

## Anticipated Paths in Fictive Motion in Caac (Oceanic language, New Caledonia)

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In Oceanic languages, spatial terms based on some salient landmarks present in the environment of the speakers often play a major role in spatial reference, and Caac, an endangered language of New Caledonia, is no exception. The location, orientation or motion of an entity on both small and large-scales is most frequently expressed in Caac by two sets of directionals: (i) three absolute directionals: *da* ‘upward/inland/windward’, *de* ‘downward/seaward/leeward’, (*z*)*in* ‘transverse’, and (ii) five deictic directionals which specify the absolute direction in addition to the movement away or towards the deictic centre.

As English speakers, Caac speakers can make use of directionals to refer to a static scene where no actual motion takes place: (1) *E-ra da*. ‘They (the children) are upwards [inland]’ (be.at-3PL upwards). This strategy – labelled *Access paths* by Talmy (1996, 2000) – enables the speakers to identify the location of a particular entity (the Figure) by expressing the potential path the addressee could take to find the entity in question.

However, Caac speakers can alternatively describe the same spatial configuration by using the opposite absolute directional (here, *de* ‘downward’) in combination with a centripetal directional (=ve ‘CENTRIP.down’): (2) *E-ra de=ve*. ‘They are upwards [inland] (literally, down [seaward] towards here).’ In this case, the location of the Figure is inferred from the imaginary trajectory that the Figure can follow to reach the speech participants (called here Anticipated/Return paths).

It has been argued that Fictive Motion reflects a general “cognitive bias towards dynamism” (Talmy, 1996:270, Matlock, 2004), i.e. a tendency for our mind to treat static phenomena in terms of dynamic representations. In this paper, I will examine the use of directionals in Anticipated Path descriptions and discuss the possible motivations, i.e. external (e.g. culture) and internal (e.g. cognition), for such a representation of a static scene.

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