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SCOPE AS A COGNITIVE TOOL IN TENSE ANALYSIS

The present article takes up one of the needs present in today's Cognitive Linguistics: applying its theoretical assumptions to a detailed study of the phenomena encountered in particular languages. The instrument tested for this purpose is one of the aspects of construal offered within Cognitive Grammar – scope (Langacker 1987, 2000, 2008, etc.). It is applied to the description of several English temporal constructions in order to check both the range of phenomena which it can refer to as well as the efficiency and accuracy of such an account.

1. Introduction

Cognitive linguistics offers a wide variety of both theoretical models as well as precise tools to be used in linguistic research. Despite their conceptual unity, an application of them may "highlight different (although related) facets of the shared conceptualization of language" (Broccias 2006: 83). However, acknowledging so is only a beginning for, as the same author observes, "one of the next challenges for cognitive linguistics is to see how we can put this view into effect by relating it to the realm of applied linguistics" (ibid.: 111).

The present article is supposed to take this challenge and check the applicability of one of the tools offered within Cognitive Grammar, scope (Langacker 1987, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2008, etc.), to applied linguistics. The area of study is the grammar of the English language or, more specifically, its temporal constructions. The analysis aims to check the construct's potential – both the type as well as the range of observations which are possible with it.

Scope is not an individual tool – it is one of the aspects of a more general human ability of construal. Consequently, even when we analyse one of those aspects, it is necessary to mention at least the ones which influence it. To obey these guidelines, the article starts with a brief characterization of the phenomenon of construal: its origin, applicability, and aspects which it covers. What follows is a detailed

description of scope – its relations with other construal aspects and a set of features which it consequently reveals. Finally, it will be transferred to the more specific area of temporal constructions, where scope adopts more specific characteristics. There, through an application of this construct to an analysis of different temporal constructions, its applicability is tested. The article is concluded with a review of the possible observations which were possible thanks to it and the author's opinion whether it is suitable for a linguistic tool.

2. Scope as one of the aspects of construal

One of the tenets of Cognitive Linguistics is the claim that different expressions encode alternative manners of viewing a situation (e.g. Croft, Cruse 2004: 1–2, Geeraerts, Cuyckens 2007: 3–5, etc.). The cover term for all these manners is *construal*. However, the choice of how we construe a process or an entity is not entirely free – we can construe something only to an extent which is already encoded in a language. In other words, a construal of some conceptual content is part of the meaning of an expression (Langacker 2008: 55). We can only influence the construal by picking a different expression which will better reflect what we wish to convey. Such a status of construal places it and its aspects among the most significant semantic phenomena.

There are several construal aspects. Although their ultimate number and type of classification is still unsettled in theoretical considerations (cf. Verhagen 2007), it is useful to observe that apart from *scope*, there are also such aspects as *vantage point*, *acuity*, or *distance* (Langacker 2000). At the same time these are the ones which originate from, and are thus intimately related to the viewing arrangement (fig. 1). The *vantage point* can be characterised as "the spot at which the viewer is situated and from which the scene is viewed" (Langacker 2000: 207). The viewer is, of course, the *conceptualizer* – the subject of conception. The *profile* is the object of conception and the bold line around it signals both its salience against the immediate scope as well as its degree of *acuity* (also called resolution or granularity) for the conceptualizer. The *distance* between the conceptualizer and the object of conception is self-explanatory. The distance arrow also represents "the construal relationship wherein the conceptualizer entertains the overall conception (of the profile – GD) and structures it in a certain manner" (ibid.). The *maximal scope* comprises "the full content of a given conceptualization" (ibid.), and the *immediate scope* is the area which we are specifically attending to.
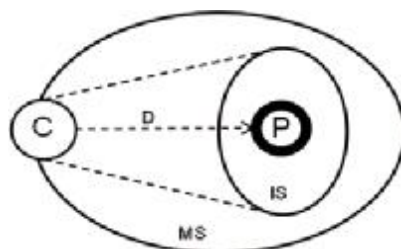
C – conceptualizer, P – profile, D – distance, MS – maximal scope, IS – immediate scope

Fig. 1. The viewing arrangement and its components
as a basis for the conceptual arrangement

The proper issue of the present article is one of these construal aspects – scope, which can be defined as "the conceptual content appearing in the subjective viewing frame inherent in its apprehension" (Langacker 2008: 63). However, to delineate its properties accurately, a relation between it and some other aspects of construal needs to be discussed.

2.1. Scope and base

One of the aspects of construal which can be applied in semantic analyses in a manner largely parallel to scope is *base*. This term has been defined as "an array of conceptual content" (Langacker 2000: 366) evoked by the designated entity – the *profile*. Actually, in one of his latest publications Langacker (2008: 66) pointed explicitly to the link between scope and base: "Construed broadly, an expression's conceptual base is identified as its maximal scope in all domains of its matrix (or all domains accessed on a given occasion). Construed more narrowly, its base is identified as the immediate scope in active domains".

Despite such a high degree of correlation, I would like to point to several operational differences between the two constructs which may turn out decisive in selecting a tool for analysis. As Langacker (1987: 120) admits, the profile – base distinction was inspired by the figure – ground organization. What it means is that the distinction between the profile and base can be reduced to a simple alignment: the designated element (profile) and the remainder (base). However, such a basic division of the temporal content can work only in specific cases, e.g. when the temporal scene underlying the use of a tense can be clearly divided into profiled and backgrounded elements, as in the case of the Present Perfect tense (Drożdż 2009b). In the case of scenes with only one profiled element, e.g. the Present Continuous tense (cf. Drożdż 2010) or Past Simple, such a division would be of little use. This contrast is illustrated in figure 2, where two of the uses of the respective tenses are shown. In the first of them (fig. 2a), Present Perfect, profiles two out of three elements of the conceptual scene underlying this use: a moment in the past when the designated process began

and its continuation till the present moment (like in the sentence *She has lived here for a year*). The third element of the scene, the present moment, is not profiled in this use – it belongs to the base. Despite a lack of any other tools, the diagram seems to play its schematic role quite well pointing to the salient elements of the scene. What the second figure (fig. 2b) shows is the main use of Past Simple: an action performed before the moment of speaking. Because this use profiles a single occurrence of an action (like in the sentence *I read an article yesterday*), very little can be shown by means of just profile and base: virtually only the process (profile) which takes place against the rest of the temporal content (base). Such a representation would not convey much information about the temporal boundaries within which the process is placed, the reasons for a lack of relation to the present moment, etc. What is needed, then, is some other tool or tools which would supply it, like in the figure 9b where scope was introduced.

(a) Present Perfect   (b) Past Simple
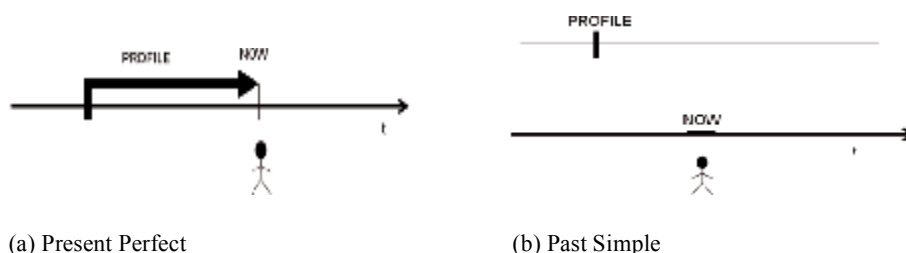
Fig. 2. An application of profile and base to an analysis
of uses of Present Perfect and Past Simple

Let me now proceed to a more detailed characterization of the properties of scope resulting from its co-occurrence with other construal aspects.

2.2. Scope and the vantage point

Scope co-occurs with several other construal aspects. Keeping in mind the fact that the notion of construal originates from the visual scene, it should come as no surprise that the first to be mentioned is the *vantage point*. On the one hand, it has been characterized as the position adopted by the conceptualizer. On the other hand, it is also the position where the boundaries of the visual scene converge. It is important to observe at this point that the extent of scope is limited: it has a beginning and an end, as well as a place where the two meet. However, the status of these elements is not equal – from a certain perspective this last of them seems more significant than the other two because, as Langacker (2008: 157) notices, the immediate scope is in fact positioned with respect to the vantage point (fig. 1). And in default cases the vantage point is equated with the time of the speech event (ibid.: 76). Although it plays no direct role in the below analyses I believe it is necessary to acknowledge both its existence and significance.

2.3. Scope – distance – acuity

The last set of relations that I wish to point to hold between scope and two other construal aspects: *distance* and *acuity*. These correlations stem from visual perception: if we focus on a distant object (the *distance* between the conceptualizer and the object is long), we can hardly distinguish the details of it (the object's *acuity* is low). At the same time, the scope of our attention covers a large area of the world around us (the *scope* is broad) (fig. 3a). Considering a converse situation – attending a proximate object – the above parameters will adopt converse values: at a short *distance* the object's *acuity* will be high and the *scope* within which we perceive the object will be narrow (cf. Langacker 2000: 206, Lakoff 1987: 428).

3. Construal aspects in the temporal domain

So far the considerations focused on the construal aspects and their properties in the spatial domain. Let us now see how they hold in the temporal domain.

As for the vantage point, its interpretation in time is rather unproblematic. Adopting a spatial position for viewing means at the same time entering the temporal domain within which the viewing will be done. As Langacker (2000: 207) observes, "the time of speaking is a temporal vantage point". The other construct which does not require much elaboration is the profile – the designated process.

The temporal relationships between distance, acuity, and scope is a more complex matter for the correlations known from space do not necessarily have to hold in time. An example can be the Past Continuous tense – although it describes a process in the, often correlated with Past Simple, it construes the process with high acuity. Concluding, the distance between the time of speaking and the denoted process does not exclusively depend on the temporal distance between the conceptualizer and the process. Rather, it seems more intimately correlated with the extent of the temporal scene (scope) which the conceptualizer embraces while viewing. In other words, the broader the scope the more distant the process and, at the same time, the lower the acuity of the process (fig. 3). Actually, such a situation establishes good grounds for postulating two different, albeit related types of acuity: process and time acuity. However, this detailed issue is dealt with more extensively elsewhere (Drożdż 2010).

(a) Broad scope, distant process, and low
acuity

(b) Narrow scope, proximate process, and
high acuity
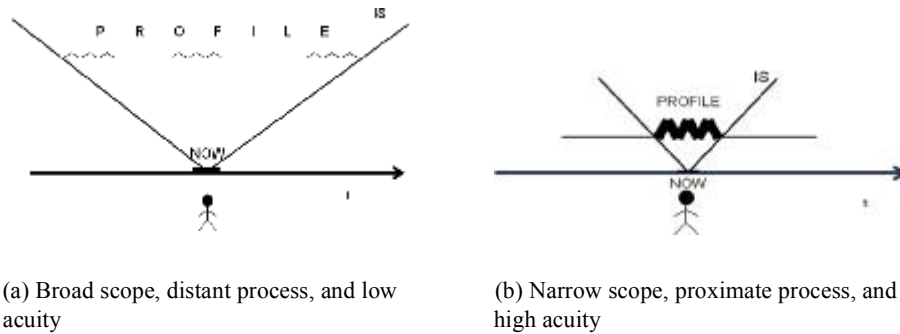
Fig. 3. The relations among scope, distance, and acuity of a process

4. Temporal characteristics of scope

Now I would like to elaborate more fully on a more precise characterization of the
very notion of scope. This will proceed along two dimensions: on the one hand,
a discussion of the elements of scope will be held: the immediate and maximal scope
and the type of processes which it can encompass. On the other hand, they will be
presented in a manner suited to the present analysis: as functioning in the temporal
domain.

4.1. Maximal and immediate scope

So far scope has been treated as a unitary construct. However, it does not have to be
so – sometimes it is necessary to distinguish between "an expression's maximal scope
in some domain, i.e. the full extent of its coverage, and a limited immediate scope,
the portion directly relevant for a particular purpose" (Langacker 2008: 63). What it
means is that in a characterization of e.g. the term *hand*, the arm would constitute the
immediate scope, and the whole body – the maximal scope, as illustrated in figure 4.
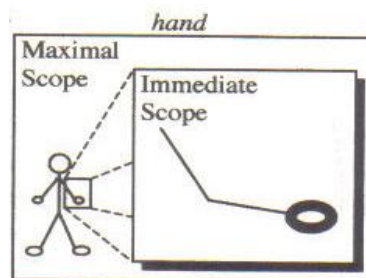
Fig. 4. Immediate and maximal scope of *hand* (Langacker 2008: 64)

In the temporal domain these types of scope receive very precise definitions. However, at this juncture an important difference between Langacker's approach and the one adopted in the present article needs to be noted. The main motif in Langacker's (2001, 2008: 147–160) temporal considerations is the distinction between perfective and imperfective processes. By the former he means processes which are "bounded in time" and designating "occurrences with a beginning and an end" (Langacker 2008: 147) while the latter group can be characterized as profiling "stable situations of indefinite duration" (ibid.) (fig. 5).
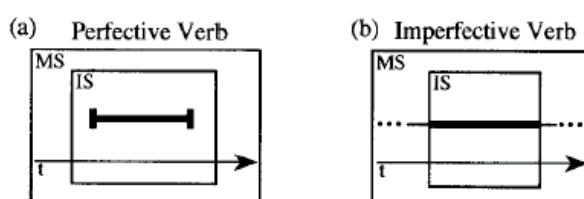
Fig. 5. Perfective and imperfective verbs (Langacker 2008: 153)

This division is reflected in the definitions he offers for the two types of scope – the *maximal scope* is defined as "a span of time containing the full, bounded process" (Langacker 2001: 12), whereas the *immediate scope* as the one which "subtends only an arbitrary portion of its internal development". What is more, "only that portion is profiled since – as a matter of definition – the profile is the focal point within the immediate scope" (ibid.), as shown in figures 6b, d.
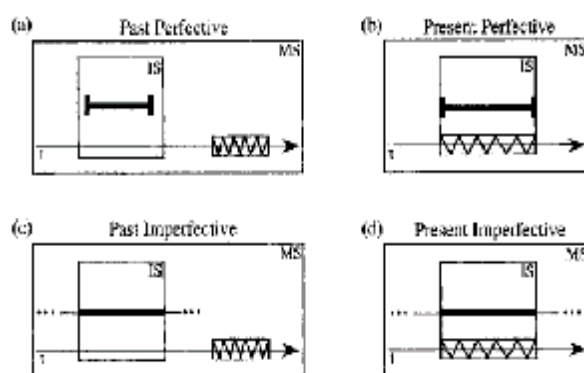
Fig. 6. An application of the perfective – imperfective distinction
to different temporal constructions (Langacker 2008: 158)

Although the perfective – imperfective distinction is unquestionably vital for grammar, I believe it would be profitable to modify the definition of scope. Rather than focusing on the type of process designated by the verb, I suggest taking into account

the type of construal which the given structure imposes on the denoted process. It is worth noticing that such an approach is not contradictory to the Cognitive Grammar assumptions: "an expression imposes a particular construal, reflecting just one of the countless ways of conceiving and portraying the situation in question" (Langacker 2008: 4). I believe that thanks to such a modified definition some important properties of the constructions in question can be pointed to, as the below discussion aims to prove.

Consequently, in the present article the *maximal scope* of a temporal construction will be understood as embracing the whole of time, and the *immediate scope* as embracing the part of temporal reality within which the conceptualizer positions the whole of the profiled action (fig. 7). What extends beyond the immediate scope is the existence of the conceptualized object or person before and after the designated process and whether it is marked is actually a matter of convenience. One more issue concerning the profile should born in mind – the conceptualizer is not entirely free in his choice of construal – he or she cannot impose *any* construal of the given profile by means of a structure for it will not be understood properly by the hearers (e.g. Past Continuous cannot point to a single occurrence of a process in the past). He or she can manipulate the type of scope only to the extent which the structure affords. Construal, then, is both a function of the applied construction and the conceptualizer's choice.
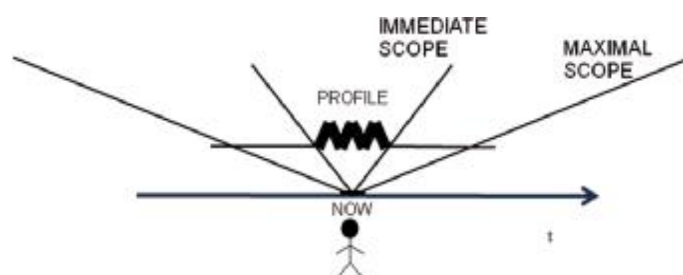
Fig. 7. A temporal characterization of the immediate and maximal scope

Concluding, an operational remark needs to be added. Since the maximal scope reveals a constant value which is not crucial in the majority of analyses, for the sake of convenience it will be excluded from the below analyses.

4.2. Scope and profile

Now I wish to discuss another dimension of scope – its relationship with the profiled process. This is also an area where the model proposed in the article parts from Langacker's. Although they still have much in common, for instance the fact that the profiled process must be manifested within the immediate temporal scope (Langacker 2008: 157), the type of manifestation remains at issue.

4.2.1. Present Simple and Present Continuous

In the present approach the emphasis is put on the type of construal which the construction imposes on the process. In other words, although it is unquestionable that unbounded verbs basically appear in Present Simple and bounded in Present Continuous (Langacker 2008: 147–148), from our encyclopaedic knowledge we know that relatively few processes are *really* unbounded (even the existence of the world and the movement of the Earth around the Sun began at some point). As a consequence, it will be assumed that choosing a tense like Present or Past Simple we impose a holistic construal of the profiled action (fig. 8a), while by means of such tenses as Present or Past Continuous we adopt an internal perspective on the profiled actions (fig. 8b).
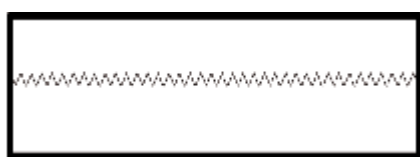
a) The holistic construal   b) The internal construal

Fig. 8. A comparison of the holistic and internal construal of the process

It is important to observe that in this sense the immediate scope does not coincide with the time of the speech event, which the profiled actions can exceed, as proposed by Langacker (2008: 157–158) (fig. 6b, d). It embraces *the whole* of the profiled process, whatever its length. Now the breadth of the scope, the distance to the profiled action, as well as the acuity of the profile can be seen as a result of selecting the given construction. At the same time, as has been discussed, a change in any of them entails a change in the others. An illustration of it can be the difference between the type of construal encoded by Present Simple and Present Continuous. The first diagram (fig. 9a) illustrates a sentence like *I know him well*, where by *knowing* the conceptualizer means the process extending between the moment when the two people met and when one of them will die. As can be seen, the immediate scope of such a process is very broad, the distance between the conceptualizer and the profile is long and, as a consequence, the acuity of the process is low. At the same time, the process of knowing is not perceived as if it was in progress but it is viewed holistically. Such a construal explains why repeated actions, e.g. *She reads books*, are also generally expressed by means of Present Simple – due to the broad scope, long distance, and low acuity of the process the repeated actions seem one, continuous process (though this use is classified by Langacker (2008: 148) as "special"). A different type of construal is encoded in Present Continuous (fig. 9b). Here, because of the narrow scope, short distance, and high acuity of the process it is possible to adopt "an "internal perspective" on the verbal process" (Langacker 2008: 166), as in the sentence *I'm reading a book now*.

a) Present Simple   b) Present Continuous

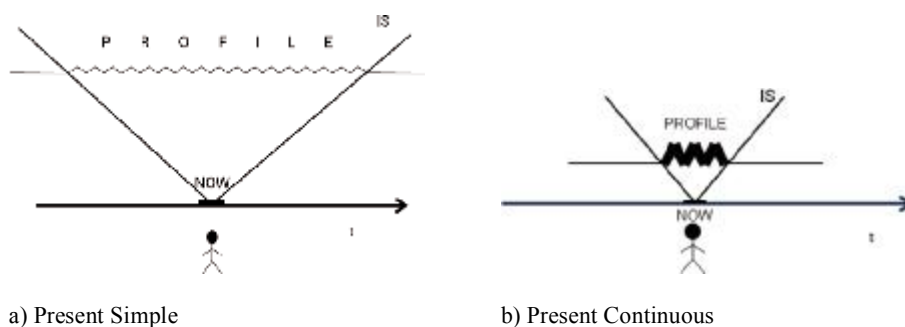Fig. 9. A comparison of the types of construal encoded
in Present Simple and Present Continuous

4.2.2. Present Simple and Past Simple

Such an approach to tenses enables also another type of observation – what such tenses as Present Simple and Past Simple have in common. From the point of view of their temporal reference they seem different. Also, when we think of the type of designated process they appear with different types of verbs: the former usually with imperfective, while the latter with perfective. However, there is a strong bond between them – they base on the same type of construal. Of course, not in absolute terms – in visual ones. The process encoded by Present Simple might be compared to seeing a large field from a distance, when we embrace the whole of it and little can be seen but the field. On the other hand, from such a position we can hardly attend to any details of it (fig. 10a). What Past Simple encodes can be compared to the perspective achieved when we move from that position even farther away from the field: at a certain distance it becomes only a single point on the horizon, and the visual scene will encompass a broader perspective than just the field (fig. 10b).

In other words, all the values assumed by the construal aspects in one tense can be found in the other: in both cases the distance between the process and the conceptualizer is long, the acuity of the process is low, and the scope is broad. Actually, in all these cases Past Simple is construed as more distant than Present Simple (longer distance, lower acuity, broader scope). Of course, the distance is not purely temporal – it is the one which the selected construction affords, and it seems more closely related to the mental distance between the conceptualizer and the profiled action. However, for descriptive purposes I believe it would be sufficient to assume that the distance encoded in them is parallel. Naturally, there is a difference between the distance to a past, completed process and a process which is not completed. Still, in both cases we construe them holistically, without focusing on their development.

In fact, the above remarks lead to the conclusion that the holistic construal unifies two distinct types of processes: on the one hand, even processes which are relatively long are expressed in Past Simple as if they were punctual. We know that e.g. going on holiday to Spain takes a long time – booking a hotel, plane, packing, going there,

spending there one or two weeks, and coming back. Still, when we say a sentence like *I went on holiday to Spain last year* we construe all these activities and all this time as if it was a single, punctual event. This is also what happens to repetitive processes – they are rendered as if they were single occurrences of the action. In English the same form of the verb can be used to mean a single process as well as a repetitive one, e.g. *I watched a film yesterday* as opposed to *I watched a film every day when I was a child*. In other words, the distance between the described processes and the conceptualizer is so great that they *seem* punctual despite their actual length or number of occurrences.

a) The visual scene underlying
Present Simple

b) The visual scene underlying
Past Simple

c) Present Simple
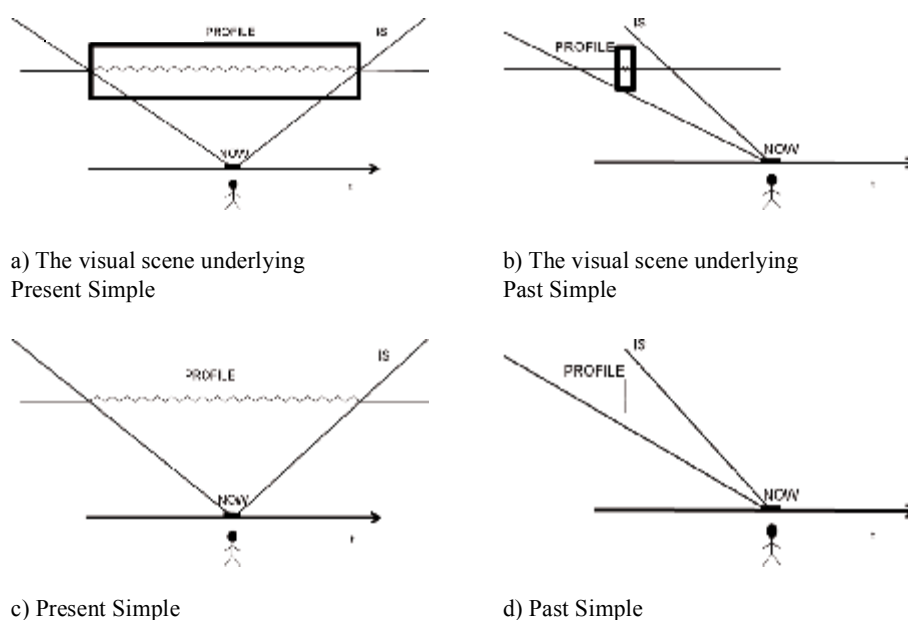
d) Past Simple

Fig. 10. A comparison of the types of construal encoded by Present Simple and Past Simple

4.2.3. Past Simple and Past Continuous

To exhaust the problem of the distinction between a process taking the whole immediate scope and occurring once within it I wish to discuss one more contrast – between Past Simple and Past Continuous. Most grammar books will probably agree that the two constructions share at least a common temporal reference – the past, and that the major difference between them is the aspect (simple, as opposed to continuous). Can the scope and other construal aspects be of any help in this respect?

Past Simple has already been discussed in detail: despite its misleading graphic representation, the scope is broad, the distance between the conceptualizer and the process is long, and the profiled process reveals low acuity. What is more, because of the large distance it is construed as if it was a single occurrence of the process within

the scope (fig. 11a). Past Continuous is on the opposite side of the scale in all of these respects: the distance between the conceptualizer and the process is construed as very short. Consequently, the acuity of the process is so high, and the designated process so detailed, that it fills the whole of scope. At the same time, the graphic representation of the scope is convergent with what it symbolizes – it is very narrow (fig. 11b). A suitable example of the tense might be *Yesterday at six I was writing a letter*. Concluding, from the point of view of construal aspects two constructions can hardly be more different than these two.

Still, it must be noticed that they commonly co-occur, which might suggest that they are not so different. And this is where another observation should be made: the processes expressed by means of Past Simple are so long that they can easily receive a different construal – as developing in time. It is enough to change one parameter – shorten the mental distance to it. Although this means that actually *any* process construed holistically can be turned into durative, this is perfectly congruent with one of the Cognitive Grammar claims – "the perfective/imperfective contrast is anything but a rigid lexical specification" (Langacker 2008: 148). In other words, despite such differences in characterization, the two types of construal have one common characteristic – flexibility. And due to it one type of construal can unproblematically turn into the other.

a) Past Simple   b) Past Continuous
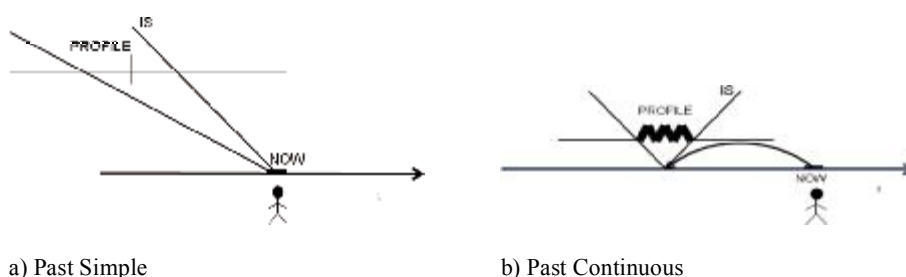
Fig. 11. A comparison of the types of construal encoded by Past Simple and Past Continuous

Summing up the problem of process duration vs. punctuality, I would like to observe that a question which might be expected to lead to some aspectual considerations turns out to be inappropriately formulated. The similarity of the profiles taking the whole span of scope turns out to be superficial – such tenses as Present Simple and Continuous denote in fact two different types of processes. This can be best seen in figure 9a and 9b – the former tense construes the process as a whole and, as a consequence, its development is in the base. The latter imposes a converse construal – profiling the development of the process it backgrounds the process as a whole. And although these types of construal can be easily exchanged, they are nevertheless distinct. Concluding, the real similarity between different uses of tenses does not lie in their graphic representations, for diagrams which seem different depict in fact parallel processes (e.g. fig. 10c, d) – it lies in similar types of construal which the uses receive.

4.2.4. Present Continuous

The last problem which I would like to discuss in the present article is the question arising from the above considerations – constructional polysemy. On the one hand, Langacker (1995: 51) states that "a symbolic element is often *polysemous*: it has not just one meaning but a family of related senses". On the other hand, in his analyses he strives to arrive at a characterization of different uses of a tense which shows what the uses have in common, e.g. the present tense "indicates the occurrence of a full instantiation of the profiled process that precisely coincides with the time of speaking" (Langacker 1991: 250).

The approach adopted in the present article is that one construction can possess several distinct, albeit related, uses. What it means is that both the types of processes profiled by them as well as the parameters of construal aspects characterizing them can be different. A good illustration of the point is Present Continuous. In the majority of its uses (cf. Drożdż 2010), it profiles durative processes of high or medium acuity which take the whole of time encompassed by the immediate scope. An example can be the process depicted in figure 12a, which can be an illustration to *I'm reading a good book this week*. Although the denoted process is repeated over the week, the construction renders it as durative. In this use the three construal aspects adopt the following values: middle temporal distance, middle acuity and middle scope. However, in its future use Present Continuous profiles a different kind of action – a punctual one (fig. 12b) (cf. Drożdż 2009a).

a) The durative use   b) The punctual use
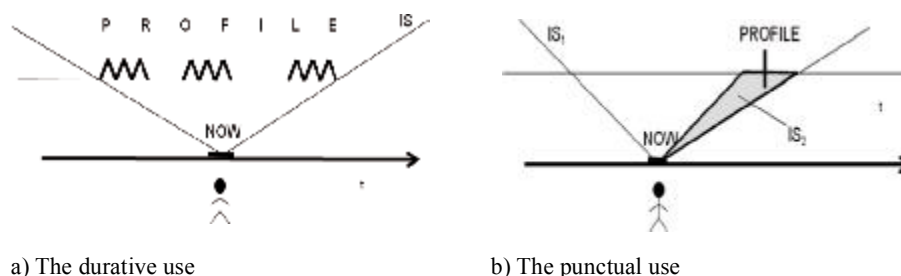
Fig. 12. Two of the uses of Present Continuous

Despite the fact that the diagrams of the two uses may seem similar to those of Present Simple and Past Simple (fig. 10c, d), the two uses encode a different type of relationship. Unquestionably, they have a lot in common: all the construal aspects adopt identical values – middle. However, they also reveal significant differences. The first of them has already been mentioned – the type of profiled process: durative versus punctual. Another becomes clearer if one refers to the contrast between Present and Past Simple. The main distinction between the two tenses stems from the difference in the perspective – it is so big that the processes are not compatible – one cannot be a part of the other. Here, with Present Continuous the opposite is true: the processes

are construed from more or less the same distance and the punctual one can be a part of the durative. In other words, this time the distinction between them is really about the contrast between a durative and punctual one or, more specifically, one designating the completion of a process.

The above considerations lead to at least one observation – that it is plausible to claim that tenses are polysemic structures. There can also be a complementary one – the processes encoded by a tense can vary significantly though the degree of their variation is limited.

5. Conclusion

The analysed construct, scope, has been tested from different perspectives. First, it is a tool which can be precisely defined and characterized for linguistic purposes. Another point is that due to its origin in visual perception it is not a sophisticated tool – it does not require extensive study for the phenomena which it covers are commonly shared. What is more, it is not an only tool – it is one of several construal aspects so even if it cannot describe adequately some aspect of language on its own, thanks to its co-occurrence with other aspects the needed precision can be ultimately achieved. Finally, the range of temporal observations which were possible thanks to it justifies the concluding opinion that scope can be classified as a fully-fledged linguistic tool.

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PARTY RITUALS REVISITED

The paper deals with the rituals performed by party participants, both hosts and guests. The theoretical basis for the study is Erving Goffman's (1955, 1967) seminal work on *interaction rituals.* The rituals discussed here include greetings and introductions, compliments and responses to compliments, food offers and responses to them, and parting rituals. They are presented against two different cultural backgrounds, Polish and generally understood Anglo-Saxon. The data used in the analysis were gathered in Poland, England and the English-speaking part of Canada. Participant observation, interviews and introspection were the methods used to collect them.

1. Introduction

In this paper I would like to present a contrastive analysis of polite rituals performed in the party situation in two different cultures, Polish and Anglo-Saxon.

The recurrence of certain communicative goals in interpersonal communication results in some communicative strategies being turned into "*interaction rituals,*" as Goffman (1967; cf. Rothenbuhler, 1998; Jakubowska, 2003) calls them. He compares these "little ceremonies of everyday life" to religious rituals. Interaction rituals have a social function. They are acts "through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it" (Goffman, 1955: 328). Our everyday behaviour is subject to *ritual constraints* which have to do with "how each individual ought to handle himself with respect to each of the others, so that he does not discredit his own tacit claim to good character or the tacit claim of the others that they are persons of social worth whose various forms of territoriality are to be respected" (Goffman, 1976: 266). What is at issue is the participants' face. Interaction rituals are to see to the basic human face-needs: the need for approval and the need for individuation and freedom of action.

To be able to see and interpret differences between rituals performed in different parts of the world, we need the concept of *culture.* It is central for the studies of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. It helps researchers understand the nature of social interaction (cf. Bond et al., 2000). The aspects of culture that constitute

a conceptual basis for the present study are social relations and social values, as they strongly influence the way members of a given culture behave; they play a very important role in the formation of interactional norms and interaction rituals.

Polish culture and, generally understood, Anglo-Saxon culture, even though they both have European roots, differ in the hierarchies of values they cherish. These differences "translate" into different interactional norms and rituals, party rituals included.

The analysis of party rituals to be presented here is based on the data gathered in Poland, England and the English-speaking part of Canada. Participant observation, interviews and introspection were the methods used to collect them. Interviews and introspection were helpful in providing many pieces of important information concerning the repertoire of party rituals present in the two cultures. However, the informants often idealised the use of rituals, and their choices often suggested how they should be used and not how they were actually used. Participant observation made up for this insufficiency, because it recorded the rituals used in real situations. The variety of sources allowed the author to have a cross-checking perspective on the analysed material.

The respondents were native speakers of their respective languages, Polish and English. The three groups (Poles, the English and Canadians) came from a similar sociocultural background and were rather homogeneous. All of the participants were educated (university or high school graduates). They were aged 20 to 67.

2. Communicative goals in social interaction

Conversation is "a structured event" made up of *encounters*, which can be viewed *transactionally* (i.e., the main aim of the encounter is the efficient transference of information; the language used is primarily "message oriented"), or *interactionally* (i.e., the main aim of the encounter is establishing and maintaining social relationships) (Brown and Yule, 1988: 2–3).

Exchange in social interaction and politeness have a "ritual" character. This ritualization and ritual prepatterned behaviour improve the signal and therefore communication (Goffman, 1967; 1971; 1981; Huxley, 1966; Ferguson, 1981; Laver, 1981). "Interaction rituals" (also called "interpersonal rituals" (Ferguson, 1981) and "rituals of exchange" (Brown and Levinson, 1987)) have a social function. They are used to establish and/or maintain a state of *"ritual equilibrium,"* which is necessary to sustain one's own face and the face of the other (Goffman, 1967). Goffman claims that "maintenance of face is a condition of interaction" (Goffman, 1955: 323). The condition all participants of social interaction have to fulfil, among other things, by performing interaction rituals.

The participants' performance of interaction rituals is based on rational grounds. In encounters viewed transactionally, in the first place, they are cooperative, while in encounters viewed interactionally, they (are expected to) follow social norms and maintain each others' face. In both cases, they act rationally. As Brown and Levinson (1987: 58) put it, they employ "linguistic strategies as *means* satisfying communicative and

face-oriented *ends*, in a strictly formal system of rational 'practical reasoning'." In the first case, their rationality means cooperation with their interlocutors in the Gricean sense. In the second case, "practical reasoning" implies a pragmatic approach to the interlocutors and conversational goals, doing what is socially acceptable – approving of their positive self-image and avoiding impositions. Thus, every interactant, who is capable of practical reasoning, is rational both in being cooperative and in tending to one's own and the others' face needs (Jakubowska, 2001). Interaction rituals are the tools which serve this purpose.

3. Everyday rituals

People behave in a conventionalised way by performing fossilised rituals in various social situations. It is said that in some situations utterances we make (e.g., thanks and apologies) are merely ritual, i.e., that we are simply doing what is expected of us (Fraser, 1981; Aijmer, 1996) and we are often insincere and do not mean what we say. To maintain a state of ritual equilibrium people address each other properly with respect to the context of the situation, their relationship and their social status. Greetings and farewells are used as "access rituals" (Goffman, 1971: 79). "Greetings mark the transition to a condition of increased access and farewells to a state of decreased access" (ibid.: 47). They have three main functions: attention-production, identification, and reduction of anxiety in social contacts (Firth, 1972; Malinowski, 1923; cf. Laver, 1981). There are two kinds of ritual interchanges: "supportive rituals," which are performed for the sake of mutual support (e.g., thanks, congratulations, condolences), and "remedial rituals," performed when the speaker tries to remedy an offence he/she has committed and thus re-establish a state of ritual equilibrium (e.g., apologies) (Goffman, 1971).

Some of these rituals can be performed verbally and nonverbally, others only verbally with the use of certain routine formulae (called also polite formulae) (cf. Ożóg, 1990, 1997, 2004a). Thus, to perform these rituals people use:
- words of address,
- formulae beginning a conversation – greetings,
- formulae ending a conversation – farewells,
- formulae expressing gratitude – thanks,
- formulae expressing apology,
- other "polite" formulae (e.g., compliments, congratulations, good wishes, toasts, and condolences).

Politeness is considered a social phenomenon, and although on the surface it appears "to fulfill altruistic goals, it is nevertheless a mask to conceal ego's true frame of mind" (Watts, 2005: 47; Watts 2003; cf. Fraser, 1990; Eelen, 2001). By hiding his/her true frame of mind, the speaker tries to gain social acceptance and appreciation of his/her positive consistent self-image, which will help him/her achieve his/her goals. However, he/she can successfully do so not only by resorting to the so-called "polite" expressions, but by performing ritualised, institutionalised forms of social behaviour, called

by Watts (2003) *politic behaviour*. This is the kind of linguistic behaviour which "is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e. as non-salient" (ibid.: 19). The (im)polite sense of the utterances often depends on the context of their use. Many utterances which are used to perform ritualised forms of social behaviour are not inherently polite, but help maintain harmony and good relationships between interactants (cf. Ożóg, 1990).

The ways of maintaining social harmony and establishing good relationships differ from culture to culture, as everyday rituals performed to achieve them encode cultural beliefs and reflect community social organisation, and as such are language- and culture-specific.

4. Cross-cultural differences in social interaction

The greatest differences between the two cultures to be compared can be noticed along the individualism-collectivism dimension. Anglo-Saxon culture is individualistic. It values individuality, equality between people, moderate emotionality, limited to the controlled expression of exclusively positive emotions, promotion of success, and the need for freedom of action and freedom from imposition, which is expressed by means of different face-saving devices, such as restraint, hedges, questions, expressions of deference, polite pessimism and conventionalised indirectness (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Johnson, 1985). The primary orientation tends toward the individual self rather than toward the significant other. Self-assertiveness, a high degree of self-reliance and independence are highly valued in Anglo-Saxon culture.

Polish culture, unlike Anglo-Saxon culture, is not a clear example of one of the two cultural categories. Traditionally, Poles value respect, interdependence, reciprocal obligations, emotionality, intimacy and modesty (Wierzbicka, 1991). *Respect* is marked by large power distance and ascribed status. It is achieved by the use of appropriate forms of address and the number and intensity of politeness expressions. *Emotionality* is expressed as sincere interest in the interlocutor's life and spontaneity. Poles approve of genuine, almost uncontrolled, expression of feelings (both positive and negative), put high value on relationships (friendship and family) and hospitality (invitations, party rituals) (Lubecka, 2000). *Modesty* is marked by lack of self-confidence, visible in responses to compliments (most often they are played down), and lack of assertiveness, visible in the way Poles present themselves. Nowadays, however, Polish culture cannot be classified as collectivistic, although it has been considered as such by many researchers (e.g., Lewicka, 2005; Lubecka, 2000). Recently Polish culture has been strongly influenced by changes which took place in Poland after 1989. As Triandis claims (1995: 15):

> In the formerly Communist countries, the shift toward market economies has much in common with the shift from collectivism to individualism in many parts of the world.

The changes involved political and economic, as well as social transformations. Their consequences have been cultural changes and the opening of Poland to modern Western culture, American culture in particular (Ożóg, 2002; 2004). Poles have borrowed main Western values and assimilated some elements of Western lifestyle. For example, success, especially financial success, has become one of the most important aims of life; individualism, independence, freedom of choice and greater mobility have become the main categories of the lifestyle of the Polish young generation (ibid.).

Traditionally thinking members of older generation of Poles represent more collectivistic values and follow collectivistic norms of behaviour, while the Poles that became adult after 1989 cherish more individualistic values and the norms characteristic individualistic societies. The existence of the two different hierarchies of values represented by the two generation groups in one culture results in differences in social relations and different patterns of behaviour.

5. At the party

The party situation cannot be treated as an average everyday situation. This is a special event, mainly of interactional character, which involves a voluntary gathering of people who have, or at least should have, positive feelings toward each other. It requires special attention to the way we behave and to what we say. This, certainly, requires a knowledge of etiquette, the formal rules of proper social behaviour. The party is like a theatrical play in which every participant has his/her own special role to perform. The actors act as the host(s) and the guest(s).

The host of the party is its organiser and at the same time the main animator, responsible for the generally understood success of the party. Using Wierzbicka's universal primitives, we may say that the host's main obligation is to make all the guests feel good.

The guests, who form the other group of actors, have much easier tasks to do. They are obliged to express their appreciation to the host for his/her attempts to make them feel good and establish and maintain good relations with fellow-quests. Guests, even though they often form a group, should be treated by the host individually.

Although the host of the party and his guests have different roles to perform they have similar interactive goals. All of them enter the party interaction as individuals having specified needs and expectations. They want to present themselves in the best way. The two main self-presentational motives are to please others and to construct one's public self congruent with one's ideal (Baumeister, 1982). "Self-presentation is aimed at establishing, maintaining, or refining an image of the individual in the minds of others" (ibid.: 3; cf. Goffman, 1959). For Goffman, self-presentation is a ritually coordinated sequence of social actions by means of which a person gains his position in a network of social relations. A "true", "real", or "private" self is constructed through one's choices and performances. Creating the self is a matter of self-presentation only insofar as it is concerned with establishing and maintaining one's *public* self, that is, the image of oneself in the minds of others (Baumeister, 1982).

It is obvious that what we mean by an image of a good host differs from an image of a good guest; different roles, functions and performance of different actions make these two images incompatible. However, both the host(s) and the guest(s) act also as party participants, and as such they have the same self-presentational goal, make one-self look and sound attractive to others.

6. Differences in the understanding of the concept of hospitality

To talk about party rituals it is necessary first to analyse the differences in the understanding of the concept of hospitality in the two cultures.

In Anglo-Saxon culture, with its primary orientation toward the individual self rather than toward the significant other, hospitality can be found in a relatively low position in the hierarchy of values. The two expressions *Make yourself at home* and *Help yourself*, so frequently uttered by hosts in Anglo-Saxon culture, tell us a lot about the attitude toward guests. Here one more saying should be quoted, *Your home is your castle*, meaning that your home is a place in which you may remain private, and from which you may exclude anybody (*Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, 1985).This saying suggests that in Anglo-Saxon culture "one's own autonomy, territory, and space, simultaneously respecting the other person's need for space and privacy" are at the top of the value hierarchy. Saying *Make yourself at home* the host implies that he wants to share his/her home with his/her guests and that he/she wants them to feel comfortable there. Respect for the other person's autonomy and independence is reflected also in the expression *Help yourself*. Uttering it the host signals that he/she does not want to impose anything on the guests and gives them freedom of action and choice.

Hospitality is one of the most important values in Polish culture. Our attitude to this value can be illustrated by the two Polish sayings: *Gość w dom Bóg w dom* 'A guest in the home, God in the home', and *Postaw się a zastaw się* 'Pledge your entire fortune and cut a dash.' The first one tells a lot about the way Poles treat guests. The guest is a blessing sent by God. *Postaw się a zastaw się* is a form of advice for a good host, who should devote everything he/she has to entertain his/her guests, even to go into debt. Polish hospitality is connected with and can be explained by typical Polish emotionality, evinced as genuine expression of feelings, sincere interest in the interlocutor's life, spontaneity, and high value put on relationships. However, together with the above-mentioned social and economic transformations, Polish hospitality is also changing. People work more and have less time to socialize, and face-to-face gatherings become less formal and less ritualized, and are often replaced by other less direct contacts.

The differences in the understanding of the concept of hospitality in the two cultures are also reflected in party rituals.