

SPECULATIONS ON THE EXPRESSION OF MOVEMENT IN FRENCH<sup>1</sup>

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1.1. Scope of the discussion

The starting point of this paper is the observation that, in comparison with English, the set of prepositions which can be used to indicate movement to a "goal" or from a "source" in French is rather depleted. If we take what are arguably the three basic locative relations, at (relation to a point), on (relation to a line or surface) and in (relation to an area or space), we find that English possesses the full range of goal and source counterparts:

TABLE I

|                     | <u>Static location</u> | <u>Goal</u> | <u>Source</u> |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>Point</u>        | at                     | to          | from          |
| <u>Line/Surface</u> | on                     | onto        | off           |
| <u>Area/space</u>   | in                     | into        | out of        |

But, in French we notice firstly that French makes no morphological distinction between static location and goal and, secondly, that the preposition system of French does not generally allow us to distinguish between the different locative relations which may characterise the source in a movement situation, but makes use of a single, general-purpose source preposition de:

TABLE II

|                     | <u>Static location/goal</u> | <u>Source</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <u>Point</u>        | à                           | )             |
| <u>Line/surface</u> | sur                         | )             |
| <u>Area/space</u>   | dans                        | )             |
|                     |                             | de            |

Nevertheless, it is surely the case that French is intrinsically capable of expressing the full range of situations involving movement to a goal or from a source which can be expressed in English.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the nature of this apparent deficiency of the French preposition system with respect to the three locative relations mentioned above and to speculate on some of the consequences of this deficiency for the expression of movement in French.

1.2. Theoretical background

The approach adopted in this paper is basically atheoretical and informal. The only a priori assumption I shall make about language is, I hope, a fairly uncontroversial one; namely that the semantic content of a sentence is essentially a function of the semantic content of the words which comprise it and the syntactic relations which obtain between these words. Conceivably there may be exceptions to this general principle (e.g. certain types of ellipsis which require missing information to be deduced from the context) but, for present purposes, I shall assume that if some element of meaning is expressed by a sentence, that element can (in principle) be attributed to one or more words or morphemes in the sentence.

1.3. Prepositions as expressions of location

In French, as in English, a typical way of expressing the location of one entity in relation to another is by means of a preposition:

- (1) a Marie est à la gare
- b Pierre reste dans son lit
- c Henri joue sur le trottoir

The fact that the burden of describing the spatial relation is borne by the preposition leaves the verb free to express other features of the situation; e.g. durative aspect in (1b) and an activity performed by the subject in (1c). This division of labour between the parts of speech has a certain functional value in that it allows novel situations to be described by combining verbs and prepositions in novel ways. If the language was organised in such a way that all aspects of the situation had to be expressed by the verb, we would need a separate verb for each situation, e.g. we would need separate verbs meaning jouer dans, jouer sur, jouer à, .... rester dans, rester sur, rester à, ... and so on for all the activities, states etc. which may obtain in different locative relations.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of this rather banal observation, a promising starting point for our investigation is a study of the way in which the various meaning components present in sentences expressing movement are distributed among the different parts of speech.

2.1. The expression of movement to a goal

In the following sentences, the prepositions define different locative relations, just as in (1):

- (2) a Pierre est allé à Paris
- b Henri a lancé le livre sur la table
- c Gaston a enfoncé le clou dans le mur

However, in these cases, the preposition does not define a static location but rather the locative relation which results from movement of some entity (denoted by the subject or object depending on the verb); that is, the preposition phrase indicates the goal.

Since all of these sentences involve movement along a certain

dimension, we must assume (according to the principle advanced in 1.2.) that there is some element (either the verb or the preposition or both) which expresses this notion. It seems clear that the verbs aller, lancer and enfoncer do express movement, so the central question is whether movement is also expressed by the preposition, as in the following English sentences where goal prepositions are used:

- (3) a Pierre went to Paris
- b Henri threw the book onto the table
- c Gaston drove the nail into the wall

This question can be formulated in more general terms. Should the absence of specific goal prepositions in French (see Table II above) be characterised as a case of morphological neutralisation - i.e. French does have goal prepositions, but they happen to be indistinguishable from their static counterparts; or does it rather reflect a limitation on the semantic load which can be borne by prepositions in French - i.e. they are incapable of expressing the notion of movement to a goal but are restricted to defining spatial relations between entities?

The difference between these two approaches may appear trivial. Indeed, for the examples in (2) both approaches yield the same result since movement is in any case expressed by the verb (so if the preposition also expresses movement, it does so redundantly).<sup>3</sup> However, the two characterisations make different predictions when applied to a wider range of data.

If à, sur and dans are potentially capable of expressing movement to a goal (even though this is not indicated by the morphology) we would expect this potential to be realised in cases

where movement of the appropriate entity is not expressed by the verb. On the other hand, if these prepositions are intrinsically incapable of expressing movement to a goal, it should not be possible (given the assumptions in 1.2.) for them to indicate the goal in sentences which contain no other element which expresses the relevant notion of movement.

Note in this connection that the goal prepositions to, onto and into can be used in this way:

- (4) a John (kicked) the ball (to the other end of the pitch )  
      (hit ) (onto the roof )  
          (into the net )
- b Harry grated cheese ( onto his pasta )  
          (into his soup )
- c Charles ( hammered ) the nail into the wall  
          ( knocked )
- d The dice must be shaken onto the table

But if we try to transpose these examples into French, we find that the resulting sentences are unacceptable or, at least, that the preposition phrases cannot be interpreted as indicating the goal.<sup>4</sup>

- (5) a \* Jean a ( botté ) le ballon ( à l'autre bout du terrain )  
      ( tapé ) ( sur le toit )  
          ( dans le filet )
- b \* Henri a répé du fromage ( sur ses pâtes )  
          ( dans sa soupe )
- c \* Charles a ( martelé ) le clou dans le mur
- d \* Il faut secouer les dés sur la table

This fact is naturally accounted for if we take the view that the prepositions in (5) are incapable of expressing movement to a goal. Since the verbs in (5) do not necessarily entail movement of the object entity, there is no element in the sentence which expresses the relevant notion of movement. Thus, the PP can only be interpreted,

if at all, as describing the place where the event occurred or the position occupied by the direct object entity during the event. In order to obtain a goal interpretation, we must substitute verbs which do express movement of the appropriate type, e.g. envoyer in (5a), répondre or simply mettre in (5b), enfoncer or planter in (5c) and jeter in (5d).

A similar contrast can be found in sentences containing intransitive verbs:

- (6) a The worm wriggled into the hole
- b Mary danced onto the stage
- (7) a \*Le ver s'est tortillé dans le trou
- b \*Marie a dansé sur la scène

Again, in (7) the PP can only be interpreted as indicating the place where the event took place. Although the verbs in (6) - (7) describe movements of various parts of the body, they do not necessarily imply movement of the body as a whole in any direction. Thus, the contrast between (6) and (7) is readily accounted for if we assume that into and onto are capable of expressing movement to a goal whereas dans and sur are not.

It is difficult to see how these contrasts could be explained on the basis of the alternative characterisation of à, sur and dans envisaged above. Presumably, we would have to stipulate that although these prepositions have the same dynamic value as to, onto and into, they can only assume this value when the notion of movement is expressed elsewhere in the sentence. But this seems to be tantamount to saying that these prepositions can not, in themselves, contribute the idea of movement.

## 2.2. Vectorial movement

The arguments given so far suggest that whenever the verb of the sentence expresses movement, it should be possible, in French, to indicate the goal by means of a locative preposition. However, there are some verbs (mainly intransitive verbs) which seem to imply movement of some sort but yet do not allow the accompanying preposition to indicate the goal in French, though in English this is quite possible:

- (8) a \*Richard a patiné à la sortie
- b \*Paul a couru sur le pont
- c \*Suzy a conduit dans le garage
- d \*L'oiseau a volé sur la branche
- (9) a Richard skated to the exit
- b Paul ran onto the bridge
- c Suzy drove into the car park
- d The bird flew onto the branch

Intuitively, there seems to be a difference between the type of movement involved in verbs like patiner, courir, conduire and voler and those verbs which do allow a following locative PP

to indicate the goal. Below is a sample of sentences containing intransitive verbs which do allow such an interpretation:

- (10) a Richard s'est rendu à la sortie
- b Paul est monté sur le pont
- c Suzy est entrée dans le parking
- d L'oiseau s'est posé sur la branche

The difference between the verbs in (8) and those in (10) is difficult to pin down, but to the extent that the former imply movement, this movement seems to be of a haphazard, open-ended sort,

whereas in the case of the verbs in (10) the movement seems to be channelled in a particular direction and the idea of a final destination is evoked. That is, the meaning of the verbs in (10) seems to contain not only the notion of movement but also a vectorial factor which is absent in the verbs in (8). The absence of this vectorial factor can perhaps be seen more clearly in the case of verbs like errer, s'égarer, flâner and to a lesser extent se promener and voyager, which specifically indicate movement of an aimless sort.

Note that locative PPs with these verbs cannot be construed as indicating a goal, though in English we can use a specific goal preposition with these verbs:

- (11) a \*Robert a erré dans la grotte.
- b \*Claudine s'est égarée sur la scène
- c \*Les touristes ont flâné à Montmartre
- d \*Solange s'est promenée au parc
- e \*Marcel a voyagé dans le midi

- (12) a Robert strayed into the cave
- b Claudine wandered onto the stage
- c The tourists sauntered to Montmartre
- d Solange strolled to the park
- d Marcel travelled to the south of France

In the French examples (11) the PP can only indicate the area within which the movement took place.

In the light of these observations, we may modify our earlier hypothesis to the effect that the ingredient which is necessary for a goal interpretation is not simply movement, but vectorial movement. Following our earlier argument, we may postulate that à, sur and dans (unlike to, onto and into) do not express vectorial movement and can

thus only be used to indicate a goal when this notion is expressed by the verb or some other element in the sentence.

### 2.3. The concept of "semantic load"

So far our discussion has been limited to the expression of vectorial movement in combination with the locative relations "at", "on" and "in". In particular, we have argued that English allows both notions to be expressed simultaneously by means of a preposition, whereas prepositions in French are restricted to defining the locative relations. It may be interesting at this stage to speculate on whether this difference is simply an isolated property of the particular prepositions involved or whether it reflects a more general difference between the preposition systems of the two languages. Let us pursue the latter hypothesis since it is the more interesting.

Given our assumption that the various semantic components which can be combined together to produce the meaning of a sentence are distributed in a fairly systematic way among the different parts of speech, we may postulate that there is a fundamental difference between the two languages concerning the semantic load which can be borne by the class of prepositions. Pursuing this line of inquiry we might characterise this difference in either of two ways:

qualitatively or quantitatively. According to the former approach, we might speculate that vectorial movement is simply not among the notions which can be expressed by prepositions in French, whereas the latter would lead us to characterise the difference between French and English in terms of the maximum number of semantic components which can be incorporated in the meaning of a preposition - this maximum being lower in French than in English.

The essential difference between these two approaches is that the quantitative approach does not specifically exclude the possibility that prepositions in French are capable of expressing vectorial movement. Suppose, for instance, that vectorial movement and the definition of a spatial relation each count as one component and that the maximum semantic load for prepositions in French is just one component whereas in English it is higher (say, two components). This constraint would prevent prepositions like à, sur and dans from expressing vectorial movement while allowing to, onto and into in English (thus accounting for the contrasts we have observed so far), but it would also allow the possibility of a preposition in French which expresses vectorial movement but does not define a particular spatial relation.

Note now that the preposition vers can be combined with verbs like these in (6) to give an interpretation involving movement to a goal:

- (13) a Richard a patiné vers la gare
- b Paul a couru vers le pont
- c Suzy a conduit vers le parking
- d L'oiseau a volé vers la branche

If we are to maintain consistency with our earlier argument, we must conclude from these examples that vers expresses vectorial movement (since the verbs in (13) do not, or so we argued earlier). Moreover, if the constraint suggested in the previous paragraph is correct, we must also conclude that vers does not define any specific locative relation. From a purely intuitive point of view, this characterisation of vers seems to be on the right track; vers does convey the idea of movement in the general direction of the entity

denoted by its complement, but, unlike to, onto and into, it does not say anything about the nature of the spatial relation which results from this movement.

2.4. Movement from a source

A similar argument can be adduced on the basis of source prepositions. As we saw in Section 1.1., English distinguishes three source prepositions according to the type of locative relation which obtained before movement took place. If we consider movement from a source to be a subclass of the vectorial component (like its converse, movement to a goal), this state of affairs is consistent with the constraint suggested in 2.3. which allows English prepositions to contain more than one component. This constraint also leads us to expect that French will allow prepositions to express the notion of source or to define a particular spatial relation, but not to do both.

This expectation is borne out in so far as de, the only source preposition in French, does not specify the nature of the spatial relation prior to movement. Thus in the following examples, de is used irrespective of the nature of this relation:

- (14) a Sonya est revenue de Paris
- b Gaston est descendu de l'échelle
- c Patrick est sorti du bistro

Moreover, in such cases, it is the verb which assumes the burden of characterising the nature of the source, whereas in English this information is typically conveyed by the preposition:

- (15) a Sonya returned from Paris
- b Gaston stepped off the ladder
- c Patrick came out of the pub

In some circumstances, French adopts an alternative strategy for indicating the source which is not available in English; namely the use of a static preposition:<sup>5</sup>

- (16) a Ernestine a cueilli la pomme sur l'arbre
- b Albert a pris ce livre sur l'étagère
- c Le clochard a ramassé le journal dans la poubelle
- d Quelqu'un a bu dans mon verre

This construction is one which English students of French often find puzzling, even illogical. However, the existence of this construction fits in rather nicely with the general approach we have been adopting. Note firstly that the verbs in (16) seem to express a notion of

vectorial movement, but, unlike the verbs discussed so far, they do so in a way which invites reference to the source rather than the goal.

A possible reason for this orientation towards the source is that the goal (or, at least, the immediate goal) is already given as the subject entity - e.g. in (16a) we understand that once the apple is removed from the tree, it becomes located somewhere on Ernestine's person. Now, the essence of our argument so far is

that locative prepositions in French simply define a spatial relation between two entities but they do not contain any vectorial feature (either in terms of goal or source). Nevertheless, we have observed that

when the verb supplies the appropriate vectorial feature, the spatial relation defined by these prepositions can be interpreted as characterising the goal. By the same token, it is rather natural

that this spatial relation should be understood as applying to the source when the vectorial feature expressed by the verb is oriented toward the source (as in (16)). To put it another way, since

locative prepositions in French are vectorially neutral, it is not surprising that they can be used to characterise either the goal or

the source depending on the vectorial properties of the verb.<sup>6</sup>

There are many interesting issues arising from examples like those in (16), not the least of which is how the verbs which behave like those in (16) are distinguished from those which require the source to be indicated by de, as in (17):<sup>7</sup>

- (17) a Pierre a sorti le mouchoir de / \* dans sa poche
- b Albert a descendu le livre de / \* sur l'étagère
- c Claude a enlevé les pépins de / \* dans l'orange

The basic intuition behind our analysis (which falls well short of a definite solution to the problem just raised) is that the putative constraint on the semantic load of prepositions in French imposes a choice concerning the way source is expressed. Either we use the

general source preposition de (in which case, the spatial characterisation of the source must be indicated by the verb or must remain unspecified) or we must use a non-vectorial, locative preposition like sur or dans (in which case, the verb must express vectorial movement strongly oriented toward the source). In English, no such dilemma arises since prepositions are capable of expressing both the vectorial element and the spatial characterisation of the source.

It follows from this approach that there will be cases where the notion of source can not be expressed conveniently in French. Compare the following:

- (18) Lulu ran out of the bedroom

- (19) \* Lulu a couru dans/de la chambre.

In (19) we can not use dans to indicate the source since courir does not involve any vectorial element (still less a source-oriented one). The preposition de does express this vectorial element,

but neither de nor courir gives any indication of the prior spatial relation between Lulu and the bedroom; consequently the use of de would leave the sentence semantically incomplete.

2.5. Non-vectorial verbs of movement

In Section 2.2. we gave examples of verbs of movement in French which lack the vectorial feature which permits an accompanying locative preposition to indicate a goal. We also observed that in cases like errer, s'égarer, flâner, etc. the notion of movement in a definite direction is explicitly denied as part of the meaning of the verb. But, in other cases it is not immediately obvious why the vectorial feature should be absent. Typical examples of this sort are verbs which specify the manner of locomotion or the type of conveyance involved; e.g. courir, boiter, marcher, nager, voler, patiner, skier, ramer, naviguer, etc. Indeed, it seems to be a general rule in French (with a few marginal exceptions as we shall see in the next section) that if a verb specifies the manner or means of locomotion, it cannot be used with a locative preposition indicating the goal.

This generalisation can be formulated in terms of the notion of semantic load which we introduced earlier in relation to prepositions. The idea is that there are general limitations on the possible combinations of semantic components which can define the meaning of a verb and that, in particular, if a verb expresses movement, it may also contain either a vectorial feature or a feature (or set of features) describing the manner in which movement took place, but not both.

Note that, in this case, the maximum semantic load can not be defined in purely quantitative terms. Verbs expressing vectorial

movement can incorporate additional components other than manner; e.g. causation (mettre, poser, etc.); deictic orientation (aller, venir); both causation and deixis (emporter, apporter, emmener, amener); a particular type of locative relation, with or without causation (entrer, sortir, monter, insérer, etc.).

Note also that this hypothesis does not require that movement verbs which lack a vectorial feature must express some manner element. Plausible examples of verbs which lack both types of component, but express movement and nothing else (except causation when used transitively), are bouger and (se) déplacer. Given this characterisation, our analysis predicts that these verbs should not allow a goal interpretation of an accompanying PP. This seems to be correct. In the following examples the PP can only be interpreted as denoting the area within which the movement took place:

- (20) a \* La femme de ménage a déplacé le cendrier sur la table
- b \* Il faut bouger ce piano dans la pièce à côté
- c \* Le train de banlieu s'est déplacé sur la voie principale
- d \* Pendant le tremblement de terre, tous les meubles ont bougé à l'autre côté de la pièce.

2.6. Some problem cases

Although our hypothesis concerning the incompatibility of manner and vectorial components within the meaning of a verb yields the right result in a wide variety of cases, there are a few verbs which our account forces us to analyse as vectorial verbs yet which seem to give some information about the manner in which movement takes place. A case in point is lancer which we classified as a



vectorial verb on the basis of the example (2b). Henri a lancé le livre sur la table but which seems to incorporate some manner element.

A possible way out of this problem would be to appeal to the intuition that the manner element which distinguishes lancer from a more neutral verb like envoyer (say, "by the action of the hand and arm") characterises the way in which the movement of the object is caused rather than the movement itself. So, if we revise our constraint slightly so that it only excludes cases where the manner and vectorial features apply to the same component (i.e. movement), lancer ceases to be an exception. However, I shall suspend judgement on whether this modification is justified.

An alternative, less radical, strategy would be to make our constraint more flexible and to formulate it in a way that takes account of the varying degrees of specificity with which manner can be expressed. The essence of this approach is that verbs of vectorial movement may tolerate the expression of some information concerning the nature of the movement, but as this information becomes more specific the vectorial feature becomes, in some sense, weaker or less prominent (to compensate, as it were, for the increased load in the manner component) and disappears altogether once a certain threshold of specificity is reached in the manner component (e.g. when the movement is characterised in terms of a particular bodily action or a particular means of transport). According to this approach we might postulate that the manner element in lancer falls within the margin of tolerance allowed by the constraint.

The following examples suggest that some such modification of the constraint may be necessary:

- (21) a L'Alpiniste est tombé dans une crevasse
- b L'Alpiniste a glissé dans une crevasse
- c \*L'Alpiniste a trébuché dans une crevasse

Arguably, tomber does not involve any manner component, but glisser surely does (movement of some surface of the moving object against an immobile surface such as the ground), yet (21b) allows a goal interpretation just like (21a). This shows that some specification of the manner is compatible with vectorial movement. On the other hand, a goal interpretation of (21c) is impossible. This correlates with the intuition that the manner element in trébucher is highly specific - a sudden, jerky movement usually caused by an obstacle fouling the feet of an ambulant individual and resulting in loss of balance. To account for the difference between the (b) and (c) sentences, we can assume that the manner specification in glisser is within the threshold fixed by the constraint, whereas that of trébucher is too specific to be combined with the expression of vectorial movement.

An interesting problem is posed by the verb porter

- (22) René a porté sa valise à la gare

The fact that à la gare can be interpreted as the goal in (22) suggests that whatever manner features distinguish porter from other causative verbs of movement fall within the limits tolerated by our constraint. However, according to my informants, it is much more difficult (and virtually impossible in the case of (23b)) to obtain a goal interpretation for the PPs in the following examples:

- (23) a ? René a porté sa valise sur le quai
- b \* René a porté sa valise dans le train.

Perhaps what is happening here is that the degree of specificity of

the manner element in porter is just within the threshold, with the result that the vectorial feature is almost non-existent, and that the effect of this weakening is to reduce the range of goals which can be specified by means of locative prepositions. Let us suggest tentatively that in such cases the range of goals is restricted to those which are defined in terms of the least "marked" spatial relations.

A similar situation is found with the verb courir which we characterized earlier as a non-vectorial verb of movement on the basis of example (8b) \*Paul a couru sur le pont. Yet we do find occasional instances where courir is used to express movement to a goal, as in the following examples taken from a song by Georges Brassens:<sup>8</sup>

- (24) a J'ai couru tout chose au rendez-vous de Marinette.
- b J'ai couru lugubre à l'enterrement de Marinette.

This suggests that courir does have some vestige of a vectorial feature in spite of its fairly specific manner component.

In the case of both porter and courir, the preposition which appears to be the least "marked", à, is also the simplest in terms of the spatial relation which it defines. However, we do find cases where the relevant notion of "markedness" cannot be identified with semantic complexity.

Above we argued that glisser can be classed as a verb of vectorial movement, even though it involves some manner element, since the PP dans la crevasse in (21b) is readily interpreted as the goal. However, if we substitute a PP introduced by sur or à a goal interpretation seems much more difficult to obtain:

- (25) a \*En descendant les marches, Henri a glissé sur le trottoir
- b \*Après avoir chuté, le skieur a glissé au bout de la piste.

This suggests that with glisser, the least marked type of goal is one defined in terms of dans (arguably the most complex of the three relations under discussion). From a purely non-linguistic point of view, this fact is not entirely surprising: since glisser typically describes uncontrollable movement down a slippery slope, the most natural resting-point is one which can be conceived as an obstacle to the movement, e.g. a three-dimensional "receptacle" rather than a flat surface or a point. It seems then that the relevant notion of "markedness" is to be determined on pragmatic, rather than purely linguistic, criteria.

A further interesting problem is posed by contrasts like the following:

- (26) a \*Louise a conduit la voiture dans le parking
- b Babette a conduit les invités dans le salon
- (27) a \*René a trimbalé sa valise à la gare
- b Jules a trimbalé sa belle-mère à l'aéroport

The (a) examples are unacceptable on a goal reading, as we would expect given the fairly precise manner features implied by the verbs. However, according to my informants, the (b) sentences are much more acceptable on the relevant interpretation.

In order to explain this contrast, one might be tempted to look for some principle which is sensitive to the animate or inanimate (or human/non-human) nature of the entity which undergoes movement. I shall argue that there is no need for such a principle and that the contrasts in (26) - (27) can be attributed to the "trade-off" between manner and vectorial components.

When conduire takes an inanimate object denoting a vehicle of some sort, a specific manner element - operation of the controls

of a manner component. Once these differences in meaning are recognised, the judgements concerning the examples in (26) - (27) follow directly from the principles we have already put forward.

3.1. Strategies for expressing manner and goal in French.

In English, as we have seen, a verb indicating manner of movement or describing an activity which does not involve movement can be combined with a preposition which introduces and defines the goal. For the reasons we have already outlined, this is not possible in French. So, we may ask, how does French combine the expression of movement to a goal with the specification of the manner of movement or an action which is ancillary to the movement?

One strategy which is often possible is to insert jusque before the preposition. This item, it seems, provides the vectorial feature which is systematically absent from prepositions in French. Thus, many of the examples given above as unacceptable on a goal reading can be substantially improved by the addition of jusque:

- (28) a Richard a patiné jusqu'à la sortie
- b Paul a couru jusque sur le pont
- c Suzy a conduit jusque dans le parking
- d Les touristes ont fiâné jusqu'à Montmartre
- e Le skieur a glissé jusqu'au bout de la piste
- f René a trimbalé sa valise jusqu'à la gare

However, it would be a mistake to assume that jusque is simply the equivalent of the vectorial element incorporated in the English prepositions to, onto and into. In particular, jusque seems to have the effect of focussing attention on the distance covered rather than the movement itself. In some cases this effect

of the vehicle - is clearly involved. But when conduire takes an animate object, there is no obvious manner component; (26b) simply means that the guests entered the living-room and that Babette was in some way responsible for this.

Similarly, when trimbaler is used with an inanimate object (as in (27a) ), the meaning is similar to that of porter but with an additional specification of manner - "with effort" or "with difficulty". Given our earlier observations concerning the marginal status of porter as a vectorial verb, it is not surprising that this extra manner component should prevent trimbaler from incorporating a vectorial feature. When trimbaler is used with an animate object (as in (27b) ) it corresponds not to porter but to a verb such as emmener. The choice of trimbaler rather than the more neutral verb does add an extra element of meaning, but this time the extra element does not bear on the manner in which the movement takes place but rather expresses a hostile or disparaging attitude towards the mother-in-law or the action of taking her to the airport. Thus, (27b) is a rather impolite way of saying Jules a emmené sa belle-mère à l'aéroport, but, as descriptions of what actually happened, the two sentences are more or less equivalent. Given that this use of trimbaler does not express any manner feature, it is quite consistent with our general approach that it should incorporate a vectorial feature and so be capable of expressing movement to a goal in a sentence like (27b).

In summary, the contrasts in (26) - (27) are not due directly to some special principle involving the animate or inanimate nature of the direct object, but can be traced to subtle differences in the meanings of the verbs which hinge crucially on the presence or absence

is fairly negligible, as in (28f) which is a reasonable translation of the English sentence René lugged his case to the station. But, in other cases, this effect can be quite drastic as in (28a) which corresponds not to Richard skated to the exit but rather to something like Richard managed to skate as far as the exit. Because of this extra element of meaning, in some cases the addition of jusque, far from improving the sentence, simply produces an absurd effect.

- (29) a \*Charles a frappé le clou jusque dans le mur
- b \*Henri a râpé du fromage jusque dans sa soupe.

An alternative strategy is to use two clauses conjoined by et or pour, the first containing a verb expressing manner or an ancillary activity, the second containing a verb of vectorial movement:

- (30) a Paul a couru pour arriver sur le pont
- b Henri a râpé du fromage pour le mettre dans sa soupe
- c La femme de ménage a déplacé le candrier et elle l'a mis sur la table
- d L'oiseau s'est envolé pour se poser sur la branche

An obvious effect of this construction is to present the activity and the reaching of the goal as two distinct events whereas, in English, the verb + preposition construction is often exploited to express the two notions as different aspects of the same event - compare (30b) with the English sentence Harry grated cheese into his soup.

A third strategy (and probably the most common) is to select a main verb which contains the appropriate vectorial feature and to indicate manner by means of some sort of adverbial expression:

- (31) a Paul est monté sur le pont en courant
- b Jean a envoyé le ballon dans le filet d'un coup de pied
- c Charles a enfoncé le clou dans le mur avec un marteau
- d Marie est entrée sur la scène en dansant

In terms of information content, constructions of this type are capable of expressing more or less the same range of meanings as verb + preposition combinations in English, but they differ quite radically in terms of the relative emphasis placed on the manner component. For instance, (31b) expresses the same information as the English sentence John kicked the ball into the net. However, although the English sentence would be perfectly appropriate in a commentary on a football match, (31b) would not. On the other hand, (31b) would be perfectly natural in the description of a basketball game, where the use of the feet to project the ball is the exception rather than the rule. This suggests that when manner is expressed as part of the meaning of the verb it may represent redundant or unimportant information, but when it is expressed separately (as in (31b)) it automatically assumes a high degree of prominence which causes it to be interpreted as new or unusual information. Since French does not permit the manner element to be expressed as part of the vectorial verb (except to a limited extent), we are faced with a two-way choice - give prominence to the manner element or leave it out completely.

The practical problems arising from this situation are mainly concerned with translation from English into French - the translator must decide whether the manner elements conveyed by the verb is sufficiently important to warrant the use of an adverbial

expression or whether it should be left out altogether. However, interesting problems also arise for translation in the other direction.

3.2. Some stylistic considerations

There is an interesting tendency in French to express movement by means of verbs which also specify the nature of the source or goal (e.g. sortir, descendre, entrer, etc.) In the case of source verbs, there is usually no alternative since this information can not be expressed by prepositions (see above, section 2.4.), but even in the expression of movement to a goal, the use of such verbs is generally preferred (e.g. entrer dans is usually more natural than aller dans). A possible reason for this is that such verbs provide a convenient means of expressing movement without any specific deictic orientation. In English, verbs which specify the nature of the goal or source are comparatively rare and those which do exist (enter, descend, etc) have a rather unidiomatic flavour. The strategy which is usually adopted in English to avoid specifying deictic orientation is to use a verb which indicates an appropriate manner of locomotion, a strategy which is excluded in French for the reasons we have already discussed. Given these assumptions, it follows that an idiomatic translation of a sentence like (32) will often be something like (33), the choice of verb depending on what is most appropriate in context:

(32) Marie est entrée dans le bureau

(33) Marie walked/stepped/popped into the office

An area of English vocabulary which is particularly rich is that of verbs of movement which specify a particular means of

conveyance. Indeed, even if an appropriate verb does not exist, it can usually be coined with no difficulty:

- (34) a Fred skateboarded into the kitchen
- b Harry windsurfed into the harbour
- c Bill hang-glided onto the church roof

However, in French there are relatively few such verbs, even for well-established modes of transport (e.g. no verbs corresponding to cycle, motor, sail, hitch-hike, etc.). Instead, French uses periphrastic forms based on verbs such as aller or faire. Now, there are also circumstances in English where a periphrastic expression seems to be preferred over a single verb; for instance, when one simply wishes to indicate participation in the action involved. Thus, while both sentences in (35) are grammatical and acceptable, the (b) sentence seems by far the more natural of the two:

(35) a Philip is cycling

      b Philip is riding his bicycle

Indeed, it seems that verbs like cycle only really come into their own when they are followed by a PP indicating the goal:

(36) Philip cycled to Lille

Suppose now that a verb bicycler were to be coined in French with the same meaning as English cycle. Suppose also that the mysterious stylistic principle which makes (35b) preferable to (35a) is also operative in French. Given this assumption, the new verb would be unlikely to supplant the periphrastic expression in examples like the following:

(37) a Philippe bicycled

      b Philippe fait du vélo

But notice that this verb could not appear in sentences like (38) for

the reasons discussed in section 2.5.

(38) \* Philippe a bicyclé à Lille

In other words, a potential word like bicycler would be prevented from appearing in the very context which, on the basis of intuitions about English, might render such a verb useful.

#### 4. Conclusion

I take it as a matter of principle that the optimal account of apparent differences between languages is the one which assumes the greatest degree of similarity between them since it is only in this way that the fundamental differences can be circumscribed. Paradoxically, our discussion of the expression of movement began with an apparent denial of this principle; namely, the claim that the difference between the preposition systems of English and French is not simply a low-level morphological difference but a more fundamental semantic difference concerning the range and amount of information which can be conveyed by means of prepositions in the two languages.

Nevertheless, I have tried to show that once this fundamental difference is recognised, the various superficial differences concerning the expression of movement in the two languages follow fairly straightforwardly.

An important feature of the account proposed in this paper is that apart from the difference just mentioned, the principles governing the two languages can be assumed to be identical in all relevant respects. For instance, the constraint concerning the incompatibility of manner and vectorial features within the meaning of a verb can be assumed to hold for English verbs as well as French verbs since the possibility of using a manner verb in a sentence expressing movement to a goal (or from a source) in English can be attributed to the availability of

prepositions which can convey the appropriate vectorial feature.

This allows us to maintain the view that, apart from the odd nuance, verbs like marcher, courir, nager and conduire have the same semantic content as their English counterparts walk, run, swim and drive. Of course, there may be systematic differences between the verbal systems of the two languages but our analysis does not require us to assume this.

In addition to questions of acceptability of sentences, we have also considered briefly the stylistic or pragmatic factors which determine whether a sentence is appropriate to a given situation. Once again, our analysis allows us to maintain that the stylistic principles involved are the same in both languages. Thus, the principle which gives prominence to the manner element when it is realised as an adverbial expression can be shown to be operative in English as well as French. The fact that, in French, manner cannot be expressed in sentences involving vectorial movement when it is contextually redundant or unimportant is not due to some stylistic principle which is peculiar to French, but is due to the interaction between the general principle just mentioned and the constraints on the semantic load of verbs and prepositions in French.

Even the differences in lexical resources in the two languages (the predilection in French for verbs incorporating a specific locative relations and, in English, the abundance of verbs specifying a means of conveyance) can be viewed as a reflection of the differences in the semantic load which can be borne by prepositions. French can not make use of manner verbs to avoid deixis since the burden of expressing vectorial manner can not be borne by prepositions, so French must adopt an alternative strategy i.e. the use of verbs like entrer,

descendre, sortir etc. Similarly, to account for the relative scarcity of verbs specifying a means of transport in French, we need not postulate a fundamental difference in the verbal systems of the two languages. Such verbs, we have suggested, would simply be less useful in French, because the limitations on the expressive power of prepositions prevent such verbs from being used as the main verbs in sentences denoting vectorial movement.

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NOTES

1. This paper forms part of a joint research project on problems of translation currently being undertaken by members of the Department of Language and Linguistics, University of Essex and the U.E.P. Angellier, Université de Lille III. I would like to thank the members of this team for their comments on some of the ideas presented in this paper and for their help in clarifying my intuitions about the data. Needless to say, I accept full responsibility for any errors or omissions which remain.
2. For a more detailed presentation of this argument, see Carter (1978a). A further article by the same author (Carter (1978b)) provides a more formal treatment of some of the issues raised in the present paper, though mainly in relation to English data.
3. The distinction being drawn here is between indicating one of the participants in a relation and actually expressing the relation itself. The former can be established by simple observation, the latter can only be determined on the basis of careful analysis of the language. For the purpose of this paper, a goal or source preposition is defined as one which does not merely serve to indicate the goal or source entity but actually expresses the goal or source relation.

4. Here and throughout, an asterisk is used to indicate that the sentence is ungrammatical on the interpretation where the PP denotes the goal (or source). Thus many of the starred examples in the text will be acceptable on a static location reading of the PP; e.g. denoting the place where the event occurred.
5. It is not clear whether locative à can be used to indicate a source in this way. An example might be J'ai pris l'argent à la caisse, but it is not obvious whether the PP indicates the source or the place where the event occurred - in any case, the two amount to pretty well the same thing. Note, however, that dative à can be used to indicate a possessive source with certain verbs:
 

Pierre a emprunté cinq francs à Marie  
 Claude a volé une bague à Brigitte  
 Jean a acheté une voiture à Mancel
6. Examples like those in (16) pose interesting problems for a definition of source and goal prepositions in terms of "indication" rather than "expression"; that is a definition of the form "P is a source/goal preposition if there is some context where P is used to indicate a source/goal". I suspect that this is the definition which is usually assumed in practice, if only because it is the easiest to apply. I also suspect that the prevalent view of French prepositions is that they display syncretism between static location and goal, but an opposition between these two notions and source (this is the characterisation given in Kilby's (1978) survey). But this is not the characterisation provided by the "indication" definition, which, if applied consistently and with due regard for examples like those in (16), yields the much less plausible conclusion that sur and dans are three ways ambiguous. The approach adopted in this paper avoids this result by distinguishing between the fact that these prepositions may indicate the source or the goal in a sentence and the fact that they only appear to express the locative relation (see above note 3).

7. Note that the intuition expressed in regard to the examples in (16), that the subject NP denotes the immediate goal, does not necessarily hold for the examples in (17). For instance, (17b) is consistent with the possibility that the book fell straight to the floor, whereas (16b) is not. This observation may provide a clue to the problem raised in the text.

8. These examples were pointed out to me by Philip Brev.

9. The inappropriateness of (31b) can be characterised in terms of Grice's maxim of Quantity which states (Grice (1975, p.45)):

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The manner adverbial in (31b) conveys information which is superfluous in the context suggested, thus violating part 2 of the maxim. The problem is that the English sentence also conveys this superfluous information, but is appropriate in this context. This suggests a need to refine the maxim of Quantity so that the second rubric only comes into play when the superfluous information is expressed by extra lexical material.

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L A R V A T U S P R O D E O (1)

Le bruissement incessant des interviews nous enveloppe trop pour qu'il nous soit aisé d'en comprendre les mécanismes. Écartons d'abord ceux qui ne tombent pas dans le domaine public: entretiens d'embauche, recueil de témoignages qui alimenteront les recherches historiques de demain (2). Penchons-nous sur un genre récent, lié à l'essor de la presse, et, surtout, de la radio et de la télévision: l'interview retransmise par les médias (3). Vaste palette encore ! Nous y trouvons en effet le témoignage de "l'homme de la rue" sur un problème déterminé: court le plus souvent, servant à illustrer une attitude typique, il appelle le commentaire du journaliste, éventuellement, mais n'est pas destiné à laisser trace. Autre espèce, particulièrement banale: la consommation (dans la délectation) du "grand homme", de ses goûts, de sa personnalité et des mille et un secrets de sa vie. "Radioscopie" de Jacques Chancel a construit son indéfectible succès sur ce ressort. Les médias partagent également l'engouement récent pour la "tranche de vie du passé": ces récits de vie d'une paysannerie et d'un artisanat en voie de disparition. Signalons aussi l'appel aux