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

Julien Perrez

Maarten Lemmens

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”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SATELLITE-framed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The bottle</td>
<td>floated</td>
<td>into the cave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De fles</td>
<td>dreef</td>
<td>de grot binnen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANNER</td>
<td>PATH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERB-framed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La bouteille</td>
<td>entra</td>
<td>dans la grotte</td>
<td>(en flottant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATH</td>
<td>(MANNER)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 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)

Picture 1

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

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

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

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*

Problem of ellipsis: Vb=0; Cx=()

*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)

General overview of the corpus
Overall harvest

Average per speaker (absolute frequencies)
OPD-data: analysis

1. Verb types
2. Constructions

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*, …
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

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*
Construction types (cont'd)

• TRANSitive clause (locative FIG = OBJ):
  * I see clothes on the bed (PERCeption)
  * And you have the green chair up there (POSSessive-viewer based)
  * She has clothes on her arm (POSSessive-char.)
  * She lays clothes on the counter (CAUSative)

• PROGressive (Dutch only):
  * The man stands to dress in the bathroom

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
OPD-data: results

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

Verb types
(cf. Lemmens & Perrez 2012)
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)

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

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

Construction types
(Ellipsis, OTHER, PROG excluded)
TRANSITIVE Cx (subtypes)

Construction types
(Ellipsis, Other, PROG excluded)
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:
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

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
Structuring (locative) information in subordination

Onions and trains

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

  who sits on sofa

  on the left you have customer
Onions and trains

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

  ![Diagram](image.png)

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
Thank you!

Julien Perrez
Julien.Perrez@ulg.ac.be

Maarten Lemmens
maarten.lemmens@univ-lille3.fr
http://perso.univ-lille3.fr/~mlemmens