

Translation of Motion events from German into French: On the complementarity of linguistic typology and Construction Grammar (CxG)



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1. Aims:

- (1) Three realizations of the **Caused Motion Construction** in German (Goldberg 1995, 2006)
- (2) **Linguistic Typology** (Talmy 1985, 2000; Croft e.a. 2010)
- (3) German and French in **contrast** (Pourcel/Kopecka 2005, Berthele 2006, De Knop/Dirven 2008)
- (4) **Translation** into French

2. Typology

German

- Satellite-framed language
- Path → satellites
- conflation of path and manner expression + flexibility in the combination of path and manner expression
- Manner salience (De Knop/Gallez 2012)

Motion / Path / Manner

French

- Verb-framed language
- Path → main verb
- Manner often implicit or skipped

- (1) Er rannte durch die Küche die Treppe runter in den Garten. (motion verb)
- (2) Er arbeitete sich durch den Materialberg. (non-motion verb)

- (1) Il traversa la cuisine, descendit l'escalier et sortit dans le jardin. (3 main verbs)
- (2) Il est venu à bout de cette masse de documents à force de travail / en travaillant. (no motion expression)

3. Constructions

Caused motion construction (Goldberg 1995, 2006) / Instantiations / Correspondences

German

- (1) *Ich habe mich (durchs Leben) durchboxen müssen*
'I had to box me/myself through (through life)'
- (2) *Er hat seine Idee durchgeboxt,*
'He has boxed his idea through'
- (3a) *Er hat sich durchs Leben geboxt.*
'He boxed himself through life'
- (3b) *Er hat sich zum Oscar gestottert.*
He stuttered himself to the oscar.
- (3c) *Jemanden ins Krankenhaus schlagen.*
* To hit someone into the hospital

- (1) Sub V Obj/Refl. Obl [VP + PP]
Ag V Pat. Loc.
- (2) Sub V Obj Obl [VP]
Ag V Pat. Loc.
- (3) Sub V Obj/Refl. Obl [PP]
Ag V Pat. Loc.

Real/fictive/metaphorical motion

No one-to-one correspondence

Motion?

- (1) *J'ai dû me battre dans (*à travers) la vie. (no motion) / ?J'ai traversé la vie en me battant..*
- (2) *Il a imposé son idée. (no motion)*
- (3a) *Il s'est battu dans la vie (*à travers) la vie./ ?Il a traversé la vie en se battant.*
- (3b) *Il a obtenu l'oscar grâce à son bégaiement. (no motion)*
- (3c) *frapper quelqu'un au point de l'envoyer à l'hôpital*

4. Difficulties encountered

- (1) Productive constructions in German
→ Non predictability
- (2) Manner salience in German
→ No one-to-one correspondence in French
- (3) Caused motion construction in German
→ No one-to-one correspondence in French
→ **Difficulties at several levels:**
 - Understanding of non-lexicalized verbs
 - **Translation into French**
 - Production of new instantiations of the CMC° in German
 - Creativity

5. CxG and Typology

- (1) Lexicon-syntax-continuum / Semantic-to surface-association (Talmy 2000)
 - (2) Semantic aspects of the whole argument structure
 - (3) Language-specific
 - (4) Complementarity
- **Used together helpful**
- CxG --> predict meaning + new realizations
 - CxG + Typology --> understanding even non lexicalized verbs within the construction
 - Typology provides an objective basis for translation choices

6. Solutions

- (1) Typological differences
→ preferred lexicalization patterns
→ "typological salience"
 - (2) Abstract schemas in CxG
→ Language-specific "Prototypical constructions"
- **Translation choices – choosing the most natural way of expressing motion in the target language**
- e.g. path expression privileged when translation of constructions featuring path and manner conflation from German into French**

7. Work in progress

- Pre- and post-tests with translation students (reading comprehension, paraphrasing, translation)
- Integrating first insights in the lecture "Linguistics applied to translation"

8. Literature (selection)

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