

## An Empirical Study on Stationary Motion Event in Mandarin Chinese

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Talmy proposes that languages generally fall into two types, verb-framed languages and satellite-framed languages (Talmy 2000b:221-222). In which, Talmy claims that "Mandarin is a strongly satellite-framed language..." (Talmy 2000b:272). Slobin challenges this view with a proposal of three types: Verb-framed languages, Satellite-framed languages, and Equipollently-framed languages. Slobin treats Mandarin as Equipollently-framed language. (Slobin 2004:25).

This dispute over Talmy's dichotomy and Slobin's trichotomy on language typology in general, as well as the arguments on the typological status of Mandarin Chinese in specific, have attracted a large number of research papers. Meanwhile it is observable that throughout the majority of the existing literature there exist two systematic misunderstandings on Talmy's work: Firstly, the misunderstanding that Talmy had based his dichotomy solely on translational motion events, with the result that tests of his framework have been limited to treating translational motion events only; secondly, the misunderstanding that Talmy had used a permissive methodology open to any form of data, with the result that a free-and-randomly selected data are used to test the framework. The facts we will argue are as follows: Firstly, Talmy had based his dichotomy not on the motion event only, but on the "macro-event", which includes five different types of event as follows: Motion Event, Event of Time Contouring, Event of State Change, Event of Correlation, and Event of Realization (Talmy 2000b: 213-288). Secondly, Talmy has strict methodological requirements on this type of research, including colloquialism in style, frequency in occurrence in speech, and pervasiveness in scope.

The present research, adopting an empirical approach in collecting the data to overcome the methodological misunderstanding, focusing on the stationary type of motion event to overcome the misunderstanding that motion event refers to translational motion events only, aims to explore the typological status for Mandarin Chinese in a more scientific way. Motion event treated by Talmy contains translational motion event (e.g. *The rock rolled down the hill.*) as well as the continuation of a stationary location or be-locatedness. (e.g. *The book lay on the table.*). The former has been a hot topic widely discussed in the research domain, while the latter has been largely neglected, and it will be the focus of this research, and it is termed as stationary motion event, or just stationary event.

Methodologically, a set of ten pictures were designed as stimuli to represent stationary motion events. 50 subjects of Chinese native speakers were interviewed to collect the data. The probe question for each picture is as follows: F zai na? (Where is F located? Note: here F represents the Figure in the picture.). The whole interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into text. A corpus data of 500 answers describing the stationary location of the Figures were collected and analyzed as syntactically containing a few distinct types of lexicalization patterns. These patterns lend support to the tentative conclusion that the Mandarin Chinese largely falls into a satellite-framed language. Meanwhile, some particular counter examples of constructions are found which might have typological significance as well, and therefore call for further research.

### References

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