Urszula Paprocka-Piotrowska

Space conceptualization and motion verbs in Polish and French as foreign languages

2014

Urszula PAPROCKA-PIOTROWSKA
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Space Conceptualization and Motion Verbs in Polish and French as Foreign Languages

Abstract:
The following text compares the acquisition of French and Polish as second languages. The empirical research (target group includes Polish and French native speakers, Polish students of French and French students of Polish) is designed to answer certain questions concerning, among others, the extent of language categorisation, the characteristics of the mother tongue and real communication of adult learners of typologically different foreign languages.

The research results show that 1) the major difficulty in constructing a new system of meaning stems from the necessity of building a new type of relation, 2) constructing new dictionary resources is a function of learners' knowledge of given language tools, and 3) comparison of the learners' transition from Polish to French and vice versa implies the existence of certain stages of acquisition particular to a deconstruction of its own and construction of a new system of language devices.

Introduction

The following text presents a part of a more broadly conceived trans-lingual research project which aims to compare the acquisition of French and Polish as second languages (cf. U. Paprocka-Piotrowska 2008[1], 2012). Based on neo-Whorfist assumptions (E. Sapir 1978, B.L. Whorf 1982) and the linguistic concept of the image of the world from the perspective of the Lublin ethnolinguistic school (J. Bartmiński/ R. Tokarski 1986, J. Bartmiński 2007), the empirical research presented below attempts to answer questions about the extent of language categorisation (semantic/syntactic structures); the characteristics of the mother tongue; and the influence of the representation of the 'objective world' (A. Wierzbicka 1978) at the moment when an adult learner of a typologically different foreign language starts to use it in actual communication. The deliberations presented below consider detailed issues connected with conceptualisation and expression of movement in short texts prepared for the research. The experimental nature of the observation, which is based on groups of 20 people, does not allow us to extrapolate its results to all learners (all Poles learning French and vice versa). Nor does it give an unambiguous declaration of

---

[1] This paper is a revised version of U. Paprocka-Piotrowska (2008, Chapter 4. *Verbes de mouvement en français et en polonais. Classement de Lamiroy*).

observed language behaviour verifiability in different communication situations (writing, everyday communication, 'uncontrolled' language activities). However, it reveals strong tendencies in both groups polled, indicating fundamental differences typical for symmetric connections: Polish as the mother tongue/French as the foreign language and French as the mother tongue/Polish as the foreign one.

1. Research participants and control groups, data and corpus, language activity and its character

The data come from the four groups of students selected homogeneously according to language proficiency (level 1/ level 2), age (adults, mostly students) and the conditions of the language acquisition process (basically the so-called 'institutional environment' e.g. university, summer courses). The empirical material (language data) from the learners was supplemented with comparable language material taken from control groups consisting of French and Polish native speakers (students). According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (*CEFR*, 2001), Polish students who learn French reach the B1/B2+ levels (level 1) as well as B2/B2+ (level 2) while the French students learning Polish as a foreign language adequately gain A1 (level 1) and A2 (level 2). Such diversity (A1/A2 and B1/B2) should not be treated, however, as a methodological obstacle. Moreover, the suggested analysis does not focus precisely on checking whether both groups behave in exactly the same way during particular stages of acquisition, but rather on observing how acquisition proceeds from elementary to advanced. That is why all the material for the analysis can be presented as follows:

French students: **A1 (A1_FR) & A2 (A2_FR)**	Polish students: **B1 (A1_PL) & B2 (A2_PL)**	Control groups: **Native_PL & Native_FR**
A1/A2/B1/B2:	competence level according to the *CEFR*	
A1_FR, A2_FR:	French student of Polish, level 1 and 2	
A1_PL, A2_PL:	Polish student of French, level 1 and 2	
Native_PL, Native_FR:	native speakers of Polish and French	

Table 1. Four groups of students and two control groups (date collected for the research)

In order to achieve a homogenous student profile, the control groups and the groups of Polish students consisted of 20 people each, while the groups of French learners of Polish comprised 10 people each. Thus, quantitative comparisons (figures describing 6 observed groups) are usually presented as a percentage.

The research participants had to retell an animated film lasting 5 minutes (part of cartoon entitled *Reksio Łyżwiarz [Rex the Skater]*, cf. http://filmpolski.pl). In the film one of the characters falls while skating on a barely frozen lake[2]. According to the definition of complex language activities (W. Levelt 1987), such a research objective

---

[2] Research protocol prepared for the needs of APN 2JE 454 project (CNRS/Paris 8, France): *Construction du discours par des apprenants des langues, enfants et adultes.* Cf. M. Watorek (2004), A.-C. Démagny / U. Paprocka-Piotrowska (2004).

allows one to observe the comprehensive process of creating language communication: from conceptualization (thought) to verbalization (word). The choice of research task, i.e. a cartoon for children, was influenced by three factors:

a) since it is silent, the story can be presented without giving its 'primary' language version;

b) the chosen part of the film initiates creation of a coherent story about the term structure allowing a detailed study of the expressed processes (verb study);

c) the simple animated film assures ease in building discourse and makes possible comparison between data generates even at the early stages of language acquisition[3].

The linguistic data, collected and recorded on an audio tape, have been transcribed in the CHILDES[4] (B. Mac Whinney 2000) and analysed (after encoding) with the use of CLAN system[5]. Automatically generated lists of verbs divided into classes (see below), allow for detailed quantitative and qualitative comparisons of the empirical material gathered.

2. Motion verbs classification

B. Lamiroy's typology of motion verbs (1983) divides so called *motion verbs* into three different classes: *verbs of movement* (not to be confused with general class of motion verbs), *verbs of directed movement* and *verbs of body motion*.

(1) Verbs of movement (change of position)

These include such verbs as *to march, to run, to skate, to swim*. The movement expressed is 'internal' (L. Tesnière 1976) as it concentrates on the subject performing the action (subject as an agent). One who *marches*, *runs*, *skates*, or *swims* moves from one place to another. Nevertheless, the reference point of the movement is not important.

In the original French version of his typology, B. Lamiroy (1983) names such verbs as *verbes de déplacement (verbs of movement)*. They are indicated below with the abbreviation *vmv*.

(2) Verbs of directed movement (change of location)

These include such verbs as *to enter/to exit, to come/to leave, to drive up/to drive down*. They are concentrated on the space where they take place and express 'external' movement (L. Tesnière 1976): from point 'a' to point 'b'. The reference point in this

---

[3] The originally prepared protocol (APN project, cf. *supra*) is also intended to compare the utterances of adults and children, which is why the props used in the research are quite simple.

[4] CHILDES: *Child Language Data Exchange System*, a computer programme used in language data processing that consists of three components: transcription rules and CHAT (*Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts*) coding of data; a CLAN (*Computerized Language Analysis*) text editor; and a database; cf.: http://childes.psy.cmu.edu.

[5] In CLAN some transcription procedures and data coding are automated. It permits automatic searches for encoded items.

case is very important since it decides on the sense of a verb and spatially orients the movement.

Verbs of directed motion (Lamiroy's *verbes de déplacement orienté*, below marked as *vdm*) usually occur in pairs and express displacements in opposite directions: *to go upstairs/to go downstairs, to come/to leave, to enter/to leave.*

(3) Verbs of body motion (change of posture)

Verbs such as *to lower, to squat* and *to kneel* are verbs of body motion. They express movement of the subject but do not imply the transfer from one point to another as they respond to the frame of the body and its position. Like verbs of movement, they do not require a reference point to define the occurring movement.

B. Lamiroy determines such verbs as *verbes de mouvement du corps* and in the following they will be indicated with the abbreviation *vbm* (*verbs of body motion*).

3. Motion expressions in Polish and French languages

(1) General description *vs* detailed description

B. Kielski (1957–1960) in his fundamental work comparing Polish and French language structures, as well as S. Gniadek (1979), M. Gawełko (1989) and J. Florczak (1997), states that in the case of motion verbs and concepts connected with movement, the Polish language can be characterized with greater adequacy in semantic descriptions of motion and the type of displacement. The typical example is the Polish sentence 'Zeszyt *leży* na stole' (The notebook *lies* on the table) with the French equivalent 'Le cahier *est* sur la table' (The notebook *is* on the table).

To compare motion verbs in two languages, the generic expression *vs* specific expression dichotomy is usually used. Thus, Polish will usually opt for the specific expression while French, which is an analytic language by its nature, is more likely to choose generic expressions that require the "addition" of something:

> Poustawiaj książki! [which means: *line up the books* not e.g. *lay them down*]
> *vs*
> Range les livres! [which means: *order the books*].

(2) Verb-framed languages *vs* satellite-framed languages

According to L. Talmy's typology[6] (1985, 2000), the structural differences between Polish and French mean they represent two opposite categories. The French encoding trajectory (path) exists only in the verb, which means it belongs to a group of verb-framed languages (*V-languages*). However, the Polish language encoding trajectory exists in, *inter alia*, prefixes (which may or may not be the same as an accompanying preposition, e.g. **do**-*paść* **do** *drzwi,* **do**-*jechać* **do** *domu* versus **w**paść **do** *wody,*

---

[6] Cf. D. Slobin (2004: 219) à propos L. Talmy's typology: "Briefly, the typology is concerned with the means of expression of the *path* of movement. In *verb-framed language* (V-languages) path is expressed by the main verb in a clause ('enter', 'exit', 'ascend', etc.), whereas in *satellite-framed languages* (S-languages) path is expressed by an element associated with the verb ('go in/out/up', etc.)".

*wychylać się **przez** okno*;[7] cf. J. Kuryłowicz 1964, A. Kopecka 2004). Polish is therefore a satellite-framed language (*S-language*).

Such typological differences in expressing (coding) a motion are important in that adults who learn a foreign language and have already mastered their native language entirely require cognitive/syntactic restructuring of the concepts and expressions acquired in L1 in order to master them (again) in L2. According to some researches (D. Slobin 1991, J. Giacobbe 1992, M. Lambert 1998, M. Caroll/ C. von Stutterheim 2003), adults who learn foreign languages are rather reluctant to attempt such mental-grammar restructuring. Hence, in the opinion of French people learning Polish (D. Sikora 2008) sentences such as:

Doszedł do nas biegnąc instead of: *Dobiegł do nas.*
[He came up to us running instead of: *He run up to us]*

are probably influenced by French structure below:

Il nous a rejoint en courant.
[He joined us running]

4. Motion verbs in narration

The diagram below presents the position of three types of motion verbs (*verbs of directed movement, verbs of movement, verbs of body motion*) gathered from the statements of research participants groups.

As noted above, the symbols A1/A2 & PL/FR refer to the language level (1 and 2) and indicate the source language of those polled (PL-Polish Students, FR-French students). The results achieved by the learners were compared to those of the native speakers (FR-French, PL-Poles).
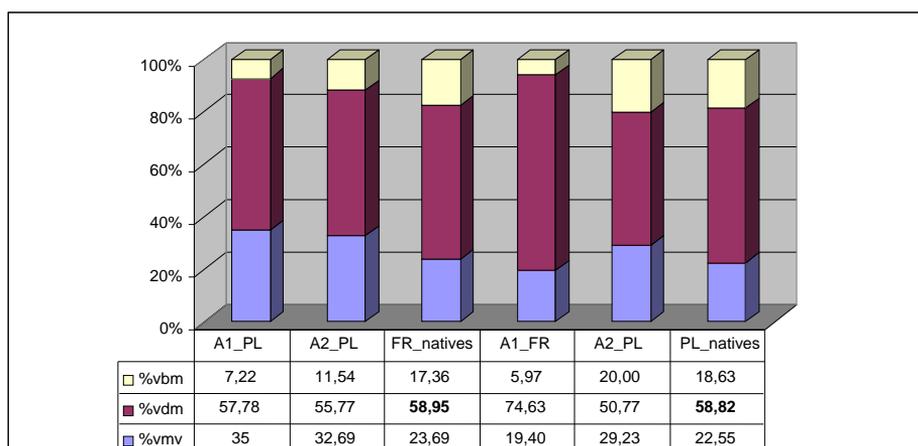
	A1_PL	A2_PL	FR_natives	A1_FR	A2_PL	PL_natives
☐ %vbm	7,22	11,54	17,36	5,97	20,00	18,63
■ %vdm	57,78	55,77	**58,95**	74,63	50,77	**58,82**
☐ %vmv	35	32,69	23,69	19,40	29,23	22,55

Diagram 1. The distribution of three classes of verbs of motion in test groups (%):
vbm = verbs of body motion, vdm = verbs of directed movement,
vmv = verbs of movement

---

[7] *To go to the door, to go home* versus *fall into the water, lean out of the window*.

The overall distribution of *verbs of movement, verbs of directed movement* and *verbs of body motion* is striking in its regularity: in all groups. Regardless of proficiency and source language – and among native speakers too – the dominant group is that of *directed movement* (the middle part of the diagram bars). Next are verbs of body movement (base of diagram bars), and lastly are the verbs of body motion (top bars diagram).

Also striking is the near-identical distribution of types of verbs used in both control groups (native speakers): almost 59% are *directed movement*; about 23% are *verbs of movement*; and verbs of *body motion* make up about 18%. This isomorphism results from the fact that all subjects were doing the same language task and indicates clearly the identity of the global usage of the available lexical material, which is appropriate for both languages. Differences in the task realization (in verbal repertoires composition) are probably situated within individual classes tested.

(1) *To go* as the motion *by default*. Verbs of directed movement

It is very interesting that verbs of direct motion are used almost identically by the two control groups (cf. Diagram 1 *supra*). In both cases many forms have been generated by multiplication of occurrence only when it comes to some verbs. In the case of French speakers these are: *aller [to go]* (70), *sortir [to go out]* (47), *tomber [to fall]* (31), *rentrer [to return]* (22), *aller chercher [to pick up]* (22), *revenir [to return]* (19), *partir [to leave]* (16), *arriver [to arrive]* (15), *monter [go up]* (11), *retourner (to return]* (10). All together, there are as many as 80 of these most frequently used verbs (67% of all forms classified as *vdm*). What is more, *aller [to go]* alone in the *vdm* group generates 21.47% of uses.

When it comes to the control group of Poles, five verbs occur with a clearly higher frequency: *pójść* (17, *to go*[perf][8]), *iść* (12 *to go*[imperf][9]), *wyjść* (11, *go out*[perf]), *wychodzić* (10, *go out*[imperf]), *wpaść* (10, *to fall*[perf]). Personal and impersonal forms of these verbs comprise 50% *vdm* by the native speakers of Polish. Nevertheless, in relation to the French group, the verb with the highest frequency – *pójść [to go[perf]]*, with 17 occurrences (14.16 % in *vdm*) – cannot compare with *aller [to go]* (21.5%), which is omnipresent in French productions.

The similarities and differences mentioned here are probably caused by the lexical-semantic conflict of the language systems. Rich lexical derivation, which is a characteristic of Polish (and most Slavic languages, cf. R. Grzegorczykowa *et al.* 1998: 539), allows for the creation of many derivatives with varied semantic nuances, but in analytic French the differences in verb sense (semantic synonyms) are usually expressed by syntactic groups built around the basic lexical unit. B. Kielski (1956: 18)[10] drew

---

[8] 'Perf': perfective Polish verb.
[9] 'Imperf': imperfective Polish verb.
[10] zdarza się i tak, że język francuski nie posiada potrzebnych synonimów syntetycznych i musi uciekać się do wyrażeń formalnie analitycznych. Gdy w języku polskim mamy np. iść, chodzić, jechać […], to język francuski na oddanie tych wszystkich znaczeń, reprezentowanych przez te synonimy, posługuje się czasownikiem *aller* (i co najwyżej jeszcze *marcher*), a więc czasownikiem o szerokim zakresie, które analitycznie zwęża się dopiero za pomocą determinantów (*à pied, à cheval, à bicyclette, en voiture, en avion*, itd.) – stosownie do potrzeby. Zasada pozostaje ta sama: synonimów i w tym wypadku nie brak, przybierają tylko formę analityczną, determinującą dokładniej znaczenie.

particular attention to this in his comparative analysis of French and Polish structure.

> it so happens that French does not have the necessary synthetic synonyms and has to resort to expressions which are formally analytic. While in Polish we have e.g. *iść, chodzić, jechać*[11] […], French expresses all of those meanings, which are represented by the synonyms mentioned, uses a verb *aller*[12] (at most also *marcher*[13]), so that a wide-ranging verb analytically narrows only with help of determinants (*à pied, à cheval, à bicyclette, en voiture, en avion*, etc[14].) as necessary. The rule remains the same: there are many synonyms but they take an analytic form which determines more precisely the meaning.

Such a structural difference means that learners of both languages as the second language (especially who are not on a very advanced level) do not cope well with transferring the L1 system to the L2 system. The difficulty is greater when passing from a language with synthetic synonyms to a language with more analytical synonyms. That is why among the whole group of people being tested the biggest difficulties with *verbs of directed movement* acquisition (*vdm*) are experienced by both groups of French speaking students learning Polish. Table 1 presents the development of lexical repertory by groups A1_FR and A2_FR (French studying Polish on A1 and A2 levels) in comparison to language behaviours of the Polish control group.

Natives_PL	A1_FR	A2_FR
pójść (17 *to go*[perf]) *iść* (12 *to go*[imperf]) *wyjść* (11 *go out*[perf]) *wychodzić* (10 *go out*[imperf]) *wpaść* (10 *to fall*[perf]) ---------------------------	*iść* (19 *to go*[imperf]) *jechać_id = iść* (7 *to run = to go*) *wracać* (5 *to return*[imperf]) -------------------------------	*pójść* (2 *to go*[perf]) *iść* (8 *to go*[imperf]) *wracać* (5 *to return*[imperf]) *wrócić* (4 *to return*[perf]) -------------------------------
Total: 50 % of all *vdm* including: **iść + pójść = 24.16%** of all *vdm*	Total: 62 % of all *vdm* including: **iść + *_id = 52%** of all *vdm*	Total: 51,52 % of all *vdm* including: **iść + pójść = 30.3%** of all *vdm*

Table 2. Verbs of directed movement (vdm): Polish control group and
*French learners of Polish L2 *_id = idiosyncratic forms: non-standard forms identifiable*
as the use of the verb 'to go'

Apart from the initial frequency of *iść [to go]*, to which learners apparently ascribed the role of the prototype of motion[15] starting from the level A2, the repertoire of their *vdm* approaches the results gained by the control group A1_FR 24% > A2_FR 30, 3% > Natives_PL 24.16% and indicates clearly the tendencies that accord with the target language structure.

---

[11] *To go, to walk, to ride.*
[12] *To go.*
[13] *To walk.*
[14] *On foot, on horseback, by bicycle, by car, by plane.*
[15] Cf. Viberg (2002) and his concept of *basic verbs*, prototypes used to express motion (*go-come*), possession (*give-take*), production (*make*), verbal communication (*say*), perception (*see*), cognition (*know*), and desire (*want*).

Poles studying French display a global tendency of development which is in accordance with the language behaviour of their French homologs. Firstly, on B1 level (A1_PL) the repertoire of *vdm* has also some visible marks of the source language of those polled. It is less homogeneous and more atomised (11 verbs have only one occurrence). Secondly, the verb *aller* (almost 30% of occurrences in the group of verbs of directed motion), which does not appear in syntactic groups, 'serves' in at least five groups of meanings:

26 vdm_aller *[iść = to go]*
2 vdm_aller_id=aller_s'en *[pójść sobie = to go away]*
1 vdm_aller_id=patiner *[jeździć na łyżwach = to skate]*
1 vdm_aller_id=rentrer *[wrócić = to return]*
1 vdm_aller_id=tomber *[upaść = to fall]*

Among B2 learners (A2_PL), the frequency of *aller [to go]* is similar to the result of the control group (native speakers of French) and reaches about 20%. Moreover, the repertoire of *vdm* with its composition resembles closely the vocabulary of native speakers. In both groups verbs such as *sortir [go out], aller [to go], tomber [to fall], revenir [to return], monter [to go up]* are the ones that occur most frequently: up to 80%.

(2) *To fall*, as the fall *by default*. Verbs of body motion

The expression of motion by using verbs *iść/aller [to go]* and their French and Polish equivalents has clearly posed greater difficulty to the French-speaking groups, but the use of *verbs of body motion* (*vbm*) is very limited in all the research participants. Table 2 displays the aggregate numbers for all the groups.

French natives 96 occurrences of *vbm*	**A1_PL** 13 occurrences of *vbm*	**A2_PL** 36 occurrences of *vbm*
Polish natives 38 occurrences of *vbm*	**A1_FR** 4 occurrences of *vbm*	**A2_FR** 13 occurrences of *vbm*

Table 3. Verbs of body motion (vbm). French control group/ Polish learners of French L2 and Polish control group/ French learners of Polish L2

In the following groups of verbs, the verb *upaść/upadać[16]- tomber [to fall down]* were the biggest difficulty for learners. It should be clearly stated that the problem with using the right lexeme is not a lexical or syntactic problem, but a problem of conceptualising a special event which is 'falling'

In French, *tomber [to fall]* has two basic meanings (*Le Nouveau Petit Robert* 2001: *tomber*):

A. être entraîné à terre en perdant son équilibre → ***choir***
    [to be driven down by losing one's balance]

---

[16] And its synonyms: *upaść/upadać*, *spaść/spadać*, *przewracać się przewrócić się*.

B. être entraîné vers le sol, d'un lieu élevé à un lieu bas ou profond, quand ce qui retenait ou soutenait vient à manquer → ***dégringoler***
[to be driven into the ground, from a high place to a low or deep place when what kept or maintained runs]

Polish possess respectively three (together with aspects' differentiation – six) lexical items to express '*the fall*' *[upadek]*: *spaść/ spadać [to move down]; upaść/ updać [to change the position from standing to lying]; przewrócić/ przewracać się [to lose balance]* that correspond respectively to (*Słownik Języka Polskiego*, on-line version: http://sjp.pwn.pl/):

a) spaść – spadać
1. przemieścić się w powietrzu w dół, tracąc punkt zaczepienia lub równowagę
[to move down in the air losing one's grip or balance at the same time]

b) upaść – upadać
1. zmienić nagle pozycję ze stojącej na leżącą
[(suddenly) to change position from standing to lying]

c) przewrócić się – przewracać się
1. tracąc równowagę, wywrócić się; też o przedmiotach, rzeczach, itp.: upaść na bok lub spodem do góry.
[losing balance, to fall, also about objects, things, etc.: to fall on its side or upside down]

Wherein a) *spaść – spadać [to move down]* as a verb of movement (from top to bottom) in our terms is not a *verb of body motion* (*vbm*) but rather a *verb of directed motion* (*vdm*). Similarly, in French, *tomber [to fall]* in the sense represented by b) *dégringoler* (literally: *to be pulled down to the ground*) does not belong to the *verb of body motion* class, but to the *verb of directed motion*.

To sum up, French verb *tomber [to fall]* can have two basic equivalents in Polish: *upaść [to change position from standing to lying]* and *przewrócić się [to lose balance]*. An additional difficulty is posed by the fact that *upaść* is already a derivative form (perfective) from *paść* (basic, imperfective form) while *przewrócić się* does not have a common core with forms: *paść/upaść*. The analysis of the linguistic data clearly shows that such cognitive semantic challenges exceed the perspective productive abilities of all the research participants observed. The typical francophones' answers in Polish as the second language can be illustrated by the examples 1-4 (idiosyncratic forms). A graphic has been added for clarification:

1) wychodzi od budki. Ale *padał* bo tu
był taki śnieża w dole (A1_FR)
*[out of the booth. But fell because there
was snow at the bottom]*[17]

3) spróbuje chodzić i nie moge. *Padał*
nie rozumie co się stało (A2_FR)
*[try to walk and I can not. Fell not
understand what happened]*

2) potem dziewczyna ma kłopot. *Pada
w woda* (A1_FR)
*[then the girl is in trouble. Falls in
water]*

4) ten maly chłopak ma wypadek bo lód
jest może za nie jest solidna i *pada do
wody* (A2_FR)
*[This little boy has an accident because
the ice is maybe not a solid and falls
into the water]*

In the fragments of speech quoted we are dealing with the typical surgeneralisation of one lexeme in its most basic form. For the francophones, the shortest and the simplest lexical unit that connotes *falling* (*padać*) constitutes the natural equivalent of the French (also) non-phrasal verb *tomber [to fall]* and creates at the same time its *primary counterpart* (J. Arabski 1979). At the stage of acquisition observed here, the French speakers do not know yet that in standard Polish the verb *padać* corresponds only to some specific contexts and collocations like atmospheric phenomenon: one can say *padać* for raining or snowing; or in metaphorical context: *padł wystrzał*, *padł projekt* (*a shot was fired, the project ended in failure*). *Padać* in the sense of body motion is used as a command: *padnij!/powstań!* (*get down!/on your feet!*) or in emphatic expressions such as: *padł rażony gromem, padł w boju* (*he fell struck by thunder, died on the battlefield*). All of those usages, which are characteristic of native-like knowledge of a language, certainly cannot be acquired on the first stages of foreign language acquisition.

Taking the Polish students learning French into consideration, this is an additional obstacle that is shown by their performances and is placed on the stage of coordination (or concordance) of the mother tongue which is classified as *S-framed language* with the foreign language system characterised as *V-framed languages* (cf. 4.2 *supra*). The redundant spatial information in Polish, typical of prefix verbs and the accompanying post-verbal spatial prepositions (*u-paść na ziemię [to fall on the ground], do-paść do drzwi [to run up to doors], w-paść w wodę [to fall into water]*) results in new syntactic groups similar to *tomber (to fall]+goal*, which even though syntactically correct, cannot be observed in native speakers' productions. The only construction among the examined groups which does not bear signs of idiosyncrasy is *tomber dans l'eau* (*wpaść do wody [fall in the water]*). Another example of the *tomber [to fall]+preposition* type can be found below (5-8).

---

[17] The *gloss* in English tries to give the general meaning of the statement; it is not a syntactic analysis.

5) A1_PL:
a) *tomber* <u>de</u> l'escalier (5) *[breaking of the staircase]*
b) *tomber* <u>sur</u> la niche (2) / <u>sur</u> son chien (1) *[to fall on the recess / on the dog]*

6) Natives_FR:
a) *tomber* <u>contre</u> l'*escalier* (1) *[to down against the stairs]*
b) *tomber* <u>dans</u> la niche (1)/<u>dans</u> le toit de la niche (1)
[to fall into the recess / in the roof of the recess]
c) *tomber* <u>sur</u> le toit de la niche (1) *[to fall on the roof of the recess]*

7) A2_PL:
a) *tomber* <u>dans</u> le trou (2) *[to fall into the hole]*
b) *tomber* <u>sur</u> sa niche (2) / <u>sur</u> la paille (1) /<u>sur</u> l'eau, <u>sur</u> le lac = dans l'eau (1)
[to fall on its recess / the straw / on water, on lake = on water]
c) *tomber* <u>dedans</u> (3) *[to fall in]*
d) *tomber* <u>de</u> l'escalier (1) *[breaking the stairs]*

8) Natives_FR:
a) *tomber* <u>au fond</u> de l'étang (1) *[to fall to the bottom of the pond]*
b) *tomber* <u>à travers</u> la glace (1) *[fall through the ice]*
c) *tomber* <u>au milieu</u> de l'eau (1) *[fall in the middle of the water]*
d) *tomber* <u>dans</u> le trou [de glace] (3) / <u>dans</u> la glace (1) / <u>dans</u> la mare (1) / <u>dans</u> le lac (1)
[to fall into the hole [ice] / in the ice / in the pond / in the lake]

Over-use of the preposition *sur* (*on*), noticeable especially in group A2_PL productions, is another symptom of the strong influence the mother tongue has on the lexicalisation of spatial relations in a foreign language. The *sur* which is standing after the verb *tomber* mirrors the typically Polish conceptual-syntactic scheme such as *upadać na [to fall on sth]*:

> **upadać** *(spadać, przewracać się)* **na** *[to fall on sth]* :
> Location: object A comes into contact with the surface of B because of the law of universal gravitation or by applying pressure from the outside

It would appear from this that learners from group A2_PL present language behaviours closer to native speakers' than students from the group A1_PL. However, both research groups stabilised only the use of the lexeme *tomber*, while the functioning of post-verbal syntagma (*verb+preposition group*) remains idiosyncratic. Therefore, the interpretation of expressions such as *il (garçon) est tombé sur la glace* [*he (boy) fell on the ice*] – which is otherwise unambiguous – is very difficult, even impossible since it is not clear whether the boy *upadł na lód [fell to the ice]* or *upadł na lodzie [fell on the ice]* because he has slipped. This, in turn, leads us to the conclusion that even on the B2 level (group A2_PL), the correct sentences and grammatical structures do not guarantee that their use is appropriate in the standard form of a target language.

(3) ... *and to skate a bit.* **On verbs of movement**

Among all of the groups tested, the verbs of movement (*vmv*) constitute an intermediate group between the most numerous group of verbs directed motion (*vdm*) and more limited one, verbs of body motion (*vbm*).

A1_PL	A2_PL	Natives_FR	A1_FR	A2_PL	Natives_PL
35%	32,69%	23,69%	19,40	29,23%	22,55%

Table 4. Verbs of movement - all tested groups

The nature of the film used as the starting point for the research participants' stories resulted in the fact that the most frequently used verbs of movement (without distinction to language and level) were: *glisser* (*ślizgać się = to slide*), *patiner* (*jeździć na łyżwach = to skate*) and their non-standard Polish equivalents as *spacerować* (*se promener = to stroll)* or *jeździć* (*aller par un moyen de locomotion = to ride*).

The striking fact about Polish students' utterances (on both levels 1 and 2) is the idiosyncrasy in their use of the French verb *glisser [to slide]*. A non-reflexive verb corresponds to its Polish reflexive form *ślizgać się / poślizgnąć się [to slide / to slip]*. In this context, it means that the verb is not followed by the particle *się* (the verb *glisser = to slide*). As a matter of fact, French also possess the lexical item, *se glisser*, but its Polish equivalent is the verb *wślizgnąć się* (e.g. *wślizgnąć się pod koc / w tłum = to slip under the blanket / into the crowd*).

	A1_PL	A2_PL	Natives_FR
Glisser [to slide]	9,5 % where: *se glisser* = 12,7 % *[to slide *himself]*	11,8 % where: *se glisser* = 26,5 % *[to slide *himself]*	20,6 %

Table 5. Glisser [to slide] in the Polish learner's and native French speaker's productions

As in examples 9 and 10:
9) *il s'est glissé* à côté de sa niche et puis il a fait pipi. Il est allé chez son patron un petit garçon qui habite la maison à côté. Le garçon *s'est glissé aussi.* (A1_PL)
[He slipped off his recess and then he peed. He went to his boss a little boy who lives in the house next door. The boy slipped too.]

10) bon, il a aperçu que il y a le sol // la terre elle est glacée. Il y a de glace. *Il s'est glissé*. Il a tombé. (A2_PL)
[so, he saw that there was the ground // the earth is frozen. There ice. He slipped. He dropped]

Native speakers opt for the verb *glisser* (example 11), or choose circumlocution with the phrase *glace [ice]* ou *glacé [frozen]* (e.g. *l'eau glacée [ice water]*)/ This is why there is 'slippage' where the verb does not occur on its own (example 12):

11) *il glisse* parce que tout l'eau qui est devant sa niche est gelée. (FR_Natifs)
[he slips because all the water in front of his recess is frozen]

12) un petit chien qui se réveille un matin […] sort de sa niche et *marche sur une plaque de glace / de verglas et tombe*. (FR_Natifs)
[a little dog who wakes up one morning [...] out of its recess and walking on a patch of ice and falls]

Moreover, in the Poles' utterances, the verb *se glisser [to slide]* also stands in for the verb *patiner [to skate]*, which is basic in the context of the story. This substitution is caused by shifting to the foreign language item the broader meaning of the Polish lexical item *ślizgać się/poślizgać się na lodzie = jeździć/pojeździć na łyżwach [slide/skate on the ice = go/ice skating],* which is displayed in the following examples 13 and 14:

13) maintenant Reksio […] il ne veut plus *se glisser*. Alors, il est assis au bord du lac. Le garçon il prend le patin. *Il se glisse*. (A1_PL)
[Now Reksio [...] he does not want to slip. So he sat by the lake. The boy he takes the pad. It slips]
14) Reksio a pris l'un des patins et il a commencé à *se glisser*. (A2_PL)
[Reksio took one of the pads and he started to slip]

Furthermore, continuing observations of the verb *patiner [ice skating]* it is worth mentioning the great varieties of non-standard forms created by participants in order to fill gaps occurring as a result of incomplete lexical competence in the second language (*innovation strategy,* cf. P. Broeder *et al.* 1988). Anticipating the comments on language behaviours of French people in similar situations, it should be mentioned that they also create *ad hoc* a great range of neologisms e.g. *patynować*, *zrobić patinage [for: jeździć na łyżwach = to skate], ratunkować, sekurować [for: ratować = to rescue]*.
      Table 6 below, contains a list of all the *lexical innovations* (together with possible substitutions of standard and non-standard forms) created by Polish students in their French language productions. For comparison, the table also includes data concerning the production of native speakers, as well as a numerical index of standard forms. The numbers following lexical items indicate the number of occurrences of a particular language form.

Native_FR	A1_PL	A2_PL
27 glisser 29 patiner 23 faire du patin	4 faire patin 30 faire patinage 6 glisser (standard forms) 6 glisser se 2 glisser se = patiner 3 patiner (standard forms) 1 patiner se 1 patisser = patiner ------------------------------- Total: 9 standard forms **44 idiosyncretic forms (83%)**	2 faire la glace = patiner 7 faire patin 26 faire patinage 12 glisser (standard forms) 5 glisser = patiner 15 glisser se = glisser 7 glisser se = patiner 8 patiner (standard forms) ---------------------------------- Total: 20 standard forms **62 idiosyncretic forms (75,6%)**

Table 6. Lexical innovations in Polish students' productions in French L2

The data presented above shows that the French used by both groups still bears distinct features of their *interlanguage* (L. Selinker 1972), the downward trends of the occurrence of idiosyncratic forms clearly indicating gradual progress in the process of acquisition.

To sum up, since the detailed considerations of the development of linguistic repertoires and the impact of this development on the lexicalization of events described in the narratives is finishing, let us take a look at lexical activity – in similar situations – which means French people learning Polish as a foreign language.

Generally speaking, their linguistic behaviour confirms the trends already illustrated for the group of Poles. Like their Polish-speaking homologues, francophones have not mastered the syntactic patterns characteristic (or not) of Polish reflexive verbs. In their case, the Achilles heel proved to be not only the already known verb *ślizgać się [to slide]* (which causes difficulties for Poles), but also the semantically less complex verb *spacerować [to stroll]*. French students produced *spacerować się [to stroll *himself]*, and *ślizgać sobie [to slide *himself]* (cf. examples 15 and 16).

15) ale kiedy wraca to chłopczyk potrzebuje tą łyżwę żeby *sobie ślizgać / pośligzać* (A2_FR)
*[but when he returns to the boy needs a skate to the slide *himself]*

16) tak i potem idą na wies i *spacerują się*. (A1_FR)
*[so and then go to the village and stroll *themselves]*

Like table 6 (above), table 7 groups the lexical innovation built on verbs discussed here. However, it is striking that there is much less language material and less diversity in the forms produced.

Natives_PL	A1_FR	A2_FR
22 jeździć (na łyżwach) 1 ślizgać 5 ślizgać się	1 patynować = jeździć na łyżwach 3 spacerować *(standard forms)* 2 spacerować = jeździć 1 spacerować się = spacerować 1 zrobić patinage = jeździć na łyżwach ---------------------------------- Total: standard forms: 3 **idiosyncretic forms: 5 (62,5%)**	2 biegać = jeździć 8 jeździć *(standard forms)* 1 pośligzać = pośligzać się 1 spacerować *(standard forms)* 1 sunąć = ślizgać się ---------------------------------- Total: standard forms: 8 **idiosyncretic forms: 5 (38,5%)**

Table 7: Lexical innovations in French students' productions in Polish L2

Like Polish students, French-speaking learners show visible progress in foreign language acquisition. In the research conducted in group A2_FR, the number of idiosyncratic forms falls by almost a half in comparison to group A1_FR. Moreover, the mobilised forms approach closer and closer their standard equivalents in Polish.

6. Conclusion

Three types of conclusions may be drawn. Although they pertain to the language material examined it can be assumed that they constitute a contribution to a broader reflection on a foreign language acquisition, especially in the configuration Slavic languages / Romance languages, and different typological groups such as synthetic/analytic languages, *S-framed languages / V-framed languages*.

1. Observation of the way students built an appropriate lexical repertoire (within discussed groups of verbs) suggests that the major difficulty in constructing a new system of meaning is not just finding the equivalents – which can be found in a dictionary – but rather stems from the necessity of building a new type of relation such as *concept* (the kind of motion, its direction, properties, etc.) and *lexeme* (the lexical form). The construction of linguistic repertoire in L2 is based in a large part on the ability to *re-conceptualise cognitive schemes* (J. Giacobbe/ M. Lucas 1980, J. Giacobbe 1992) which are associated with the expression of movement in a foreign language. The best example is the non-isomorphic use of reflexive verbs. While for the verb e.g. *se promener* (*to stroll *himself*) the spatio-temporal event 'walk' is directly linked to the agent who 'takes himself for a walk' - *il SE promène*, as in the case of the verb *spacerować* (ø *promener = to stroll*) the agent does not apply the event 'walk' to himself, but concludes that the act is performed by him (Polish: *speceruję (ja) = I stroll*). This transition, which is not from *lexeme to lexeme*, but rather from *conceptualization to conceptualisation*, is a long and arduous process for learners. It requires not only an understanding of language conceptual schemes but also deconstruction of those schemes in the first language in favour of new constructions in the second language. In other words, as D. Slobin rightly suggests (1996), learners must go on from *thought and language* to *thinking for speaking*.

2. Comparison of vocabulary development (group 1 and group 2) suggests that constructing new dictionary resources is a function of learners' knowledge of the language tools characteristic of the target language (which varies according to the stage of acquisition and is generally assumed to increase as the learner progresses to new stages of foreign language acquisition) and their ability to constantly compare the two systems (foreign language and mother tongue) in order to continuously track their differences and similarities.

3. On this basis learners build their own *critical rules* (W. Klein 1986) that allow them to test their own hypotheses about the functioning of a foreign language and develop their own *interlanguage*, up to the same level as in the standard version of a target language.

4. Comparison of the learners' transition from the *S-Language* system (Polish) to the *V-Language* system (French) and the other way round, suggests the existence of certain stages of acquisition particular to a deconstruction of its own and construction a new system of language devices.

Table 8 proposes four stages of acquisition, corresponding to the four steps that learners have taken (when observed in this study) in order to adapt to thinking and speaking in a foreign language.

	S-Language → V-Language Polish → French	V-Language → S-Language French → Polish
1	Use of a verb in its basic meaning (primary) Idiosyncratic, post-verbal, syntactic groups	Predominance of the basic forms of the verb-mainly the prefix less formations Non-standard use of post-verbal prepositions
2	Broadening the verb meaning spectrum Post-verbal syntactic groups (usually standard)	Prefix verbs presence Stabilised use of post-verbal prepositions
3	Mobilization of secondary contextual meanings of a verb Wide range of prepositional post-verbal groups	Stabilised usage of prefixes 'Compatibility' of motion trajectory encoded via prefix and post-verbal preposition
4		Stabilised usage of prefixes Wide range of prepositional post-verbal groups without compulsory 'compatibility' between prefix and post-verbal preposition

Table 8. Construction of foreign language system:
transition from S-Language to V-Language structure

The evolution of language devices offered by target languages, which is suggested in table 8, emphasizes the process of simultaneous construction and deconstruction of systems existing in the speaker's language awareness. Stages 1-4, in the left column (Polish > French), lead to the construction of lexical repertory characteristic of French. For a group of Poles the 'point of arrival' constitutes at the same time the 'point of departure' for mastering Polish by French students, and vice versa: in the right column (French > Polish), stage 4 is the starting point for the Polish-speaker. From this stage of mother tongue knowledge he needs to 'return' in foreign language to the first stage and move on the next stages of acquisition of French as L2.

In the light of this analysis, it can be stated that the observation of verb repertoire is a good criterion of changes occurring at different stages of language acquisition. To achieve a more complete picture of the issues discussed it would be worth complementing the existing data with a corpus of children's utterances in their early (5–6 years) and later (8–10 years) stages of language acquisition to state more unequivocally what difficulties in foreign language acquisition result from conceptual differences from the target language, and what in a given source language is the longest-resisting 'natural phenomenon' which is not easily acquired in conceptual and formal terms (cf. U. Paprocka-Piotrowska/ C. Martinot/ S. Gerolimich 2012).

Bibliography

Arabski, J. (1979), *Errors as Indications of the Development of Interlanguage*. Katowice.

Bartmiński, J. (2007), *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata*. Lublin.

Bartmiński, J./ R. Tokarski (1986), *Językowy obraz świata a spójność tekstu*. In: T. Dobrzyńska (ed.), Teoria tekstu. Zbiór studiów. Wrocław. 65–81.

Broeder, P./ G. Extra/ R. Hout/ S. Van Strömqvist/ K. Voionmaa (eds) (1988), *Second Language Acquisition by Adult Immigrants. Final Report. Vol. 3: Processes in the developing lexicon*. Strasbourg/Tilburg/Goteborg.

Corder, P. S. (1971), *Idiosyncratic Dialect and Error Analysis*. In: International Review of Applied Linguistics IX (2). 147–160.

Caroll, M./ C von Stutterheim (2003), *Typology and Information Organisation: Perspective Talking and Language-Specific Effects in the Construction of Events*. In: A. Ramat (ed.), Typology and Second Language Acquisition. Berlin. 365–402.

Common European Framework Of Reference For Languages (2001), Language Policy Division, Council of Europe. Strasbourg.

Demagny, A-C./ U. Paprocka-Piotrowska (2004), *L'acquisition du lexique verbal et des connecteurs temporels dans les récits de fiction en français L1et L2*. In: Langages 155. 52–75.

Florczak, J. (1997), *Relations sémantiques entre les verbes de mouvement et de position du polonais et du français*. In: J. Sypnicki (ed.), Polysémie, Synonymie, Antonymie. Relations dans le lexique. Aspect théoriques et applicatifs. Łódź. 47–72.

Gniadek, S. (1979), *Grammaire contrastive franco–polonaise*. Warszawa.

Gawelko, M. (1989), *Remarques sur l'économie de l'expression linguistique romane* (unpublished Master Thesis.)

Giacobbe, J. (1992), *Acquisition d'une langue étrangère. Cognition et interaction.* Paris.

Giacobbe, J./ M. Lucas (1980), *Quelques hypothèses sur le rapport langue maternelle – systèmes intermédiaires à propos d'une étude sur l'acquisition des verbes espagnols 'ser' et 'estar' par des adultes francophones*. In: Encrages. Enseignement – Recherche: théories et pratiques. Numéro spécial: Acquisition d'une langue étrangère. 25–36.

Grzegorczykowa, R. (2002), *Wprowadzenie do semantyki językoznawczej*. Warszawa.

Grzegorczykowa, R./ R. Laskowski/ H. Wróbel (eds) (1998), *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Morfologia*. Warszawa.

Kielski, B. (1956), *Język francuski a polski. Przyczynek do typologii języków*. Wrocław.

Kielski, B. (1957–1960), *Struktura języków francuskiego i polskiego w świetle analizy porównaczej. Cz. 1–2*. Wrocław.

Klein, W. (1986), *Second language acquisition*. Cambridge.

Kopecka, A. (2004), *Etude typologique de l'expression de l'espace: localisation et déplacement en français et en polonais*. PhD thesis Lyon 2 (unpublished ms.). Lyon.

Kuryłowicz, J. (1964), *The inflect-ional cat-egories of in-do-europ-ean*. Heidelberg.

Lambert, M. (1998), *Temporal Reference in Story Re-Tellings. Comparison between French and American Native Speakers and French Advanced Learners of English*. In: V. Regan (ed.), Contemporary Approaches to Second Language Acquisition in Social Context. Dublin. 62–74.

Lamiroy, B. (1983), *Les verbes de mouvement en français et en espagnol*. Linguisticae Investigationes, Supplementa 11. Amsterdam/ Philadelphie/ Leuven.

Le Nouveau Petit Robert (1993, éd. 2001). Paris.

Levelt, W. (1989), *Speaking. From Intention to Articulation*. Cambridge MA.

Mac Whinney B. (2000), *The CHILDES Project: Tools for Analyzing Talk.* Mahwah, NY. On–line version: The CHILDES Project. Vol.1 /Part 1: The CHAT Transcription Format. Vol. 2/Part 2: The CLAN Programs. http://childes.psy.cmu.edu [28.12.12].

Paprocka-Piotrowska, U. (2008), *Conter au risque de tout changer. Complexité conceptuelle et référence aux procès dans l'acquisition du français L2 et du polonais L2*. Lublin.

Paprocka-Piotrowska, U. (2012), *Nous regardons le monde à travers des lunettes que la langue nous a mises. Quelques remarques sur l'image linguistique du monde et l'activité communicative langagière de l'apprenant*. In: J. Zając/ K. Karpińska-Szaj (eds), Synérgies Pologne 9/12. 143–163.

Paprocka-Piotrowska, U./ C. Martinot/ S. Gerolimich (eds) (2012), *La complexité en langue et son acquisition*. Lublin.

Sapir, E. (1978), *Gramatyk i jego język*. In: E. Sapir, Kultura, język, osobowość. Warszawa. 96–127.

Selinker, L. (1972), *Interlanguage*. In: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching X (3). 209–231.

Słownik Języka Polskiego. On-line version: http://sjp.pwn.pl/ [28.12.12].

Sikora, D. (2008), *May an Event Approach be Useful in Dealing with Polish Motion Verbs?* On-line vesrion: http://languages.uchicago.edu. The Slavic Cognitive Linguistics Association (SCLA), SCLA 2007 Conference at the University of Chicago. [28.12.12].

Slobin, D. (1991), *Learning to Think for Speaking: Native Language, Cognition, and Rhetorical Style*. In: Pragmatics 1. 7–26.

Slobin, D. (1996), *From 'Thought and Language' to 'Thinking for Speaking'*. In: J.J. Gumperz/ S.C. Levinson (eds), Rethinking linguistic relativity. Cambridge. 70–96.

Slobin, D. (2004), *The Many Ways to Search for a Frog. Linguistic Typology and the Expression of Motion Events*. In: S. Strömqvist/ L. Verhoeven (eds), *Relating events in narrative. Vol. 2: Typological and contextual perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ. 219–257.

Tesniere, L. (1976), *Eléments de syntaxe structurale*. Paris.

Talmy, L. (1985), *Lexicalisation patterns: semantic structure in lexical form*. In: T. Shopen (ed.), Language Typology and Syntactic Description. Vol. 3: Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon. Cambridge. 56–149.

Talmy, L. (2000), *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. Cambridge MA.

Viberg, A. (2002), *Basic Verbs in Second Language Acquisition*. In: Revue Française de Linguistique Appliquée VII–2. 51–69.

Whorf, B.L. (1982), *Język, umysł i rzeczywistość*. In: B.L. Whorf, Język, myśl i rzeczywistość. Warszawa. 332–362.

Watorek, M. (ed.) (2004), *Langages 155. Construction du discours par des enfants et des apprenants adultes*.

Wierzbicka, A. (1978), *Wstęp do polskiego wydania*. In: E. Sapir, Kultura, język, osobowość. Warszawa. 5–29.