Motion event descriptions in a second language: Where are we now?

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The linguistic encoding of motion events has attracted a great deal of attention in second language acquisition (SLA) research in the last decade or so. This research, which is mostly based on Talmy's (1985, 1991, 2000) influential typological framework and Slobin's (1991, 1996)'s thinking for speaking (TFS) hypothesis, has examined the extent to which speakers of a second language (L2) are able to acquire the appropriate TFS patterns when talking about motion in the target language.

The lecture will be divided into two parts. In the first part I will provide an overview of the work conducted on the expression of *voluntary/spontaneous motion* by adult L2 learners. I will argue that this research can be fruitfully classified according to three main parameters: (1) the type of cross-linguistic influence that is examined, i.e., whether it is unidirectional –from the learner's L1 to his/her L2, or whether it is bidirectional –from the L1 on the L2 and from the L2 on the L1; (2) the typological relation between the learners' L1 and L2, i.e., whether the two languages belong to the same or different typological pattern; and (3) the level of linguistic proficiency of the learners in question, i.e., whether they are beginners, intermediate or advanced language learners.

In the second part of the lecture I will focus on a current project conducted on the expression of *caused-motion* by adult L2 learners. This research examines the expression of placement events by two groups of native speakers (NSs), i.e., NSs of Danish and NSs of Spanish, and two groups of adult L2 learners i.e., Danish learners of L2 Spanish and Spanish learners of L2 Danish. In the lecture I will focus on the results obtained with respect to the semantic categorization of placement verbs, which was examined by means of cluster analysis, a statistical technique previously used in the semantic categorization of other types of events in L1 (e.g., Majid et al., 2007, 2008) and L2 speakers (e.g., Jessen & Cadierno, 2013). The results of this analysis show difficulties for both learner groups in the semantic re-categorization of placement verbs.