
The semantics of space and directionality: cross-type similarities and within-type differences

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Labex TransferS



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A typology of motion expression

- Talmy 1985: Verb-Framed vs Satellite-Framed languages
 - Differences in path, aspect, change of state, action correlation, event realization
 - Path expression: ‘classical’ opposition *La botella **salió** flotando* vs *The bottle floated **out***

- Corollaries
 - manner expression (+/- optional)
 - lexical inventories

≈ stylistic remarks by Bally (1932) and Tesnière (1959) (cf. Fortis 2012)

A binary opposition?

□ Limits of the SF/VF distinction

“Spanish does not always behave like Talmy’s characterization of a verb-framed language” (Slobin 1996 : 196)

“most languages straddle more than one of the previously proposed typological categories” (Beavers, Levin & Tham 2010 : 331)

■ VF utterances in SF languages and vice-versa

➤ external factors

■ VF features in SF languages and vice-versa

➤ languages as more or less prototypically VF or SF

□ A third way to travel

■ Equipollently-framed languages (Slobin 2004, Jaminjung)

■ Thai as an instance of the « third way » (Zlatev & Yangklang 2004)

Beyond ‘discrete’ typologies

□ From SF to VF...

- as a continuum (Slobin 2004 : *Cline of manner salience*)
- as a typology of strategies (“individual complex event types within a language”, Croft et al. 2010 : 202)
- importance of understudied languages (Evans & Levinson 2009)

NB: 1. I will still use the terms VF and SF to refer to ‘prototypically’ VF / SF languages.

2. Some issues deserve a specific discussion, such as the status and definition of *satellite, manner, path*, etc. (Zlatev et al. 2010, Fortis et al. 2011, Grinevald 2011, Imbert et al. 2011, Fortis & Vittrant 2011).

From the *Trajectoire* project to the ET project

- Trajectoire: project funded by the French CNRS (TUL federation), headed by J.-M. Fortis, C. Grinevald, A. Kopecka & A. Vittrant (2006-2010) (<http://www.ddl.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/trajectoire/>)
 - Aims: to **study the expression of Path** through the **description of** (morpho-syntactic) **strategies** used by a **sample of the world's languages**
 - Tool: a series of elicitation videos (*Trajectoire* DVD)
- ET (From Space to Time or *De l'Espace au Temps*): project funded by the TransferS Labex, headed by B. Fagard & J. Zlatev (2011-2014)
 - Aims: try to disentangle the arbitrary from the universal in the way languages enable speakers to describe space and time (<http://fromspacetotime.wordpress.com/>).

TR-task

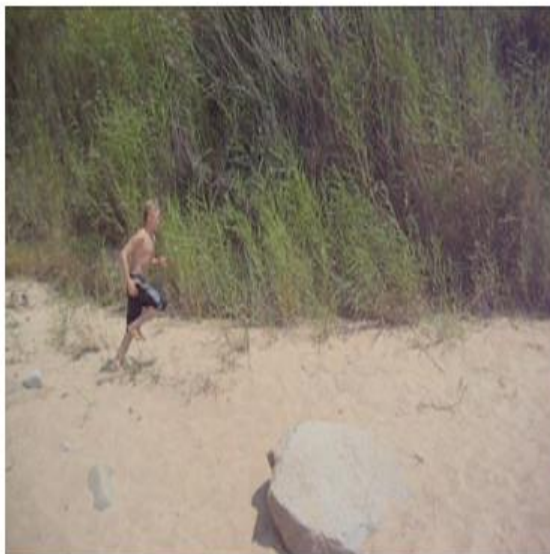
- Elicitation tool for the *Trajectoire* project (Kopecka, Ishibashi, Vuillermet 2006)
- 76 short videoclips: 2 (training) + 74 (elicitation)
 - 40 involve translocative (path) motion
 - 15 involve non-translocative motion (in which the figure does not change its average position)
 - 13 are ambiguous between translocative and non-translocative motion



(a) Cave Environment



(b) Green area Environment



(c) Beach Environment

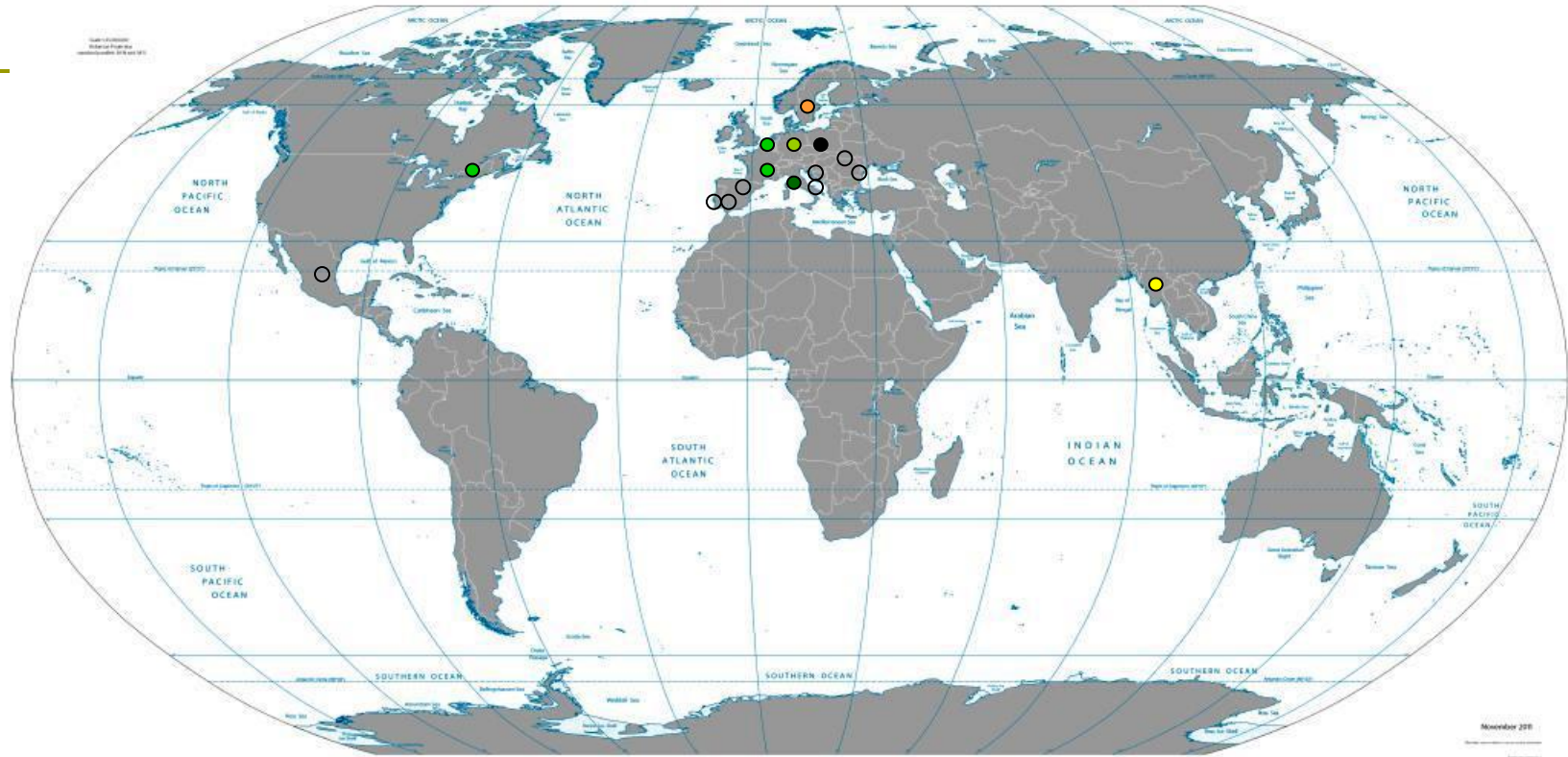


(d) Park Environment



Data for this presentation

12 to 20 speakers per language for the six languages below (colored dots on the map); 74 descriptions per speaker



Indo-European

Germanic

Swedish

German

Romance

Piedmontese

French

Slavic

Polish

Tai-Kadai (Non
Indo-European)

Thai

Why these languages?

- Polish, German & Swedish: SF
- French & Piedmontese: VF
- Thai: '3rd way'
- Not redundant: *cline* from absence of satellites to systematic use of satellites
 - (almost) no satellites: French *descend/*go down*
 - rare satellites: Piedmontese *descend/go down*
 - free satellites: Swedish *go down*, Thai *go descend*
 - free or attached satellites: German *down-go/he goes down*
 - attached satellites: Polish *down-go/he down-goes*

The ‘satellite cline’

- (almost) no satellites
 - un petit garçon qui **saute en bas** d’une falaise jusque dans la mer – du bas d’une falaise
 - ‘a small boy who **jumps down** a cliff into the sea’
- rare satellites
 - an fiol c a **ven giy** senza scarpe
 - ‘a boy who **comes down**, barefoot’
- free satellites
 - en kvinna **går ner** för en trappa som / leder ner i en grotta
 - ‘a lady **goes down** on the stairs which lead down into a cave’
 - *Thai go descend ??*
- free or attached satellites
 - (...) jetzt **läuft** die Frau diese Steinstufen wieder **runter** und kommt in die Höhle rein auf einen zu
 - ‘now the lady **walks back down** these stone stairs and comes towards us into the cave’
 - (...) eine Frau die sie- die Treppe **heruntergeht** und- um in die Höhle hineinzugehen
 - ‘a lady who **goes down** the stairs in order to go inside the cave’
- attached satellites
 - dziewczyna **schodzi** po kamiennych schodach do jaskini
 - ‘(a/the) young lady **walks down** stone stairs into the cave’

For this presentation

□ Choice of scenes

- Focus: descriptions of 15 video-clips in which the agent moves in the direction of the camera (jumping, running or walking)
- Coded: Deixis, Path and Manner of motion, including their mode of expression (form class and degree of grammaticalization).

Methodology

- Data analysis:
 - English gloss
 - Morpho-syntactic gloss
 - Two-level semantic analysis
 - Presence/absence of a set of features (*Path, Motion, Manner of motion, etc.*)
 - Analysis of the feature if present
 - Comparison across languages on the basis of *scene description as a whole* (i.e. constructional in a wide sense)
- Database

Expected results

- Relative homogeneity within each type (VF/SF) and each language family, namely:
 - Manner and Path:
 - German, Swedish, Polish > Thai > French, Piedmontese
 - Deixis:
 - German, Swedish, **Thai**, French, Piedmontese > Polish (cf. Ricca 1993)

Actual results

- On the basis of the 15 selected scenes:
 - Deixis
 - German, Thai 45% >> elsewhere (less than 25%)
 - Manner
 - Polish 90% > German 80 % > Swedish 50 % > ...
 - Path
 - French 60 %, Piedmontese 40 %

Deixis

- Locus (constructional, lexical, grammatical)
 - verb (*come/*go*)
 - adverb (*here/there*)
 - verbal prefix (German *her/hin*)
 - adverbial (*towards me, towards the camera*)

- Frequency & Redundancy

- Congruence (ex. German *her-*, *r-* in 'back' scenes)

Importance of locus of expression

- Expressions of deixis:
 - Grammaticalized: *her-* (or *r-*) and *hin-* → sometimes used independently of the speaker's position (see ex. £)
 - Lexical: always in adequacy with the speaker's position
 - Sometimes 'redundantly'

- German speakers in our sample overwhelmingly express their whereabouts vis-à-vis the scene they describe
 - Cf. Carroll & Von Stutterheim (1993 : 1034) « In German a speaker perspective constitutes the preferred point of reference in establishing coherence within the frame of reference used to link spatial information in the text »

Deixis in 'front' scenes

- (£) an fiol c a **ven** giy senza scarpe (a boy comes down barefoot)
- (£) un c a **ven ensa** arrivan da una fia c a l è cugià per terra (one who comes here arriving from a girl)
- (£) n om a **ven vers nui** cun na fña setà da dreda e cugiàia nt in prà (a man who comes towards us)
- (£) hm man sieht eine Wiese in der Mitte einen Baumstamm und eine Frau steht vor dem Baumstamm und rennt von dem Baumstamm weg hm **auf die Kamera zu** (a woman... runs away from the tree trunk towards the camera) (33)
- (£) kobieta wyszła z jaskini i szła ścieżką **w stronę ekranu** (a woman came out of the cave and walked on the path towards the screen) (23)
- (£) ben de nouveau image de grotte euh **point de vue dans lequel on s'était retrouvés tout à l'heure donc où on voit la sortie de la grotte qui est- la sortie est- c'est** un escalier de pierre qui va **vers le bois** et donc la dame qui en était sortie tout à l'heure qui l'avait emprunté pour sortir maintenant emprunte l'escalier pour rentrer on la voit **venir** à l'intérieur de la grotte (... we see her coming inside the cave) (22 front)
- (£) il y a une femme qui sort de la grotte qui marche euh **vers euh la caméra on va dire** (a woman walking out of the cave huh, let's say towards the camera) (23 front)
- (£) en kvinna **kommer** ur en grotta och / går längs en smal stig mot kameran (a woman comes out of a cave) (23)
- (£) Mi Phuying Doen Ok **Ma Chak Tham**² (the woman came walking out of the cave, lit. have woman walk exit come from cave) (23)

‘Front’ scene descriptions without deixis

(£) tu znowu z- od tego drzewa ucieka (Once again, (she) runs away of- from that tree) (33)

(£) euh toujours cette image où un- il y a un arbre au centre et une femme s’était- était venue de cet arbre était retournée à cet arbre maintenant elle quitte l’arbre de nouveau sans nous regarder mais en trotinant toujours (hm still this image where a- there’s a tree in the middle and a woman was- came from this tree went back to that tree now she leaves the tree once again without looking at us, still running) (33)

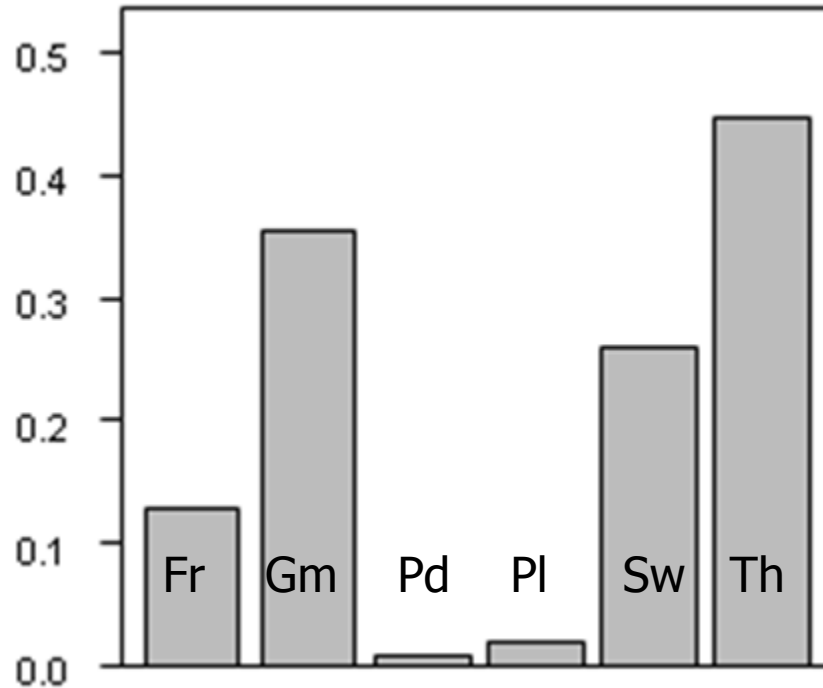
(£) une dame sort d’une sorte de grotte entourée d’arbres pour aller on ne sait où (23)

(£) ta kobieta znowu wraca do jaskini schodzi / ona cały czas wchodzi i wychodzi (The woman walks back down into the cave, she keeps walking in and out) (22)

Only for *some* scenes in Thai, e.g. *static descriptions*:

(£) Phuying Ro Khrai Bang Khon Yu Thi Tai Tonmai (the woman is waiting for someone under the tree, lit. woman wait who some person **be** at under tree) (32)

Presence of at least *one* element indicating Deixis



Percentage of scenes with Deixis in French, German, Piedmontese, Polish, Swedish and Thai



Bonus track: Deixis in ‘back’-scenes

(£) German

eine Frau läuft aus der Höhle raus **von der Kamera weg**

a.fem woman walk.3sg out-of the.gen cave deict.out from the.gen camera away

A woman walks out of the cave away from the camera

(£) hm eine Frau geht **von mir weg** aus der Höhle **heraus**

huh a.fem woman go.3sg from me.dat away out_of the.gen cave deict.out

A woman walks away from me (and) out of the cave

(£) eine Frau läuft von einem Baum weg hm **Richtung der Kamera**

a.fem woman walk.3sg from a.dat tree away huh direction the.gen camera

A woman walks away from a tree towards the camera

(£) **une femme qui sort d'une grotte pour euh marcher vers un sentier dans le bois**

a.fem woman who exit.3sg of a.fem cave to walk.inf towards a trail in the wood

A woman walks out of a cave towards a trail in the woods (25)

(£) e n aut c a ven fora da la caverna (and another who comes out of the cave) (30, SIDE scene)

(£) Mi Phuying Khon Nueng Doen Khuen Bandai Ok Ma Chak Tham2 (a woman came walking up the stairs, out of a cave, lit. have woman one walk ascend stairs exit come from cave) (29)

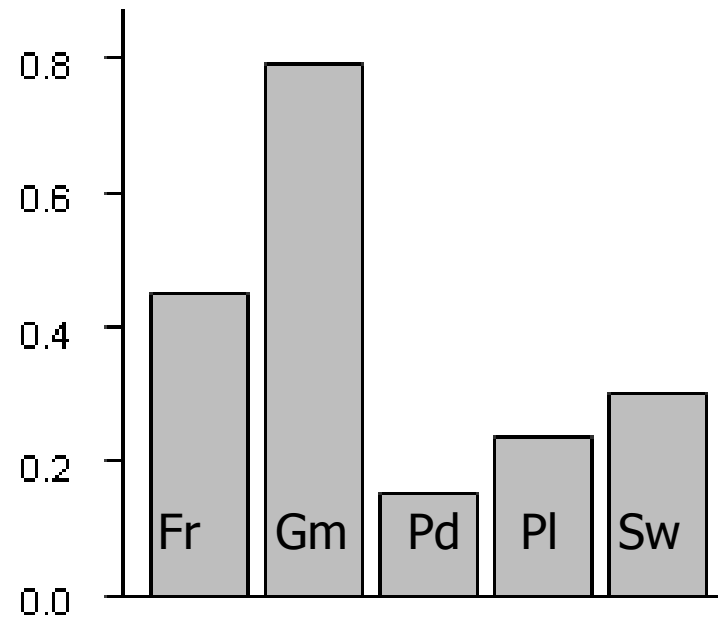
Manner

- Locus
 - verb (*run, jump, ...*)
 - adverb (*fast, calmly*)
 - adverbial (*without hurrying*)
 - noun (*jogger*)

- Manner type
 - 'bodily': walk, run, jump, etc.
 - velocity: fast, quickly, slowly...
 - action/activity: stroll, hike...
 - force: penetrate, pierce
 - shape: meander, curve, bend

- Variety & Frequency
 - lexical inventory
 - redundancy

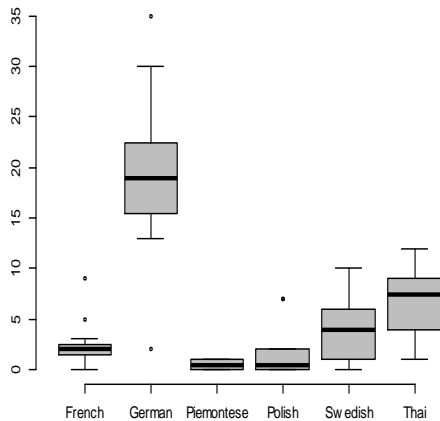
Presence of at least *one* element indicating Manner of motion



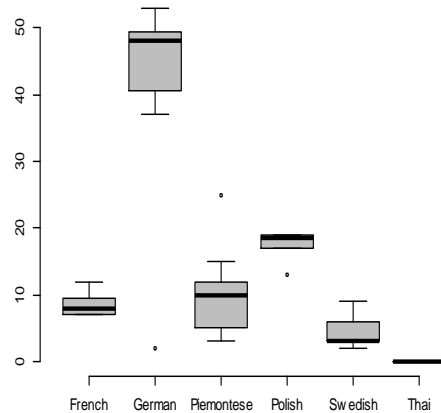
Percentage of scenes with Manner of motion in French, German, Piedmontese, Polish and Swedish

Discussion: variations across languages, variations across speakers

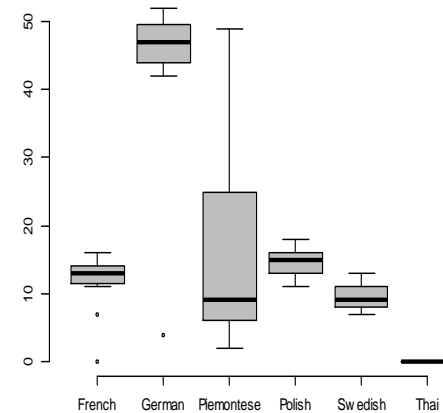
Deixis - Total occs per language



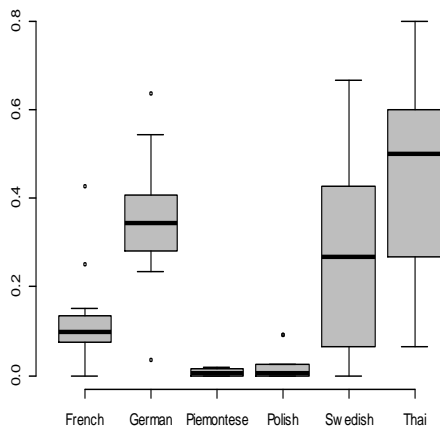
Manner - Total occs per language



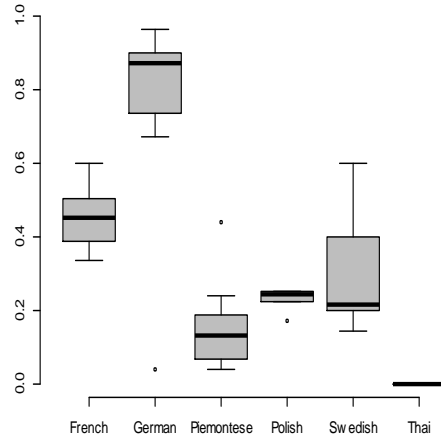
Path - Total occs per language



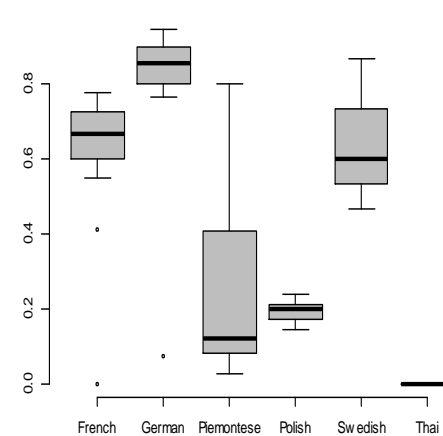
Deixis - Proportion per speaker per language



Manner - Proportion per speaker per language



Path - Proportion per speaker per language



Annex – 15 scenes

- Scene 1 :
 - A Figure **walks down into a cave**, towards us
- Scene 2:
 - A Figure **walks out of a cave**, towards us (23)
- Scene 3:
 - A Figure **walks out of a cave**, away from us (25)
- Scene 4:
 - A Figure **runs out of the sea**, across the screen
- A Figure **runs away from a tree**, towards us (33)
- Scene 6:
 - A figure **jumps from a stone** and **runs**, towards us

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Scene 022_Path_F_walk_down_into_cave_front



Scene: 023_Path_F_walk_outof_cave_front



Scene: 025_Path_F_walk_outof_cave_back



Scene: 031_Path_M_run_outof_sea_sideRL



Scene: 034_Path_C_jump_from_stone_run_front

