Verbalization of Motion Situations in French, Swedish and Thai
(with focus on verbs)

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Overview

- What is (bodily) motion?
- Verbalizations of observed motion/movement: an influence of linguistic typology?
- The Trajectoire and ET projects
- Method
- Results
  - Noun/verb ratios
  - Manner, Direction, Path verbs
  - Deictic verbs
- Conclusions

What is (bodily) movement?

Mover's perspective

''Our primary experience of ourselves is … of the primordial dynamism that manifests itself in the awareness of our existence as a moving, active being.'' (Patocka 1998: 40)

"The qualitative structure of any movement generates a particular dynamic… it flows forth with a certain kinetic energy" (Sheets-Johnstone 2012: 38)

Observer's perspective

"…the experience of continuous change in the relative position of a figure against a background."

(Zlatev, Blomberg & David 2010: 394)

An observed motion situation

Verbalizations of observed movement: the influence of typology?

(1) He   ***ran***   *into*   *the house*   (ENG)

(2) Han   ***sprang***   *in*   *i*   *huset*   (SW)
    3SG.M   run.PST in   in   house-DEF

(2) Il   *est*   ***entré***   *dans*   *la*   *maison (en courant)*   (FR)
    3SG.M AUX   enter.PAST in   DEF   house   run.PST.PART

(4) kháw   ***wîŋ***   ***khâw***   ***pay***   *nay*   *bâan*   (TH)
    3SG   run   enter   go   in   house

Issues and motivation

- French, Swedish and Thai have been suggested to instantiate three different types: ***verb-framed, satellite-framed and equipollently-framed*** (Zlatev & David 2003; Slobin 2004). Systematically different verbalizations?

- Differences in **reification ratio:** #THING/#PROCESS (= #noun/#verb) (cf. Langacker 1987)

- The need for a comparative "bottom-up", onomasiological approach, using identical non-linguistic stimuli.

- The images of *Frog Where are You* (Berman & Slobin 1994; Strömqvist and Verhoeven 2004) are several steps removed from the actual experience of motion situations.

Trajectoire & ET

- **Trajectoire**: Fortis, Grinevald, Kopecka & Vittrant et al. (2006-2010)

  - A carefully designed elicitation tool, focusing on Path & Deixis (see below)

- **ET** (*De l'Espace au Temps*): Fagard & Zlatev et al. (2011-2014)

  - A sample of ca. 20 languages

  - Actutal and non-actual (« fictive ») motion (Blomberg & Zlatev 2013)

  - Piloting for effects on co-speech gesture and temporal reference

Method

- Video-clips
  - 2 training
  - 2 static (no change in position)
  - 17 **non-translocative** motion situations (movements in which the agent does not change their average position)
  - 55 showed **translocative** motion situations (movements with change in average position)
- 8-14 sec duration

Method

- One or more persons involved in various actions and movements in an environment with much vegetation or by the sea.
- Described by native speaker participants
  - French (11)
  - Swedish (17)
  - Thai (14)

- Video-recorded and then transcribed using ELAN
- Coded for morphosyntax and spatial semantics

Present focus

- Reification ratios: Things/Processes
- Differential use of motion verbs
  - Manner
  - Path: Begin, Middle, End (bounded)
  - Direction: vector given by Frame of Reference (unbounded), (cf. Zlatev 2008)
- Deictic verbs
  - Subclass of Direction (vector defined by DC)
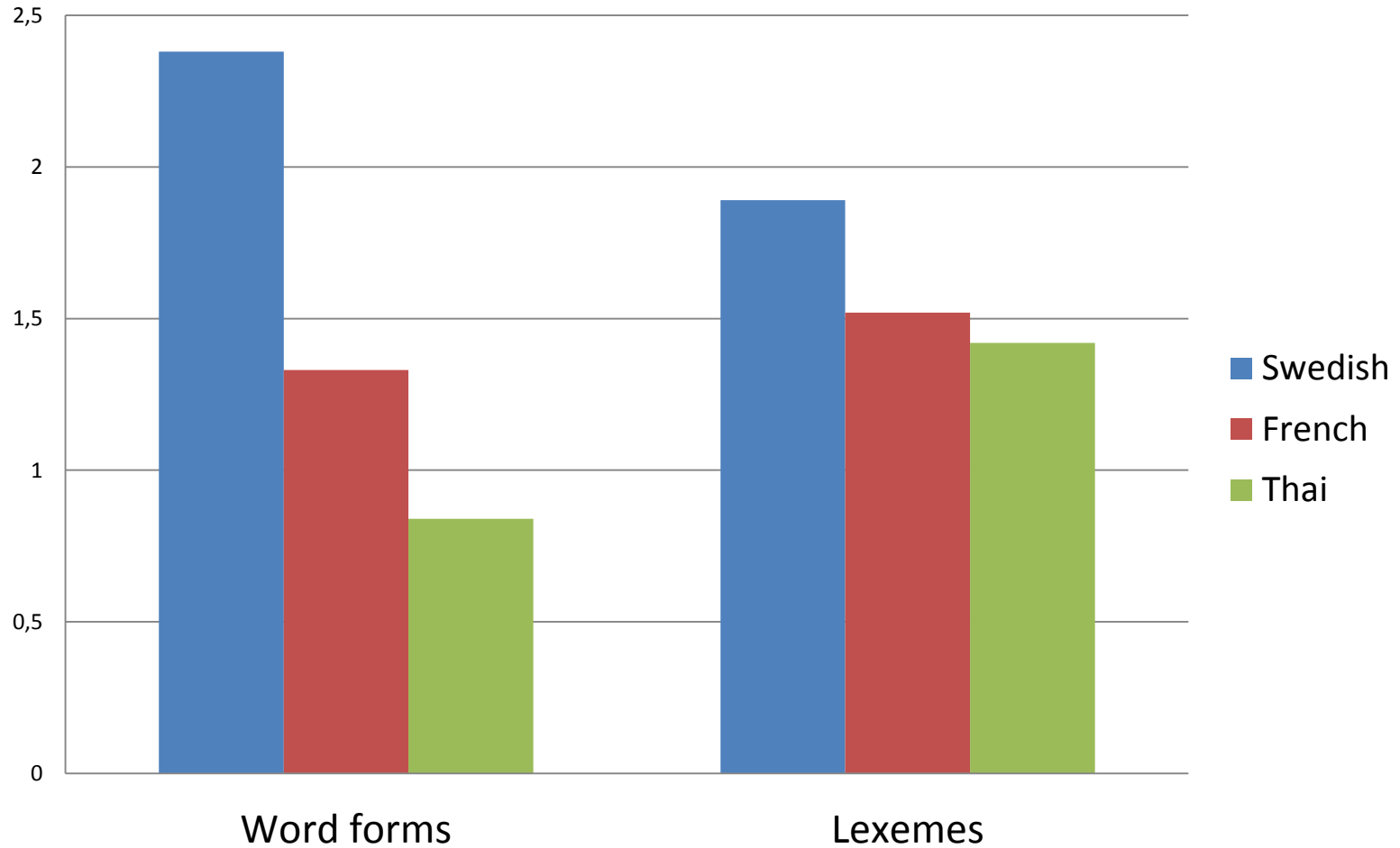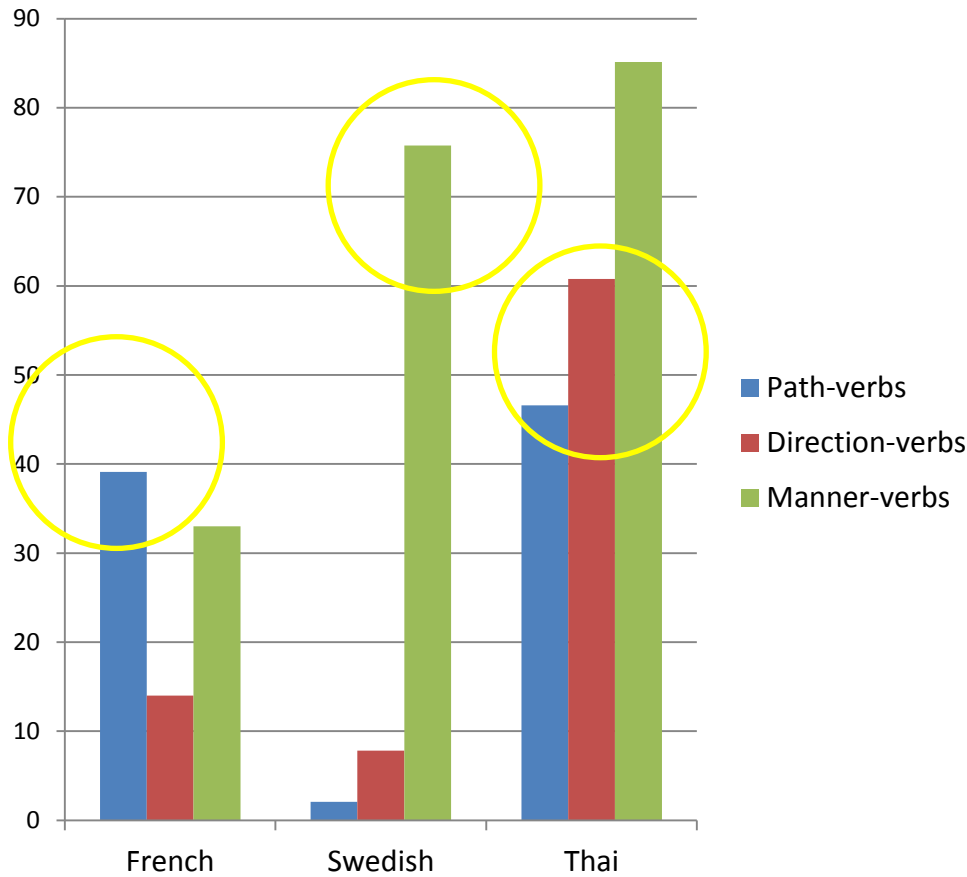
Nouns and verbs

Word forms
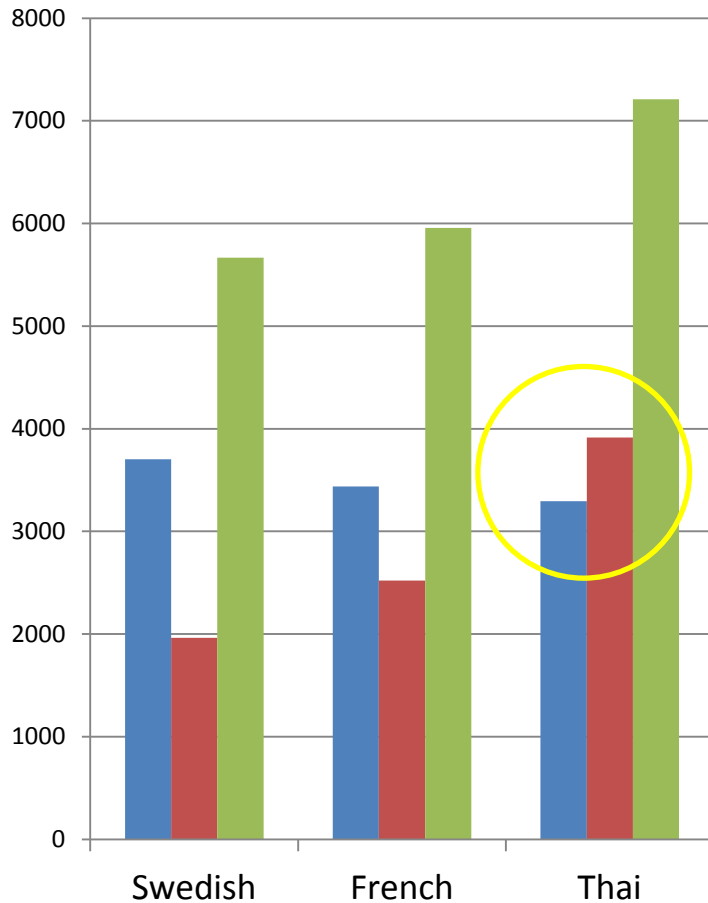
Lexemes
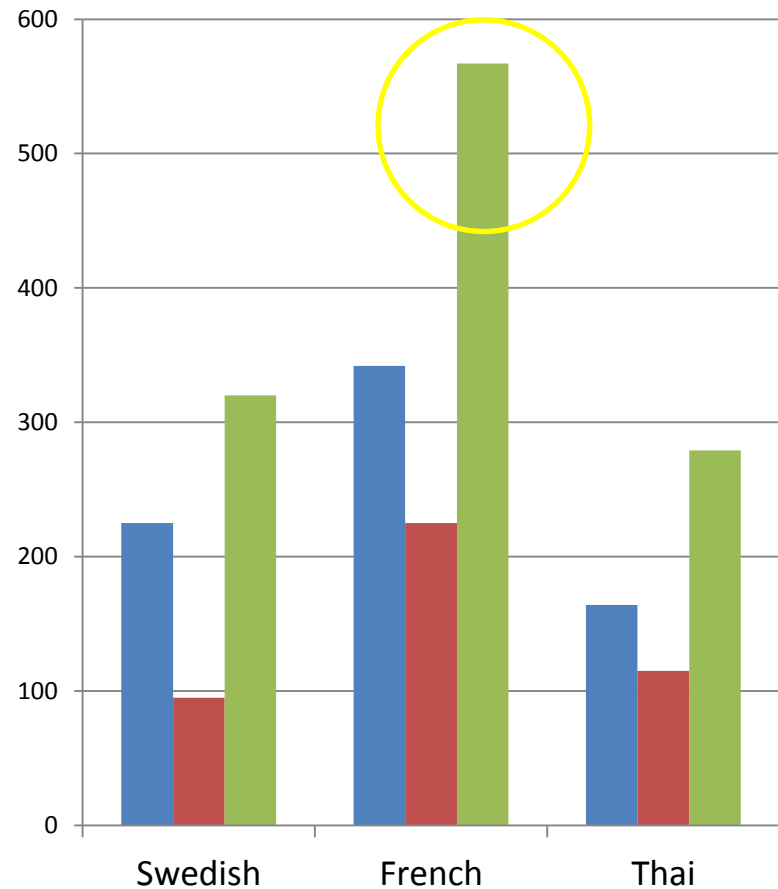
Nouns and verbs
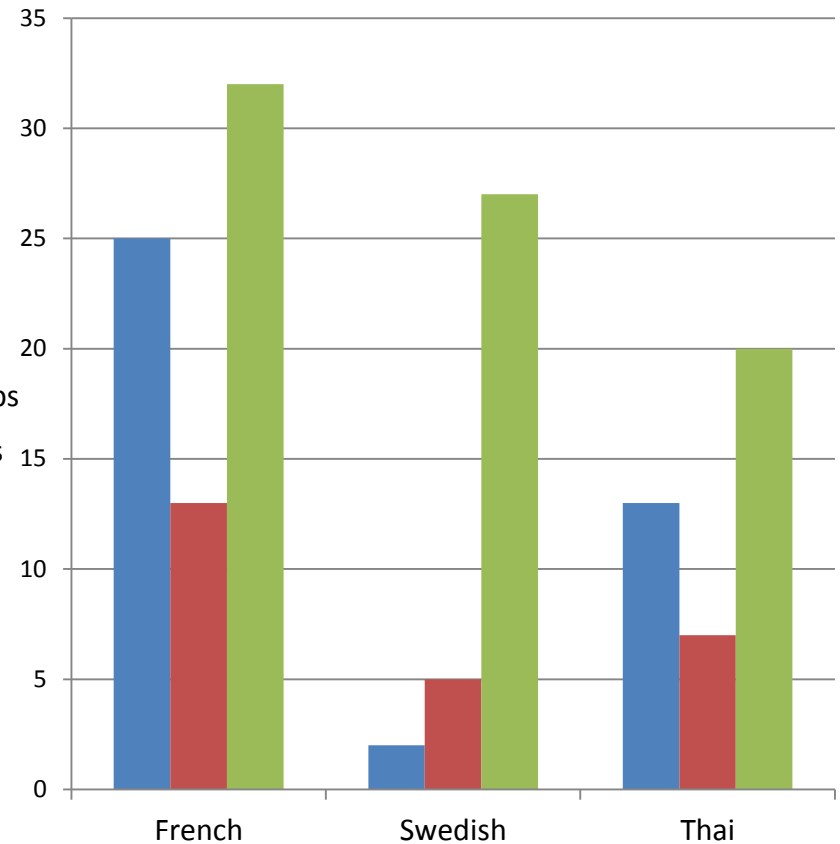

N/V rations

Path, Direction & Manner

Word forms (per speaker)

Lexemes

Deixis

- COME and GO verbs
  - *komma/gå* (SW)
  - *venir/aller* (FR)
  - *maa/pai* (TH)
- Exclude expressions such as "towards/away from me/the camera/this way"
- 3 classes of motion situations (stimuli)
  - 15 towards DC
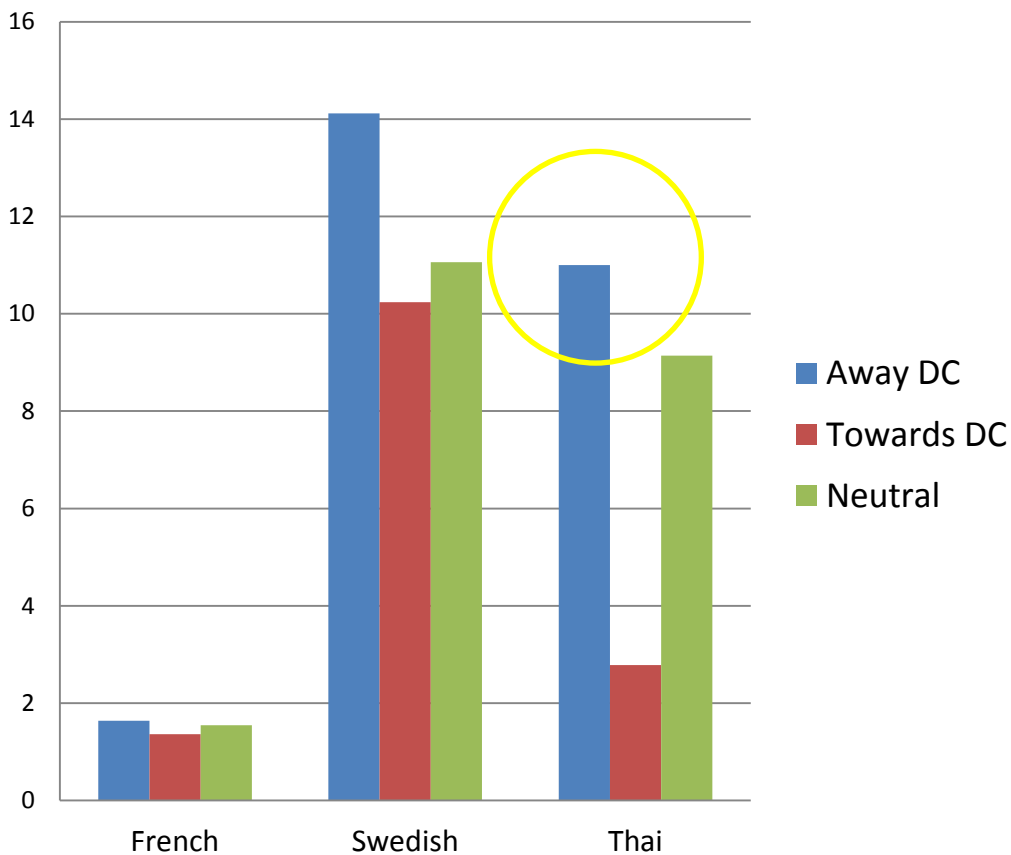 - 17 away from DC
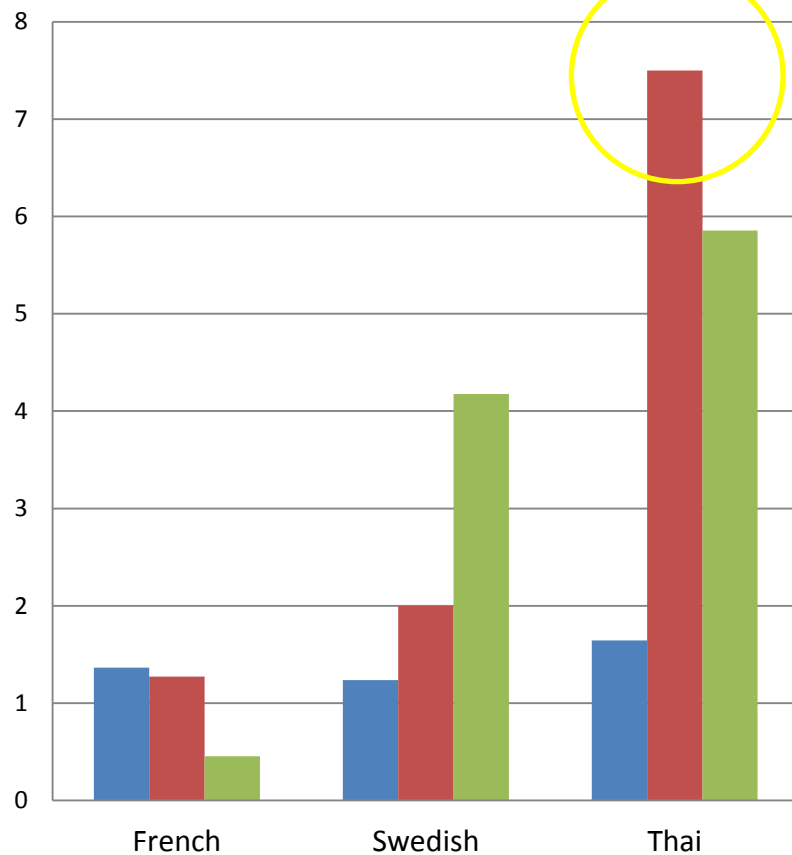 - 23 neutral (sideways motion)

Movement Away from Observer

Deixic verbs
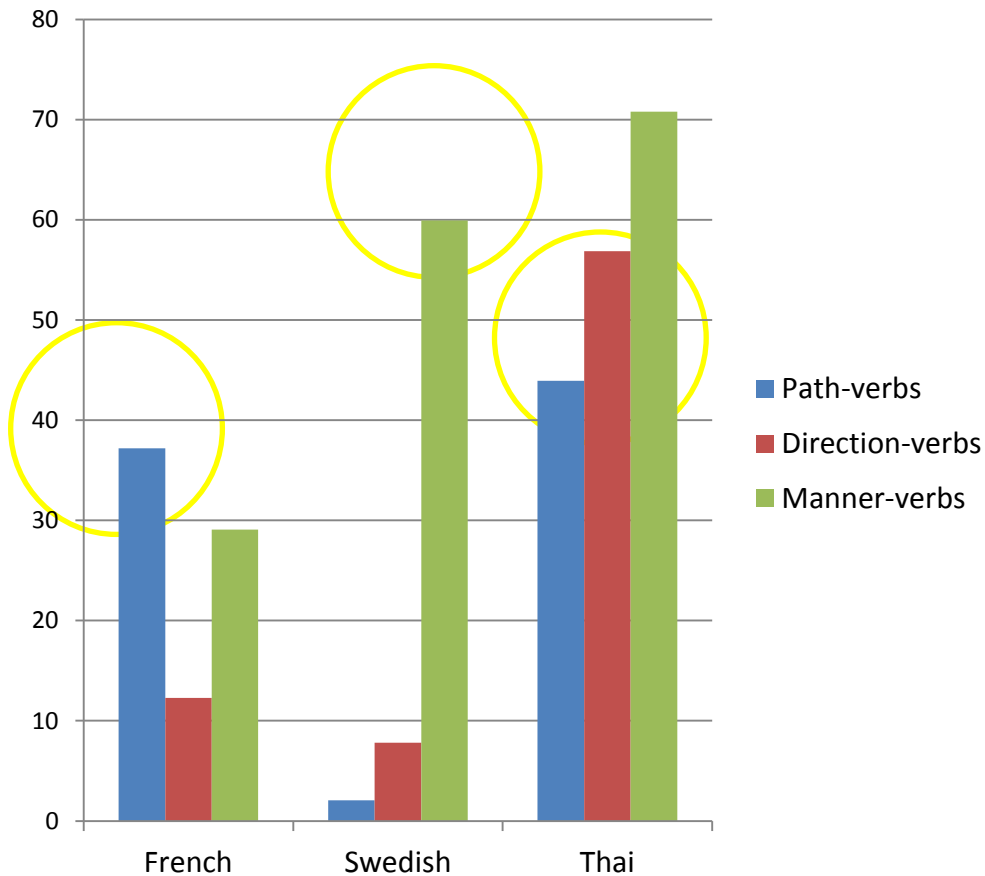# (per speaker, by situation type)

Conclusions

- Systematic differences in "verbalization of experience" between the three languages.

- Confirmation of the "equipollent" status of Thai: different from both Swedish and French

- Systematic contrastive use of deictic verbs only in Thai
  - Use of **SV-constructions**
  - Partial **grammaticalization** of *pai & maa*?

- Path, Direction and Deixis should be considered as distinct "variables" in motion typology

Path, Direction & Manner
(only 55 translocative situations)

Word forms (per speaker)

Lexemes