

Bejalai in Iban: A Study on Translating Motion Verbs in *Bup Kudus Baru*

The Bible Translator

2021, Vol. 72(2) 200–219

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DOI: 10.1177/20516770211004686

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of the Talmy-Slobin typology of semantic components of motion verbs as applied to Bible translation. Using the *Bup Kudus Baru*, a new Iban translation, in comparison with a framework formed by the Hebrew original, NRSV representing English translation, and occasionally a Chinese translation, the author demonstrates the key features of verb-framed, satellite-framed, and equipollently-framed languages. The analysis of two Hebrew motion verbs, *yāšā'* (path verb) and *hālak* (manner verb), and their respective Iban translations in *Bup Kudus Baru*, shows that the Iban language, much like Malay and Urak Lawoi' from the same language family, is of path-salient nature in principle, but at the same time displays the use of serial verb constructs, a feature of equipollently-framed languages when manner verbs are required. The author concludes with some suggestions of ways to apply the Talmy-Slobin model in Bible translation, from the point of view of translators, translation officers, and their institutions.

Keywords

Leonard Talmy, Dan Slobin, motion verbs, Iban language, Biblical Hebrew, Bible translation

Introduction

The motion verb is a particular form of verbal structure that conveys information about the locality and movement of the participants, whether human, animal, or even abstract objects. It is a part of linguistic description to portray a special kind of event as a motion event. In simple terms, motion

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events are events where an entity is said to move from one place to another place; motion verbs are the key component used to describe how this event takes place.

Motion verbs are prevalent in all languages. In English, some examples of motion verbs are *walk, run, leave, climb, go, journey, move, ascend, descend*, and many others. In Biblical Hebrew, some common examples of motion verbs are *נפל* (to fall, to descend), *הלך* (to walk, to go), *יצא* (to come out, to escape), *בוא* (to come to, to arrive), all of which have been translated quite differently into various languages. For Iban, a Bornean language, motion verbs include *datai* (come), *ngagai* (go), *bejalai* (walk), *angkat* (get up or lift), *belanda* (run), *mupuk* (leave), and *pulai* (return).

Talmian typology of motion events and Slobin's three categories of manner/path verbs

In the past four decades, the study of motion verbs has received wide attention among linguists in many languages. Leonard Talmy wrote a seminal paper on motion verbs in 1985. The theory that Talmy proposes is known among linguists as the “typology of motion expression or events” in which six basic conceptual components are involved. The components are (Talmy 1985):

- (1) Figure, a moving entity. In Talmy's definition, the figure is “the salient moving or stationary object in a motion event” (129).
- (2) Ground, the spatial reference that implies a location movement. The ground is defined as “the reference-object in a Motion event, with respect to which the Figure's path/site is reckoned” (129).
- (3) Motion, the movement itself.
- (4) Path, the source, the trajectory, and/or the destination of the motion. According to Talmy, “this category refers to the variety of paths followed, or sites occupied, by the Figure object” (129).
- (5) Manner, the way the figure moves, or the type of motion. Talmy defines manner as “a subsidiary action or state that is manifested concurrently with the main action or state” (128).
- (6) Cause, the reason behind the motion, that is, X moves because of Y.¹

To illustrate Talmian typology, Ruth 2.3a (“So she went. She came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers”—NRSV) expresses the syntactical distribution of the semantic components below:

¹ In the initial stage of Talmy's theory, manner and cause are combined as manner/cause, because in actual situations it may be difficult to differentiate the manner and the cause.

So	she (Ruth)	went		
(Conj.)	Figure	Motion		
She	came	and gleaned	in	the field
Figure	Motion	(Conj.) Motion + Manner	Path	Ground
and behind		the reapers		
(Conj.) Path		Ground		

The difference between motion with manner and motion with cause is further illustrated by the following examples:

The napkin	fell	off	the table
Figure	Motion + Manner	Path	Ground

and

The napkin	blew	off	the table
Figure	Motion + Cause	Path	Ground

The analysis of motion verbs pioneered by Talmy focuses on the interface between surface elements (such as verbs, adpositions, subordinate clauses, “satellites”) and semantic elements, and in particular, on the two components manner and path, as some languages are more prone to manner-driven verbs, and others to path-driven. Talmy further proposes the linguistic feature of conflation, meaning that, in some languages, manner or cause are conflated in the verb itself without a further sub-verb or subordinate clause. Mandarin Chinese is quoted by Talmy as an example of this kind of conflated verb. For example,² the Chinese monomorphemic verb *liu* (flowing) is a manner-of-motion type, meaning fluid or liquid is going out from a location to the outside of it. For instance, the sentence *da liu xue le* is literally “he flowed blood,” which sounds unnatural in English, but is equivalent to “he was bleeding.” But related to the monomorphemic *liu* are many compound verbs that carry with them the sense of path in Talmian typology. *Liu-ru* is “flow into,” *liu-dao* is “flow to” and *liuxiang* is “flow toward.” Furthermore, *ni-liu* means “flow in the opposite direction” and *dui-liu* expresses the idea of “circulation.” Thus, in the wider scope of cross-linguistic analysis, Talmy suggests two kinds of motion construction among different languages, that is, verb-framed languages or structures and satellite-framed languages or structures.

² Examples are mine.

What distinguishes verb-framed and satellite-framed languages? Briefly, verb-framed languages (V-languages) are those languages that express the semantic component of path by the main verb in a clause, whereas satellite-framed languages (S-languages) tend to express path by means of an element associated with the verb. An example of V-languages given by Talmy is Spanish, with verbs such as *entrar* for “move in,” *subir* for “move up,” *bajar* “move down,” and *pasar* “move through,” where path is conflated in the main verbs. Most Indo-European languages, other than Romance ones, are S-languages, where path is indicated by a particle or preposition (called “satellite” by Talmy) such as “in,” “out,” “through,” “up,” or “down” in English. It should be noted that it is not only motion and path which can be conflated. Motion and ground can too.

The classification of motion verbs into two categories has been revised and expanded by Dan Slobin. Slobin argues that V-languages tend to be more elaborated in their description of locations both of protagonists and objects and of the end states of the motion, whereas S-languages are characterized by the dynamic description of path and manner. Furthermore, inspired by his study on the motion verbs found in Thai and Russian, Slobin proposes to include a third category which he calls “Equipollently-framed languages” (E-languages). This third category is characterized by the use of serial verbs and the inclusion of other elements that are equal in both form and force, or significance, with the “main” motion verbs. For this category, it is at times difficult to determine for sure what the main verb is within a motion clause. Thus, both path and manner are expressed by equally significant grammatical forms, and this feature is found in many Austronesian languages. It is illustrated by the sentence in Indonesian below:

<i>Dia</i>	<i>pergi</i>	<i>meninggalkan</i>	<i>sekolahnya</i>
He	go	leave	his school
Figure	Manner	Path	Ground

In this sentence, both manner and path are expressed by verbs (*pergi* and *meninggal* + KAN construction),³ and similar cases can be found in Thai:

³ In fact, this can be analysed by separating the two verbs, classifying one as a manner verb and the other as a path verb. For a more detailed analysis, see Rau, Wang, and Chang 2012. They show that the Yami language in Taiwan, like Thai, exhibits the feature of E-languages of having path verbs attached to manner verbs.

<i>Kháw</i>	(<i>wíng</i>) ⁴	<i>khâw</i>	<i>bâan</i>
He or she	run	enter	house
Figure	Manner (verb)	Path (verb)	Ground

In short, Slobin sums up the three categories in this useful table (2006, 64):

Language type	Preferred means of expression	Typical construction type	Examples
Verb-framed	path expressed by finite verb, with subordinate manner expression	Verb (path) + subordinate verb (manner)	Romance, Semitic, Turkic, Basque, Japanese, Korean
Satellite-framed	path expressed by non-verb element associated with verb	Verb (manner) + satellite (path)	Germanic, Slavic, Finno-Ugric
Equipollently-framed	path and manner expressed by equivalent grammatical forms	Serial verb: verb (manner) + verb (path)	Niger-Congo, HmongMien, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, MonKhmer, Austronesian
		Bipartite verb: (manner + path) verb	Algonquian, Athabaskan, Hokan, Klamath-Takelman
		Generic verb: co-verb (manner) + co-verb (path) + verb (generic)	Jaminjungan

The Talmy-Slobin semantic typology has received considerable attention in recent years, especially in the fields of linguistics and translation

⁴In this Thai sentence, the word *wíng* is optional but gives additional information to the whole sentence. Thus, without the word *wíng*, the other three words form a grammatically correct sentence. Technically, when they occur separately, both *wíng* and *khâw* (the third word of this sentence) are also motion verbs (*wíng* means “run,” whereas *khâw* means “enter”). However, when they are joined in a sentence, then *khâw* will function like a preposition describing *wíng* (run). Alternatively, in this sentence, the word *khâw* can be replaced by other prepositions such as *nai*. I am a non-Thai speaker and would like to express my gratitude to Stephen Pattemore for this piece of information.

studies. This study of motion events or motion verbs has advanced in several directions. First, because of in-depth, cross-linguistic analysis of two or more languages, scholars have discovered more complexity to the scope of path and manner. For instance, Spanish is considered a verb-framed language with the general assumption that the path-salient feature is imbedded in motion verbs. However, under close investigation, it was found that Spanish speakers favour the use of manner verbs where motion is vertical (Naigles 1998, 548). Thus, many have concluded that the semantic typology is a matter of tendency, not of universal application. Furthermore, in a study on the motion events of six Western Austronesian languages (Huang and Tanangkingsing 2005),⁵ it was found that although the motion verbs of these languages are typically path-salient, within them there are intra-path-verb variations.⁶ Like Mandarin Chinese, the Austronesian languages have a propensity to use serial verbs in motion events. In the case of Mandarin Chinese, motion events appear in many combinations of serial verbs, such as: manner verb with path verb; path verb with path verb; manner verb with path verb and directional verbs or deictic constructions, such as the common appearance of the word *lai2* and *qu4* (Xu 2013).⁷ This concatenation of multiple verbal constructions is also found in Urak Lawoi', another Austronesian language in Thailand.⁸

In this article, I draw illustrations from the revised Iban Bible translation, *Bup Kudus Baru* (BKB), with Gen 1–11 as the corpus, to see how the Talmian scheme of motion verbs can be applicable in Bible translation. Furthermore, I draw comparisons with the English and Hebrew (and occasionally Chinese) texts to see how cross-linguistic typology of motion verbs can play a key role in Bible translation. A point to note is that the three languages, Iban, English, and Hebrew, precisely represent the three categories of manner/path verb structure proposed by Talmy and Slobin. Hebrew is a verb-framed language, English a satellite-framed language, and Iban an equipollently-framed language (with a slight propensity to path verbs).

⁵ The languages examined are Saisiyat with 5,300 speakers, Tsou with 5,400 speakers, and Sulik with 91,000 speakers (three minority languages in Taiwan), Tagalog and Cebuano (two Meso-Philippine languages), and Malay, a language widely spoken by the people of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.

⁶ The exception is Malay, whose verbal pattern is not as path-salient as the other five languages. Nevertheless, Huang and Tanangkingsing conclude that Malay is still essentially a verb-framed language, tending to have more path-related verbs than those of the manner-salient languages (2005, 337).

⁷ The numeric used (2, 4) is the intonation mark of Mandarin Chinese commonly used by Sino-linguists.

⁸ The information on Urak Lawoi' is from Stephen Pattimore (personal communication). For instance, a typical motion verbal construct might be *pi amet bawa maraeh buwai* (go get bring come do). See also Hogan 1999, 27–28.

This article is specifically focused on the Hebrew motion verbs הָלַךְ (*hālak* “to go”)⁹ and יָצָא (*yāšā* “to go out,” “to exit”) in Gen 1–11 and their translations in English, Iban (*Bup Kudus Baru*), and Mandarin Chinese (Revised Chinese Union Version—RCUV), as these two are among the most common motion verbs in Genesis.

The Iban Bible—*Bup Kudus Baru*

The Iban people are the largest minority ethnic group in Sarawak, with a population of 713,421 in Sarawak, based on the 2010 Malaysia census. One hundred fifty years ago, in 1864, a portion of the Bible was translated and published in Iban. The New Testament was first published in 1933 and the whole Bible in 1988 by the Bible Society of Malaysia. As the language had undergone some orthographical alteration, and some words in the 1988 version had become archaic, there was a need for a major revision; this revision work began in 1998. The revision process took ten years, with the final revised edition published in 2011, with the names of God, *Allah Taala* and *Tuhan*, retained.

Historically, the Iban people were farmers, fishermen, and hunter-gatherers. (Unfortunately, in the past they were often branded as headhunters. In fact, the headhunter practice took place in areas that were overpopulated, resulting in ethnic cleansing.) Furthermore, the Ibans were often ready to move beyond their traditional lands for various purposes. Thus, the word *bejalai* is quite different from its Malay equivalent of *jalan* (to walk) and its cognates. To the Malay, *jalan* means “going for a short walk” or “taking a trip.” However, to the Ibans, *bejalai* is part and parcel of their culture and livelihood. Although they lived in longhouses, young Iban men were often required to embark on a long journey, seeking both work opportunities and adventure. The *bejalai* experience was thus a prerequisite for the attainment of adulthood in the Iban community.¹⁰ In a study on the meaning of *bejalai*, Peter Kedit, who is an Iban with a keen interest in Iban culture, highlights that, in the past, in the longhouses of Batang Ai, every adult man had to have had at least one experience of *bejalai* in their lives. An Iban man was not a full adult without the *bejalai* escapade (Kedit 1993).¹¹

⁹ The verb הָלַךְ in the Hebrew Bible has the general sense of “to go.” In the *qal* form, it is directional, meaning “to go (with a specific direction or path in mind).” The *hitpaal* form includes both motion and manner, “to go to and fro,” or “to walk about.”

¹⁰ For every successful *bejalai* adventure of an Iban male, a tattoo of a flower (a sacred symbol) would be crafted on the skin of the returnee upon his safe arrival back to the village. The *bejalai* adventure was exclusively a male activity and did not apply to female members of the community. With the modernization of Sarawak, the practice is almost non-existent today. The word *bejalai* may in some contexts retain implications of the earlier practice, although it can also be used in the more usual sense of “walking.”

¹¹ Reviewed by Otto Steinmayer at www.ikanlundu.com/Kedit_bejalai.html.

The motion verb יָצָא' (*yāṣā'*) in Gen 1–11

This article focuses first on the motion verb *yāṣā'*, which has been commonly translated into English as “go out” or “come out.” It is generally connected with a motion event that portrays a figure or object going away from a specific space, location, or sphere. In the whole book of Genesis, this word *yāṣā'* occurs eighty times. Here, we will limit our analysis to chaps. 1–11, comprising sixteen occurrences.

The languages involved in this study include the following: Biblical Hebrew, English (in two translations: NRSV, which has a Protestant orientation, and NJPS, which is Jewish), Bahasa Malaysia (Today's Malay Version [TMV], a meaning-based translation modelled after GNB), Iban (*Bup Kudus Baru* or the New Iban Holy Bible, which is also modelled after GNB), and Mandarin Chinese (RCUV). In terms of semantic typology, English has been classified by Talmy, Slobin, and many others as using satellite-framed motion events where verbs are manner-salient. For the Austronesian languages such as Malay and Iban, it is general believed that they are verb-framed, with the more path-inclined verbs representing motion events. However, as Huang and Tanangkingsing have demonstrated, not all Austronesian languages exhibit the same degree of path salience, with some of them instead expressing motion events by serial verb constructions. In the case of Mandarin Chinese, which is a major language in the Sino-Tibetan family, most Sino-linguists find that although this language is principally a manner-inclined one, it also relies heavily on the serial verb construction to convey a motion event. These considerations justify an inquiry to see if the translations of *yāṣā'* by the translators of the different languages follow the typological description proposed by Slobin.

My analysis of the semantic typology of the translated texts and the original Hebrew text is illustrated in Table 1.

From Table 1, the following deductions can be made:

- (1) In agreement with the Talmy-Slobin categorization, close examination of the multiple *yāṣā'* occurrences in Gen 1–11 reveals that Biblical Hebrew is a verb-framed language with path-salient features. It is clear from such a close examination that *yāṣā'* is a path-salient verb, reflecting the verb-framed characteristic of the Hebrew language. Of the sixteen occurrences in Gen 1–11 (including double occurrences in a single verse in 8.7, 17), all are path-of-motion verbs where the motion is directed to a place or a destined entity or space, known as the ground in Talmian terms. Even with the path-salience embedded in the verb *yāṣā'*, the motion verbs are often supplemented in Gen 1–11 with an additional prepositional phrase with

Table 1. The translation of *yāšār* in English, Malay, Iban, and Mandarin Chinese (P = Path, V-P = Path verb, V-M = Manner verb)

	English (NRSV)	English (NIPS)	Malay (TMV)	Iban (BKB)	Chinese (RCUV)	Tanakh
Gen 1.12	brought forth	brought forth	<i>mengeluarkan</i> (bring out)	<i>mansutka</i> (brought out)	长出了 (<i>zhang chu lei</i> , grew)	תוצא
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P	V-P	V-M + V-P	V-P
Gen 1.24	bring forth	bring forth	<i>mengeluarkan</i> (bring out)	<i>pansutka</i> (bring out)	生出 (<i>sheng chu</i> , grew forth)	תצא
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P	V-P	V-M + V-P	V-P
Gen 2.10	flows out of	issues from	<i>mengalir dari</i> (flow from)	<i>pansut ari</i> (flow from)	流出来 (<i>liu chu lai</i> , flows out of)	... תצא
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + P	V-M + V-P	V-P + P
Gen 4.16	went away from	left	<i>pergi dari</i> (go from)	<i>baserara ari</i> (depart from)	离开了 (<i>li kai lei</i> , departed)	... תצא
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + V-P	V-P + P
Gen 8.7	went (to and fro)	went (to and fro)	<i>terbang kian ke mari</i> (flow near and far)	<i>majak terebai</i> (flow around)	飞来飞去 (<i>fei lai fei</i> <i>qu</i> , flow around)	ויצא וישוב
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-M + P	Path + V-M	V-M+P+V-M +P	V-P + V-P + V-P
Gen 8.16	go out of	come out of	<i>keluarlah</i> (go out)	<i>pansut</i> (depart)	出 (<i>chu</i> , out of)	צא-מן
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P	V-P	V-P	V-P + P
Gen 8.17	bring out	bring out	<i>bawalah keluar</i> (bring out)	<i>bai pansut</i> (bring out)	带出来 (<i>dai chu lai</i> , bring out)	הוצא
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-M + V-P	V-M + V-P	V-M + V-P	V-P

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

	English (NRSV)	English (NJPS)	Malay (TMV)	Iban (BKB)	Chinese (RCUV)	Tanakh
Gen 8.18	went out	came out	<i>keluar dari</i> (left from)	<i>pansut ari</i> (departed from)	出来了 (<i>chu lai lei</i> , came out)	נָצַח'
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + P	V-P	V-P
Gen 8.19	went out	came out	<i>keluar dari</i> (went out)	<i>pansut ... ari</i> (departed from)	出了 (<i>chu lai</i> , came out)	נָצַח'נ
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + P	V-P	V-P + P
Gen 9.10	came out of	have come out of	<i>keluar dari</i> (went out)	<i>pansut ari</i> (departed from)	出来 (<i>chu lai</i> , came out)	נָצַח'
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + P	V-P	V-P
Gen 9.18	went out of	came out of	<i>keluar dari</i> (went out)	<i>pansut ari</i> (departed from)	出来 (<i>chu lai</i> , came out)	הֵינָצַח'נ
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P + P	V-P + P	V-P	V-P
Gen 10.11	From ... went into	From ... went forth	<i>Dari ... pergi ke</i> (from ... went to)	<i>Ari...mansang</i> <i>ngagai</i> (from ... went to)	从 ... 出来往 (<i>cong</i> ... <i>chu lai wang</i> , from ... came out to)	נָצַח' ... נָצַח'
Manner/Path	P + V-M + P	P + V-M + P	P + V-M + P	P + V-P + P	P + V-P + P	P + V-P
Gen 10.14	From ... come	Whence ... came forth	(<i>nenek moyang</i>)	<i>nurunka</i>	从 ... 出来 (<i>cong</i> ... <i>chu lai</i> , from ... came)	נָצַח'נ ... נָצַח'
Manner/Path	P + V-M	P + V-M + P	(meaning-based translation, "ancestor")	V-M	P + V-P	V-P + P
Gen 11.31	went out	set out	<i>meninggalkan</i>	<i>angkat ari</i>	出了 (<i>chu lei</i> , out of)	נָצַח'נ ... נָצַח'נ
Manner/Path	V-M + P	V-M + P	V-P	V-M + P	V-P	V-P + P

the Hebrew directional marker ל . The path-salient motion verbs are joined with the prepositional markers in 2.10; 4.16; 8.19; 9.18; 10.11, 14; and 11.31. The function of the prepositional phrase is perhaps to create a further directional motion effect of the verb $yāšā'$.

- (2) In the two English versions (NRSV and NJPS), the translation exhibits manner-salient verbs such as “come,” “go,” “bring,” with the only exception being NJPS’s path-of-motion verb “left” in 4.16. As English is classified as a satellite-framed language, the specification of the path using particles or prepositions is clearly shown in the table. Thus, the manner-salient verbs are supplemented by particles or prepositions such as “forth” (come forth) or “out” (flow out). Compared with the path-salient feature of the Hebrew verb $yāšā'$, which carries in it a direction of path of “away from a place,” the English equivalents of “come,” “go,” and “flow” express mainly the manner of motion rather than the path.
- (3) As for Mandarin Chinese, most scholars consider it a satellite-framed language, much like English. However, recently it has been argued that Mandarin Chinese should be classified as a serial verbal equipollently-framed language, according to the Slobin schema. Using Hebrew $yāšā'$ as the test case, the translation of RCUV shows a similar result to what would be expected from the scholarship on the Chinese view on motion events. The combination of manner verbs and path verbs is found to be quite extensive in the table, with a prevalent use of directional co-verbs or deictic expressions, such as *lai* and *qu*.¹² The Chinese translation shows a mixed appearance of manner and path verbs, with some instances of combined manner and path verbs.¹³
- (4) According to Austronesian linguists, Malay tends to be a path-salient verbal language, like many other Austronesian languages. The same can be said about Iban, which is in the proto-Malay group. From the table, we see that the translation of the Hebrew verb $yāšā'$ significantly exhibits a path-verb characteristic in which the path is imbedded in the verb itself. The manner-of-motion verb does occur one or two times, with one instance of a serial verb construction: “bring + leaving out” (*bawalah keluar* in Malay and *bai pansut* in Iban). The

¹² There is a great debate on the nature of these two co-verbs (*lai* means “come to,” whereas *qu* means “go to”), as to whether they should be treated as deictic verbs or path-of-motion verbs. In fact, Talmy considered the Chinese language as a typically satellite-framed language, but later linguists have argued that Chinese is a verb-framed language. In this article, I consider Chinese, as Slobin did, an equipollently-framed language. See Liao et al. 2020.

¹³ See the various examples provided in Chen and Gao 2009.

analysis may be skewed by the fact that the Iban translation is partly modelled on TMV. Despite this shortcoming, the table does provide an indication of Iban as characterized by a verb-framed typology with some features of equipollently-framed syntactic expressions, including serial verb constructions.

The motion verb הלך (*hālak*) in Gen 1–11

Compared with the eighty occurrences of *yāšā'*, the other motion verb הלך (*hālak*), commonly translated as “to go” or “to walk” in English, is even more prevalent in Genesis, with 121 occurrences. However, in the first eleven chapters it occurs only eleven times, less often than *yāšā'* (sixteen times). In the following section, we shall examine the translation of this verb in English and Iban, with occasional references to the Chinese and Malay translations, to see how the Talmy-Slobin typology can be applied to Bible translation practice.

Gen 2.14

The first occurrence of *hālak* in Genesis is found in 2.14, whose translation is in itself an interesting inquiry. Here NRSV says, as in the Hebrew text, that the river Tigris flows (הלך *hālak*), literally, “walks” or “goes,” east of Assyria. It is notable that between the Hebrew verb *hālak* and the object or ground, “the east of Assyria,” there is no preposition or path indicator, such as “in,” “to,” or “around.” According to the semantic typology accepted by most linguists, Hebrew is a verb-framed language, and thus the path element is embedded in the verb itself. This allows two possibilities for the motion events of the Tigris: it is either flowing in (within) the east of Assyria or it is flowing to the east of Assyria.

Most English translations follow the Hebrew text by translating “(it) flows east of Assyria” (NRSV, GNB, ESV), leaving the manner of water flow ambiguous. Is the river flowing in the eastern part of Assyria, or is it flowing (from somewhere) to the east of Assyria (meaning that this is the end of its flow)? However, BKB rephrases this sentence as “Ai sungai nya rarat tunga ke timur menua Asiria” (literally, “the water of the river flows to the east of the region of Assyria”), making it specific that it is the water of the river that is the figure, rather than the river itself (“river” becomes the ground in the analysis). Besides this, the translation makes it obvious that it is a form of serial verb construction to indicate that the river flows (from somewhere) to the eastern part of Assyria. Thus, *rarat* (run), a manner verb, combines with *tunga* (flow out), a path verb with a path particle *ke* (“to,” a location preposition). TMV, also in an Austronesian language, seems to translate the sentence in the form of manner verb +

path satellite by introducing the preposition *di*, which is equivalent to “in” in English: “Sungai yang ketiga bernama Tigris, yang mengalir di sebelah timur Asyur” (The third river is named Tigris, which flows in the east side of Assyria). Strictly speaking, if Hebrew is to be considered as a typical verb-framed language, then it is more likely that the verb *hālak* should depict a motion-of-event that is oriented towards an endpoint, rather than focusing on the features of the ground as a satellite-framed language constantly does. The same way of interpreting the word *hālak* is also found in Wenham’s commentary (1987, 44, 66): “The third river is named Tigris: it runs to the east of Ashur.”

Expanding the discussion further, if the Septuagint is brought into the picture, the translation of this verse becomes more perplexing. In the Septuagint, the verb *hālak* is rendered as a manner verb: καὶ ὁ ποταμὸς ὁ τρίτος Τίγρις· οὗτος ὁ πορευόμενος κατέναντι Ἀσσυρίων. A typical translation based on the Septuagint would be: “And the third river is Tigris; this one goes opposite Assuris” (see Brayford 2007, 36–37). It is obvious that in the Septuagint, the verb *hālak* is translated as a manner verb, πορευόμενος, and furthermore, the word “east” from the phrase “east of Assyria” is rendered as a path (preposition), κατέναντι, literally, “opposite,” to describe the trajectory of the motion, making it more like a satellite-framed translation than the original verb-framed text.

The Iban translation can be illustrated in term of semantic typology as follows:

	Figure	Manner	Path verb	Path-satellite	Ground
Hebrew ¹⁴	הוא	ההלך			קדמת אשור
NRSV	which (it)	flows			east of Assyria
BKB	Ai sungai nya	rarat	tunga	ke	timur menua Asiria
BKB Gloss	The water of the river	flows	toward, directed to	to	east of Assyria

Gen 3.8

Genesis 3.8 describes the series of events that take place in the Garden of Eden. Conceptually, the first event is an event of motion: the Lord walking in the garden. Then the human couple hear the sound of his walking. In Hebrew and in the English translations, the analysis of the initiating motion event is something like: Figure (the Lord) + manner-of-motion (walk or

¹⁴ For the examples that include Hebrew in this paper, the Hebrew is read in units from left to right. Thus, in this case, the order is: הוא ההלך קדמת אשור.

walking) + path (in) + ground (the garden). Similarly, BKB translates it as “TUHAN Allah Taala bejalai dalam kebun” (The Lord God himself walks/ is walking in the garden). In terms of manner-of-motion, RCUV is remarkable in that it refines the simple motion verb (*xingzou*, literally, “walking”) by a manner-of-motion serial verb construction (*laihui xingzou*), where the new verb is conflated with a manner of “going to and fro,” reflecting the *hitpael* form of the Hebrew הלך. This salient feature is not found in BKB and NRSV. The analysis of the semantic components of the four versions is shown below:

Hebrew text of Gen 3.8

Hebrew	יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים	מֵתְהַלֵּךְ	בְּגֵן
Grammatical categories	noun, name	verb, <i>hitpael</i> ptc	prep + noun
Gloss	The Lord God	is walking	in the garden
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb	Path + Ground ¹⁵

English and Iban translation of Gen 3.8

NRSV	The Lord God	walking	in	the garden
BKB	TUHAN Allah Taala	bejalai	dalam	kebun
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb	Path	Ground

Chinese translation of Gen 3.8

RCUV	耶和華上帝	在	園中	來回	行走
Gloss	The Lord God	in	the garden ¹⁶	to and fro ¹⁷	walking
Semantic components	Figure	Path	Ground	Path verb	Manner verb

Gen 3.14

Next, in Gen 3.14, the curse on the primordial serpent is expressed in motion verbs: “upon your belly you shall go.” In Hebrew, the expression has the same components as the literal translation in NRSV, and it is a simple type of manner of motion event. The BKB rendering, “nuan deka ngerayap ngena perut nuan” (literally, “you shall crawl using your belly”), is a

¹⁵ In Hebrew, it is common to observe a conflation of path and ground where particle prepositions are merged with the goal.

¹⁶ Technically, the Chinese expression of path is 在 ... 中 (in ... inside), leaving 園 (garden) as the ground.

¹⁷ This is a way of rendering the Hebrew *hitpael* by translating the manner verb with a different manner adverb, something not yet discussed among Talmy-Slobin cognitive linguists.

typical “Figure + Manner verb + Path verb + Ground” structure, in which the Hebrew “go” is rendered by a more explicit verb, *ngerayap* (crawling); at the same time the prepositional phrase is translated by the verbal phrase “using your belly.” The conflated or concatenated verb is another feature of the motion event in the Iban language. In the BKB translation of Gen 3.14, the motion verb is comprised of not just *ngerayap* (“crawl,” a manner verb) but also *ngena perut nuan* (“using your belly,” which starts with a path verb, “use/using”). This could be simply equivalent to “the serpent shall use its belly to walk.” The semantic component analysis is illustrated by the table below:

Hebrew text of Gen 3.14:

Hebrew	עַל	בְּבֶרֶךְ	תֵּלֵךְ
Grammatical analysis	prep	noun (possessive)	verb, <i>qal</i> impf
Gloss	Upon	your belly	you shall walk
Semantic components	Path	Ground	Motion-Manner

English translation of Gen 3.14

NRSV	Upon	your belly	you	shall go ¹⁸
Semantic components	Path	Ground	Figure	Motion-Manner

Iban translation of Gen 3.14

BKB	<i>nuan</i>	<i>deka ngerayap</i>	<i>ngena</i>	<i>perut nuan</i>
Gloss	you	shall crawl	using	your belly
Semantic components	Figure	Motion + Manner	Motion-Path	Ground

Gen 5.22, 24

These verses provide two examples of הֵלֵךְ being used metaphorically in an identical way. The Hebrew text of Gen 5.22 reads, “Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah three hundred years.” The metaphorical sense of walking with God is explicated by the BKB translation as “diau begulai sejalai enggau Allah Taala 300 taun” (living [associating] with God in the same road 300 years). It is translated this way because Iban has no equivalent of motion verbs associated with “morally following” or “faithful adherence.” Thus, technically, this motion verb of “walk” which carries a

¹⁸ Among English translations, this Hebrew verb is translated more often as “crawl” than as “go.” For “crawl,” see CEV, GNB, NLT, NIV, and NJPS. For “go,” see NJB, ESV, and NRSV.

metaphoric significance is not translated in the same way in Iban. The same can be said of Gen 6.9, where “walked with God” is applied to Noah.

Hebrew text of Gen 5.22

Hebrew	וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ	עֵנוֹךְ	אֶת־יְהוָה
Grammatical analysis	verb, <i>hitpael</i> inf	Noun, name	prep + def art + noun
Gloss	Walked	Enoch	with (the) God
Semantic components	Motion + Manner	Figure	Path + Ground

English and Iban translation of Gen 5.22

NRSV	Enoch			walked	with	God
BKB	Enok	diau	begulai	sejalai	enggau	Allah Taala
Gloss	Enoch	live	becomes associated	walking together	with	God
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb	Motion verb	Path verb	Path	Ground

From this table, we observe that in the typical equipollently-framed language construction, the motion verb “walked” in Hebrew and in English is translated by conflation of a manner verb *diau* (to live), another manner verb *begulai* (to become companion), and a path verb *sejalai* (walking together) in Iban. This is an example of something both lost and gained in the process of translation, as proposed by some translation theorists. The concise expression “walk” is lost, but the Bible text enjoys a cultural enrichment from the Iban tradition of getting a companion during the *bejalai* adventure in the forests of Borneo.

Gen 7.18

The text of Gen 7.18 is yet another good illustration of translation strategies for motion verbs. In Hebrew, it is, “The water increased and became very great on the earth; the ark was ‘going’ on the surface of the water.” Biblical Hebrew uses the same word to describe the movement of an inanimate object and the movement of a human. A similar pictorial description can be found in Jonah 1.11, 13, where the sea is described as “going and storming.” NRSV’s rendering of Gen 7.18, “The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters,” uses a metaphorical verb, “swelled,” for the first of the two Hebrew verbs of increase in quantity (וַיִּגְבַּר), but for the rest of the motion, it translates with an equivalent of the Hebrew verb, for instance, “floated” for הָלַךְ. In BKB,

this latter part of the verse is translated as “bandung nya melepung” (literally, “the boat floated”) without the path or ground being described. This is because in Iban, *melepung* is itself a motion verb with manner, cause, and path conflated (multiple verbal conflation, I suggest). Yet again, there are elements lost and gained. In this case, the gain is conciseness, but the pictorial description is lost in the process.

Iban translation (BKB) of Gen 7.18a

BKB	Ai	mansang	dalam sedalam ¹⁹
Gloss	water	advance, go forward	more and more, or deeper and deeper
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb	Path

Iban translation (BKB) of Gen 7.18b

BKB	bandung nya	melepung
Gloss	The ark	floated
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb + Cause + Path ²⁰

Gen 8.3

This is like 7.18, in which the figure of the movement is the water or the flood. The Hebrew text reads, “the waters were returning from (upon) the earth and kept going; the waters turned back and abated after one hundred fifty days.” In this text, four motion verbs appear: שׁוּב - הֵלֵךְ - שׁוּב - חָסַר (turning back—going—turning back—falling). NRSV reduces the four motions into two, that is, “receded” (וַיִּשְׁבוּ) and “abated” (וַיַּחַסְרוּ), rendering the two-verb phrase הֵלֵךְ וַיִּשְׁבוּ by the adverb “gradually,” attached to “receded.” In BKB, the translation is even more succinct in that the motion verb is translated by a clause, “majak surut sesurut” (meaning “going back again and again”). This laconic Iban translation is parallel to the translation in 7.18, “mansang dalam sedalam” (going forward more and more), in my opinion, producing a good revision of the Iban Bible by the accurate rendering of the nuances of the Hebrew motion verb הֵלֵךְ.

The semantic relationship is represented by the following table:

¹⁹ Meaning “down and down.”

²⁰ This is a case of multiple conflation in which a motion verb carries with it the manner (moving upward), the cause (the water floated the ark), and the path (it was floating on the surface of the water/flood, as the Hebrew text goes). Thus, the Hebrew הֵלֵךְ requires a qualifying clause, “on the surface of the water,” to denote the idea of floating. But in Iban, a single verb *melepung* describes it all.

The Hebrew text of Gen 8.3

Hebrew	וַיָּשׁוּב	הַמַּיִם	מֵעַל	הָאָרֶץ	הַלֵּוֹךְ	וַיָּשׁוּב
Grammatical	verb, <i>qal</i> impf	def art + noun	double prep	def art + noun	verb, <i>qal</i> inf	verb, <i>qal</i> inf
Gloss	returned	the water/ flood	from + upon	the Earth	walking	returning
Semantic components	Motion + Path	Figure	Path(s)	Ground	Manner verb	Manner verb
Hebrew			וַיִּחְסְרוּ		הַמַּיִם	
Grammatical			verb, <i>qal</i> impf		def art + noun	
Gloss			subsided, or abated		the water	
Semantic components			Manner verb		Figure	

Turning to the BKB translation, the table below shows the semantic categories of the translation:

BKB	ai bah nya	majak	surut-sesurut	dalam	pengelama 150 hari ²¹
Gloss	water of the flood	going back	down and down	in	the period of 150 days
Semantic components	Figure	Manner verb	Path verb	Path	Ground

Conclusion

From this study of the Iban translation of the Hebrew motion verbs **יָשׁוּב** and **הָלַךְ**, a preliminary summary about motion events in the Iban language can be made. In the translation of the Hebrew path verb **יָשׁוּב**, the Iban language is not very different from the Hebrew and in general it renders the Hebrew path verb with a similar path verb (*pansut*). This indicates that the Iban language is typically path-salient in its description of motion events. However, when the Hebrew manner verb **הָלַךְ** is examined, it can be observed that the Iban translation resorts to a serial verb construction to express the various meanings of the Hebrew. This suggests that Iban tends to the equipollently-framed pattern. Here lies the artistry of the translators in making choices for translation into their target language. Such freedom of expression is a

²¹ This last phrase, “in the period of 150 days” is rendered as the beginning of 8.4 by almost all English translations, whereas the Iban translation joins it to the recession of the flood water, following the translation of the Septuagint: ἡλαττονοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ μετὰ πεντήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν ἡμέρας.

courageous attempt to render the Hebrew into Iban in a way that is meaningful to its readers.

The translation of motion verbs can be considered one of the most difficult tasks in Bible translation. In this study, I have shown that the Talmy-Slobin typology and semantic–syntactic interface has provided a heuristic tool for translators and translation officers to explore ways the translators of different types of languages (satellite-framed, verb-framed, and equipollently-framed) render the motion verbs of the Hebrew Bible into their respective languages. There are unavoidably many losses and gains in the process. The language in focus here, Iban, is confirmed as a partially path-salient language with equipollently-framed features, in which the translators may express motion by either a singular path verb or a serial verb construction, consisting of both manner and path verbs.

What are the implications for Bible translation of the typology of semantic lexicalization? First, translators need to know the inventory of motion verbs in their own language, as well as the related pattern structure for expressing motion verbs. For instance, how does the language express movement in an upward, downward, or sideward direction, as well as the velocity of the movement? Then, translators may have to examine carefully the inventory of path verbs or functional verbs in the language, to find an effective translation of the Scriptures that is faithful both to the intended message and to the linguistic requirements of the target language. Second, care needs to be taken in the choice of a model text. To facilitate speedy translation, it is UBS's practice to choose a model text for the translators. In general, the language of the model text should have some connection, preferably a close one, with the target language. Furthermore, as each language is unique, translation officers should be careful to help translators avoid the pitfall of "following faithfully" the model text while at the same time "betraying" elegant, salient features of their own language. Third, the Bible translation community needs to invest collective effort into research on how motion verbs are expressed in both the languages of the model texts and the target languages into which the Bible is translated.²² The community of the translation possesses a large pool of resources in linguistics that we have yet to explore. Perhaps motion verbs should be included alongside other cultural and linguistic exploration, in a process like the ancient Iban *bejalai*, adventures in the Bornean jungle.²³

²² The languages analysed in this article are representative members of four language families: Austronesian (Iban), Sino-Tibetan (Mandarin Chinese), English (Indo-European), and Afroasiatic (Hebrew).

²³ I am grateful to my colleague, Stephen Pattemore, for reading successive drafts and giving me invaluable comments that greatly improved the manuscript. All errors are my own.

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Abbreviations

BKB	<i>Bup Kudus Baru</i> (Revised Iban Bible; 2011)
CEV	Contemporary English Version (1999)
ESV	English Standard Version (2016)
GNB	Good News Bible (1994)
NIV	New International Version (2011)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society version (<i>Tanakh</i> , 1985)
NLT	New Living Translation (1996)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
RCUV	Revised Chinese Union Version (2010)
TMV	Today's Malay Version (1987)