

Intensifying compounds in the Diasystem of Belgian French-speaking learners of English



Isa Hendrikx
Isa.hendrikx@uclouvain.be

Diasystematic Construction Grammar: linguistic competence of multilingual speakers as an “interlingual network of constructions with different degrees of schematicity” (Höder, 2012: 255)

Research questions

- (1) Do cross-linguistic differences between the expression of intensification in French and English form an obstacle for learners to develop diasystematic links?
- (2) Does more input through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) help learners to enhance the reorganizational processes in their multilingual construction and to form more (entrenched) diasystematic links?

Participants

Non-CLIL	CLIL	L1 speakers
97	96	65

15 -20 years old

Tests

- The **multiple-choice test** consists of 10 short gap sentences
- The test includes frequent and infrequent intensifying compounds

He was ... drunk and behaved really badly
blind
fast
rock

- The **cloze test** consists of 10 short gap sentences

CONCLUSION
The CLIL effect is visible throughout the different levels of abstraction, both at the productive and the receptive level

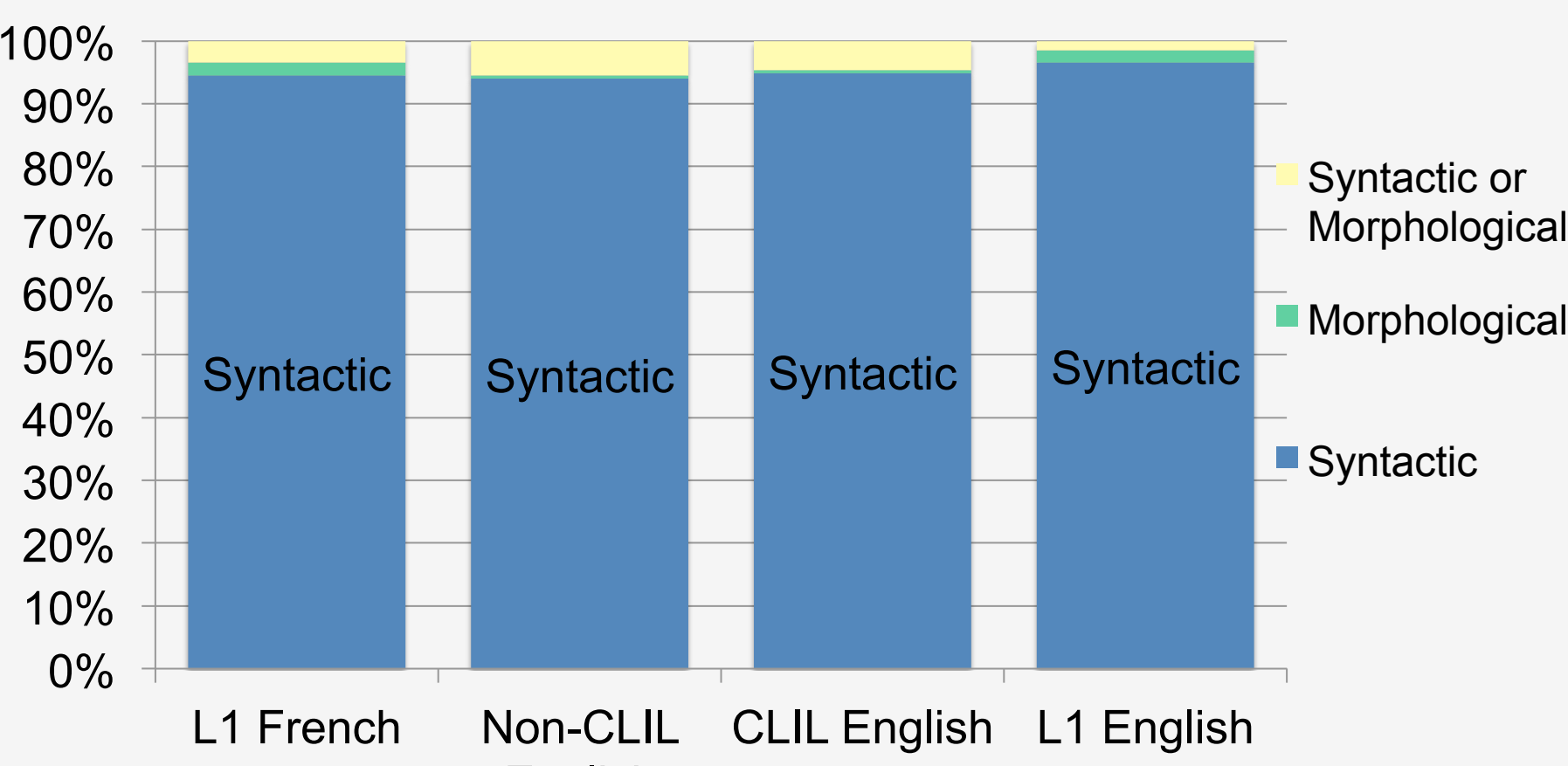
Receptive knowledge

Highest level of schematicity

Language Domain	Intensifying construction	French	English
SYNTAX	[ADV + ADJ] _{AP}	<i>très malade</i> ‘very ill’	<i>very ill</i>
	[ADJ ADJ] _{AP} [ADJ <i>mais</i> alors ADJ] _{AP}	<i>joli mais alors vraiment joli</i> ‘pretty but then really pretty’	<i>big big</i>
	[(<i>as</i>) ADJ <i>as</i> NP] _{AP} [(<i>aussi</i>) ADJ <i>que/</i> <i>comme</i> NP] _{AP}	<i>fort comme un Turc</i> lit. ‘strong like a Turkish person’	<i>gentle as a lamb,</i> <i>as fast as possible</i>
	[ADJ à INF] _{AP}	<i>bête à pleurer</i> ‘lit. stupid to cry’ <i>moche à hurler</i> ‘lit. ugly to shout’	
MORPHOLOGY	[Prefix + ADJ] _{ADJ}	<i>superpuissant</i> ‘super powerful’	<i>hypersensitive, extra-large</i>
	[N + ADJ] _{ADJ}	?	<i>ice-cold, brand-new, stock-still</i>
MORPHOLOGY / SYNTAX	[ADJ- <i>st</i>] _{ADJ} [(<i>the</i>) <i>most</i> ADJ] _{AP} [(<i>le/la</i>) <i>plus</i> ADJ] _{AP}	<i>le plus joli que j’ai jamais vu</i> ‘the prettiest I’ve ever seen’	<i>most beautiful ever, funniest of my life</i>

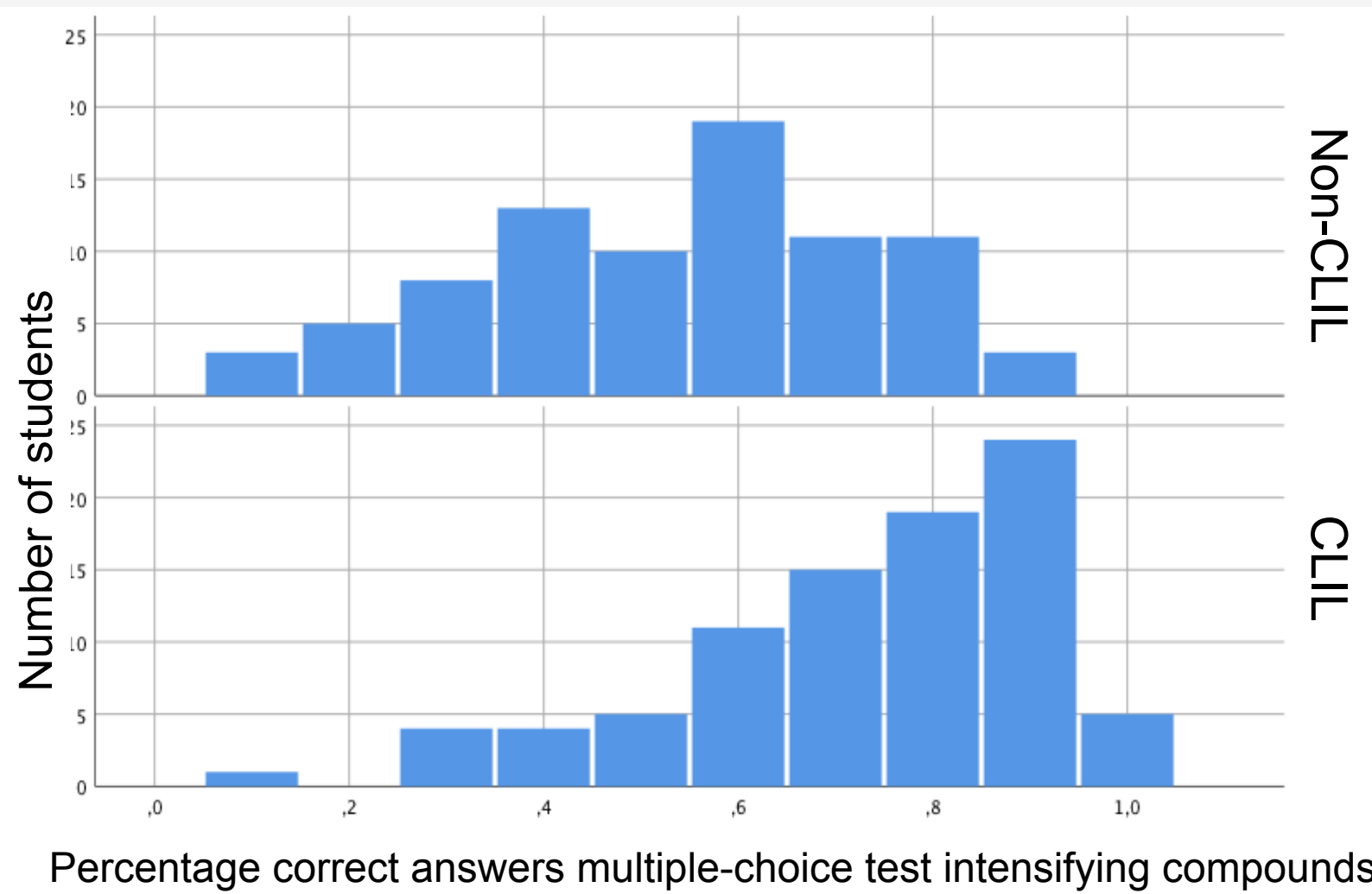
Productive use

SYNTACTIC VS. MORPHOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

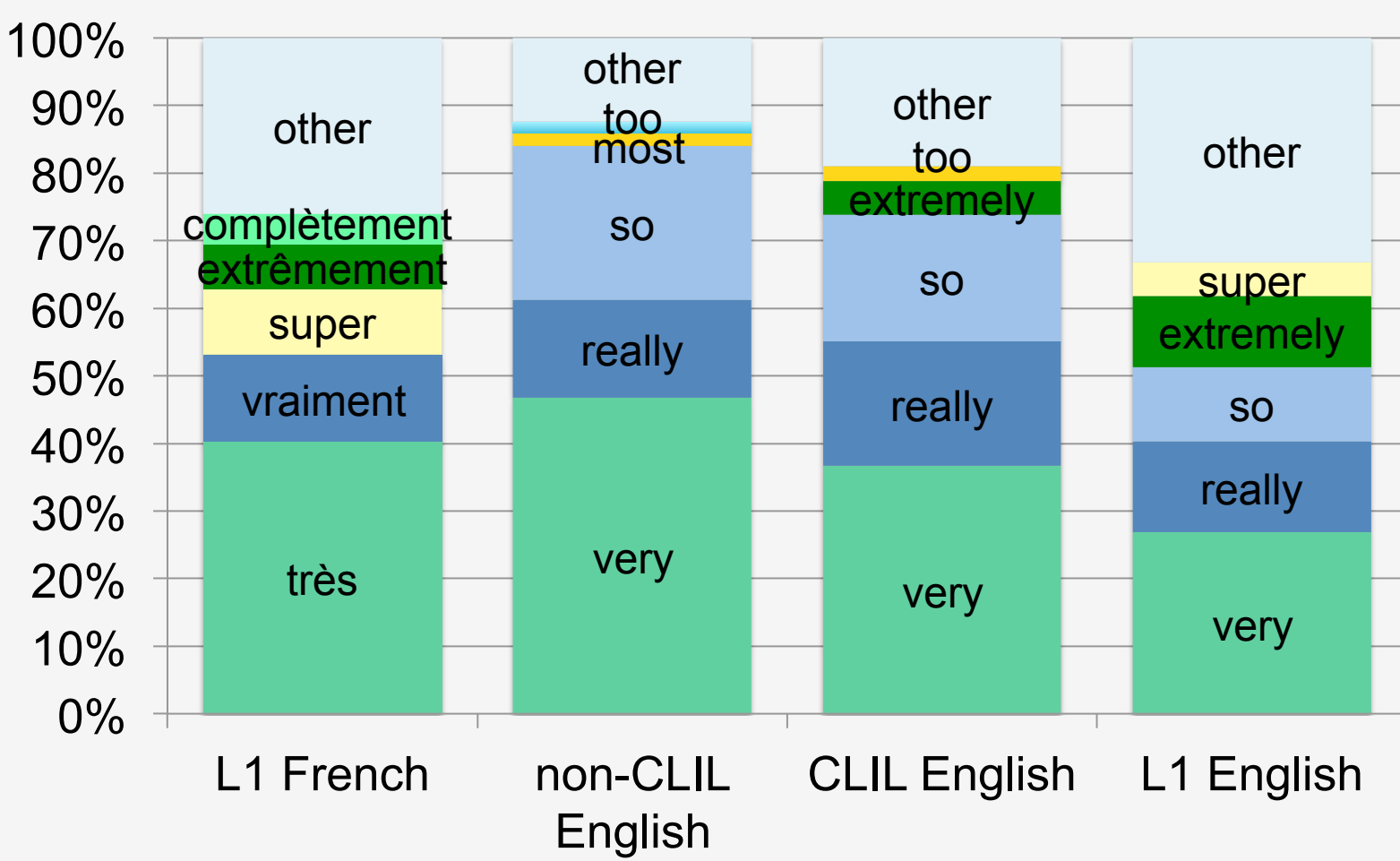


Semi-schematic constructions

PROPORTION CORRECT ANSWERS TO THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST



MOST FREQUENT INTENSIFIERS

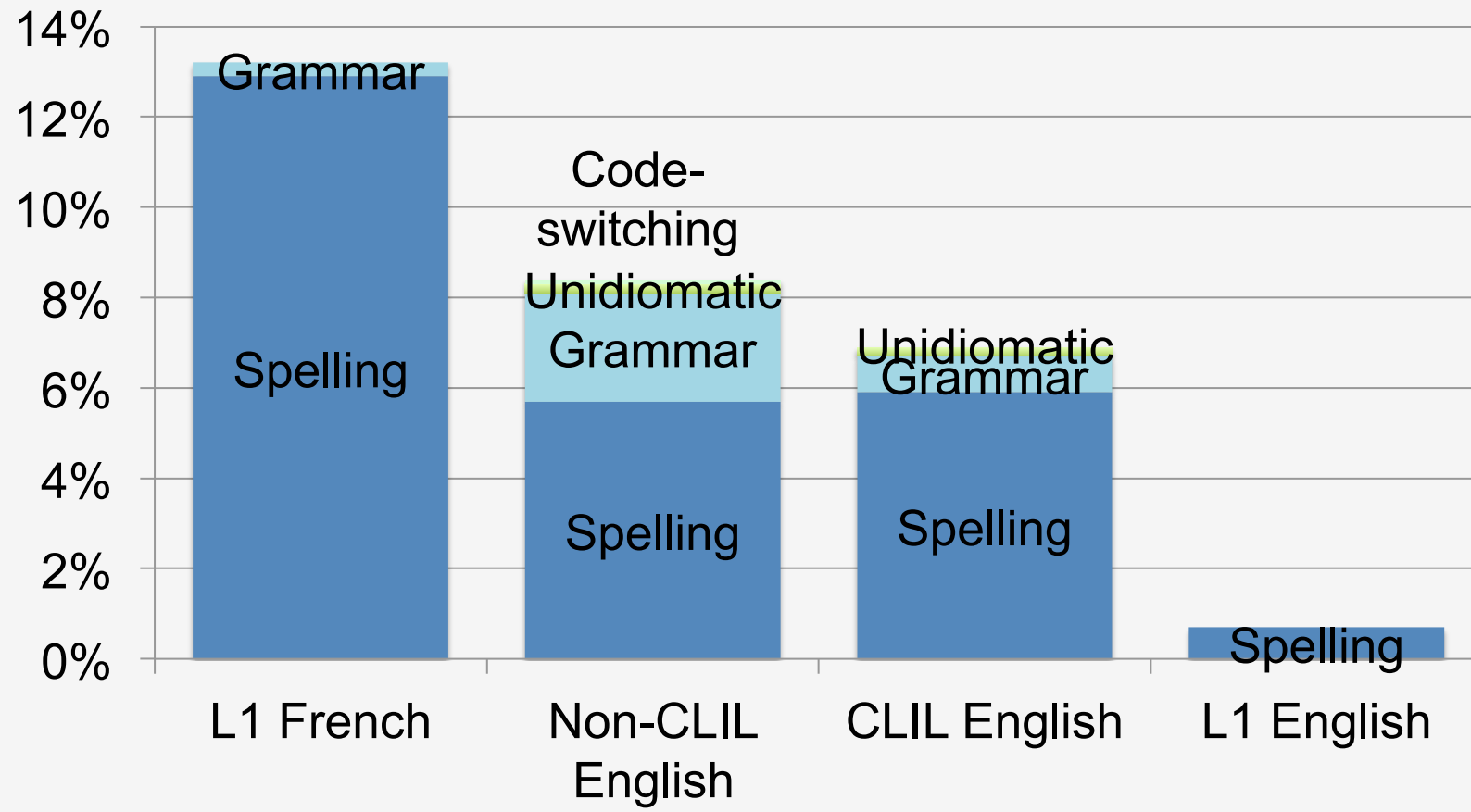


Substantive constructions

DIFFICULTY OF SPECIFIC COMPOUNDS

- >90% of the CLIL students recognized *brand-new* and *world wide*
- >60% of the CLIL learners identified *ice-cold*, *soaking wet*, *crystal clear*, *blind drunk*, *paper-thin*, *razor-sharp*, *wide awake* and *dead easy*
- 70.89% of the non-CLIL learners recognized *razor-sharp*
- >50% identified *brand-new*, *crystal clear*, *world wide*, *paper-thin*, *soaking wet* and *wide awake*
- <50% of the non-CLIL students recognized *ice-cold*, *dead easy* and *blind drunk*

MISUSE INTENSIFIERS



Diaconstruction
Form [[X]_{int} [Y]_{ADJ}]_{A/AP}
Meaning [[X]_{booster} [Y]_{scalar}]_{A/AP}
'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Fr>
Form [[X]_{ADJ} à [Y]_{int}]_{AP}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Diaconstruction <Fr + Eng>
Form [[X]_{ADV} [Y]_{ADJ}]_{AP}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Eng>
Form [[X]_N [Y]_{ADJ}]_{ADJ}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Fr>
Form [[X]_{ADJ} à *pleurer*]_{AP}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Fr>
Form [*très* [Y]_{ADJ}]_{AP}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Eng>
Form [*very* [Y]_{ADJ}]_{AP}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Eng>
Form [*ice* [Y]_{ADJ}]_{ADJ}
Meaning 'very ADJ'

Idioconstruction <Fr>
Form [*bête à pleurer*]_{AP}
Meaning 'very stupid'

Idioconstruction <Fr>
Form [*très chouette*]_{AP}
Meaning 'very nice'

Idioconstruction <Eng>
Form [*very nice*]_{AP}
Meaning 'very nice'

Idioconstruction <Eng>
Form [*ice-cold*]_{ADJ}
Meaning 'very cold'