Subjectification as a mechanism motivating the use of the Polish imperfective in reference to completed events

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1. Introduction

Verbs in Polish, like verbs in other Slavic languages, may be classified as either perfective or imperfective. The aim of the present paper is to analyze selected aspects of the semantics of the Polish imperfective within the framework of cognitive grammar. More specifically, I will be interested in those uses of the imperfective in the past tense which refer to completed events. Since such events are prototypically denoted by perfective verb phrases and the imperfective is often characterized as that member of the aspectual contrast which refers to ongoing processes, the present study will be concerned with trying to find the mechanisms which in specific contexts motivate the use of imperfectives, instead of perfectives, to designate completed events. The claim that I would like to make in the present study is that the motivating factors in question do not pertain to objective properties of conceived situations, but rather to how those situations are **construed** by the conceptualizer.

The data analyzed in the present paper are all attested examples taken from two crime stories by a Polish writer Joanna Chmielewska. The reason for choosing Chmielewska's works as the sources of the data is that she uses good colloquial Polish, which should not be much different from the spoken language, at least as far as its grammatical structure is concerned.

The specific claim that I will try to argue for with respect to the data chosen for the present study will be that the factor motivating the use of the imperfective in the examples under consideration is the mechanism of **subjectification**, whereby certain **objectively** construed aspects of the conceived scene denoted by the prototypical imperfective receive a more **subjective** construal in the extended uses of the aspectual variant in question.

Before I turn to an explanation of what is meant by the statements above, as well as to an analysis of the data that is supposed to support them, let me first present the main points of the theoretical framework adopted for the present study. This is because the claims made in the present paper are to be interpreted specifically against the background of how the nature of human linguistic functioning is understood in cognitive grammar.

2. The theoretical framework

First of all, cognitive grammar takes a **usage-based** view of language (cf. e.g. Langacker 1988a; 2000). Under this view, human linguistic knowledge is seen as emerging through abstracting commonalities observable in actual uses of linguistic expressions with specific phonetic shapes and specific, context-bound meanings. With repeated use, this process brings about the gradual **entrenchment** of those aspects of form and meaning that are recurrent in multiple uses. The term 'entrenchment' is to be understood here as the process of automatization through which "even a highly complex [psychological - A.K.] event can coalesce into a well-rehearsed routine that is easily elicited and reliably executed" and "comes to be manipulable as a "pre-packaged" assembly" (Langacker 2000:3).The process of acquiring a language thus resides in the abstraction of progressively more and more schematic mental representations that grasp the regularities observed in actual language use. This is how Langacker (1997a) characterizes the acquisition of meaning in language:

> Expressions are learned by being encountered on multiple occasions, engendering contextual understandings that are similar in certain respects and diverge in others. Consistently recurrent features of these understandings are reinforced and progressively 'entrenched', whereas features that do not recur simply 'cancel out' and fail to achieve conventional symbolic association with the form. 'Linguistic knowledge' resides in structures that become cognitively entrenched and achieve the status of conventional units. Relative to the usage events giving rise to them, such units are necessarily **schematic** (i.e. characterized in lesser specificity and detail). However, any facets of the context that recur across the supporting usage events will tend to be retained as specifications of the abstracted conventional units. Included are assessments of

> how a usage event relates to the ongoing discourse, as well as any features of the immediate interaction and its social circumstances (...). Specifications of this nature are therefore part of the conceptual semantic value of linguistic elements to the extent that they survive the process of cancellation and abstraction, and even the most emancipated, decontextualized elements retain some vestige of them.
>
> (Langacker 1997:236; boldface used by the author)

In cognitive grammar, the above characterization is not limited to the acquisition of meaning of lexical items, but automatically extends into the realm of grammar. This is because one of the main tenets of the theory is that lexicon and grammar form a continuum - any difference between them "is clearly a matter of degree and any particular line of demarcation would be arbitrary" (Langacker 1999a:18). Thus, according to cognitive grammar (cf. e.g. *ibid*.:19), grammatical patterns should be viewed as nothing more than schemas representing commonalities extracted by speakers from sets of specific symbolically complex expressions which are structurally parallel in certain respects.

Such schemas may have varying degrees of generality - in cognitive grammar's model of language structure, low-level schemas representing local generalizations coexist with fully general patterns. Mental representations arrived at through the process of abstraction discussed above may also differ with respect to their degree of cognitive salience. Frequently recurring aspects of language use are highly entrenched and thus highly salient in our mental representation of language structure. However, since entrenchment is a function of the frequency of occurrence and the frequency of occurrence is, by its very nature, a graded matter, our linguistic knowledge comprises the full spectrum of structures - from those which are well-entrenched and highly salient to those which are novel and non-salient. According to cognitive grammar, there is no specific point at which a non-arbitrary boundary may be drawn between novel linguistic structures and those that have already become conventionalized. As Langacker observes, "a boundary imposed at any particular threshold will continually fluctuate, since every use of a structure reinforces it and entrenches it more deeply, whereas non-use has the opposite

effect. Even the first occurrence of a novel structure constitutes an initial step along the path of progressive entrenchment and conventionalization, assuming that it leaves some kind of trace in at least one member of the speech community" (2000:10-11).

Schematic mental representations that are extracted from actual language use and that have varying degrees of entrenchment and generality are further linked by categorizing relationships - some linguistic structures are judged by speakers as either instantiations of, or extensions from, others. Thus, our knowledge of a language may be viewed as a vast and highly complex network, whose nodes differ in their level of abstraction and degree of cognitive salience, and are linked by categorizing relationships of instantiation and extension.

A usage-based view of language has numerous consequences of fundamental importance. One of them is the idea that all linguistic structures have phonological and/or semantic content and there are no linguistic elements that have a purely syntactic import. The theory of cognitive grammar is highly constrained by the so-called **content requirement** which states that "the units (cognitive "routines") comprising a speaker's linguistic knowledge are limited to semantic, phonological, and symbolic structures which are either directly manifested as parts of actual expressions, or else emerge from such structures by the process of abstraction (schematization) and categorization" (Langacker 2000:8). This requirement is a direct consequence of a usage-based view of language - what occurs overtly in actual utterances can only be expressions with semantic and phonological content. Structures posited by cognitive grammar in accounts of human linguistic functioning may only constitute abstractions from overtly occurring utterances or categorizing relationships between such abstractions. Hence, they have to have some phonological and/or semantic content, albeit sometimes a very abstract one.

Another consequence of adopting a usage-based model of language structure is the claim that human linguistic knowledge, which linguists aim at describing, should be characterized as "those aspects of cognitive organization in which resides a speaker's grasp of established linguistic convention" (Langacker 1987a:57) or as "a structured inventory of conventional

linguistic units" (*ibid*.). A unit is to be understood here as any semantic, phonological or symbolic structure mastered by a native speaker to such an extent that it becomes a cognitive routine for him (cf. also Langacker 1988b:11).

In turn, such an understanding of the notion of the knowledge of a language leads, among other things, to granting the status of a unit to any meaning of a given linguistic structure arising in specific contexts of use, provided that this meaning is sufficiently conventionalized for a sufficient number of speakers of a language (cf. Langacker 1988b:11; 1998a:654ff). Whether or not this specific meaning may be derived from some more general principles does not matter for its unit status.

Also, adopting this understanding of grammar results in the claim that a characterization of an expression's meaning should not be limited to those of its aspects which are common to all uses of the expression in question. Instead, a full characterization of an expression's meaning should take into account all its entrenched and conventionalized meanings, even if some of them appear only in specific contexts. Therefore, it may be expected that such a characterization does not normally reduce to a single sense, but rather is a network of interrelated conventionalized meanings. Within such a network, some senses are more prototypical, salient and central, while others constitute extensions or schematizations from them (cf. e.g. Langacker 1988b).

A further consequence of a usage-based view of language is an already mentioned claim that the meaning of a linguistic expression reduces to the conceptualization this expression evokes. We acquire meanings of linguistic expressions in actual usage events, when the expressions in question are used to convey specific, context-dependent conceptualizations. Conventionalized meanings of linguistic structures are arrived at through the process of decontextualization and abstraction discussed above. Thus, they are more abstract, but not fundamentally different from conceptualizations that speakers try to convey in specific usage events.

Since cognitive grammar views meanings of linguistic structures as abstractions from specific conceptualizations in actual usage-events, it adopts an encyclopedic idea of linguistic semantics and considers any distinction between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge as arbitrary (cf. e.g. Langacker 1988c; for arguments against the claim that our knowledge of meaning in language should be distinguished from our general encyclopedic world knowledge see Haiman 1980). Any aspect of the speaker's overall knowledge may be invoked and activated in a particular conceptualization and through repeated use any such conceptualization may become conventionalized as a meaning of some linguistic expression. Therefore, cognitive grammar adopts an encyclopedic view of linguistic semantics and claims that linguistic expressions are nothing more than conventionalized ways of accessing our overall system of knowledge. This system is not amorphous but organized into **cognitive domains**, where a cognitive domain is to be understood as a "coherent area of conceptualization" (Langacker 1987a:488) of any kind.

As already mentioned above, cognitive grammar claims that meaning reduces to conceptualization. Adopting this view leads to the first kind of subjectivism in cognitive grammar's approach to semantics. It is often (if not always) the case that how we conceptualize a particular fragment of reality does not correspond very exactly to reality itself. Instead, it is to a large extent shaped by our inborn cognitive abilities, our overall biological make-up, and our physical, as well as socio-cultural, experience. Consequently, our mental representations of various aspects of reality are idealized in the sense that they do not correspond to the objective world very well. What is important, in cognitive linguistics' view, it is not reality itself, but rather these idealized representations that our linguistic functioning rests upon (cf. e.g. Langacker 1991 and 1993a; Lakoff 1987, 1988 and 1989).

Equating linguistic meaning with conceptualization results also in subjectivism of another kind. If the meaning of a linguistic expression is really the same as the conceptualization this expression evokes, then it should be characterized not only in terms of the conceptualization's

objective content but also in terms of how this content is **construed** or **imagined** (cf. Langacker 1988c). According to Langacker, humans have an amazing mental ability to "construe a conceived situation in alternate ways - by means of alternate images - for purposes of thought or expression" (1987a:110). Alternate images, or construals, of the same conceptual content may differ with respect to a number of parameters, some of which will be discussed below.

The first parameter, which is of fundamental importance to how a conceived situation is construed, is **profiling** (cf. e.g. Langacker 1987a:118, 183ff). For any linguistic expression, we may distinguish between, on the one hand, the entity that is specifically **designated** within the conceptualization that constitutes the expression's meaning and, on the other, all the cognitive domains that we invoke to support the conceptualization in question. For example, when we conceptualize who a wife is, we first have to invoke the conception of a married couple. Within the conception of a married couple we focus our attention on its female member - this is the entity that we focus our attention on and that the word *wife* specifically designates. However, the conception of a couple constitutes the necessary **base** for the very emergence of the concept of a wife. Thus, the meaning of any linguistic expression should be characterized in terms of the imposition of a particular **profile** (that is, the entity that is specifically designated by the expression in question) on a particular base. As Langacker observes (*ibid.*:183), "[t]he semantic value of an expression resides in neither the base nor the profile alone, but only in their combination; it derives from the designation of a specific entity identified and characterized by its position within a larger configuration". To illustrate this - without the base conception *married couple* the very emergence of the concept *wife* is impossible. On the other hand, the concept *husband* requires precisely the same base to emerge. The only thing that distinguishes the meaning of *husband* from that of *wife* is the imposition of a different profile on the same base.

It may be observed that those aspects of a conceptualization that constitute its base may themselves be graded with respect to their degree of centrality and salience. Those facets of the

base that have "the highest degree of salience and relevance" (Langacker 1987a:490) are called the **immediate scope** of predication, where a predication is to be understood as the semantic pole of a linguistic structure. The predication's **maximal scope**, in turn, may be characterized as "the full content of a given conceptualization, not just central notions that we are specifically attending to, but also an array of more peripheral notions we may be only dimly aware of" (Langacker 1995:156). For example, the characterization of the concept *wife* as 'the female member of a married couple' is most central to its meaning. Thus, the concept *married couple* constitutes the immediate scope within which the female member is profiled. On the other hand, the idea that it is usually the wife who takes care of the couple's children may be seen as less central to the meaning of the expression under consideration and thus belonging to its maximal scope. To use Langacker's metaphor (cf. *ibid*.:155f), if we think of conceptualization as a mental analog of vision, and the conceptualizer as a mental analog of the viewer, the maximal scope may be compared to the maximal field of view. The immediate scope is similar to the center of the visual field, or the **onstage region**, that is, "the general locus of viewing attention" (*ibid*.:155).The way the conceptualizer accesses a conceived scene constitutes the conceptual **viewing frame** (cf. Langacker 1997b:61; Ms b). It is the adopted viewing frame that delimits the portion of conceived scene falling within the onstage region. Finally, the profile is an equivalent of the object of visual perception, that is, the focus of our visual attention.

Let me pursue the conceptualization/vision analogy a little further since it seems to be extremely helpful in explicating numerous linguistic phenomena of fundamental importance, including various aspects of how the perfective and the imperfective are used in languages such as Polish.

In the case of what Langacker (cf. e.g. 1987a:128ff) calls the **optimal viewing arrangement**, the viewer/conceptualizer and the object of perception/conception are totally distinct. The role of the viewer is totally **subjective** - he functions solely as the subject of perception/conception and his viewing attention is focused solely on the object of

perception/conception. In other words, in the optimal viewing arrangement the viewer "loses all awareness of his own role as perceiver" (Langacker 1987a:129). On the other hand, the role of the observed entity remains totally objective - it functions solely as the object of perception/conception and, furthermore, is located within what constitutes the observer's locus of viewing attention.

However, the adopted viewing arrangement does not always have to meet all of the above conditions. In the case of the **egocentric viewing arrangement** we have to do with "an expansion of the objective scene beyond the region of perceptual optimality to include the observer and his immediate surroundings" (Langacker 1987a:130). Since "people are often concerned with themselves and with their own situations" (*ibid.*), this kind of viewing arrangement seems to be characteristic of a large part of our linguistic functioning. In my view, it constitutes an important factor motivating numerous uses of the Polish imperfective.

According to cognitive grammar, all linguistic expressions may be divided into two broad classes depending on the character of their profile: those that profile **things** and those that profile **relations**. The technical term 'thing' is defined in this context as "a region in some domain" (Langacker 1987a:189) or, in other words, "a set of interconnected entities" (*ibid.*:198). In this characterization, an entity is to be understood as "anything one might conceive of or refer to for analytical purposes" (Langacker 1991:548). Entities are said to be interconnected whenever "the cognitive events constituting their conception are coordinated as components of a higher-order cognitive event" (*ibid.*:549). Relations, as opposed to things, are characterized as sets of interconnections among conceived entities (cf. *ibid.*:552), and not the interconnected entities themselves. Thus the difference between relations and things is a matter of construal and amounts to profiling, respectively, either interconnections through which a certain group of entities is established as a conceptual whole (region), or this conceptual whole itself.

All those expressions that profile things are referred to as nouns in cognitive grammar. Relational predications, on the other hand, are classified as verbs, adjectives, prepositions, etc. depending on a kind of relation they profile.

Since the present analysis deals with verbal aspect and verbs belong to the class of relational predications, let me now discuss the notion of relation in some more detail.

Relations themselves may be divided into two main classes: the class of **temporal** relations (profiled by verbs) and the class of **atemporal** relations (profiled by adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, participles, etc.). A relation is temporal when (i) it consists of a number of component configurations, instead of just one; (ii) these component configurations are thought of as being distributed through **conceived time** (that is, time understood as an object of conceptualization, as opposed to its medium), and finally (iii) their conceptualization involves **sequential scanning**, in which "[t]he various phases of an evolving situation are examined serially, in non-cumulative fashion; hence the conceptualization is dynamic, in the sense that its contents change from one instant to the next" (Langacker 1987b:72). In cognitive grammar any relation that conforms to the above characterization is called a **process** (for a discussion of the notion of process, cf. also Langacker 1987a:491; 1987b:75). On the other hand, we have to do with an atemporal relation whenever a relational conceptualization involves **summary,** instead of sequential, **scanning** - in summary scanning "a set of specifications or a series of component states are activated successively yet cumulatively; thus, after a *build-up phase*, all facets of a complex structure are coactivated and simultaneously accessible" (Langacker 1991:554; italics used by the author). Atemporal relations may be either **simple**, involving just a single configuration, or **complex**, that is, consisting of a number of configurations (cf. Langacker 1987a:248f). A conceptualization involving a number of differing configurations does not have to be internally inconsistent, since the configurations in question may be thought of as being distributed through conceived time. However, the inclusion of conceived time within the conception of a relation does not have to mean that a relation is temporal. A complex atemporal

relation does not have a positive temporal profile characteristic of processes, since all its component configurations are processed in a summary fashion (rather than sequentially) and, consequently, become simultaneously available to the conceptualizer at some point of **processing time** (that is, time through which the conceptualization process unfolds).

According to cognitive grammar (cf. Langacker 1987a:217ff), virtually any relational conception involves a certain asymmetry in how the participants of the relation in question are viewed. One of them, the **trajector**, is viewed as being especially salient, or standing out within the relational profile. In other words, it is thought of as the **primary figure** within the profiled relation, that is, the initial focus of attention in accessing conceptually the relation in question (cf. Langacker Ms a). Another salient entity within a relational profile constitutes the **secondary figure**, that is, the second focus of attention, accessed through the conception of the trajector and, in turn, allowing to access the conception of the profiled relation as a whole (cf. *ibid*.). The secondary focal participant of a relation is referred to as the **landmark**.

The trajector/landmark alignment adopted in a conceptualization is not determined by the conceptualization's objective content, although various objective factors may make one alignment more natural than another. However, it is always the conceptualizer who grants the status of the primary and secondary figures to the relational participants, thereby imposing a particular construal on a conceived scene. As a result, two linguistic expressions may evoke the same objective content, which is nevertheless construed differently due to differing trajector/landmark alignments adopted for each expression in question. For example, both *the table under the lamp* and *the lamp above the table* evoke the conception of two objects, the table and the lamp, in the same spatial configuration. The two expressions, however, are not identical in meaning and are likely to be used in different contexts. This is because they differ with respect to which relational participant is chosen as the primary figure and which plays only the role of the point of reference for assessing the primary figure's location.

Let me note at this point that the dimensions of construal claimed to be relevant to a characterization of meaning in language are not purely linguistic in nature. Instead, they are viewed as reflecting a few very basic and highly general cognitive abilities constituting a part of our biological endowment and making possible the emergence of any structured experience (cf. e.g. Langacker 1987a:99ff; 1993b; 1999a:2ff). For example, profiling may be seen as an instance of our general ability to focus attention on different facets of the same conceived scene. The ability to impose differing trajector/landmark organizations on relational conceptions may be seen as an instance of our more general ability to adopt alternate figure/ground organizations within a conceptualization of any kind. The ability to scan in a sequential and summary fashion is likewise characteristic of cognition in general. For example, when we watch the movement of a ball kicked by a player in a football match, we scan sequentially through the visual field. On the other hand, when we imagine the line of the ball's path, we employ the mode of summary scanning. Finally, the ability to impose a relational or a nominal profile on the same conceptual content reflects our more general cognitive abilities of, respectively, conceiving of entities in connection with one another and of conceptual reification (characterized as the conceptual grouping of conceived entities and the ability to manipulate the group thus established as a unitary whole).

After the above discussion of the major claims that cognitive grammar makes with respect to the nature of meaning in language in general, let me now turn to its more specific assumptions that will have a direct bearing on analyzing the semantics of verbal aspect in particular.

First of all, as mentioned above, I would like to claim that every verb profiles a process, that is, a series of states distributed through conceived time and scanned sequentially. More precisely, following Langacker (cf.1991:33), I will assume that every verbal stem considered in isolation profiles a **process type**, that is, a process not thought of as having any particular location in time, which is its **domain of instantiation**. The notion of the domain of instantiation

should be understood here as referring to the domain "in which instances of a type are primarily thought of as being located and are distinguished from one another on the basis of their locations" (*ibid*.:547; cf. also pp. 14 or 56f). On the other hand, every finite clause profiles a **grounded instance** of a process type. A process instance is thought of as having a particular location in time. Being grounded, it is conceptualized as located in time and reality/irreality specifically relative to the speaker, the hearer and the speech event, collectively referred to by the term **ground**. Grounding in a finite clause is achieved through the use of a particular tense and modal predication (cf. *ibid*.:241). Finally, a finite clause profiles a process instance which is not only grounded, but also quantified (cf. *ibid*.:421) - a given sentence may profile either a whole instance of a process, or some portion thereof as falling within the adopted immediate scope. The quantification over a process instance is of special interest for the present analysis since it is effected by aspectual predications (cf. *ibid*.).

According to Langacker (cf. 1987b:78ff), process types may be classified into two main groups: those that are conceptualized as being bounded in time within their immediate scope and those that are thought of as temporally unbounded.

It should be noted that the bounded/unbounded distinction made in cognitive grammar differs from the traditional telic/atelic contrast (cf. Garey 1957:106). According to Langacker, a process type is bounded not only if it inherently involves the conception of a terminal point, whose attainment results in completing the process in question. A process type is temporally bounded simply if its component states are normally thought of as being distributed over a limited span of time and its temporal boundaries are conceptualized as falling within the immediate scope of predication (cf.1987b.:80ff).

It is important to stress here that what matters for classifying a process type as either temporally bounded or unbounded is how the process in question is typically conceptualized. The objective properties of a real-world situation are not important. Thus, for example, the real-world situation that may be described by means of the sentence *Harry knows French* has the

objective beginning (the moment when Harry mastered French to a certain degree) and ending (for instance, Harry's death). However, this is not how we normally think of a situation of this kind. We conceptualize it as a state which is indefinitely extended in time because its endpoints do not fall within any "human-sized" temporal viewing frame. Therefore, the process type profiled by the verb *know* should be classified as temporally unbounded.

The second criterion used by Langacker in classifying process types is their internal homo- or heterogeneity (cf. 1987b.:80ff). A process type is internally heterogeneous if its component states are changing through time. On the other hand, a process type is internally homogeneous if all its component states are "construed as being effectively identical" (*ibid*.:80). It should be noted here once again that homogeneity in Langacker's sense has nothing to do with objective properties of real-world situations. A conceptualization may be said to be internally homogeneous if "it is construed as homogeneous for expressive purposes, i.e. its internal variability is not in focus as a salient or explicit matter of predication" (Langacker 1987a:205).

According to Langacker (cf. 1987b:80ff), temporally unbounded processes are at the same time internally homogeneous. On the other hand, temporally bounded processes are typically internally heterogeneous - a conceptualization of a process type traditionally classified as telic encompasses its natural beginning and ending, as well as the intermediate states that constitute the transition between them.

However, a temporally bounded process type does not have to be internally heterogeneous. As mentioned above, a process type is temporally bounded simply if its temporal expanse is thought of as being limited. Thus, internal heterogeneity is not a necessary prerequisite for temporal bounding. As a result, in Langacker's classification there exist process types which are at the same time internally homogeneous and temporally bounded (cf. 1987b:85ff). Among such process types are those profiled by verbs such as, for instance, *sleep*, *walk*, *swim* etc. As Langacker claims, "[p]rocesses like these typically occur in *bounded episodes*, rather than continuing indefinitely. Their episodic nature is evidently incorporated as

part of the conventional value of these verbs, and is responsible for their categorization as [temporally bounded]" (*ibid.*86; the author's emphasis; in the quotation, I replaced the original term 'perfective' with 'temporally bounded' to avoid confusion with the terminology used in reference to the Slavic aspectual contrast). It may be claimed that in the case of processes of this kind temporal bounding introduces a minimal degree of heterogeneity within the conceived scene - in Langacker's words, "change implied by [them - A.K.] is confined to the initiation and the termination of a process" (*ibid*.).

One consequence of the internal homogeneity of temporally unbounded processes, as opposed to the heterogeneity (even if minimal) of the temporally bounded ones, is the fact that we may recognize a valid instance of an unbounded process type in any arbitrary portion of its states instantiated in conceived time. On the other hand, only a full series of the component states together with the endpoints may be thought of as a valid instance of a temporally bounded process type. In this respect, temporally bounded and temporally unbounded processes are analogous, respectively, to count and mass nouns (the analogy between temporally bounded/unbounded processes on the one hand, and the count/mass nouns on the other, is extensively discussed in Langacker 1987b:80ff; see also e.g. Mourelatos 1981, Bolinger 1975:147). Thus, for example, in the case of the count noun *alphabet* only a conception of the complete series of letters constitutes a valid instance of the type in question. No portion of letters which falls short of being the full sequence may count as an instance of *alphabet*. On the other hand, if we take the example of *water* (mass noun), any portion of this substance, no matter how large or small, constitutes a valid instance of the thing type in question.

This ends the discussion of the major assumptions of cognitive grammar that are relevant for the present study. After presenting them I am now in a position to turn to considering the data.

3. An analysis of the data

Since all my examples here are in the past tense, I have to start with a few words about the semantics of the past tense in Polish. I have not investigated this matter in any depth. I hope, however, that for the present purposes the following characterization will be sufficient:

(1) The import of the past tense predication in Polish is that the immediate scope of predication, and hence the temporal profile of the verb with which it combines is limited to some past time wholly preceding the time of speaking.

As a consequence, when a past tense predication grounds an instance of a temporally bounded process, this instance is construed as completed or at least terminated prior to the time of speaking. This is because when a full temporally bounded process instance is profiled, its endpoints are, by necessity, contained within the immediate scope of predication. This scope is in turn located prior to the time of speaking by the past tense predication. On the other hand, it is possible to construe a temporally unbounded process instance grounded by the past tense predication as continuing up to the present. Although also in this case the immediate scope of predication (and hence the processual profile) wholly precedes the time of speaking, the endpoints of the process are, by definition, excluded from the immediate scope of predication and hence the process in question may be thought of as continuing up to the present.

My argument for the above characterization of the meaning of the past tense predication in Polish is that when a process is specifically conceptualized as continuing from the past till the present, it has to be denoted by means of a sentence in the present tense. This is illustrated by (2) below.

(2) ***Mieszkam*** tu od września

Live(Pres.)-I here since September

'I have lived here since September'

In cases such as (2) the immediate scope of predication encompasses a period from some past moment till the time of speaking. The meaning of the past tense predication is incompatible with this kind of immediate scope, as illustrated by (3) below.

(3) ***Mieszkałam*** *tu od września*

Live(Past)-I here since September

'I lived here since September (but this is no longer the case)'

The use of the past tense form of a verb in (3) may only be taken to mean that the profiled process was terminated at some moment prior to the time of speaking. It cannot be understood as meaning that a process begun in the past and continues up to the time of speaking.

After these introductory remarks let me at last pass to presenting and analyzing the data. In all the examples to be considered below past tense imperfective verb phrases refer to past completed events (note that in each case the relevant imperfective verb is put in bold case).

It seems that in the first group of sentences to be considered below (that is, in the examples in (4)-(8)) a past process is viewed as producing some kind of a resultant state. Furthermore, it is this state that seems to be construed as being relevant to the conceptualizer at a posterior temporal reference point from which the past process is - at least in some sense - viewed. In the first set of examples, which are given under (4) below, what is relevant to the conceptualizer at the time of reference (commonly equated with the time of speaking) is the knowledge state of the verb's trajector. This knowledge state is construed as resulting from the past process profiled by the imperfective verb phrase.

(4) a. *Ta cała Wanda Parker mogła mieć brata albo siostrę, nie* ***sprawdzaliśmy***

This whole Wanda Parker could have brother or sister, not checked-we(Imperf.)

tego, przyj¹wszy, ¿e ca³a rodzina nie ¿yje...

this having-assumed that whole family not live...

'This Wanda Parker person could have had a brother or sister, we haven't checked this, having assumed that the whole family is dead'

b. *Do testamentu podobno potrzebni œwiadkowie. Tak* ***czyta³am***

For will apparently needed witnesses. So read-I(Imperf.)

'From what I've read apparently you need witnesses for your will'

c. ***S³ysza³a*** *o mafii taksówkowej*

Heard-she(Imperf.) about mob taxi(Adj.)

'She has heard about the taxi mob'

Sentence (4a) was uttered by a police officer considering the possibility that the murder's victim could have had a family. The officer admits that he has no positive knowledge in this respect by saying that actions which could lead to such positive knowledge were not performed. These actions are referred to by means of the imperfective *sprawdzać* 'check'. The sentence contains no overt signal that it is the knowledge state of the processual trajector which is at issue. This part of the sentence's meaning is conveyed by the use of the imperfective.

The first sentence in (4b) is a statement of a proposition which belongs to the knowledge system of the speaker. The second sentence names the past process performed by the speaker which resulted in accepting the proposition in question as part of this system of knowledge. Again, nothing in the sentence signals overtly that what is conversationally relevant is the knowledge state of the processual trajector. This is, however, what has to be assumed if the above discourse is to be coherent.

In (4c) we have a verb which in its basic sense denotes an act of auditory perception. However, when the imperfective variant of this verb is used, the notion of the trajector's knowledge state at some point of reference receives greater prominence, and the idea of a prior act of perceiving on his part becomes less salient. This may probably be seen as an intermediate stage in the process of meaning extension in accordance with the pattern by which verbs denoting acts of auditory perception develop the sense of 'understand' or 'know' (cf. Sweetser 1990:35ff).

To sum up what has been said so far, the examples in (4) involve the conception of an internally heterogeneous past process which was completed and brought about a certain state of knowledge in the mind of the processual trajector. It is this knowledge state that seems to be conversationally relevant. The trajector continues to be in this state of knowledge up to some temporal reference point. In Polish there is no grammatical distinction between the past and the past perfect meaning. Therefore, it may be the case that the profiled process occurred prior to some past reference point and the resultant knowledge state of the processual trajector is construed as continuing up and through this past reference time. Commonly, however, the reference point is thought to be the present, that is, the time of the speech event.

I assume that in the examples under (4) it is only the process itself, and not the resultant knowledge state of the processual trajector, which is profiled. This is because the verbs under consideration are in the past tense and I have suggested above that the past tense predication in Polish requires locating the immediate scope of predication prior to the time of speaking. When the examples under (4) are construed as involving the speech time as their reference point, this kind of immediate scope may contain only the process itself, since the resultant knowledge state it produced is conceived of as continuing up to the present. No such argument can be made with respect to the past perfect interpretation of the sentences under consideration, since in that case the resultant knowledge state is viewed as continuing up to the reference point, which is itself located in the past. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the mere shifting of the

reference point from the present to the past does not change the overall configuration of the conceptualization in question, including its profiling.

As already mentioned, the overall conception denoted by the sentences in (4) contains also the notion of a certain knowledge state produced in the mind of the processual trajector as a result of the profiled process. This knowledge state is construed as continuing from the moment of completing the process up to the reference point. Thus, it is viewed as going beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope of predication. This is what, in my view, motivates the use of imperfective verb phrases here. In the prototypical meaning of the imperfective only a portion of the internal states of a process is profiled. The profiled portion of the processual states is viewed as effectively homogeneous. The remaining states are relegated to the base and viewed as exceeding the boundaries of the immediate scope. In cases like (4), on the other hand, the complete past process is profiled and contained within the limits of the immediate scope. However, the overall conceptualization also contains in its base the resulting knowledge state, which is construed as going beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope and continuing up to the reference point. Additionally, the relative salience of this resultant knowledge state within the overall conceived scene seems to bring about the backgrounding of the profiled process' internal heterogeneity, thereby making the conceptualization more similar to the meaning of the prototypical imperfective.

The variant of the imperfective used in sentences under (5) below is only a slight modification of the one involved in the previous group of examples.

(5) a. *[C]zy drzwi na balkonie s¹ w koñcu otwarte, czy zamkniête? (...) Ktoœ je*

(Q) door on balcony are in end open or closed? (...) Somebody it

zamyka³?

closed(Imperf.)?

'In short, is the balcony door open or closed? (...) Has somebody closed it?'

b. *Nikt z was go [listu] gdzieœ nie* ***przek³ada³****?*

None of you it [letter] somewhere not put-somewhere-else(Imperf)?

'None of you has put it somewhere?'

Here again, the profiled process is construed as being located prior to some reference point and as having produced a knowledge state in the mind of its trajector. This knowledge state is understood as continuing up to, and being relevant at, the reference time in question. The only difference is that this time the notion of acquiring some knowledge as a result of engaging oneself in an activity is at best very marginal and non-salient within the typical conceptualization evoked by the verbs under consideration. Thus, the causal link between the profiled past process and the knowledge state continuing up to the reference time is here more indirect and more subjective - it is more a matter of how the speaker conceives of the scene than of what is determined by objective factors.

In the next group of examples, which are given in (6) below, what is relevant to the current discourse is the present state or location of the processual landmark. In most cases either this state or location is unusual, or the landmark is missing from the place where it should be. The processual trajector is construed as being responsible for this situation, since it is his or her past action that brought about the present state of the landmark.

(6) a. *Konto ona ma, sam dla niej* ***załatwiałem***

Account she has, myself for her opened-I(Imperf.)

'She has an account, I opened it for her'

b. *Ktoś* ***ruszał*** *drabinę*

Somebody moved(Imperf.) ladder

‘Somebody has moved the ladder’

c. *Ja tego tam nie* ***k³ad³em****!*

I that there not put(Imperf.)

‘I didn’t put that there’

In (6a) the verb’s landmark, that is, a bank account is understood as existing at the moment of speaking as a result of what the verb’s trajector did in the past. I would like to note at this point that this example could just as well be included into the set of sentences under (5) - it may be understood as conveying the message that the trajector (that is, the speaker) is currently aware of the account’s existence as a result of completing the process of opening it in the past.

Sentence (6b) is uttered by one of the characters in the story at the moment when the ladder is needed but cannot be found in its usual place. The intended meaning is that somebody must have taken it somewhere in the past and that is why it is missing at the moment of speaking.

In (c), again, some object is found in an unusual place. The speaker (that is, the verb’s trajector) wants to convey the meaning that he is not responsible for this state of affairs, since in the past he did not perform the process which supposedly brought about the processual landmark being in its present location.

I suggest that what each of the sentences in (6) profiles is again a past process, which is internally heterogeneous and fully completed. As a result of this process, the verb’s landmark starts being in a certain state or location. It is construed as being in that state or location at the moment of speaking and the verb’s trajector is understood as being responsible for this situation. Note once again that with sentences similar to those in (6) (as well as in the majority of examples considered below), it is possible to assume a temporal reference point which is itself located prior to the speech time. I assume that the argumentation given above, in the discussion of (4),

with respect to what sentences of this kind actually profile is valid in such cases as well. I suggest that it is the process preceding the assumed reference point which is put in profile. This process is conceived of as bringing about a certain state or location of the processual landmark. The base conception of the landmark being in the resultant location or state is what goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope and motivates the use of an imperfective verb. Additionally, the discourse salience of the conception of the resultant state seems to background the notion of the profiled process' temporal evolution.

The sentences in (7) below are special cases of (6) in that here as well the resultant state that continues up to, and is relevant at, the reference time is the state of the processual landmark. They are also related to the examples under (4) in that the resultant state under consideration is a new state of knowledge brought about by the profiled process.

(7) a. *Oni nie wiedz¹, co siê tu dzieje, ja nikogo nie* ***zawiadamia³am***

They not know what (Reflexive) here happens, I nobody not notified(Imperf.)

'They don't know what's going on here. I haven't told anyone'

b. *Przedtem nalałam herbaty do termosu. Chrzestna babcia* ***mówiła,*** *że*

Before poured-I tea to thermos. God grandmother said(Imperf.) that

chce

wants-she

'I poured tea into the thermos. My mother's godmother had said she would want some'

Example (7a) seems to be pretty straightforward. The conception of the profiled process involves the idea of the trajector, who is the sender of some (usually verbal) message and the landmark, who is the receiver of the message in question. Typically, the communication process profiled by the verb in (7a) is thought of as producing a new knowledge state in the processual

landmark. This knowledge state, in turn, is construed as continuing up to, and being relevant at, the chosen temporal reference point.

The situation is more complicated in the case of (7b). Here, the landmark of the profiled process and, what follows, the relevant receiver of the verbal message, is not overtly specified - the verb *mówić* does not take a direct object and is thus translated by the English verb *say* (Polish *mówić* can also be followed by an NP in the Dative and is then translated by the English *tell*). It seems that the overt mention of the receiver of the message is not necessary whenever this receiver is equated with the speaker himself (or at least with a larger group of people to which the speaker belongs). Note that in (7b) the sentence profiling the process of verbal communication is preceded by a sentence with the first-person singular subject, that is, a sentence profiling a process whose trajector is the speaker. Furthermore, the process with the first-person singular trajector is construed as being in some sense brought about by the process of verbal communication. It thus seems reasonable to assume that it is the speaker who is the receiver in the act of verbal communication profiled by the second sentence in (7b) and who engages in the process profiled by the first sentence in this example as a result of receiving the message in question.

Thus, I would like to suggest that in cases of this kind it is the speaker who is conceptualized as the landmark of the process of verbal communication. This kind of conceptualization constitutes a departure from what Langacker calls the optimal viewing arrangement (cf. the discussion in section 2 above). In cases like (7b) the asymmetry between the respective roles of the object and subject of conceptualization is no longer maximal. The subject of conceptualization is thought of as a participant of the profiled relationship. As such, he is by necessity put on-stage. It should be noted, however, that in the example under consideration, although the conceptualizer is construed as the processual landmark, nothing in the form of the sentence overtly signals the necessity for such a construal. Langacker (cf. e.g. Ms b) observes that overt mention correlates with salience. It may thus be claimed that the conceptualizer's role

in the process is maximally non-salient within the immediate scope of predication, to the extent to which non-salience is consistent with the status of the landmark participant in the profiled relationship.

In (8) below we again have examples in which what is relevant to the ongoing discourse is the state or location of the processual landmark at some temporal reference point. This time, however, the relationship between the landmark being in a certain state or location at the reference time and the profiled process preceding this reference time is by no means straightforward.

(8) a. *Sylwia ostatnio* ***ogl¹da³a*** *zdjêcia*

Sylwia lastly looked-at(Imperf.) photos

'Sylwia was the last to look at the photos'

b. ***Czyta³aœ*** *list jako ostatnia*

Read-you(Imperf.) letter as last

'You were the last to have read the letter'

c. *Bez chwili wahania przypomniała wszystkim, że zdjęcia* ***odbierała***

Without moment hesitation-of reminded-she all that photos picked-up(Imperf.)

z zak³adu fotograficznego Felicja osobiœcie, ona tak¿e ***robi³a*** *przy okazji*

from processing Felicja personally, she also did(Imperf.) at occasion

zakupy

shopping

'Without a moment's hesitation she reminded them all that it was Felicja who had picked up the photos from processing, on her way she also did the shopping'

Sentence (8a) is uttered when one of the characters in the story wants to look at the photos but they are not in the place where they should be. The blame for this state of affairs is put on Sylwia (the verb's trajector), since she was the last to have them in her hands.

Sentence (8b) is produced under similar circumstances. The characters in the story want to check an important piece of information. However, they cannot find the letter in which this piece of information was stated. Again, it is the verb's trajector (the person to whom this utterance was addressed) that is blamed for this state of affairs.

Finally, (8c) describes the situation of finding a pack of salt and a number of photos in the freezer. Saying that it was Felicja who picked up the photos and did the shopping is in this case equivalent to saying that it is her who should be held responsible for putting the things in question in this unusual location.

In all the examples under (8) it is again the case that a process performed by the trajector prior to some reference time results in the processual landmark being in an unusual place or location at a temporal reference point (RP). Thus far, the situation is analogous to that in (6). This time, however, the causal link between the profiled process and the landmark being in a certain state or location at the time of reference is not direct. Doing the shopping or picking up photos from processing does not in itself result in a pack of salt or a number of photo prints being put in the freezer. I would like to suggest, however, that our conception of each process profiled in (8) is normally embedded in a larger frame, a well-known scenario or routine containing a whole chain of processes that normally accompany the profiled action. For example, when you do the shopping, you normally bring home the things you have bought, you unpack your bags and put things in various places. Such processes, although not profiled, are nevertheless quite salient within the conceptual base of the designated process and it is one of them that is construed as bringing about the fact that the processual landmark is found in an unusual state or location at the point of reference.

The uses of the imperfective illustrated by (4)-(8) have certain characteristics in common. All of them profile processes which are thought of as preceding a certain temporal reference point and as being wholly completed prior to that reference point. What motivates the use of the imperfective in cases like (4)-(8) is the conception of a state resulting from the profiled process and continuing up to the time of reference. The conception of the resultant state goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope of predication, thereby licensing the use of the imperfective. Also, the relevance of the resultant state in question for the ongoing discourse seems to bring about relative backgrounding of the notion of the profiled process' internal heterogeneity - this may be another factor motivating the choice of the imperfective in the contexts under consideration.

As mentioned above, in the case of the prototypical use of the imperfective in which a process is viewed as ongoing, it is some portion of its internal states which is put in profile. The immediate scope of predication is limited to that profiled portion and the remaining component states are viewed as going beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope (IS). On the other hand, in cases like (4)-(8), the whole profiled process is contained within the limits of IS. What goes beyond them is the result produced by the process in question. I would like to suggest that extending the use of the imperfective from the prototypical meaning to contexts like (4)-(8) involves the process of **subjectification**.

In Langacker's theory (cf. 1985; 1990; 1991; 1993c; 1997b; 1998b; 1999b), the notion of subjectification is interpreted as pertaining to a particular way of construing a scene - it is viewed as a semantic shift in which an entity originally construed objectively receives a more subjective construal. A subjectively construed entity no longer constitutes an object of conceptualization, but rather is a part of the conceptualization process itself. In his earlier work, Langacker suggested that subjectification involves *replacing* an objectively construed element by its subjective counterpart. However, more recently he adopted the view that "this subjective component is there all along, being immanent in the objective conception, and simply remains

behind when the latter fades away" (1999b:151; see also 1998b; Verhagen 1995). In other words, under this interpretation subjectification is understood as resulting from the process of **attenuation**, in which facets of the objective scene progressively disappear from the overall conceptualization until the only element left is the subjective mental operation inherent in conceiving of the initial objective situation.

This difference in understanding the nature of subjectification has at least one important consequence. Subjectification thought of in terms of replacement is more easily viewed as a process taking place in discrete steps (cf. Langacker 1994:15-16). On the other hand, understanding subjectification as attenuation leads to attributing to it a more gradual nature (cf. e.g. Langacker 1998b:76).

A simple illustration of the subjectification process at work is given in (9) below (the examples are taken from Langacker 1999b:155):

(9) a. *The child hurried **across** the street*

b. *The child is safely **across** the street*

c. *You need to mail a latter? There is a mailbox just **across** the street*

d. *A number of shops are conveniently located just **across** the street*

e. *Last night there was a fire **across** the street*

Sentence (9a) profiles an instance of objective actual movement on the part of the clausal trajector. The preposition *across* designates the path of this profiled objective actual movement. The prepositional profile is thus a complex atemporal relation in which the trajector traverses the spatial expanse of the landmark and the movement is construed atemporally as a result of adopting the summary mode of scanning. In the remaining examples what is profiled is no longer the trajector's movement, but rather its being in a certain static location. In (9b), however, this location is understood as resulting from an instance of past actual movement of the trajector -

this movement, therefore, functions as a facet of the conceptualization's base. In (9c) the trajector's location is, in turn, viewed as the endpoint of a future potential movement of the addressee. Sentence (9d) involves as an unprofiled facet of its base an instance of a potential movement by a generalized or generic individual - the clausal trajector is thought of as being located at the endpoint of such a movement's path. Finally sentence(9e) seems to be a limiting case where the use of *across* has no objective motivation whatsoever - here the notion of any physical movement is probably wholly absent from the overall conceptualization. Instead, the use of a path preposition is motivated only by the fact that the conceptualizer scans mentally along a certain path in the process of conceptualizing the scene. This mental scanning is a means of locating the trajector with respect to the landmark. The path of mental scanning in (9e) is identical to the path of the trajector's movement in (9a). In (a), however, the movement is objective, that is, its role is limited to being solely an object of conceptualization. In (e), on the other hand, traversing the path from a reference point to the trajector's location is something that the conceptualizer does. As such, it constitutes a part of the conceptualization process itself. It may be noted that the same mental scanning is involved in conceptualizing the initial objective configuration in (9a) - to conceptualize the trajector's objective movement one has to scan mentally along its path. In (9a), however, this subjective component is overlaid by the conception of objective movement. Then, as the process of subjectification proceeds, various facets of the objective scene progressively get more and more attenuated and thus "[a]lthough the conceptualizer continues to carry out the same or a comparable mental scanning as in the initial configuration, the objective situation (...) offers less [and less - A.K.] motivation for it" (Langacker 1999b:152).

If we now return to the prototypical meaning of the imperfective in Polish and its uses in the examples under (4)-(8), we may observe that in the former case it is a purely objective relation, that is, the unprofiled states of the conceptualized process, which are thought of as exceeding the boundaries of the immediate scope. Of course, the conceptualizer has to conceive

of the profiled portion of a process as a part of some larger whole. Nevertheless, this subjective mental operation is overlaid by the objective content to the extent that it becomes "invisible" - the profiled portion of a process is objectively a part of a larger whole and the role of the conceptualizer is limited to recognizing this fact.

The situation is different in the case of sentences (4)-(8). Here we also have to do with an objective relation going beyond the boundaries of IS - namely, the conceptualization's maximal scope includes the idea of a resultant state of a past process which continues up to the reference time. However, this time the role of the conceptualizer is more active, since now conceiving of the profiled process as a part of a larger configuration is much less determined by the objective scene and much more a matter of subjective judgment. It is the conceptualizer who has to recognize the existence of a link between the profiled process and its resultant state, as well as the relevance of both the process and its resultant state to the current discourse. Thus in the examples under (4)-(8) the elements of the objective scene motivating the use of the imperfective are to a large extent attenuated and it is now subjective factors that come to the fore. Note that as the causal relation between the profiled process and its result becomes more indirect in cases like (8), the mental operations performed by the conceptualizer become progressively more and more important in motivating the use of the imperfective. I would like to suggest, then, that in cases like (4)-(8) the mental operations in question have to be included within the maximal scope of the conceptualization, despite the fact that they are parts of the conceptualization process itself.

After this excursion into the area of subjectification, let me now return to the further analysis of the data. The sentence in (10) below seems to be another example involving subjectification as a factor which motivates the use of the imperfective.

In this example, it is obvious from the overall context that the process profiled by the bolded verb is at some level viewed as completed. However, the use of the imperfective conveys the meaning that the speaker is not so much interested in its evolution from the initial to the final

state, but rather in the fact that the process in question simply took place at some moment in the past.

(10) ***Wychodziłam*** *ze śmieciami, u nas zsyp* *się zapchał i był*
Went-out-I(Imperf.) with trash, at us trash-chute itself got-stuck and was
zamknięty, może mnie widział cieć
closed, maybe me saw janitor
'Our trash-chute was stuck, [so] I took out the trash, maybe the janitor saw me'

Sentence (10) is uttered by a woman interrogated by the police. The occurrence of the profiled process is supposed to provide an alibi for her.

The meaning of this examples seems to involve the conception of a completed, internally heterogeneous process instance located in time at some moment prior to the time of speaking. As mentioned above, the process under consideration is telic and it is clear that at some level it is construed as completed. The woman's going out with the trash had to be completed in order for the janitor to be able to see her and provide an alibi for her. However, the internal heterogeneity and completion are not what the conceptualizer focuses on. The most prominent aspect of the denoted conceptualization is the mere occurrence of the process at some past moment. It is this occurrence which is relevant to the ongoing discourse - after all, we have to do here with a statement about past actions whose occurrence (or otherwise) is supposed to have some bearing on the murder investigation at the time of speaking.

Note that in (10) the relation of current relevance seems to have a much more subjective basis than in (4) and (6), or even (8) above. In sentences (4) and (6) the conception of the causal link between the profiled past event and the resultant state obtaining at the reference time is strongly motivated by the semantics of the verb phrase, as well as by what typically happens in the world. Thus, it is to a large extent independent of the speaker's judgment and has a strong

objective motivation. The same may be said about (8), although this time the subjective judgment of the speaker seems to play a greater role. In the case of (10), however, it is the speaker who makes a choice with respect to what past events may have a bearing on the current development of the murder investigation. The semantics of the verb phrase does not in any way point to the possibility of the past process being currently relevant. Also, in cases like (4)-(8) a past process is viewed as producing some result with respect to objectively construed entities. In (10), on the other hand, the relevance of the past process inheres in the fact that its occurrence or otherwise may influence the hearer's reasoning processes - if the interrogating police officer accepts the fact that the profiled process did in fact occur, he may conclude that the woman under interrogation is not involved in the murder case. Thus in (10) the motivation for using the imperfective is subjective on at least two counts: first, the relevance of the profiled past event is not objectively given, but rather is a matter of the speaker's judgment; secondly, it does not pertain to the process' potential to influence an objectively construed situation, but rather to a bearing its occurrence or otherwise may have on the hearer's reasoning.

The sentence in (11) represents just a slight modification of the preceding variant of the imperfective.

(11) a. *Pamiêta³a doskonale, ¿e jej ojciec przed wojn¹* ***p³aci³*** *za*

Remembered-she perfectly that her father before war paid(Imperf.) for

nie [ramy do obrazów] bardzo drogo

them [frames for pictures] very expensively

'She remembered perfectly well that her father paid a lot for [the picture frames] before the war'

This sentence is used in a context in which the subject of the whole sentence considers some picture frames as highly valuable and invokes the memory of a prior occurrence of the process of

paying a lot for them as supporting this evaluation. Thus in (11) it is again not the case that the profiled process is viewed as being currently relevant at RP in the sense of producing some result that obtains in the objective scene at RP. Instead, the conceptualizer's idea of the occurrence of the process in question has a causal role in a reasoning process - recollecting the past event of the conceptualizer's father paying a lot for the frames supports the present conviction on their high value. More precisely, we have to do here with the surrogate conceptualizer, whose act of recollecting a past event is what the sentence as a whole profiles. This, however, does not change the overall line of reasoning. Thus the general mechanism motivating the use of the imperfective in (11) is identical to that in (10). The main difference seems to be that (10) involves the speaker's conception of mental operations performed by another person, namely the hearer. In (11), on the other hand, there is just one relevant conceptualizer in the case of whom conceiving of some past process results in arriving at certain conclusion. Secondly, the past process profiled in (11) involves an individual other than the speaker as its trajector and painting frames as the landmark. It is these frames that are considered highly valuable by the conceptualizer - hence they are the trajector in the second process representing the conceptualizer's judgment.

Let me now turn to the last example to be considered in the present paper. Sentence (12) below is still another instance of subjectification motivating the use of the imperfective.

(12) *Nie bez powodu Antoœ* ***pyta³,*** *czy Wandzia j¹ lubi*

Not without reason Antoœ asked(Imperf.) whether Wandzia her likes

'It's not been without a reason that Antoœ asked whether Wandzia liked her'

This sentence is uttered when the conceptualizers (the speech act participants) have just learnt that the person referred to by the pronoun 'her' is the main beneficiary of the will left by Ms Wandzia, who later on became the victim of a murder. Ms Wandzia planned to make this kind of will well before she was murdered and the man referred to as Antoœ, who used to act on

her behalf, knew about those plans. That was the reason why he asked the speech act participants about Ms Wandzia's attitude towards the prospective beneficiary. At the time when the question was asked the conceptualizers did not know the reason why it was asked. It is only at the reference time (in this case, the time of the speech event) that the real significance of the question asked in the past becomes apparent to them.

Sentences similar to (12) profile a past process. This process is contained within the immediate scope of the predication in question. However, the notion of its temporal evolution again seems to be backgrounded within the overall conceptualization. The idea of some state of affairs (R) which is the reason for the trajector's engaging in the profiled past process figures within the maximal scope of the overall conceptualization. In the example under consideration the state of affairs which motivated preceding actions on the part of the processual trajector is thought of as continuing up to the reference time. At the time of reference the conceptualizer becomes aware of this state of affairs, of its continuation through time and of its causal role in the preceding process.

I would like to suggest that what motivates the use of imperfectives in contexts like (12) is the fact that both the notion of the state of affairs R continuing through time up to the time of reference and, what is more important, the conceptualizer's mental operation of becoming aware of R and its role in the profiled process figure within the maximal scope of conceptualization. Both these conceptions exceed the boundaries of IS and link the past process with the reference time. In this sense, (12) is an instance of what Langacker (Ms b) calls **experiential reporting**. We have to do with experiential reporting whenever a linguistic message does not pertain solely to "what-is-out-there-in-the-world" in itself, but also to the speaker's viewing experience of "what-is-out-there-in-the-world". In (12) the immediate scope of predication is restricted to the objectively construed past event. However, the maximal scope includes also the conception of the speaker's becoming aware of some past state of affairs at the reference time - it is this conceptual viewing experience at the reference time following the past event that functions as an

unprofiled facet of the base and links the conception of the event in question with the temporal reference point, thereby motivating the use of the imperfective.

It should be noted that sentence (12) may also be used when R is thought of as obtaining only prior to the reference time and simultaneously with the profiled process. Under this interpretation it is only the conceptualizer's mental operation of conceiving of R which extends the boundaries of the immediate scope. This seems to be the case of the motivation for the use of the imperfective becoming even more subjective than in cases like (10) or (11). In (10) and (11) the properties of the objectively construed profiled past process have some bearing on the subjectively construed reasoning process on the part of the conceptualizer. This constitutes the last vestige of objectivity in the relation of current relevance that the profiled process bears to the reference time. This relation, in turn, is what exceeds the boundaries of the immediate scope and thus motivates the use of the imperfective. In the case of (12), on the other hand, the profiled process is viewed as completed, that is, wholly contained within the boundaries of the immediate scope. Within the overall conceptualization there is no other objective relation which is thought of as going beyond these boundaries. The only relation that exceeds the immediate scope's boundaries is the mental operation performed by the conceptualizer. This mental operation constitutes a part of the conceptualization process and therefore, is purely subjective. Nevertheless, it is included within the maximal scope of the overall conceptualization and, as such, motivates the use of the imperfective. In this sense, (12) may be viewed as an instance of the purely subjective motivation for the use of the imperfective.

I would like to finish the present analysis of the data with one more comment. It seems to me that in all the examples under consideration conceptualizing a relation which exceeds the boundaries of the immediate scope (thereby motivating the use of the imperfective) does not at the same time bring the idea of the profiled event's internal heterogeneity strongly to the fore. On the contrary, the relative salience of the relation in question results in backgrounding the notion of temporal evolution of the process in profile. Such a backgrounding seems to be the

second factor sanctioning the use of the imperfective in reference to completed events. If this is indeed the case, than the existence of specific restrictions on the felicitous use of imperfectives to profile completed processes may be expected. One such hypothesized restriction seems to pertain to those uses of the imperfective in which the profiled past process produced a resultant state currently relevant at a posterior reference time. My suggestion is that the use of the imperfective is sanctioned only when the resultant state in question may be conceived of with a certain degree of autonomy from the conception of the process that produced it. It cannot be conceptualized solely *qua* the final state of the profiled event, since such a conceptualization would bring to the fore the idea of the processual profile evolving through all its component phases. This hypothesis is partially supported by the observation that the relevant resultant states in the examples considered above are either knowledge states or locations of the processual trajectors or landmarks. Importantly, both a knowledge state and a location may be viewed as being produced by the profiled event, but do not have to be conceptualized solely *qua* its final state.

4. Conclusions

There is a number of points that I would like to make in concluding the present paper. Let me start with listing the semantic variants of the imperfective discussed above:

(i) in uses analogous to (4)-(8) the profiled past process brings about a certain resultant state that is viewed as being currently relevant at a reference time; the notion of a resultant state and its relevance are relatively prominent aspects of the predication's maximal scope; the salience of relations going beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope motivates the use of the imperfective here - it is thanks to this salience that the profiled process' internal heterogeneity is backgrounded and that this process is conceptualized as being embedded within a larger configuration exceeding the boundaries of the immediate scope; cases similar to (4)-(8)

are instances of subjectification, in the sense that the relation of current relevance, although objectively motivated by the continuation of a resultant state, has nevertheless to be recognized as such by the conceptualizer - processes are not relevant in themselves; they start to be relevant when they are recognized as such

(ii) sentences similar to (10) and (11) are further instances of subjectification; the profiled past events are construed as currently relevant in the sense that accepting their occurrence as a part of reality leads the conceptualizer to particular conclusions; it is these conclusions that are important for the ongoing discourse; the subjectively construed relation of current relevance is again what motivates the use of the imperfective; the last vestige of objectivity in how this relation is conceptualized is the fact that the properties of the objectively construed past process have some guiding role in the conceptualizer's reasoning process

(iii) sentences analogous to (12) may be viewed as the most radical cases of subjectification; here, the conceptualizer becomes aware of reasons for a past event at some reference time; it is this event that is put in profile; the event is viewed as temporally bounded within its immediate scope; there may be no objective relation going beyond the boundaries of the immediate scope and linking the past event with the reference time; only the subjectively construed mental operation performed by the conceptualizer may be responsible for the linking - hence the motivation for the use of the imperfective may in this case be totally subjective.

There are two characteristics which all the uses of the imperfective discussed above seem to share and which differentiate them from the meaning of the perfective.

First of all, the prototypical imperfective profiles a process instance which is internally homogeneous and temporally unbounded within its immediate scope. Even though all the examples considered in the present chapter depart from this prototype in that the profiled process

instances are temporally bounded and viewed - at some level - as internally heterogeneous, the use of the imperfective results in backgrounding the notion of their heterogeneity within the overall conceptualization. By contrast, the prototypical perfective specifically focuses on the notion of temporal bounding and evolution of the profiled process. Thus, as suggested to me by Ronald Langacker (personal communication) , the perfective may be characterized as specifically focusing on the bounded and heterogeneous character of the profiled process, while in the imperfective these aspects of the conceptual content are in some sense backgrounded.

Secondly, as again pointed out to me by Ronald Langacker (personal communication), in all cases considered so far a process instance profiled by the imperfective and contained within its immediate scope is embedded within a larger conceptualization that constitutes its maximal scope. On the other hand, in the case of the perfective the notions of the immediate and the maximal scope effectively collapse - a profiled process instance may be said to be embedded in a larger frame only to the extent that it invokes our general encyclopedic knowledge of the world. No specific maximal scope is required to support its conceptualization.

In my view, the data considered above constitutes an argument against the claim commonly made in the study of aspect in Slavic languages that in the perfective/imperfective contrast it is only the perfective that has some positive value, and the imperfective is a semantically neutral member of the opposition whose specific contextual interpretations are derived from the operation of pragmatic mechanisms (cf. e.g. Jakobson 1932:3f and 1957:48f; Forsyth 1970:82; Smith 1991:124). This claim may be considered true to the extent that, as mentioned above, the semantic import of the imperfective seems to be that it always backgrounds what the perfective specifically focuses on. However, in my view such a characterization of the perfective/imperfective contrast should be seen as pertaining to a relatively abstract schematic representation of each category. Both these schematic representations are instantiated by lower-level schemas, which represent the conventionalized patterns of using perfective and imperfective verb phrases in Polish. Each such conventionalized

pattern should be characterized in its own terms. After all, as far as the imperfective is concerned, the effect of backgrounding the notion of internal heterogeneity has a different motivation in each use considered above. It may be motivated by the current relevance of an objectively construed result produced by the profiled process, by the objective properties of the past event which influence the conceptualizer's subjective reasoning processes at present, or by the fully subjective act of conceiving of the profiled event and the reasons for its occurrence on the part of the conceptualizer. Each such motivation constitutes a specific positive semantic value of the imperfective, and each such value has to be included into the set of conventionalized units that a native speaker of Polish has mastered.

It seems to me that by relegating the task of explaining the imperfective's diversity of uses to the domain of pragmatics one either refuses to offer any account of them, or else makes the claim on the semantic neutrality of the imperfective, as well as the semantics/pragmatics distinction vacuous - any characterization of contexts in which the imperfective may conventionally be used, as well as specific meanings that arise in those contexts amounts to a characterization of the imperfective's positive contribution to the meaning of the expression under consideration. In addition, if the conventions of use associated with a particular aspectual form are specific to a given language (and this is what Smith suggests with respect to at least some of them - cf. e.g. 1991:124) then they have to constitute a part of a knowledge system that makes using a language possible - whether one calls it the knowledge of a language or the knowledge of principles of use does not seem to make any real difference. Even if such patterns of use were wholly a matter of general pragmatic principles, it could still be argued that through repeated use the patterns in question have got entrenched and conventionalized as a part of what effectively is the perfective's or the imperfective's meaning.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that any semantic characterization of the imperfective cannot be reduced to a single representation covering all the possible uses of imperfective verb phrases (for that matter, the same holds true about the semantics of the perfective). Instead, such

a representation should be viewed as a network of interrelated senses connected by the relationships of extension and elaboration. What is important, the characterization of the imperfective in terms of viewing a process as being in progress may be considered the prototypical meaning within the whole network of senses. It is true that the imperfective is notorious for the multiplicity of its uses and it is this multiplicity that has led many scholars to the claim that no positive characterization of the imperfective's meaning can be given. However, one of the aims of the present paper has been to show that multiple uses of the imperfective may indeed be viewed as related to its prototypical meaning (characterized as above), provided that it is not only objective content but also construal that are taken into consideration.

It seems that an important mechanism pertaining to construal and motivating multiple uses of the imperfective is the process of subjectification, by which speakers present profiled events as specifically related to them, to the ongoing discourse and its immediate circumstances.

In my view, the data considered in the present chapter suggests that truth-conditional approaches to semantics can only tell a part of the story about meaning in natural language. This is because considerations of truth are only one among many factors that speakers are concerned with in assembling their verbal messages. Other factors seem to go beyond what a truth-conditional approach to meaning is capable of handling, since they are strictly subjective in nature and do not pertain to what the world is like, but rather to how the speaker chooses to conceive of it. Speakers are not only concerned with objective events out there in the world, but also with their relation to themselves, their immediate surroundings and the ongoing discourse. It is such factors that bring about a diminished relevance of the notions of temporal bounding and internal heterogeneity in particular contexts, thereby motivating the uses of the imperfective considered above. An account of what the positive semantic contribution of the Polish imperfective is does not seem to be possible without allowing the speaker and his construal of a conceived situation to enter the scene. This in turn requires disregarding the truth-conditional

paradigm and embracing a truly subjectivist view of meaning - such as the one offered by cognitive grammar.

It seems to me that the data I have discussed above may also be seen as supporting the claim that semantic indeterminacy is a fundamental property of human language and linguistic functioning. As Langacker (cf. 1998a) argues, meaning in language is far from being fully compositional. It is heavily underdetermined by the linguistic form. The semantics of aspect in Polish seems to provide yet another illustration in this respect. Making sense of how Polish imperfective verb phrases are used requires relying on aspects of knowledge that are very well entrenched and automatically activated when the verb phrases in question are used. Nevertheless, no element of the linguistic form "stands" for them. They remain totally covert. This is probably best illustrated by cases like those in (8) above, but the same seems to hold true for the remaining examples as well. Covert meanings are bound to arise whenever we have to do with subjectification, and it is precisely such meanings that sanction the uses of the imperfective discussed above.

To defend the view of full compositionality and determinacy in language, linguists confronted with this kind of data commonly employ what Langacker (cf. *ibid.*:650) calls the minimalist strategy. The main point of this strategy is to adopt such a narrow view of what counts as language and linguistic meaning that all cases of indeterminacy and non-compositionality would fall outside its scope. This strategy has also been used in considerations concerning the semantics of verbal aspect (cf. the above-mentioned idea that the task of explaining the multiplicity of uses of the Slavic imperfective should be relegated to the domain of pragmatics). However, one of the aims of the analysis presented in this study has been to show that it is precisely such covert meanings that sanction the use of one aspectual form rather than the other. Thus, in my view, shifting the burden of explanation with respect to how aspectual forms are used to an ill-defined area labeled 'pragmatics' amounts to admitting that what counts as a properly linguistic analysis of the phenomenon under consideration has very little to say

about what native speakers of Polish know, when they use aspectual forms in particular conventionally sanctioned ways.

Finally, I would like to note that dividing the data into supposedly clear-cut sets with distinct meanings is an artifact of analysis presented above. In reality, the same sentence may be used to convey different meanings on different occasions. What is more, conceptualizations actually denoted by sentences similar to those discussed above may in actuality be combinations of various meanings discussed above and the relationships between them may not be well-delineated.

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