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SPECIALTY SECTION
This article was submitted to
Language Sciences,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Communication

RECEIVED 07 February 2023
ACCEPTED 13 February 2023
PUBLISHED 28 February 2023

CITATION
Hijazo-Gascón A, Llopis-García R and Andria M
(2023) Editorial: L2 acquisition of motion
events: Crossing boundaries into unexplored
territories. *Front. Commun.* 8:1160581.
doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2023.1160581

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Editorial: L2 acquisition of motion events: Crossing boundaries into unexplored territories

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KEYWORDS

motion events, Second Language Acquisition, Cognitive Linguistics, cross-linguistic influence, semantic typology, L2 instruction

Editorial on the Research Topic

L2 acquisition of motion events: Crossing boundaries into unexplored territories

The field of motion events has received a growing interest in the last decades, after Talmy's (1985, 1991) and Slobin's (1991, 1996) seminal works. A myriad of publications examine aspects of the semantics of motion in different languages. In the field of Second Language (L2) Acquisition, research into motion events has explored different language combinations, types of cross-linguistic influence and types of learners. The main aim of this Research Topic is to delve into unexplored areas of research in motion events. In this sense, this Research Topic presents eight papers that offer an innovative look into motion events. The novelty of these studies emerges from new proposed methodologies, different theoretical perspectives, or an outlook on motion from underrepresented languages in the field. Regarding the latter, one of our main aims in this Research Topic was to showcase motion from the lens of a variety of languages other than English. We firmly believe in the importance of linguistic diversity in order to gain a better understanding of L2 Acquisition processes and to this end, ten languages are represented here, either as L2 or L1, namely Danish, English, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Mapudungun, Spanish, Swedish, Tunisian Arabic, and Uyghur. The paragraphs that follow offer a brief summary of the works included in this Research Topic.

In her perspective article, Filipović argues for a multi-factor approach in L2 motion acquisition research. Her theoretical proposal, Complex Adaptive System Principles (CASP) for L2 Acquisition and Bilingualism attempts to integrate the many factors involved in the acquisition of L2 and language use by multilingual speakers. She exemplifies the differences in the L2 acquisition of English and Spanish for Manner and Cause, and how in certain cases learners may keep their L1 patterns or adapt them. Her proposed model offers a pathway to understanding either or both scenarios.

Two papers present empirical research on underrepresented languages, either as L1 or L2. These languages are Mapudungun, an isolated language from Chile and Argentina, and Uyghur, a Turkic language from China. For the first, Becerra et al. study motion events in L1 and L2 Mapudungun (by L1 Spanish-speaking learners). This work is relevant not only because it focuses on an indigenous minority language, but also from a typological point of view, as Mapudungun is an equipollently-framed language. The authors show that learners present the influence of their L1 when narrating the Frog Story in Mapudungun.

For the second paper, [Tusun](#) tackles Uyghur-Chinese early bilinguals' use of motion events. Typologically, Uyghur is a verb-framed language and Mandarin is an equipollently-framed language. However, they present a structural overlap. [Tusun's](#) results reveal very little cross-linguistic influence in early bilingual adults. He compares his findings with his previous research on early bilingual children and argues that cross-linguistic influence can be considered a developmental phenomenon.

To expand the scope of research and explore new territories, it is also important to examine the relation between motion and other conceptual domains. [Gerwien and von Stutterheim](#) precisely do so by investigating the relation between motion events and aspect. In their study, L1 German and L2 German speakers (of L1 Tunisian Arabic) describe different types of motion events. Tunisian Arabic and German speakers do not share the same aspectual properties and L2 speakers of German do seem to be sensitive to the temporal structure of the scene in motion events, maintaining the aspectual pattern of their L1 in their production of German. However, this does not make their description of motion events more specific, so the authors argue for an approach that considers motion events as conceptual units instead. In another paper, [Madlener-Charpentier and Liste-Lamas](#) also study L2 German, but from a different perspective. German, on top of being a satellite-framed language, presents several linguistic devices to encode semantic components (prepositions, cases, particles, etc.). The authors present data from different stimuli, different types (oral and written) and with different L1s, namely verb-framed (Spanish, French) and satellite-framed (English, Danish) languages. Their results show how advanced learners acquire the basic satellite-framed pattern of the L2, but there are several language-specific challenges that are yet to be mastered and that the paper addresses.

Another two papers focus on caused-motion, and more particularly on placement events, i.e., those in which an entity is moved to a different location. [Andersson and Gullberg](#) examine L2 processing with neuro-linguistic techniques. In their study, L1 and L2 Swedish speakers (L1 German and English), take part in an experiment to investigate how they process fine-grained verb semantics. The categories of Swedish in this respect are more detailed than those of English and, while German categories are similar to Swedish, they are not coincident. The results show that learners can develop sensitivities to the fine-grained verb semantics of the L2, especially in typical uses of the verb. However, cross-linguistic influence from the L2 is present, especially in learners who lack similar distinctions in their L1. [Cadierno et al.](#) also focus on caused-motion, more specifically on placement events. For this case, L2 Danish (by L1 Spanish speakers) and their placement constructions are analysed. Overall, results reveal that learners kept using their L1 patterns by using the most frequent Spanish construction, and by avoiding semantically more complex constructions from the L2. The authors conclude that the conceptualisation of meaning in the L2 is different from the results of monolinguals in both Danish and Spanish.

Finally, [Aguiló-Mora and Negueruela-Azarola](#) focus on teaching thinking-for-speaking patterns in L2 Spanish learners with English as L1. They present teaching practices

on motion events, combining the theoretical foundations of Cognitive Linguistics and Sociocultural Psychology. Based on the Mindful Conceptual Engagement approach for L2 development, their study shows how L2 Spanish learners internalise thinking-for-speaking patterns in communicative tasks. Their action research study shows how the explicit explanation of motion events from this perspective could contribute to a beneficial conceptual understanding for learners, improving their awareness and production in L2 translation and L2 performance tasks.

With the work of all the authors in this Research Topic, we have delved into unexplored territories in motion studies, and we hope that the new paths offered in the articles compiled here contribute enriching perspectives and promising new lines of research.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

Funding

This work has been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science (MOTIV PID2021-123302NB-I00), Spanish Ministry of Universities and EU-Next Generation EU María Zambrano Programme (MZ-240621), Government of Aragon (Psylex H11-17R; MultiMetAR LMP143_21), Serra Hünter Programme (UB-LE-9021), and Greek Government's General Secretariat for Research and Innovation and Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (Code: 1656, LETEGR2 project).

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the authors for their valuable contribution to the present Research Topic and the reviewers for their dedication and insightful feedback.

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