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Beyond the verb: constructions at work in the expression of static location in Dutch and French

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Aims & hypotheses

1. Typological differences w.r.t. location (native & learner data)
2. Larger perspective:
 1. differences at construction level
 2. different discourse strategies

Talmy's Typology of "MOTION events"

SATELLITE-framed		
<i>The bottle</i>	floated	into the cave
<i>De fles</i>	dreef	de grot binnen
	MANNER	PATH
VERB-framed		
<i>La bouteille</i>	entra	<i>dans la grotte</i> (en flottant)
	PATH	(MANNER)

- S-lang.: Gmc. la., Slavic la., Chinese, etc.
- V-lang.: Romance la., Hebrew, Turkish, etc.

Location as Static Motion

- Talmy (2000): MOTION EVENT either dynamic or static:

"The basic Motion event consists of one object (the FIGURE) **moving or located** with respect to another object (the reference object or the GROUND)" (Vol II, p. 25).
- Typological V/S distinction also applies to location
(see, however, Lemmens 2005; Lemmens & Slobin 2008)

Location verb project

(cf. Lemmens 2005; Lemmens & Perrez 2012)

- guided elicited descriptions based on 5 pictures from a children's book
- analysis of locative verbs, also in relation to the construction used (e.g., BLC vs. presentational), discourse factors
- against background of Talmy's typology of S/V-framed languages (but not so crucial)
- inter-Germanic differences (En./Du./Sw.); French-Gmc; co-verbal gestures (in progress); L2 (collab. J. Perrez)

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Picture 1



Can you tell me where the **clothes** are in this shop, telling me **what types of clothes** they are as well?

Picture 2



- (a) Tell me where the **shoes** and the **shoe boxes** are in this store?
(b) Can you please describe for me where the **customers** are, talking about each of them **individually**?

Picture 3



Here I'm interested in the **clothes** and the **furniture**.
Can you tell me where they are?

Picture 4



Where are the **vegetables**?

Picture 5



What kind of **products** are being sold here and where are they?

Experiment protocol

- Two parts with different tasks:
 1. Core part: elicitation of locative descriptions of the basis of these 5 pictures
 2. Follow-up: elicitation of coding variation for a three selected scenes
- Second part ignored today

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Oral Picture Description Project

- 12 subjects per language (22 for Dutch L2), pictures presented in randomized order
- Video-taped, transcribed & coded (CHAT & ELAN)
- Current analysis (done in Excel):
 - based on sentences describing the **location of entities**, (location verb or locative complement)
 - annotated for Verb type, Cx (BLC, Pres, ID, etc.), Figure, Ground, Satellites, etc.

- Difficulty of **delineating locative** clauses (lots of embedding), e.g.,
 - *on the bed [that stands in the middle of the room], there lie clothes*
 - linguistic (clausal) level: 2 locative events
Fig1=bed; Fig2=clothes; Fig1 > Gr for Fig2
 - discourse / functional level: 1 locative event:
Fig=clothes; rest = "auxiliary"
 - *there are clothes on the bed vs.
there are clothes lying on the bed vs.
there are clothes that are lying on the bed*

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Problem of ellipsis: $V_b=0$; $C_x=()$

*there hangs also meat on the ceiling on hooks
and [there hang] sausages more to the right
and fully to the right in the store [there *hang]
bags and cookies and so*



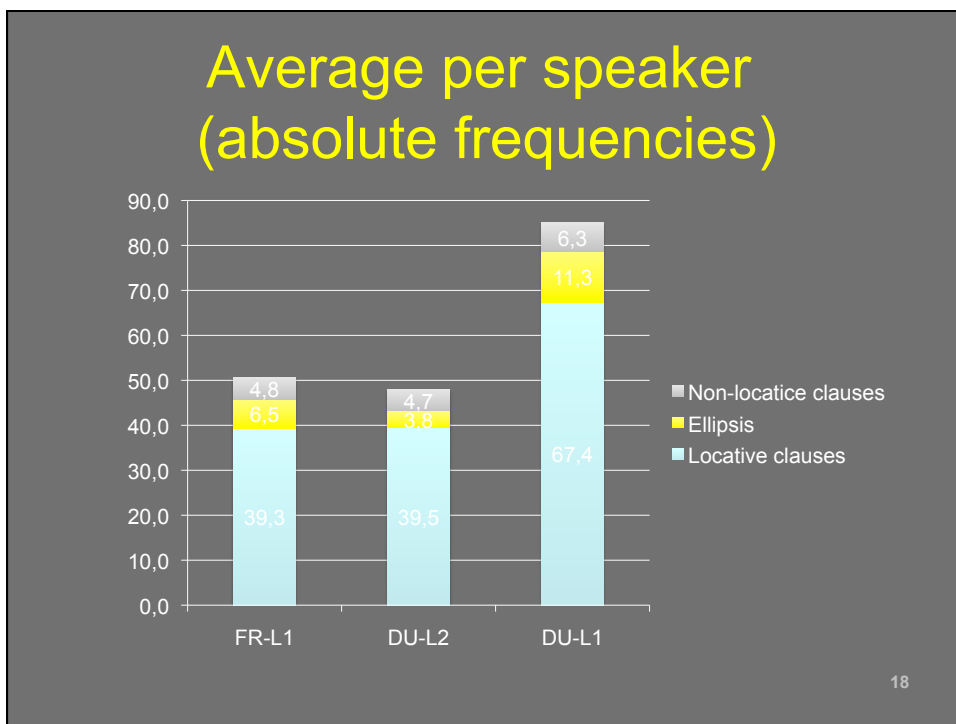
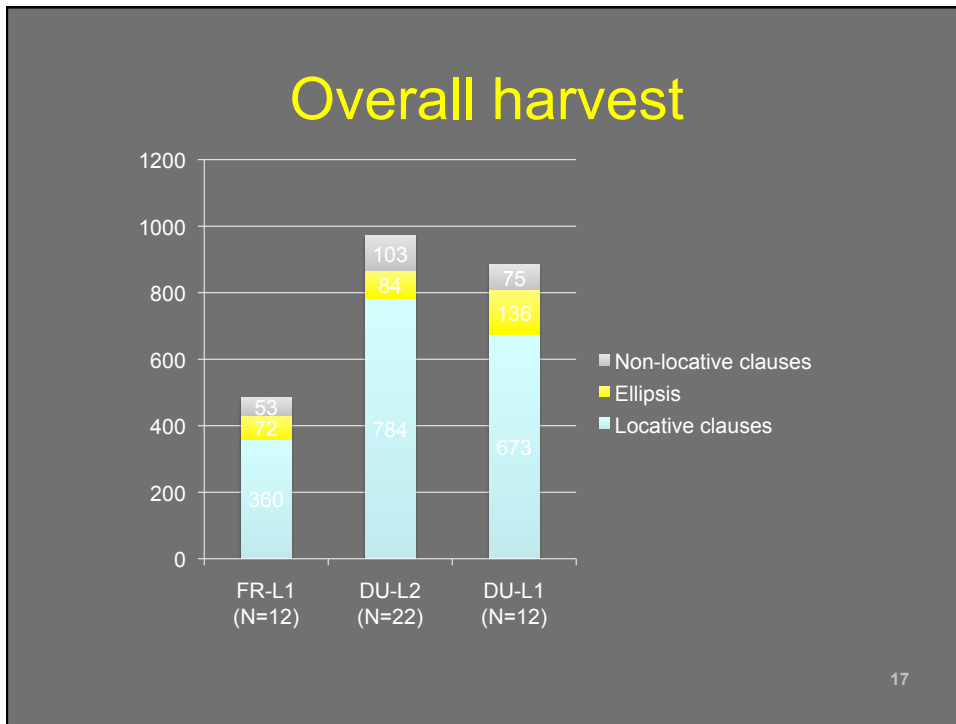
Non-locs

- Locative clause: contains a locative verb or locative complement
- "non-locative": clauses with locative verb only, without a locative complement :
 - *There lie clothes* (PRESENTational)
 - *People are standing*
- Rationale:
 - avoid favorable treatment of Dutch (higher use of POS vbs)

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General overview of the corpus

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OPD-data: analysis

1. Verb types
2. Constructions

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1. Verb types

- **Posture** verbs (includes *hang*)
- **Neutral** verbs (e.g. *be*, *se trouver*, ...)
- **Dispositional** verbs: some indication of 'manner' of location (term taken from Brown 1996):
 - Configuration: *folded*, *draped*, ...
 - Arrangement: *spread*, *aligned*, ...
 - Attachment: *attached*, *glued*, ...

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Verb types (cont'd)

- **Perception** verbs:
 - *you see clothes on the bed*
- **Possession** verbs:
 - *the woman has some clothes in front of her on the counter*
- **Others**
 - MOTION verbs: *the counter runs along the wall*
 - ACTION verbs: *tying a tie in front of the mirror*
 - CONTAINMENT & HOLD verbs

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2. Construction types

- **BLC** (basic locative construction):
 - The clothes are / lie on the bed (Fig-Vb-Gr)*
- **PRES**entational clauses :
 - There are / lie clothes on the bed*
- **ID**entificational clause:
 - It's clothes on the bed*

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Construction types (cont'd)

- **TRANS**itive clause (locative FIG = OBJ):
 - I see clothes on the bed* (**PERC**eption)
 - And you have the green chair up there* (**POSS**essive-viewer based)
 - She has clothes on her arm* (**POSS**essive-char.)
 - She lays clothes on the counter* (**CAUS**ative)
- **PROG**ressive (Dutch only):
 - *The man stands to dress in the bathroom*

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COMBINED Constructions (same Figure)

XXX + BLC:

- Different combinations possible, e.g.
 - **PRES (non-loc) + BLC**
There are clothes | that lie on the bed
 - **PRES (loc) + BLC**
There are on the table vegetables | that lie there
 - **PERC + BLC**
I see clothes | (that) lie on the bed

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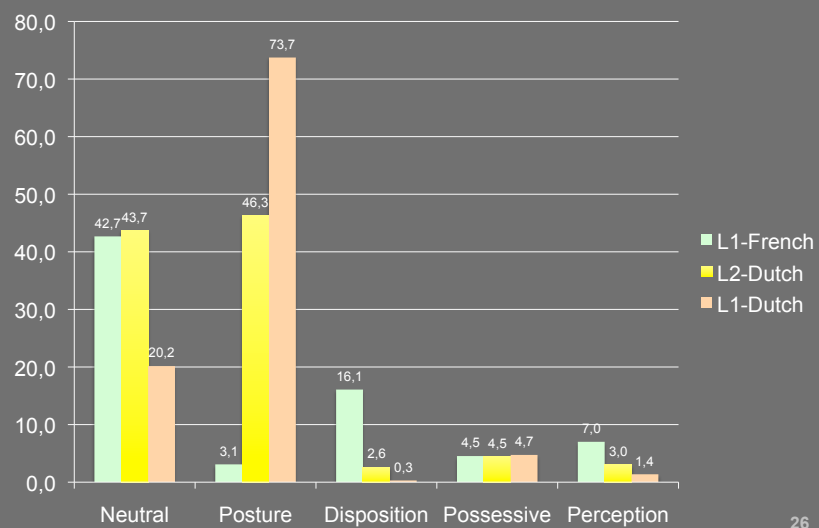
OPD-data: results

1. Verb types (cf. earlier studies)
2. Constructions & discourse strategies

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Verb types

(cf. Lemmens & Perrez 2012)



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L2 (Fr > Du)

- striking **underuse** of posture verbs and overuse of neutral verbs
 - individually not always incorrect, but is accumulation which gives unidiomatic character
- "posture verb **confusion** / **panic**":
 - use of wrong posture verb
 - use of posture verb where none is allowed (overgeneralisation)

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- L2-speakers do pick up certain tendencies in the target language, leading to overextension, occasionally even to "**over-locativization**", i.e. using a locative clause (following overall Dutch logic) for scenes where Dutch would not (e.g. **clothes standing on people*)

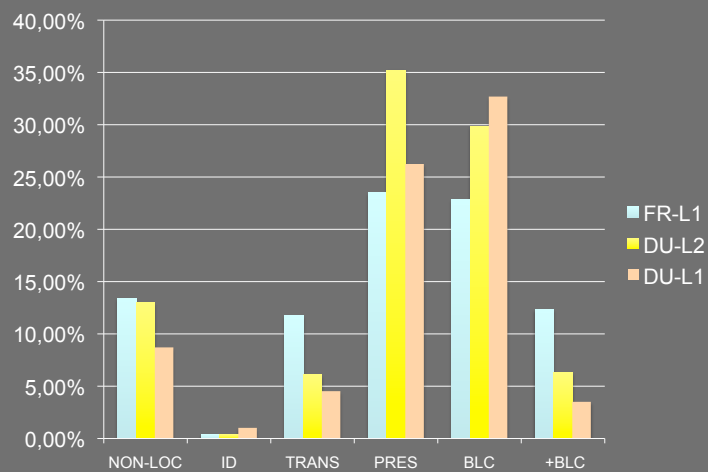
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OPD-data: results

1. Verb types (cf. earlier studies)
2. Constructions & discourse strategies

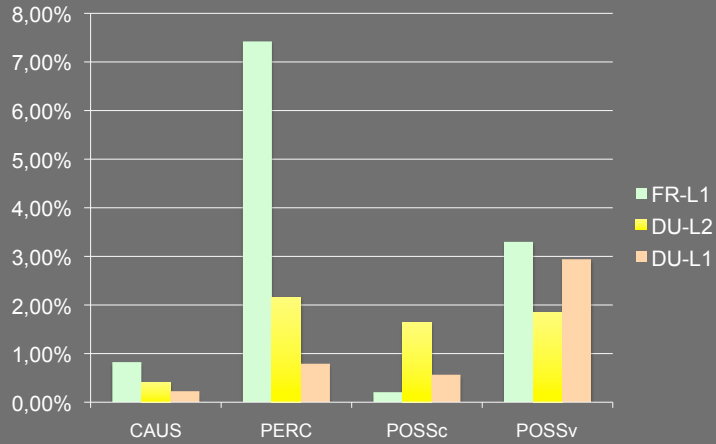
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Construction types (Ellipsis, OTHER, PROG excluded)



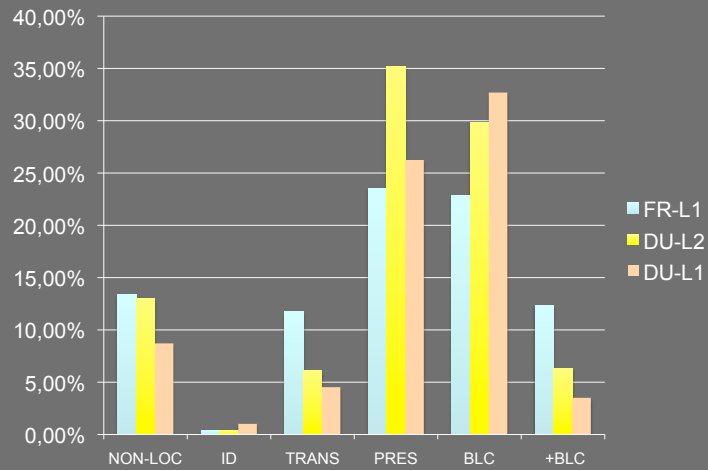
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TRANSITIVE Cx (subtypes)



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Construction types (Ellipsis, Other, PROG excluded)



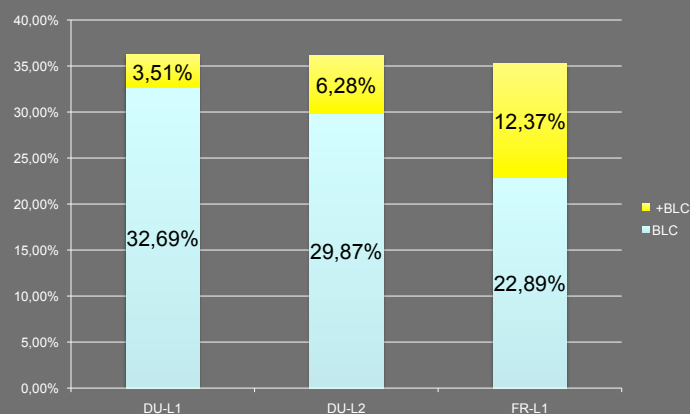
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BLC vs. +BLC

- +BLC: marks complex clauses with further locative information about the entity in a subclause (same Figure), e.g.
 - *I see clothes **that lie on the bed*** (PERC+BCL)
- "BLC" and "+BLC" taken together gives similar overall frequency L1 & L2, yet important difference between the two sub-categories:

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BLC vs. +BLC



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From SYNTAX to DISCOURSE

- Dutch and French seem fundamentally different in their organisation of information:
 - French: introduces an entity and then provides further locative information on that entity (hence, higher occurrence of +BLC), e.g.,
*vous avez un premier **client** qui **est assis** sur un fauteuil vert*
 you have a first customer who is seated on a green sofa

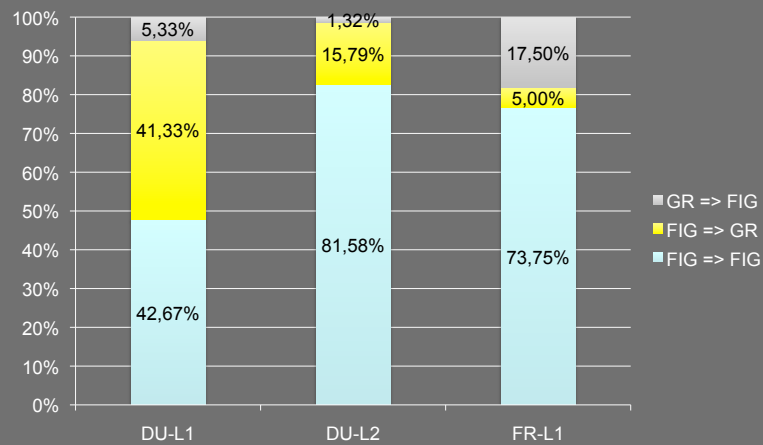
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From SYNTAX to DISCOURSE

- Dutch: often introduces the location of an entity (Figure) which is followed by locative information on another entity (Fig 1 serves as the background)
in de slaapkamer staat er een groot bed waar verschillende kledingstukken op liggen
 in the bedroom there stands a big **bed** on which different **clothes** lie

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Structuring (locative) information in subordination



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Onions and trains

- French = ONION-model = accumulative pattern, more information on the **given** entity (Figure or Ground):



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Onions and trains

- Dutch = TRAIN model = chaining pattern: linking of locative events involving **different** Figures

in the bedroom
there stands a big bed

Locative event 1

on which lie different
clothes

Locative event 2

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Conclusions

- Typological differences in choice of verbs
 - Dutch: posture-verb
 - French: neutral verbs, disposition verbs (attachment)
- Constructional differences point at different way of organising information
 - French: cumulative, with locative info as added value
 - Dutch: location more autonomous, as separate events

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Thank you !

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