

## Verbs of rotation: a lexical typology

Lexical typology is becoming an important field of linguistic research and draws attention of more and more researchers, as, for example, Newman (ed.) 2002, Goddard (ed.) 2008, Bowerman et al. 2004 and Majid et al. 2007, Majsak & Rakhilina (eds.) 2007; for a recent overview see Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2008.

Generally, a study in lexical typology aims at (i) discovering parameters of variation relevant for a given lexical group, and (ii) describing how lexical systems are organized throughout languages.

This paper will present some results of the typological project dealing with verbs of rotation across languages. The data come from a dozen of languages, including both areally and genetically close as well as unrelated idioms: cf., on the one hand, Russian, Polish, Serbian, and, on the other hand, Welsh, Chinese, Armenian, Agul (Lezgian), and others.

The paper provides an account of possible parameters of semantic variation within the cross-linguistic domain of rotation. Our study is mainly corpus-based, but special questionnaires have also been used. The results of this study show a considerable difference between verbal frames of rotation lexicalized in the languages of the world, no matter whether they are genetically related or not.

At the same time, it is argued that exists a universal list of rotation situations and semantic parameters relevant for lexical typology, like inner / outer axis of rotation, incomplete / complete revolution, rotation above the Landmark, rotation combined with forward motion, etc. Cf. a clear lexical opposition between rotation in close contact with surface and other types in Turkish example (1):

(1) *Dünya günes etrafında dönüyor* (\**yuvarlanıyor*). ‘The Earth **revolves** around the Sun’.

*Fıçı yerde yuvarlanıyor* (\**dönüyor*). ‘The barrel **rolls** on the ground’.

Along the same lines, in many languages circular movement in the air above the Landmark requires a special verb. Thus, for the situation ‘*The hawk is moving in circles above the prey*’ English uses the verb *wheel*, Russian – *kružit*, Spanish – *revolotear*, Hindi – *ma<sup>n</sup>drānā*, Japanese – *mau*, etc.

Verbs of rotation prove to be especially favorable for lexical-typological research: they are not only relevant for all cultures and present in all languages studied, but display a considerable and non-trivial variation of lexical systems across languages. Thus, taking into account the number of such verbs, one can speak about “poor” rotation systems (like that of Tatar, with only 3 verbal items) and “rich” rotation systems (like that of Welsh, with more than 20 items).

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