

## Describing Motion Events in Spanish and English in Child Bilingual Narratives

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Previous studies have shown that there are crosslinguistic differences when encoding motion events (Berman & Slobin 1994). Research has shown that motion is preferably expressed by means of a manner verb in satellite languages like English as in example (1) while verb-framed or Romance languages like Spanish prefer to use a path verb as shown in example (2) (Talmy 1985):

- 1) An owl flew <sub>[motion + manner]</sub> out <sub>[path]</sub>
- 2) Sale <sub>[motion + path]</sub> un buho  
Exits an owl

(Examples taken from Slobin 2006)

The main verb ‘sale’ in example (2) provides information about the motion and path of the event without encoding manner. In example (1), on the other hand, the main verb ‘flew’ encodes motion and manner and the particle ‘out’ expresses the path. Spanish expressions usually capture manner by means of a gerund or prepositional phrase (Naigle et al. 1998) as shown in example (3)

- 3) Sale <sub>[motion + path]</sub> volando <sub>[manner]</sub> un buho  
Exits flying an owl

The lexicalisation of motion events in Spanish is constrained by syntactic and lexical features. Saliency of manner in Spanish is very low due to its lack of extensive manner verbs as compared to English, a high manner salient language, with a big repertoire of manner verbs (Slobin 2006). Furthermore, the event structure involving boundary crossing (Aske 1989, Naigle et al. 1998) and effects of language typology constrain the use of manner verbs in Spanish. However, Feist et al. (2007), in their preliminary study of manner verbs in Spanish, discovered that context and culture play a role in enhancing manner saliency and the acceptability of manner verbs in boundary crossing events.

Focusing on Spanish-English bilingual children (7 to 9 years-old), this study investigated bidirectional transfer of grammatical and lexical structures in oral narratives elicited by means of the picture book, “Frog, where are you?” (Mayer, 1969). Motion events in both English and Spanish narratives of 20 bilingual children collected in Miami, Florida were analysed (Pearson 2002) for patterns of motion description (manner versus path). It is hypothesised that bilingual children will show cross-linguistic influence from their first (L1) and second (L2) languages in a uni- or bidirectional way in the same way as bilingual adults (Hohenstein et al. 2006) and adult L2 speakers (Larrañaga et al. 2011). Based on the findings of Aveledo & Athanasopoulous (2016), it is also predicted that bilingual children will produce fewer manner verbs than their English monolingual counterparts, but fewer path verbs than their Spanish monolingual children.

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