

Ideophones in Malayalam

In this study, ideophones are considered to be members of an open lexical class of marked words that depict sensory imagery (Dingemanse 2019). According to Talmy (1985, p. 59), lexicalization is involved where a particular meaning component is found to be in regular association with a particular morpheme.”. Talmy (1985, p. 61) postulates a typology of motion event encoding, whereby an event is defined as that which consists of “one object (the Figure) moving or located with respect to another object (the Ground or the reference-object)”. Talmy brings forth a binary typology of verb-framed and satellite-framed languages, where in the former, movement is encoded in the main verb of the clause and in the latter, it is encoded in the elements associated with the verb. Slobin (2006) includes manner to motion events, and brings in components of motor pattern, rate of motion, force dynamics, and so on. Furthermore, Slobin (2006) notes that languages with serial verbs have not been included in Talmy’s binary typology. Slobin designates the serial-verb languages as the third class of lexicalisation pattern and terms it as equipotentially-framed languages.

In Malayalam, which is a serial-verb language (Jayaseelan and Amritavalli 2017; Swenson 2019), the sentence given below (Jayaseelan and Amritavalli 2017, p. 470) is permissible:

- (1) ja:n oru ma:ŋa poŋŋicu kaŋuki muriccu upp- il- iŋtu kaŋiccu cavaccu tiŋŋ- u
I a mango pluck wash cut salt- in- put bite chew eat- Past
'I plucked, washed, cut, pickled, bit, chewed and ate a mango.'

In the sentence given above, only the last verb is finite, and there is no conjunction marker. Ideophones in Malayalam involve reduplication. They can be word stems, where tense and aspect can be marked (Asher and Kumari 1997):

- (2) eŋŋ-a:ŋə niŋŋal muru-muru-kkunnəŋə
what-be-PRES you grumble-PRES-NOML
'What is it that you are grumbling about?'

Ideophones can also be adverbial (see 3b) and adjectival (see 3c), and are often followed by the quotative particle -eŋŋə, -ee/-e: (Asher and Kumari 1997).

- (3) a. karumure tiŋŋu
crunching sound eat-PAST
'(X) ate with a crunching sound.'
b. koŋakoŋa- eŋŋə
creamy QUOT-particle
'a creamy consistency' (Adv)
c. guŋuguŋu ɕabɖam
gurgle sound
'sound of something falling in water' (Adj)
d. ɕaŋapaŋe- eŋŋə vi:ŋu
clatter-QUOT fall
'to fall down with a clatter' (Adv)
e. kuŋukuŋ-e: oŋkunnŋu

profusely-QUOT flow
'flow profusely.' (Adv)

Slobin (2006) proposes that in serial-verb languages, there would be a VERB_{MANNER} + VERB_{PATH}, wherein motion ideophones are instantiated as two verbs with path and manner with equivalent grammatical forms. However, in Malayalam, motion ideophones can be verb stems (see 2), adverbs (see 3b, 3d, 3e) and adjectives (3c) and are often attached with quotative particles. The case of Malayalam can be better explained using the semantic grid (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 2019) with various combinatorial possibilities of semantic components. The motion ideophones in Malayalam are a combination of motion and manner, encoded in the same adjective or adverb, or in the verb stem, and are similar to the quotative ideophones in Japanese (Dingemanse and Akita 2017).

References

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