

## The expression of Caused motion in French by English Learners

Henriëtte Hendriks<sup>1</sup>, Annie-Claude Demagny<sup>2</sup> & Maya Hickmann<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Cambridge, <sup>2</sup>CNRS & Université Paris 8

Research on linguistic diversity has recently revived debates concerning universal and language-specific determinants in language acquisition (Hickmann, 2006; Slobin, 1996). This paper addresses some diversity issues in relation to the expression of caused motion in the acquisition of French as a second language.

The expression of caused motion differs in English and French. English, a satellite-framed language, encodes Manner and Cause in verbal roots and Path in satellites (example 1). French, a verb-framed language, expresses Path in main verbs and Manner and Cause in other devices (2) (cf. Talmy 1983, 1985, 2000). These typological contrasts have possible implications for second language acquisition.

(1) *He pushes the ball across the street.*

(2) *Il traverse la rue en poussant le ballon.*

To measure these, we analyse the expression of caused motion by English adults learning French as a second language. Cartoons in which an agent acts upon an object in a certain Manner causing its displacement according to a certain Manner and Path were presented to several groups of adult speakers (English and French native speakers; English learners of French (three proficiency levels)).

Results show that adult L2 learners initially organize information according to their source language. Thus, at lower proficiency levels, they express Manner and Cause in the verb, and Path in the satellite, an impossible solution in French, as shown in (3).

(3) *?Il a tiré le caddie à la garage.*

With increasing proficiency, speakers express Manner and Cause in main verbs, and Path in a gerundive-like construction. Although grammatical, this organization is not target-like:

(4) *Pousser en montant.*

In sum, at higher levels of proficiency influences of both source and target language are present in the interlanguage. The discussion of the paper will highlight the implications of typological constraints for models of second language acquisition.

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