

**Title:** Typological Constraints in Foreign Language Acquisition: The Expression of Motion by Advanced Russian Learners of English and French

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Much recent interest has been devoted to typological variations in how languages represent motion. Talmy (2000) classifies French as verbframed (VF), English and Russian as satelliteframed (SF), depending on what they lexicalise in verb roots (Path for VF, Manner for SF). However, Russian presents particular properties within SF languages: prefixes, simplex Verbs of Motion. The present study explores the implications of these differences by comparing how advanced Russian learners of English/French and groups of natives (N=12 per group) described clips showing voluntary motion carried out in various manners and along three paths: UP, DOWN, ACROSS.

Results concerning natives show a massive reliance on an SF pattern in English, but different patterns within and across event types in the other two languages. French mostly shows a VF pattern (all events) and Manner+Path conflation in the verb (UP). Russian displays the most complex pattern combination, including SF (all events), VF (DOWN, UP), and conflation (UP).

Given the high variability of their L1, Russian learners were expected to display more variability in L2 English /French than natives in the corresponding languages. Results show that learners of English do produce more variable responses than English natives: target SF and nontarget VF (*he put itself to the tree, he crossed the street*). However, learners of French show the same target patterns as the natives (VF/conflation), although in different proportions: more VF (UP), less VF (DOWN/ACROSS) than in natives' descriptions. Paradoxically, it seems easier for Russian learners to acquire opaque patterns than transparent ones.

To conclude, in the acquisition of French, opaque L1 and L2 systems are fused into an 'intermediary' learners' system, whereas the acquisition of English is presumably influenced by L1 opacity which overrides L2 transparency.

Talmy, L. (2000). *Toward a cognitive semantics*. Cambridge, MIT Press.

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