

Is Sylvester Pacing Up and Down or Is He Going Back and Forth? Onomasiological Analysis of the Multimodal Expression of Motion Events in French and Dutch as L1 and L2

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Christina Piot

University of Liège/University of Lille - Savoirs, Textes, Langage (CNRS UMR8163)
christina.piot@uliege.be

Abstract

The typological differences between verb-framed and satellite-framed languages observed by Talmy (2000) have been shown to be reflected in cospeech gestures (McNeill/Duncan 2000; Kita/Özyürek 2003; McNeill 2005; Brown/Chen 2013). More specifically, studies indicate different correlations between the types of language and semantic components encoded in gestures, and the synchronisation between gestures and speech (McNeill/Duncan 2000; Kita/Özyürek 2003). Such gestures should therefore be considered when studying L2 learners' thinking for speaking patterns (Stam 2018). Against this background, our study aims to determine how motion events are expressed in speech and co-speech gestures by L1 speakers of French, L1 speakers of Dutch and CLIL French-speaking learners of Dutch.

We conducted an elicitation experiment in which participants recounted scenes from a Tweety and Sylvester cartoon. Nine L1 speakers of French, nine L1 speakers of Dutch, and 11 CLIL French-speaking learners of Dutch (proficiency level: between A1 and B2) completed the task. Using different taxonomies, we identified the semantic components (manner and path) encoded in the verbs and satellites. Iconic and deictic gestures were analysed in terms of the semantic components of motion they convey (e.g., manner, path, ground). Finally, we examined the synchronisation between speech and gestures, following Stam's (2006) procedure.

In the present study, we adopted a qualitative approach by focusing on the expression of specific self-propelled motion events. We addressed the different multimodal combinations used to express these motion events and aimed to highlight the multimodal inter- and intralanguage differences and learners' interlanguage specificities.

Keywords

motion events, thinking-for-speaking, thinking-for-speaking in L2, co-speech gesture...

