Structural asymmetry in the expression of Source and Goal in French: from lexical semantics to discourse strategies

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This presentation addresses the source/goal asymmetry issue in the expression of Path in French using elicitation data from the project *Trajectoire (cf.* Ishibashi & al. 2006*).* French is known as a verb-framed language (Talmy 2000) which encodes Path and Motion into the verb as in (1)

   [1] *La femme sort de la grotte* (Lit. The woman exits out of the cave).

French motion verbs lexically encode the motion (change of placement) and the change of spatial relation (for instance, be at the source at T_0 => not be at the source at T_1) (cf. Boons 1987, Sarda 2001, Aurnague 2011). Thanks to this complex lexical semantics, motion verbs can profile the source, the goal, or the medium location (ie. location in between the source and the goal) or several such information (cf. Kopecka 2009). Moreover, French motion verbs frequently combine with prepositions which can change the meaning of the process as in (2):

   [2] *La femme sort dans la cour. (Lit.* The woman exits in(to) the yard)

Example (2), as opposed to (1), profiles the goal, the final location of the Figure rather than the initial location of the figure (the source), even if the verb itself (*sortir,* 'exit') foccusses on the source.

In this paper, I will provide a brief description of the lexico-syntactic devices available in French to express source and goal information in motion event. I will then present the elicitation data and analyze the frequency of the expression of the source and goal information at different level of structure. A more fine-grained analysis of the data will bring out more peripheral means used to express the source through discourse strategies, as in (3) where a relative clause modifying the Figure NP and the following inserted clause, give information about the initial position of the Figure.

   [3] donc sur une plage/un enfant en maillot de bain *qui au départ est immobile* heu *il est sur une sorte de petite d'une surmontée d' herbes*/heu court vers la caméra en sautant un rocher

   'Thus, on a beach, a child in a swimsuit *who at the beginning is still*, hum, *he is on a kind of small grass hill*/ hum runs towards the camera, jumping over a rock'

As a conclusion, I will defend two major points: the first one is related to difficulty to consider French a mere verb-framed language as French prepositions do behave as satellites when they express information different from the one expressed by the verb (as shown in (2)). This make possible to easily express complex motion events which can specify for instance the source information through the verb and the goal information through a PP. The second point is concerned with the importance of discursive strategies which strongly rely on the iconicity principle. This tendency to discursively specify element of the Path according to the principle of iconicity leads to a common expression of the source location as a setting at the beginning of the descriptions. This strategy compensates for the predominance of the expression of the goal within the verbal core. This last point is also linked to the semantic density issue (cf. Sinha & Kuteva 1995). The use of discursive strategies to first specify the setting, and then introduce the Figure participating in a motion event leads to classify French within the low semantic density languages as many semantic component of motion can be distributed over several sentences.

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