

Lexicalization patterns for the expression of motion and localization in German: an embodied teaching approach.

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Our paper focuses on two typical expressions of motion and localization in German: the caused-motion-construction (Germ. *Er hustet die Postkarte vom Tisch* – lit. 'He coughs the post card off the table') and noun-verb-phrases with posture verbs (Germ. *Sie stehen unter Beobachtung* – lit. 'They stand under observation'). These two patterns are particularly challenging for French-speaking learners of German, because of the typological differences between the two languages. Indeed, in French, there is no one-to-one equivalent for the German caused-motion construction (hereafter CMC) (see a. o. De Knop & Gallez 2013) and French posture verbs are only used to express concrete positions (see a. o. De Knop & Perrez 2014).

These typological differences make therefore both patterns highly interesting for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. De Knop (2020) has pointed out that 'embodied teaching' might contribute to making the learning of such expressions more efficient: On the one hand, the motion expressed in CMCs can be perceived through visualization or gestures and, on the other hand, the use of posture verbs in more abstract expressions can be linked to their original concrete-physical meaning.

In this contribution, we follow this avenue and present the results of an exploratory study conducted in 2021 with French-speaking students from three Belgian universities. The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which embodied teaching might help improve the understanding of the two lexicalization patterns. Our talk will first describe our intervention by showing how we taught these patterns with images, animations and references to bodily experiences. Then our innovative testing method will be presented. As already observed by Llopis-García (2021), many empirical tests conducted so far are based on traditional teaching methods, since they rely on formal tasks (fill-in-the-blank, etc.). Therefore, we propose a methodology in which embodiment is implemented not only at the teaching level, but also at the level of the testing. In our study the students had to answer the questions of the pre- and posttest in an 'embodied way' by depicting the CMC-scene with a drawing and by explaining the use of posture verbs by referring to bodily experiences.

The results of our quantitative and qualitative analyses were very promising: embodied teaching does not only contribute to a better understanding of the German CMC and noun-verb-phrases with posture verbs. The students were also able to extrapolate their 'embodied reasoning' to new examples and to use their 'constructional competence' more efficiently. They adopted conceptualization strategies and applied them to concrete-physical but also to abstract patterns.

In addition to the discussion of the results, we will also address some methodological challenges and present some perspectives for further research.

References

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