

Voluntary Motion Events in French Learners of L2 Chinese: Manner verbs, Path verbs or neither?

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Over the last twenty years, a number of studies have examined expression of motion events in Chinese within different fields of linguistics such as typology, dialectology or diachrony (e.g., Chen & Guo 2010, Chu 2004, Ji 2009, Kan 2010, Lamarre 2003, Li 1997, Shi 2014, Zeng 2014). A growing number of studies in the field of second language acquisition also analyzed how adult foreign language learners encode spatial relations in various Indo-European languages (e.g., Cadierno 2004, 2008, 2010; Hendriks & Hickmann 2011; Hendriks *et al.* 2008; Larrañaga *et al.* 2012; Sharpen 2016; Stam 2015). However, only a limited number of studies investigated L2 Chinese (see Arslangul 2015; Chen 2005; Wu 2011, 2014; Paul 2014; Ji & Hohenstein 2014). In the present study, we will discuss how Talmy's (2000) typological framework of motion events provides a productive basis for the inquiry of how adult language learners come to express motion in L2. If acquiring a native language involves learning particular ways of *thinking-for-speaking* (Slobin 1996), learning the characteristic lexicalization patterns of a target language that are different from the source language should present some difficulties to learners. We address this question by examining how French-speaking learners acquire the expression of voluntary motion events in L2 Chinese (verb-framed *vs.* satellite-framed language), focusing on the use of motion and non-motion verbs and on the lexicalization patterns of the motion verbs (Path verb *vs.* Manner verb).

The procedure used consists of the analysis of an oral corpus collected from 5 different groups of informants (N=114): French and Chinese native speakers (NS), as well as learners of L2 Chinese at three proficiency levels (low, intermediate and advanced). The stimulus of the elicited task is a comic strip composed of ten plates of four drawings, including eight target items and two distractors. The narrative is a quest during which the main character meets new protagonists, all of them coming out onto the scene unexpectedly (boundary crossing situations). The results show that 1) Chinese, French NS and advanced learners essentially describe the appearance of the new protagonists with motion verbs, while the low and intermediate learners make more use of non-motion verbs (e.g., 有 *yǒu* 'be' or 看到 *kàndào* 'see'); 2) like French NS with *sortir* 'exit', the three groups of learners dominantly use the Path verb 出 *chū* 'exit' (mostly with the deictic directional complement 来 *lái* 'hither'), where Chinese NS use Manner verbs (e.g., 跑 *pǎo* 'run' or 跳 *tiào* 'jump', followed by the Path directional complement 出 *chū* 'out'. The results reveal that there is no typological difference in respect to the selection between motion or non-motion verbs among Chinese and French NS, which means that the choice carried out by the learners may be related to their general linguistic development in L2. Regarding the lexicalization patterns of the motion verbs, there is a seemingly conceptual transfer from L1 (verb-framed) to L2 (satellite-framed patterns). As Slobin (1996) stated, the *thinking-for-speaking* in L2 seems resistant to restructuring even at an advanced level.

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