (*the road*) is presented as the trajector of the factive motion event.

The trajector of the fictive motion event (e.g. *road, fence*) is conceptualized as if it could move from one place to another (i.e. from a source to a destination along a path). We project our experience of entities moving (or being moved) from place to place (i.e. the factive motion event) onto a situation in which this motion cannot take place, but which is conceptualized as if it could take place. This process of conceptualization of a fictive motion event in terms of a factive motion event serves a specific purpose: the focalization of the path element of the motion even, as we will explain below.

The structural elements of path and motion along the path are the most salient or crucial elements in the metaphorical operation. If we pay attention to our conceptualization of an utterance which depicts fictive motion (e.g. *The road goes from Capitola to Aptos*) we realize that we do not conceptualize the trajector (*the road*) as moving from the source to the destination. What we conceptualize and mentally imagine or scan is the path that a factive trajector (and not a fictive trajector such as a *road*) outlines and follows in order to move from a source to a destination. Thus, the motion along a path which is depicted in the fictive motion event allows language users to foreground or highlight the path that a factive trajector would follow, as the following figure illustrates:

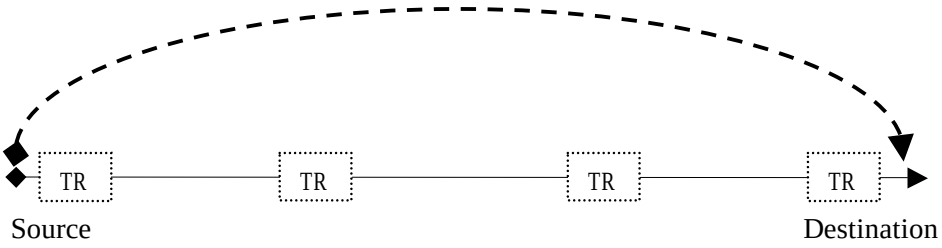

Figure 1: Representation of a fictive motion event

The process by means of which the expression of the motion along a path is used in order to refer to and highlight the path of motion is explained by means of a metonymic operation in one of the correspondences of the metaphorical target. By virtue of the metonymy MOTION ALONG A PATH FOR PATH[1], the motion along the path which is depicted in the fictive motion event (this is not possible in a factive motion event since a *road* cannot possibly move) metonymically stands for the path of motion (which is plausible in its factive counterpart). In this metonymy the motion along the path of motion activates the path from X to Y (*from Capitola to Aptos*). The metonymy MOTION ALONG A PATH FOR PATH involves the metonymic reduction of one of the correspondences of the metaphoric target. It is a metonymy of the target-in-source type in which the target domain (the path of motion) is a subdomain of the source or matrix domain (the motion along the path), as the following figure illustrates:

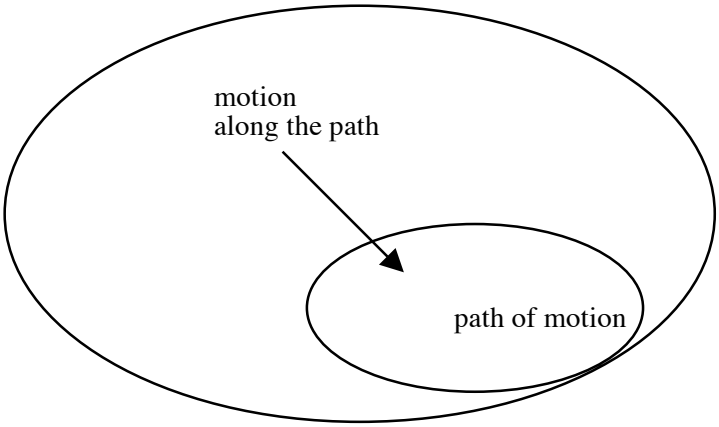

Figure 2: MOTION ALONG A PATH FOR PATH metonymy

This metonymic operation is in fact a subcase of the high-level metonymy ACTION FOR RESULT (Kövecses and Radden 1998; Panther and Thornburg 2000; Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001). In *The road goes from Capitola to Aptos* and related utterances, most of the structural elements of the motion event are expressed. The whole action of going from one side of the landmark to the opposite side of the landmark metonymically activates and highlights one of its subdomains: the result of motion, as the following figure illustrates:

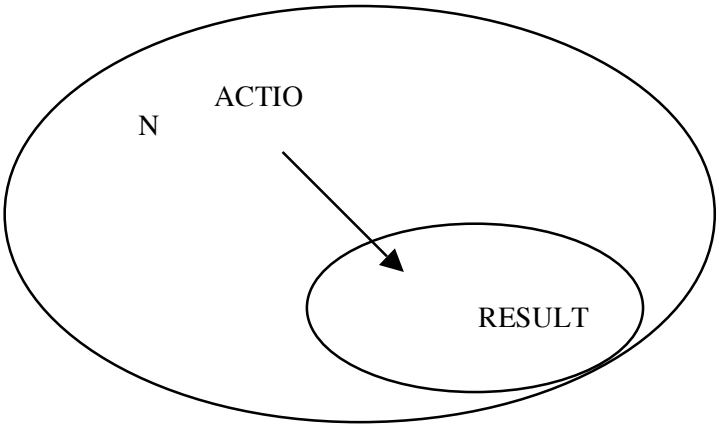

Figure 3: ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy

The ACTION FOR RESULT target-in-source metonymy is the motivating factor behind the development of the metaphoric target. It has the function of placing in focus the path of motion, which is a consequence of the motion along the path. We claim that the notion of path of motion is a result with respect to the motion along the path (action) in the sense that the creation and conceptualization of a path of motion is a natural and logical consequence or result of the action by means of which the path of motion is configured. This high-level metonymy licenses the understanding of an utterance depicting a process ([+ dynamic], [- control]) in terms of the action ([+ dynamic], [+ control]).

3. Towards a typology of fictive motion events: our proposal

Matlock (2004b: 231-233), in her account and refinement of the theory about fictive motion proposed by Talmy (2000), proposes a typology of fictive motion constructions. In this typology this author draws a distinction between:

(a) Type 1 of FM (fictive motion) constructions:
(10) The highway crawls through the city (Matlock 2004b: 231)
(b) Type 2 of FM constructions:
(11) The table goes from the kitchen wall to the sliding glass door (Matlock 2004b: 227)
(12) *The underground cable crawls from Capitola to Aptos (Matlock 2004b: 232)

According to this typology (Matlock 2004b), the first type of fictive motion constructions are those with paths ordinarily associated with motion and that tolerate manner verbs (e.g. *crawl*), whereas the second type of fictive motion constructions are those in which the trajector has no association with motion and they do not allow manner verbs (**The underground cable crawls from Capitola to Aptos*).

One of the drawbacks that our analysis of the corpus has shown is that fact that the distinction between bare motion verbs and manner motion verbs is not a determinant factor in the establishment of such a typology, since both types of verbs (bare and manner motion verbs) can appear in both types of fictive motion constructions, as the following examples illustrate:

(a) Type 1 of FM (fictive motion) constructions:
(13) The highway crawls through the city (Matlock 2004b: 231)
(14) The fence zigzags/descends from the plateau to the valley (Talmy 2000: 138)
(b) Type 2 of FM constructions:
(15) The table goes from the kitchen wall to the sliding glass door (Matlock 2004b: 227)
(16) The underground cable **follows** the property line (Matlock 2004b: 227)
(17) The fish pond **runs** along the fence (Matlock 2004b: 227)

The first type of fictive motion constructions (exemplified in (13) and (14)), which follows the taxonomy proposed by Matlock (2004b), is characterized by the presence of trajectors associated with motion (*highway*, *fence*) and it allows manner verbs (*crawl*, *zigzag*, *descend*). The second type of fictive motion constructions is exemplified in (15), (16), and (17). In these examples we find what Matlock refers to as 'trajectors with no association with motion' (*table*, *underground cable*), but as examples (16) and (17) show, manner verbs (*follow*, *run*) are also allowed in this type of construction.

Our analysis of the corpus has proved that this taxonomy of fictive motion constructions is not very accurate. We do not agree with the idea that the association of the trajector with motion is a determinant factor in the establishment of such a typology. A *highway* (associated with motion) and a *table* (not associated with motion according to Matlock) have a similar association with motion: neither of them can be trajectors in factive motion events, as determined by our world knowledge (extracted from our everyday interaction in the world), but both trajectors can be associated with motion in the sense that they can appear as landmarks in a factive motion event, as the following examples illustrate:

(18) The ball rolled on the **table**
(19)We took the **highway** to Miami.

The role of the metonymy MOTION ALONG A PATH FOR PATH is not restricted to a type of FM constructions, it is present in any kind of fictive motion construction, and it is a subcase of the high-level metonymy ACTION FOR RESULT (Kövecses and Radden 1998; Panther and Thornburg 2000; Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez 2001).

The analysis of the examples of our corpus has enabled us to prove that the previous typologies of fictive motion constructions are not accurate, since they do not account properly

for the linguistic realization of fictive motion events. After an exhaustive analysis of the data provided by our corpus of study, we have observed that it is possible to draw a distinction between (a) fictive motion constructions in which the verb takes one argument (which corresponds to the landmark component of the motion event), and (b) constructions in which the verb takes two or more arguments (which correspond to different components of the motion event):

→Type (a) of fictive motion constructions:
Subject (trajector) + verb of motion (bare or manner) + one argument: landmark
(20) A trail goes through the desert (Matlock 2004b: 223)
(21) The road runs along the coast (Matlock 2004b: 223)
→Type (b) of fictive motion constructions:
Subject (trajector) + verb of motion (bare or manner) + two or more arguments: source, destination, and additional landmarks.
(22) The fence goes from the plateau to the valley (Talmy 2000: 99)
(23) The fence zigzags from the plateau to the valley along the property line

This typological distinction of fictive motion constructions has a construal nature. In (20) and (21) we think of the fictive trajector not as going from a source to a destination, but simply as spanning a relevant part of its activity in connection to a region in space. However, in (22) and (23) the focus is upon the whole PATH schema.

4. Conclusion

This paper represents an attempt to revise and shed new light on the studies devoted to the analysis of fictive motion events in English. A detailed analysis of the existing proposals that study this conceptual domain, in combination with an exhaustive corpus study, has allowed us to improve and enrich the study of the conceptualization and understanding of fictive motion events in English from a Cognitive Linguistics perspective.

In the first part of this paper we present a summary of the theory we have elaborated in relation to fictive motion events. We argue that the MOTION metaphor, in combination with other Idealized Cognitive Models such as metonymy, underlie the semantic characterization of the fictive motion event.

The second part of this paper addresses the issue of the existing accounts about the classification of fictive motion events. Taking the taxonomy proposed by Matlock (2004b) as a starting point, and supporting our results with examples taken from the analysis of our corpus, we propose a new taxonomy of fictive motion constructions that is based on the number of arguments that the motion verb may take rather than on the association of the trajectory with movement or on the allowance of manner or bare motion verbs. This taxonomy has also allowed us to show that metonymy is present in every case of fictive motion, and not just in a specific type of fictive motion construction, as it has been suggested in other studies.

Notes

[1] This metonymy has also been recognized by Matlock (2004b: 231), though not much attention is devoted to this issue.

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