

*Acquiring motion verbs in a second language:  
The case of Italian L2\**

Il presente contributo è dedicato alle strategie di lessicalizzazione degli eventi di moto non transitivi nell'acquisizione dell'italiano come L2. Esso si inserisce nel quadro teorico della tipologia lessicale che distingue tra lingue *verb-framed* – ossia lingue che lessicalizzano il componente Percorso (*Path*) nel verbo, come nel caso di it. *uscire* – e lingue *satellite-framed* – ossia lingue che lessicalizzano tale componente nel satellite (particelle o prefissi (in)separabili), come nel caso di ted. *ausgehen* (Talmy 1991 e 2000b). Tale quadro teorico viene messo in discussione alla luce del fatto che l'italiano, pur assegnabile in termini generali al gruppo delle lingue *verb-framed*, rappresenta tuttavia un caso di assegnazione non categorica.

Nel lavoro si osserva la lessicalizzazione degli eventi di moto nelle narrazioni della nota *Frog Story* nell'italiano L2 di dodici apprendenti guidati di lingua materna inglese e tedesco/nederlandese, discutendone in primo luogo i tipi lessicali emersi; in secondo luogo, si osservano le strategie di codifica del costituente Percorso nei differenti *loci*, verbale, avverbale e adnominale secondo il modello di tipologia di lessicalizzazione delle componenti concettuali proposto in Wälchli (2001). A tale analisi trasversale si affiancano alcune osservazioni sull'uso dei verbi di moto nell'italiano L2 di un apprendente non guidato di lingua materna tigrino. L'analisi dei dati acquisizionali rivela che le strategie di lessicalizzazione adottate dagli apprendenti si conformano al tipo misto cui l'italiano appartiene, pur risultando apprezzabilmente influenzate dalle caratteristiche tipologiche della L1.

1. The purpose of this contribution is the presentation of preliminary results in the analysis of the use of motion verbs in Italian L2 by a group of tutored young adult learners. Regularities in use of motion

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verbs by this group of learners may allow to establish some hypothesis about their acquisition process.

The semantic analysis of “spatial localization events” – as defined by Berthele (2004: 95) – has been refined in the last two decades after the first proposals by Leonard Talmy in 1985, who elaborated on the original distinction between movement verbs such as *courir* ‘run’ and displacement verbs such as *monter* ‘go up’ put forward by Lucien Tesnière in 1959. Referring to the most recent version of the cognitive semantic analysis of a spatial localization event in Talmy (2000b), the main components of such event, being it static or dynamic, are the Figure and the Ground<sup>1</sup>.

The Figure is the entity located or moved in space with respect to a second entity called the Ground. As illustrated in the scheme at (1), the localization event involves also an activation process, by which the Figure is located or moved with respect to the Ground, and an association function, establishing the relation between the Figure and the Ground.

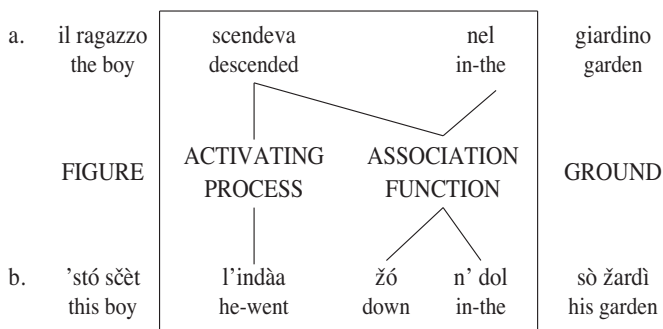
As is well known, different lexicalization strategies of the components of the conceptual structure of spatial localization events found to occur in different languages have been subsumed under the types of V-framed and S-framed languages, according to whether the association function is expressed by the verb root, i.e. verb-framed, or by another element in the clause, originally called the satellite, hence satellite-framed. The two types are illustrated in (1) by the Italian clause in (a) and its translation equivalent in the local dialect of Bergamo in (b), relevant because Bergamo is the town where the learners to be investigated have acquired their second language. Standard Italian as a V-framed language – beware however that this claim will be challenged in the following – projects the associative function also onto the verb root *scendere*; the local dialect – on its part – lexicalizes the associative function also in the adverb *žó* meaning ‘down’ and instantiates a S-framed type.

This typological framework allows the investigation of the constructions found in the learners of Italian as a second language with

<sup>1</sup> However, in the third chapter of the same volume Talmy writes “Thus, either the association function alone or the association function together with the ground entity can be considered the schematic core of the framing event. This will be called the core schema” (2000b: 217).

respect to the constructions found in the target language and to those of their first languages, and the assessment of the acquisition process in this domain of the lexicon of the L2.

(1) Spatial localization events in Italian vs. Bergamo local dialect<sup>2</sup>



“[Every morning] this boy went down into his garden”

A fundamental contribution to the typology of the linguistic expression of the localization events was made by Wälchli (2001), who pointed to the possibility of expressing the main semantic components of the localization events at clause level not only in verb roots as in the Italian example (1a), but also in adverbials, as in the case of *žó* in (1b), and in adnominals, such as case markers and adpositions, as the preposition *in* in (1). In this example the Path followed by the Figure, the boy, in the process of changing its location is a downward Path and the Goal of the dislocation is the interior of the garden.

Raphael Berthele (2004) has already pointed to the importance of taking a variationist perspective in assessing the lexical typology of a language in the domain of motion verbs. As regards Italian, straightforward attribution to a definite type – the V-framed type – has already been criticized by Simone (1997) and may in fact be challenged on the basis of three considerations.

The first consideration pertains the possibility of switching from

<sup>2</sup> The examples were adapted from the original dialect text and its Italian translation published in Anesa / Rondi (1981: 124, 130). For the scheme of the lexicalization patterns see also Berthele (2004: 95).

V-framed to S-framed constructions in the same context, as illustrated in example (2) by *è scesa* ‘has descended’ and *è venuta giù* ‘has come down’.

- (2) [...] perché io ho vista XYZ che è **scesa**  
because I have seen XYZ who is descended  
ma io ero in box è venuta giù ha detto [...]  
but I was in garage is come down has aid

‘because I have seen XYZ who has **descended**, but I was in the garage; she has come down and has said’

(LIP corpus, cfr. De Mauro *et al.* 1993, telephone conversation, Milan)

The switch in example (2) may be motivated by the need of expressing deixis, in this case the movement of XYZ, i.e. the person talked about, towards the speaker. Expression of deixis in the verbal root obliges the expression of the downward motion in the adverbial *giù*. In fact, Deixis was recognised by Talmy (2000b: 56-57) as one of the three components of the displacement Path, together with Vector – i.e. the direction of the displacement – and Conformation, roughly relating to the geometric structure of the Ground.

The second consideration pertains the frequent occurrence of redundant expressions of the Path of movement as in example (3), where the downward movement is encoded in the verbal root and adverbially as well.

- (3) al mattino **scendevano giù** **scendevano giù**  
in-the morning they-descended down they-descended down

‘in the morning they went down’

(LIP corpus, cfr. De Mauro *et al.* 1993, debate in meeting, Milan)

The occurrence of this type of construction can hardly be attributed to the influence of the S-framed type of the dialect substrate of North-Western Italy, shown in example (1b). Indeed redundant constructions such as the one reported in (2) occur at the very beginning of the history of Italian in the 13th century in Florence, as witnessed, for instance, by the *Novellino*, from where example in (4) is drawn. In Florence there isn’t – and there never was – a typologically divergent dialect substrate

such as that found in other parts of Italy and – for the matter under discussion here – particularly in North-Western Italy.

- (4) e'    **discese**    giù    per    le    gradora [...]  
he descended down for the steps  
'he went down the steps'

(*Il Novellino*, I, 67-68; XIII century)

The third and last consideration about the difficulty of categorising in a straightforward way Italian in terms of the two major V-framed and S-framed types of lexicalization patterns relates to the fact that in some cases the colloquial varieties may resort to either a synthetic or an analytic expression of a localization event, as illustrated in (5a). However, as pointed out by Ježek (2002: 295), only the analytic – i.e. S-framed – way of expression is allowed in figurative uses, as in (5b).

- (5) a. mi ha aiutato a    **alzarmi/**    tirarmi su  
me has help to raise-me pull-me up  
'(s)he helped me to raise myself'  
b. quella notizia mi ha    \***alzato/**    tirato su  
that news me has raised pulled up  
'that news has comforted me'

(Ježek 2002: 295, her examples (25), (26))

These short considerations show – although in very general terms – the different dimensions of variation which Italian as the target language presents to the learners in the expression of spatial lexicalization events. The complex picture of Italian fits the complex intertwining of typological parameters discussed by Wälchli (2001) with respect to the verbal, adverbial or adnominal means used in a language.

2. The broad typological split between the lexicalization patterns of spatial localization events involving V-framed and S-framed constructions has been shown to have important psycholinguistic correlates by Slobin (2000, 2004). Slobin's investigations have demonstrated that speakers of the two types of languages tend to describe the same localization events according to different perspectives.

In particular, speakers of S-framed languages such as English or German tend to differentiate the Manner in which the events take place in more subtle ways than speakers of V-framed languages. Languages of the V-framed lexicalization type – correspondingly – seem to have smaller inventories of lexical types expressing Manner of movement such as *clamber*, *climb* or *tumble* in English. The preferred adverbial encoding of the path in S-framed languages allows the expression of the Manner of movement in the verbal root, whereas in V-framed languages verbal roots are mostly reserved for the expression of the Path of displacement, as in Italian *salire* ‘go up’ and *scendere* ‘go down’.

The variationist approach advocated by Raphael Berthele has challenged the clearcut differentiation of the two types of languages in actual speakers’ behavior and, as was illustrated for Italian, it is also difficult to assign a language to a single type. However, in the evaluation of the language behavior of second language learners, the potential influence of the predominant lexicalization pattern of the first language may be of major relevance for the investigation of the acquisition process.

The learners investigated for this report provisionally comprise twelve learners selected from a corpus of 37 informants with different first languages (Albanian, western Arabic dialects, Dutch, French, German, English, Russian and others). They are tutored advanced learners of Italian L2 who have successfully completed the third, fourth or fifth level of the “Corsi di Italiano per Stranieri”/“Italian Courses for Foreigners” organized at the University of Bergamo. Of the twelve learners, six have English as their first language, five have German and one has Dutch. The choice of these learners allows the observation of the potential influence of S-framed first languages in the acquisition of mainly V-framed Italian as a second language. As to the level of proficiency of the learners, advanced learners allow the identification of recurrent or preferred lexicalization patterns. Finally the choice of tutored learners allows to a certain extent the control of their formal input, which has not comprised activities explicitly devoted to the learning of predicates or adverbs involved in the expression of spatial localization events. Furthermore, the level of proficiency of the learners investigated has been determined independently of our research design. The characteristics of the twelve learners are reported in Table 1.

*Table 1: Characteristics of the learners investigated*

Learner, gender, age			First language	Level of proficiency	Length of stay in Italy
AND	f.	24	German	V	4 months
ANK	f.	26	German	III	4 months
KRI	f.	23	German	IV	4 months
ELL	f.	20	English	III	5 months
IRI	f.	24	German	III	6 months
JEN	f.	40	English	IV	12 months
KAT	f.	21	English	IV	5 months
LOU	f.	20	English	IV	5 months
NAT	f.	21	German	III	5 months
RIC	m.	27	English	IV	5 months
STE	m.	24	English	IV	7 months
YDA	f.	22	Dutch	III	4 months

The data consist of audiorecorded narratives of the *Frog Story* (Mayer 1969), a kind of data which favors broad comparability. Besides the learners' narratives, the narratives of two native speakers of Italian were considered as well.

3. The analysis focuses on the way intransitive displacement events are lexicalized in the learners' narratives. Intransitive displacement events include basic motion, involving a human Figure, as well as – unlike Wälchli (2001) – non-basic intransitive motion involving an animate or humanized Figure, as illustrated in examples (6), (7) and (8):

- (6) questo # ragazzo ha ha sa/è **salito** su un grande  
 this boy has has is ascended onto a big  
 un grande sasso<sup>3</sup>  
 a big stone  
 'this boy climbed a huge rock' (RIC)

<sup>3</sup> The following convention have been adopted in the transcription of the learner's varieties: # (or +, ++, +++ om esamples 24-26): pauses (of growing length); /: self-correction by speaker; :: phonetic lengthening; \* \*: non Italian items; =: border of utterances of different speakers in immediate succession; ^: rising intonation; ,: intonation break with no pause; -: suspensive intonation.

- (7) la rana **fugge** ahm de la bottilia  
the frog escapes from the bottle  
'the frog flees from the jar' (JEN)
- (8) la casa di vespi è **caduta** eh sula terra  
the house of wasps is fallen on-the ground  
'the wasps' nest fell on the ground' (ANK)

Table 2 reports all lexical types expressing intransitive motion events found in the data and the occurrences produced by the learners for each type. Lexical types are ordered from less to most frequent and learners are ordered from left to right according to the number of tokens they produced. In Table 2 the names of the learners with either German or Dutch as L1 are shadowed.

Out of fourteen lexical types comprised in Table 2, four encode Manner of motion, namely *arrampicarsi* 'climb', *correre* 'run' and the two synonyms verbs *fuggire* and *scappare* 'run away, make off'. *Cadere* 'fall', claimed by some authors to be a manner verb, has been considered a displacement verb, although of a special – and not unproblematic – type, in accordance with Slobin (1996)<sup>4</sup>. Even if tricky to allocate, *nascondersi* 'hide (oneself)' has been considered as encoding a dislocation event, namely one in which the Figure translates up to a point where it cannot be seen any more, as exemplified in (9).

<sup>4</sup> The ambiguous semantics of *cadere* 'fall' (and *nascondersi* 'hide') is discussed in Spreafico (2006). The verb *cadere* itself was considered as a manner verb in subsequent works, e.g. Spreafico/Valentini (2006), Valentini (in press), mainly on the basis of the absence of control of the downward movement by the subject, i.e. the Figure. In other terms, *cadere* may be considered as denoting a particular manner of going downward with respect to the true displacement verb *scendere* 'go down, descend'. It is however noteworthy that both verbs share the expression of a downward movement.



Table 2: Lexical types and occurrences for each learner  
(L1 German and Dutch shadowed)

Lexical types	KAT	IRI	ELL	YDA	NAT	JEN	KRI	RIC	AND	LOU	STE	ANK	Tot.
<i>nascondersi</i> 'hide'							1						1
<i>seguire</i> 'follow'									1				1
<i>arrampicarsi</i> 'climb'										1			1
<i>partire</i> 'leave'											1		1
<i>ritornare</i> 'return'			1										1
<i>venire</i> 'come'				1						1			2
<i>uscire</i> 'go out'							1		1				2
<i>arrivare</i> 'arrive'							1	1		1			3
<i>fuggire</i> 'escape'						1	1	1					3
<i>correre</i> 'run'				1		1				1	1		4
<i>salire</i> 'go up'					3	1		2			4		10
<i>scappare</i> 'escape'	1	1	1			1		1	2	2	1	5	15
<i>andare</i> 'go'		3	1	2	1		4	2	2	1	1	4	21
<i>cadere</i> 'fall'	2		2	2	3	3	1	2	4	3	3	3	28
Tokens	3	4	5	6	7	7	9	9	10	10	11	12	93

- (9) forse la rana eh **si nascosto** dentro questo buco  
maybe the frog itself hidden inside this hole  
'maybe the frog hid itself inside this hole' (KRI)

When narrating the appearance of a mole out of a hole, a learner has used the verb *comparire* 'appear', as in example (10). This verb introduces new characters, does not encode a true dislocation event and therefore was not comprised in Table 2.

- (10) c'è un piccolo animale che è #  
there is a little animal that is  
**comparso** dal buco nella terra  
appeared from-the hole in-the ground  
'there's a little animal that came out of the hole in the ground' (RIC)

It is worth noticing that in narrating analogous events, Italian native speakers might use a phrasal verb corresponding to the English verb 'come out', which may encode a real displacement, as in the case of the owl coming out of a hole – cf. example (11) –, but which may otherwise serve as a verb of “mise-en-scène”. This is shown in example (12), where *venire fuori* is used for the introduction of the elk, accompanied by the indefinite article signalling new referents introduced into discourse, unlike the owl in the previous example (11), accompanied by the definite article signalling referents already present in the discourse.

- (11) dopo **viene fuori** il gufo  
then comes out the owl  
'then the owl flies out' (GIO, native informant)
- (12) **viene fuori** un alce  
comes out an elk  
'an elk appears' (GIO, native informant)

A last problem involved in the classification of motion verbs, but which we won't discuss here, pertains the value to be assigned to the deictic verbs of the target language as used by the learners investigated here. As discussed by Ricca (1993: 39-53), the verbs corresponding to Italian deictic verbs in Germanic languages are characterized by a telic

*Aktionsart* rather than deixis: this may appear in the use of *venire* – pronounced as *fenire* – ‘come’ exemplified in (13).

- (13) quando il bambino **fiene** per ecc/  
when the child comes for  
eccedente nella testa di un cervo  
accident in-the head of a deer  
‘when because of an incident the child ends up on the deer’s head’  
(YDA)

As shown in Table 2, most of the lexical types produced in the narratives by the learners considered here (i.e. eleven out of fourteen) have ten or less occurrences and are scattered across the informants. Few (three out of fourteen), namely *scappare* ‘escape’, *andare* ‘go’ and *cadere* ‘fall’, are widespread and used by almost every learner irrespective of their proficiency in Italian. These three frequent lexical types seem to distribute among the learners in an interesting way. Considering the three bottom shadowed rows of Table 2, we may say that, if a learner has a low proficiency level and has English as his L1, then he will use ‘fall’ and ‘escape’; on the other hand, if a learner has a low proficiency level and has German as his L1, then he will use ‘go’ and either ‘fall’ or ‘escape’ or both. This is true for ANK too, the learner who has completed level III and who has produced the highest figure of lexicalizations, although resorting to only the three lexical types at issue here. On the other hand, KAT, the learner with the least amount of lexicalizations, although conforming to the tendency in the use of lexical types, has a higher degree of proficiency, having completed level IV. In general terms, consideration of the number of tokens shows that narrators with L1 German make more extensive use of the generic verb *andare* ‘go’ than speakers of English do.

More data are needed in order to account for the widespread use of the three lexical types ‘fall’, ‘go’ and ‘escape’. Whereas ‘go’ is basic in L2 vocabulary and is found as early as in the basic variety, ‘fall’ and ‘escape’ might be more often chosen in the narratives because they lexicalize particular dramatic turning points in the Frog Story.

4. We turn now to the analysis of the means used by the learners for the expression of the associative function of the displacement, i.e. the Path of motion. As already discussed with reference to example (1), the locus of the expression can be the verbal root, as typically found in V-framed Romance languages, or an adverbial or adnominal phrase, as typically found in S-framed Germanic languages. The range of *loci* for the expression of the associative function actually found in the data examined here is reported in Table 3. In this Table the figures of the occurrences for the types of expression found in the data, shown in the first column on the left, are grouped according to the learners' first languages.

*Table 3: The locus of the expression of PATH in Italian L2 by English and German/Dutch learners*

Locus	L1 English		L1 German (and Dutch)	
	V	13	<b>34,2%</b>	7
V + ADN	14	36,8%	14	35%
ADN	7	18,4%	14	<b>35%</b>
ADV	3	7,9%	2	5%
ADV + ADN	1	2,6%	1	2,5%
No locus			2	5%
Total	38	100%	40	100%

*Legend:* ADN 'adnominal', ADV 'adverbal', V 'verbal root'.

By a comparable amount of lexicalized motion events (38 vs. 40), the figures reported in Table 3 show a certain degree of accordance in the choice of some *loci* of expression by the learners of the two groups and a remarkable difference in the choice of the verbal root alone (i.e. V) and of an adnominal item alone (i.e. ADN). Verbal plus adnominal expression of the associative function (i.e. V+ADN) is illustrated in (14) and (15).

- (14) e il cane **sale** il ragazzo quasi  
and the dog ascends the boy almost  
**sulla testa** di questo ragazz/ ragazzino  
on-the head of this boy little-boy  
'and the dog goes on the head of this boy/climbs the head of this boy'  
(STE, L1 English)

- (15) però subito un gufo è **uscito del buco**  
but at-once an owl is exited from-the hole  
'but suddenly an owl has come out of the hole'  
(KRI, L1 German)

The choice of the sole adverb (i.e. ADV) or of the adverb and of an adnominal item (i.e. ADV+ADN) are illustrated in (16) and (17).

- (16) un topo che vieni **fuori**  
a mouse that come out  
'a mouse that pops out'  
(LOU, L1 English)

- (17) poi sono andati **fuori nel bosco** [...]  
then they-are gone out in-the wood  
'then they went out into the wood'  
(RIC, L1 English)

Finally, an example for the absence of expression of the Path is reported in (18).

- (18) quando il bambino dorme il rana ++ va  
when the child sleeps the frog goes  
'when the child is sleeping, the frog goes (away)'  
(YDA, L1 Dutch)

The major difference in the behavior of the two groups of learners is found in the choice of the verbal root and of an adnominal item for the expression of the Path. The figures reported in Table 3 make it clear that speakers with L1 English prefer to mark the associative function in the verbal root: they do so in 13 instances out of 38 (34,2%); in comparison, the other group of learners, with either German or Dutch as L1, encode the Path of motion in the verbal root in 7 cases out of 40

(17,5%). These learners show a preference for the encoding of the Path in the adnominal locus (14 times out of 40, i.e. 35%); speakers of English, on the other hand, appear to encode the Path in a prepositional phrase only in 7 cases (out of 38, i.e. 18,4%). The two alternative choices are illustrated in example (19), drawn from the corpus of an English speaker, and in example (20), drawn from the corpus of a German speaker.

(19) ma **ritornata** con una delle delle altri piccoli  
but returned with one of-the other little-PL  
'but he came back with one of the little ones' (ELL, L1 English)

(20) va **al lago**  
goes to-the lake  
'they go to the lake' (IRI, L1 German)

With regard to the number of adnominal slots used by English speakers, it should be pointed out that in four cases out of seven English informants use the verb *salire* with a direct object, as in example (21); as a matter of fact Italian *salire* requires a prepositional phrase, usually introduced by the preposition *su* 'on'. The transitive use of *salire* is likely to be due to the influence of their first language, as partly confirmed by the absence of the same construction in German learners.

(21) il bambino **ha salito un albero**  
the child has ascended a tree  
'the child climbed up a tree' (JEN, L1 English)

As to the adverbial items occurring in the learners' narratives, it is worth noticing that only two items appear, namely *fuori* 'out' and *via* 'away'. This is remarkable, since the inventory of adverbial items of the target language in this domain comprises also *dentro* 'inside', *su* 'up', homophone of the preposition with the same meaning but for tonicity, its opposite *giù* 'down', and *indietro* 'back', *dietro* 'behind', *incontro* 'toward' and others, which could potentially appear in the narratives. In the narrative of one of the Italian native speakers considered besides the learners the items *giù* 'down' and *dietro* 'behind' appear besides *fuori*

‘out’. *Giù* in connection with a metaphorical manner verb is illustrated in (22) and *fuori* in (23). In this last example, the associative function is redundantly encoded in both the verbal root *uscire* ‘exit’ and the adverbial *fuori* ‘out’; this construction is found in the target language, but not in the learners investigated here.

(22) il cane **vola giù** dalla finestra  
the dog flies down from-the windows  
‘the dog falls down the window’ (GIO, native speaker)

(23) la rana **esce fuori** dal vaso  
the frog exits out from-the jar  
‘the frog goes out of the jar’ (GIO, native speaker)

5. As stated at the beginning of the analysis of the lexicalization patterns found in the narratives investigated here, the twelve learners examined are a subgroup of a larger group of 37 learners with different first languages. The concluding remarks which we are now able to propose on the basis of the data illustrated here must therefore be taken with caution.

Although belonging to the same S-framed type, English on the one side and German/Dutch on the other side appear to differ in the role they play in influencing the lexicalization patterns of the learners. This is most evident in the preferred choice of the verbal root as the *locus* for the expression of the Path of motion in the learners with L1 English and, conversely, in the preferred choice of an adnominal item as the *locus* for the expression of the Path of movement in the learners with L1 German/Dutch. This resorts to a tendency towards a more iconic pattern of lexicalization in the latter group of learners, where motion is expressed by a generic verb such as ‘go’, and the Path by an adnominal means of expression, i.e. a preposition. Availability of both S-framed and V-framed constructions in the first language – e.g. *go out* vs. *exit*, *go in* vs. *enter* etc. in English– might be responsible for the orientation of the learners with L1 English toward a V-framed type of lexicalization. This orientation might have been strengthened by recognisable cognates in source and target language, such as *enter/entrare*.

In the discussion of the lexical types found in the narratives and of their distribution among the learners reported in Table 2, we have already pointed to the possibility that some frequent choices, namely the choice of ‘fall’ and ‘escape’, might depend on the plot itself of the story: the frog’s escape initiates the entire plot and in the course of the story three characters happen to fall down. Both these lexical types do not belong to the most frequent words of spoken Italian, as illustrated in Table 4. Unlike these verbs, the third most frequent choice of the learners, i.e. *andare* ‘go’, is indeed comprised in the group of the most frequent words of spoken Italian in the frequency dictionary edited by De Mauro *et alii* (1993).

Table 4: Rank of usage of verbal items in spoken Italian.

<i>andare</i> ‘go’ 26	<i>cadere</i> ‘fall’ 539	<i>scappare</i> ‘escape’ 1018
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Other lexical choices besides ‘go’ seem to depend on regularities found in the target language and to be more relevant for the acquisitional point of view. The only two adverbial items ‘out’ and ‘away’ found in the learners’ narratives are the two most frequent items in the repertoire of similar adverbials in spoken Italian. This is illustrated in Table 5 with respect to ‘in’, ‘down’ and ‘up’ according to the frequency dictionary edited by De Mauro *et alii* (1993). Besides frequency in the input, two other factors might have influenced the choice of these adverbials. Bisyllabic *fuori* and *via* appear to be phonetically more salient than monosyllabic *giù* and *su*. On the other hand, their meanings imply more radical changes of state than that implied by a movement on the vertical axis. The changes of state implied by *fuori* and *via* affect, in general terms, presence and visibility of the figure. These considerations should hold also in case of *dentro* ‘in’, which does appear in the learners’ narratives but only as a preposition, i.e. as an adnominal item (cf. example (9)). These findings seem to match in part those found in the acquisition of other second languages (cf. Becker / Carroll 1997: 57). However a more thorough analysis is needed in order to arrive at a reliable comparability of the data.



Table 5: Rank of usage of some adverbials in spoken Italian

<i>Fuori</i> 'out'	<i>via</i> 'away'	<i>dentro</i> 'in'	<i>giù</i> 'down'	<i>su</i> 'up'
203	218	327	374	624

Finally, as to the combination of verbal, adverbial and adnominal slots in the expression of motion events, the learners seem to adhere to the V-framed type of lexicalization patterns, as illustrated in the figures for the V and V+ADN rows of Table 3. However, disregarding the different behaviours of English and German or Dutch speakers, which have been already discussed, and considering the row ADV of Table 3 too, the learners' lexicalization patterns seem to reproduce the quite variable possibilities of the target language, with the only exception of redundant expressions of the type 'exit out' exemplified in (23) or 'descending down' exemplified in (3). The same situation is found in an early spontaneous learner of Italian, comprised in the database of the Pavia Project. The very initial postbasic variety of this learner after almost two months of stay in Italy comprises three motion predicates, illustrated in (24) and (25).

(24) MK, L1 Tigrinya, recording 03, almost 2 months in Italy

```
\Mk\ c'è ++ ta:nto^, collegio *La Sale*
<there is much college LS>
in Massaua= eh? + dopo ++ noi an/-noi andiamo Massaua- eh
<in Massaua then we-go Massaua>
\It\ =ah ahm
\Mk\ entriamo in collegio *La Sale*
<we-enter in college LS>
```

(25) MK, L1 Tigrinya, recording 03, almost 2 months in Italy

```
\It\ cosa fai?
<what you-do?>
\Mk\ io +++ cam/ io cambio l_mio vestiti eh +++ eh non + non
<I change my cloths +++ not not>
++ non ++ vado fuori+= perchè c'è freddo tropo
<not I-go out + because there is cold too-much>
```

The lexical repertoire of motion verbs in this variety comprises the early verb 'go', which does not specify the Path, but only the motion

away from the *origo*, as found in early stages of the acquisition of different second languages by Becker / Carroll (1997: 86). Besides ‘go’, there appears the verb ‘enter’ which conflates Motion and Path according to the V-framed pattern of lexicalization, and the phrasal verb ‘go out’ for ‘exit’ where Motion and Path are lexicalized separately according to the S-framed pattern of lexicalization. On the other hand, this learner shows autonomous usage of the adverbials ‘out’ and ‘away’, as illustrated in (26).

(26) MK, L1 Tigrinya, recording 03, almost 2 months in Italy

```
\Mk\ presepio sì  
<Holy Crib yes>  
presepio, anche c'è in *La Sale* +  
<Holy Crib also there is in LS>  
adesso non c'è perchè - il governmento - la - collegio  
<now not there is because - the government - the - college>  
*La Sale* + eh il padre tutti - fuori + adesso, via  
<LS + the father all - out + now away>
```

‘Now there is no Holy Crib any longer, because the government has thrown out the brethren, now they are away’

The learners’ susceptibility to the variation between V-framed and S-framed patterns allowed in Italian as their target language in the domain of motion verbs opens new perspectives of further investigations of the interaction between cognition and first and second language in the acquisition of motion verbs along the lines of Levinson (2003). At the same time, the learners’ behaviour may be used as a kind of magnifying glass with respect to the task of defining the typology of the target language in this domain on the basis of Talmy’s (2000a, b) frame of reference.

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