MONIKA BERLIŃSKA
Philological School of Higher Education
Wrocław

A COGNITIVE GRAMMAR ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POLISH REFLEXIVE CONSTRUCTIONS[1]

My main aim in this paper is a semantic analysis of Polish reflexive constructions conducted within the framework of Langacker's (1987, 1991) cognitive grammar with a view to showing that the great diversity of such constructions is only apparent as, at a more abstract level of conceptualization, they all function as contextual realizations of certain basic schematic notions. The analysis focuses on four of Wilczewska's (1966) twelve classes of Polish reflexive verbs: directly reflexive verbs, passive-resultative-spontaneous verbs, passive verbs, and reciprocal verbs. In the analysis I show that whenever Polish speakers make use of a reflexive construction, they convey one of the following three types of information: an entity acts on itself, two (or more) entities act analogously on each other (one another), and an event seemingly happens on its own. Furthermore, I claim that it is the relational reflexive marker *się*, which, by dint of its several profiling options, brings different elements of a transitive-construction action chain into focus and makes the above-enumerated information types possible to be communicated. Consequently, I postulate three broad senses of Polish reflexive constructions: those expressing (1) reflexive relationships, (2) reciprocal relationships, and (3) seemingly spontaneous events–each constituting a separate, though closely related, grammatical category. In turn, these three senses/grammatical categories are said to form a crucial part of the schematic network model of Polish reflexive constructions.

1. Introduction

A cognitive grammar conception of language as a kind of cognitive ability, "indissociable from other facets of human cognition" (Langacker [1991: I]), offers a completely new perspective on its overall structure and function. If language

---

[1] This article focuses on the essentials of my cognitive grammar analysis of Polish reflexive constructions; for a more detailed analysis, including an outline of a schematic network model of Polish reflexives, see Berlińska (2005).

is inherent in every person's cognition, it must inevitably be a highly individual phenomenon; at the same time, it must be conventional enough to ensure successful communication. Cognitive grammar allows us to ask such questions as why two speakers chosen at random use a particular type of grammatical construction in preference to another to express a certain type of event, and how come they never confuse which construction codes which type of event? The understanding of how speakers manage to communicate efficiently on a daily basis is much easier if a linguist adopts a view that everyday expressions these speakers use are contextual realizations of certain basic concepts shared by all language users (cf. Langacker [1991: 283-286]). My attempt at investigating some aspects of the problem of reflexivity in natural language is meant to support such a claim. I aim to show that the great diversity of events coded by Polish reflexive constructions is largely apparent, inasmuch as all the reflexive constructions I examine turn out to be contextual realizations of certain basic schematic notions. The above-mentioned basic concepts underlying grammatical constructions and common to all native speakers of a language will be henceforth referred to as constructional archetypes (cf. Langacker [1993, 1999: 171-172]) and viewed as highly schematic knowledge structures which derive from our immediate experience of the world and help us structure the surrounding reality.

Thus, if a linguistic analysis is to have the requisite explanatory potential, a cognitive grammarian must attempt to trace the whole path leading from the most specific level of conceptualization, i.e. the level of actual expression, through subsequent levels which vary in generality, until he arrives at the most abstract level, the purported point at which the archetype emerges. Importantly, should he fail to extract such an underlying, all-embracing schematic concept, the whole analysis does not automatically lose its viability, mainly because the situation in which at the end of his analysis he manages to reconstruct the archetype – a situation in which all the intermediate levels of conceptualization and the schematizing operations occurring among them are immediately accessible to his introspection – is an ideal one. A cognitive grammarian cannot, however, expect all linguistic categories and cognitive processes leading to their formation to be readily available to his conscious examination. Quite the contrary, linguistic expressions may form such complex schematic networks that certain of their nodes are simply too abstract for him to capture analytically. Whether or not he manages to extract the archetype is less crucial, however, than the fact that cognitive grammar provides him with all the necessary tools to carry out such a multi-level analysis. It enables him to combine the efforts of structuralist grammarians whose semantic analyses, limited by the acute shortage of analytical tools,[2] focused exclusively on the readily accessible lowest level of conceptualization (the level of actual expression)

---

[2] Bloomfield (1933: 35) admitted that structuralists lacked a firm psychological basis on which they could develop the constructs deemed necessary to carry out semantic analyses.

and transformational-generative linguists searching for some universally valid generalizations.

As for structuralists, the self-evident atheoreticity of such accounts as, for example, Wilczewska's (1966) have a twofold advantage to them: firstly, the linguistic material is not burdened with any complex theoretical apparatus of the kind encountered in the long tradition of generative-transformational grammar,[3] and secondly, the analyzed data is shown in the actual context of its usage, including the rich variety of external factors influencing the meaning of a single expression – this type of information is indispensable in a semantic analysis I am about to present. Despite their obvious advantages, however, structuralist approaches are to a large extent founded mostly on intuitive grounds and lack any organizing principle. Wilczewska (1966: 27) provides a detailed classification of Polish reflexive verbs based on the so-called shades of meaning but does not attempt to find out whether there is any factor, other than the common label, that unites them. Her analysis is considerably insightful, as it makes use of semantic factors to group the linguistic material; at the same time, it proves limited as it provides no explanation of how a single grammatical construction manages to code such a great number of highly diverse conceptualizations.

A cognitive grammarian finds structuralist analyses highly useful, inasmuch as they provide a detailed account of the starting point of his own analysis. Nevertheless, he goes a few steps further in his considerations and attempts to reconstruct the archetype underlying the analyzed constructions and motivating its various contextual realizations. This is precisely how a structuralist and cognitive grammarian differ: whereas the former completes his analysis at the level of actual expression, the latter starts it at this very level and, to use a spatial metaphor, goes upwards in search of generalizations that would be valid for all the specific, low-level expressions. The analysis I am about to present follows this exact path: I start with Wilczewska's intuitive classification of Polish reflexive verbs, characterize the semantic structures of the expressions that make up each of her classes in terms of cognitive grammar and show that their diversity is only apparent as, at a more abstract level of conceptualization, they all function as instantiations of certain local archetypes. On the basis of such local archetypes, it is possible to reconstruct the overall category archetype. This last step, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper.

My analysis focuses on four of Wilczewska's (1966) twelve classes of Polish reflexive verbs[4]: **directly reflexive verbs** (czasowniki bezpośrednio zwrotne), **passive-resultative-spontaneous verbs** (czasowniki bierno-rezultatywno-samoistne), **passive verbs** (czasowniki bierne), and **reciprocal verbs** (czasowniki wzajemne), and consequently presents only a portion of the overall schematic

---

[3] See e.g. Chomsky (1957, 1964, 1965, 1968), Katz (1966), and Katz and Fodor (1963).
[4] For a detailed description and an informal semantic classification of Polish reflexive verbs, see Wilczewska (1966).

network of Polish reflexive constructions.[5] I believe, however, that if a cognitive grammarian should attempt to carry out an analysis of the whole schematic network of Polish reflexives, he could manage to extract an actual archetype of this highly complex grammatical category. As the following analysis will show, even at this introductory level of examination of Polish reflexive constructions I have managed to extract a viable candidate for the overall category archetype–the trajector-landmark coincidence. Even though this highly abstract concept cannot constitute a schematization of all the analyzed expressions, it must be remembered that my analysis is not meant to be entirely comprehensive. Be that as it may, its potential for motivating the use of a variety of reflexive constructions cannot be denied.

In order to carry out a semantic analysis along the lines stated above I made extensive use of the following constructs of cognitive grammar: scope of predication, action chain, profiling, and experiential vs. intrinsic autonomy/dependence alignment. Moreover, I made occasional use of the concept of elaboration site (e-site) of a predication. What follows is a brief characterization of the former set of constructs; the latter construct and certain other less prominent notions are characterized below in footnotes.

The notion of an action chain (cf. Langacker [1986, 1991a: 215]) is a fundamental concept that underlies the distinction between transitive and reflexive constructions. It is an abstract concept, grounded in the billiard-ball model of the world (cf. Langacker [1991b: 13]), which lies at the basis of our conception of events as inherently complex units consisting of various types of participants interacting in many different ways. An action chain always involves a transfer of energy resulting from the participants' contact with one another. A participant that initiates this transfer (energy source) is called the action-chain head, whereas the one which consumes the energy without its further transmission (energy sink) is called its tail. Consequently, the most basic action chain consists of two participant objects – the energy source and the energy sink – interacting energetically

---

[5] In cognitive grammar, linguistic units are viewed as complex categories or the so-called schematic network models. In such networks each individual sense of a linguistic expression is represented by a separate node connected with other nodes by means of categorizing relationships, such as elaboration and extension. The nodes themselves are of various complexity; they involve both specific structures and categorizing schemas extracted to describe their commonality at different levels of abstraction. The crucial point about schematic network models is that their structure as a whole, and not any of its component structures alone, determines the meaning of a linguistic expression. It is believed, moreover, that every schematic network model is, at a very abstract level of conceptualization, subsumed by an all-embracing, highly abstract concept called an archetype. Depending on the complexity of a linguistic category, the archetype can be more or less easily extracted in the course of a linguistic analysis. In some cases, however, especially in the case of very complex lexico-grammatical categories of the kind discussed in this paper, the archetype may prove too abstract to be extracted at all (cf. Langacker [1987: 411, 1988a, 1991a: 266-272]).

without any intermediaries. Of course, certain types of participants become engaged in interactions that have a psychological, rather than an energetic, character. In such a case, the interactions in which these participants are involved need not be referred to as action chains; instead, they may be called interactional chains.

An interactional chain alone is not an adequate tool to characterize all the semantic intricacies of a grammatical construction. That is why it has to be supplemented with the concept of role archetypes, which specify the character of the participants making up interactional chains. Some role archetypes, such as agent, patient, and instrument, characterize the participants of energetic action chains, while others, such as experiencer and experienced, characterize the participants of non-energetic interactional chains. Importantly, the conception of role archetypes in cognitive grammar is such that they do not make up a discrete set; instead, they function as cognitive points of reference for a detailed characterization of the manner in which the participants of interactional chains influence one another. Such a conception of role archetypes enables a cognitive grammarian to broaden the array of available roles or to combine them into hybrids, depending on his analytical needs (cf. Langacker [1988b, 1991a: 236-239]).

In the case of linguistic expressions portraying participants engaged in various types of interactions, the conception of an interactional chain, supplemented with appropriate role archetypes, forms a cognitive matrix which becomes narrowed down by the so-called scope of predication. This scope is flexible and may encompass various portions of the interactional chain. Within the scope of predication, certain participants and their interactions may acquire a high level of conceptual prominence: they are then said to constitute the profile of the entire expression. If, for example, the scope of predication subsumes the whole agent-instrument-theme[6] action chain, three different profiles are possible: *John broke the glass* profiles the entire chain; *The hammer broke the glass* puts only the hammer-glass interaction into focus; and *The glass broke easily* confines the profile to the thematic-change-of-state process undergone by the glass (Langacker [1991b: 297]).

Last but not least, the conception of intrinsic vs. experiential autonomy/dependence (A/D) alignment proves indispensable when analyzing the level of actual expression. The experiential A/D alignment accounts for the actual arrangement of lexically encoded concepts in a sentence, while intrinsic A/D alignment shows how an event is organized conceptually (Langacker [1991b: 289]). Such a distinction may not seem particularly valid until we become aware of the principle of underdeterminacy of linguistic expressions, and of language in general.[7]

---

[6] The notion of theme is schematic with respect to a number of role archetypes, including patent, mover, experiencer, etc. (Langacker [1991b: 554]).

[7] Carston (2002: 19-20) draws a distinction between linguistic meaning, encoded by linguistic forms, and speaker's meaning. The author claims that the meaning encoded in linguistic expressions used by speakers underdetermines what they say (i.e. the proposition expressed). As a re-

The experiential vs. intrinsic A/D alignment helps to explain how speakers' complex and highly detailed conceptualizations become simplified once they have been encoded in a linguistic expression. Native speakers have a certain number of conventional linguistic units at their disposal, which they have to choose from in order that what they intend to communicate is correctly decoded by the listener. Since this is the case, the information conveyed must be relatively schematic, and as a result a lot of important detail tends to be omitted. The intrinsic A/D alignment presents what could be the possible organization of an event in a speaker's mind, including both contextual and speaker's personal detail; the experiential A/D alignment, on the other hand, shows how the event is rendered in language, i.e. after the omission of certain elements that are not prerequisite for the intended meaning to be communicated (Langacker [1991b: 290]). What is more, not only is the personal or contextual information left out, but more importantly speakers often fail to mention the driving force of an event if it falls under the tentative category of 'transparent' to human perception – e.g. temperature or gravity – and portray the event as spontaneous, in which case the event receives what Langacker (1991b: 291) calls an absolute construal. The omitted information, sometimes crucial to a correct understanding of an expression, can be properly dealt with only by postulating these two levels of linguistic expressions.

The analysis I carried out has revealed that each time a native speaker of Polish makes use of a reflexive construction, he conveys one of the following three types of information: an entity acts on itself, an event seemingly happens on its own, or two (or more) entities act analogously on each other (one another). Consequently, I postulate three broad senses of Polish reflexive constructions: (1) constructions expressing reflexive relationships, (2) seemingly spontaneous events, and (3) constructions expressing reciprocal relationships – each constituting a separate grammatical category, closely related to the others. Subsequently, as a result of the influence of various internal and external factors (e.g. extension, elaboration, etc.) these three complex grammatical categories may be united by the highest-level, all-embracing schema and come together to form a significant part of the schematic network model of Polish reflexive constructions. Furthermore, I claim that it is the relational reflexive marker *się*[8] which, owing to its sev-

---

eral profiling options, brings different elements of a transitive-construction action chain into focus and makes the above-mentioned three information types possible to be communicated. [SIĘ][9] enforces its profile on the semantic pole of a transitive construction and, as a result, changes its conceptual organization. At the sentence level, this process manifests itself in the change of the grammatical category of the verb (the element to which the reflexive marker is directly attached) as well as the whole construction – both become intransitive.

The following sections contain a detailed analysis of three types of interactions between the reflexive marker [SIĘ] and the semantic poles of transitive constructions. The above-mentioned three types of information communicated by native speakers of Polish when using reflexive constructions are the result of such interactions.

2. Constructions expressing reflexive relationships[10]

One type of interaction between the relational reflexive marker [SIĘ] and the semantic pole of the verbs/constructions it co-occurs with is encountered in Wilczewska's directly reflexive verbs.[11] This group is divided into subgroup A and subgroup B, depending on the kind of relationship between the basic (i.e. transitive) verb-form and the derivative (i.e. intransitive) form with *się*, and in these two subgroups there are further subdivisions distinguished on the basis of the so--called shades of meaning (Wilczewska [1966:27]). The external grammatical feature of subgroup A consists in the possibility of substituting the intransitive verb plus *się* with its transitive counterpart plus a direct object in the form of *siebie*, usually in combination with *sam* or *samego siebie*. The most representative examples in this group comprise verbs describing activities directed towards the surface of one's own body or any part of it. Wilczewska accentuates that even though the verbs express quite diverse activities, the crucial feature they all share is that the subject performs them by himself, with his own hands, e.g.

(1) a. **myć się**
        'to wash oneself'
    b. ...z zapalczywością godną **biczującego się** mnicha.
        '...with fierceness worth a monk flagellating himself.'

---

the derived verb phrase is intransitive and behaves as such at higher levels of organization (cf. Langacker [1991:369]).

[9] In accordance with the convention commonly followed by cognitive grammarians, a capitalized item enclosed in brackets signifies a predication, i.e. the semantic pole of the bipolar symbolic unit under consideration.

[10] By a reflexive relationship I mean the type of relation in which an entity acts on itself.

[11] This is Wilczewska's label for one type of intransitive verbs that have a transitive counterpart (a semantic variant, according to Langacker [1987:76]).

c. **Wytarł się** kosmatym ręcznikiem....
  'He dried himself with a fleecy towel...'
d. ...**pukać się** palcem w czoło.
  '...to tap one's finger against one's forehead.'

This group also includes verbs describing a multitude of activities directed towards the subject construed as a psychophysical entity, e.g.

(2) a. ...**powierzałem się** ufnie Mocy wiodącej nas ku walce, ...
  '...I entrusted myself to the Force that led us to battle, ...'
b. Teraz wystarczyło już tylko **zmobilizować się** wewnętrznie.
  'Just to mobilize inside oneself would be sufficient now.'
c. ...gotów był **sprzedać się** każdemu, kto postawi obiad.
  '...he was willing to sell himself to anybody who would stand him a dinner.'
d. ...poszedłem za kulisy i **przypomniałem się** łysemu skrzypkowi.
  '...I went backstage and remembered myself to the bald violinist.'

As for group B, the major difference between the verbs in this group and those in group A is the impossibility of replacing their reflexive form with the active one plus *siebie*. According to Wilczewska (1966: 33), the semantic scope of these two forms is different and is not subject to any generalizations. The active form portrays the action as superior, an action of an authority, a commander, or an organizer; the reflexive verb, by contrast, expresses an activity in which the subject is personally, actively involved, e.g.

(3) a. ... **przeprowadzili się** całą liczną rodziną do Łodzi.
  '...they moved to Łódź with the whole numerous family.'
b. Gros naszego lotnictwa **ewakuuje się** do Anglii.
  'The majority of our air force is being evacuated to England.'
c. ...kiedy **załadowaliśmy się** na samochody.
  '...when we embarked on the cars.'
d. Nie inaczej tylko baba chce **się** za niego **wydać**.
  'That's right, the old biddy wants to marry herself off to him.'

In a cognitive grammar analysis, one can dispense with complex taxonomies of the kind referred to above. Instead, a cognitive grammar analysis presupposes the characterization of verbal meaning formulated with the use of such constructs as profiling and A/D alignment. In the case of directly reflexive verbs, the reflexive marker [SIĘ] changes the transitive verb form into its intransitive counterpart with *się* in such a way that in the scope of predication subsuming the agent-instrument-theme action chain, the marker makes the initial and final participant subjectively (i.e. mentally) indistinguishable. In such a case, the theme becomes the subject of the clause, i.e. the head of the profiled portion of the action chain. As

such, it becomes conceptualized as the relational figure and consequently receives the trajector status. On the other hand, when looked upon from the perspective of the experiential vs. intrinsic A/D alignment, the function of the theme is that of the sole event participant, which means that the theme participates in what Langacker (1991: 287) refers to as the **thematic relationship** (i.e. a conceptually autonomous event component). Because of our inability to distinguish mentally between the head and the tail of the action chain in this case, and, what follows, because of the complex role the subject assumes in such cases, it is necessary to make use of a more specific semantic role than the theme, namely a **passive experiencer**.[12] It will help us explain the complex semantic role assumed by the subject in many different constructions.

Firstly, let us have a look at one of the reflexive constructions categorized by Wilczewska (1966: 29-35) as directly reflexive group A, that is *myć się* 'to wash oneself.'

At the first, or lower, level of constituency, the processual predicate [MYĆ[13]] is integrated with [SIĘ] to form a more elaborate processual predication [[MYĆ]-[SIĘ]], which is an established unit of Polish. Subsequently, [[MYĆ]-[SIĘ]] combines with the nominal predication [JANEK] at the second, or higher, level, deriving the composite structure of the overall expression ([JANEK]-[[MYJE]-[SIĘ]]).[14] A closed curve surrounds this composite structure on the presumption that it is novel; the remaining structures are surrounded by rectangles to indicate their unit status, see Fig. 1.

Let us, at first, consider the lower level of constituency. [MYĆ] designates a transitive process in which the trajector, through time, performs a succession of actions on the surface of a landmark, thereby defining whether the landmark as a whole, or only some parts of it, participate in the process. The relational reflexive marker [SIĘ] converts a verb taking *n* arguments into one that takes only *n-1* arguments instead. It is a dependent predication whose standard and target are respectively schematic for the basic and derived structures.[15] Thus, it specifies the identity of two participants that would otherwise be coded as the subject and ob-

---

[12] The role of a passive experiencer can be roughly defined as a person who undergoes a change of state as a result of the absorption of energy transmitted through physical contact. It is often assumed by the landmark (here Basia) of such psychological interactions as *Janek wystraszył Basię* 'John scared Basia.'

[13] For the sake of simplicity, the phonological pole of the symbolic unit is not included. This practice will be followed throughout the article; nevertheless, every symbolic unit is to be understood as a bipolar entity.

[14] Although grammatical tense has a profound effect on the structure of the scene portrayed by a speaker, we will not, for the sake of simplicity, go about such complicated details; however, when we deal with constructions, we will use the present tense so that they do not sound as awkward as they would if we used the infinitive.

[15] The notion of a dependent predication and the related notions of the standard and target of comparison are characterized in Langacker (1987: 350-356).
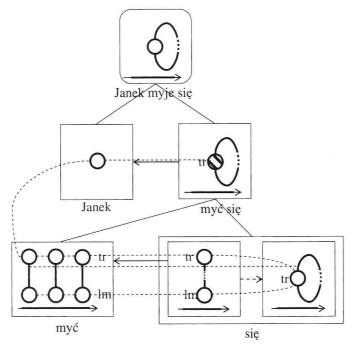
Fig. 1

ject of a transitive verb. The standard depicts a schematic transitive process and serves as the **e-site**[16] for the verb stem [MYĆ]. The target is the same, with the minor exception that a single participant (its trajector) corresponds to both the trajector and the landmark of the standard. Since the nature of the composite structure is always determined by the target, the derived verb phrase is intransitive (cf. Langacker [1991: 369]).

The verb *myć* 'to wash' sublexically specifies the type and role of the predicates elaborating the trajector and landmark of the process it codes. Specifically, the trajector assumes the role of an agent (i.e. an active participant who volitionally and consciously performs the activity of washing the surface of the landmark), whereas the landmark assumes either the role of a patient (if the landmark is an inanimate object) or a hybrid of a patient and a passive experiencer (if the landmark happens to be animate). In either case, it is a participant that undergoes a change of state, presumably from dirty to clean, as a result of the washing performed by the trajector. As for the type of the predicates in question, the most crucial issue pertains to the one elaborating the processual landmark. This issue

---

[16] In a construction, elaboration site (termed e-site for short) are those facets of one component structure that the other component serves to elaborate (Langacker [1991: 548]).

concerns the nature of this nominal predicate. Specifically, the predicate elaborating the processual landmark designates a physical object, a body part, or a surface that can undergo the process of washing. On the other hand, [SIĘ] as a relational predicate profiles the whole process and a reflexive relation between the trajector and landmark of this process. In such a relation, the trajector retains all of its characteristics and additionally adopts some of the landmark's characteristics. Thus, at the first level of constituency, [SIĘ] profiles the whole process of washing and the reflexive relation, which here consists in narrowing the elaboration possibilities of the landmark to a part (or the whole) that can undergo the activity of washing, albeit only within the trajector. Then, at the second level of constituency, the nominal predication [JANEK] elaborates the schematic trajector (and landmark) of the composite structure [[MYĆ]-[SIĘ]]. As was previously mentioned, in the case of the predicate [MYĆ] the trajector assumes the role of the agent, actively performing the activity of washing; however, it also functions as the landmark. By means of [SIĘ], it adopts the role of the passive experiencer, i.e. the person (surface) on whom the agent (he himself) performs the activity in question. Thus, at the second (higher, more abstract) level of constituency, we observe a trajector-landmark (or an agent-passive experiencer) identity.

At this point, we are left with the grammatical construction [[JANEK]-[[MYJE]-[SIĘ]]], in which the trajector and landmark, being the same person, are subjectively indistinguishable. The former performs the activity of washing on the whole surface of the latter. It is important to remember, however, that this is just one out of many (equally or even more specific) possible event-types that can be coded by this construction. One does not necessarily have to wash the whole of his body so that he could say *myję się* 'I'm washing myself'; however, when one does so, it actually is the first image that comes to the hearer's mind. That is why I claim that such an interpretation is cognitively the most salient, and as a result the most readily arrived at, in the conception of such an event. The other, less salient interpretations are often brought out by various types of external factors such as the situational context, the knowledge shared between the participants, the presence or absence of eye contact, etc. For instance, I may have a flatmate who hardly ever takes a bath but washes her hair some three times a day. So when I come back from work, hear the water running in the bathroom, and ask

(4) a. Co robisz?
       'What are you doing?'

she may answer by saying

   b. Myję się.
       'I'm washing myself.'

However, it is very unlikely for me to interpret it as her having a shower; on the contrary, it would probably be the last image to come to my mind. The first

thing I would think of (i.e. the most salient interpretation in this context) would most certainly be my flatmate washing her precious hair. As we can see, in this imaginary context the most salient interpretation of the contextless use of our construction is pushed into the background. The situation and shared knowledge between the participants enhances this particular interpretation on the part of the hearer; others will, of course, be brought out by different types of external factors and their interrelations. It is also instructive to look at our example situation from the speaker's viewpoint and find out why she uses the expression *Myję się* 'I'm washing myself' instead of one that would describe the activity she is performing in the bathroom in more detail. We suggest that it is again the shared knowledge between the participants that allows the speaker a free choice of how to represent the event. He estimates how much information is shared and chooses the most appropriate linguistic unit. Thus, my flatmate, realizing that I know her habits quite well, chooses not to inform me of any details and portrays the event at a more abstract level of conceptualization. This example shows that language users actively tailor the expressions they use to their communicative purposes, which amounts to saying that they creatively exploit the conventions of their language, rather than passively follow them.

At this point, I wish to examine another reflexive construction: one that Wilczewska classifies as representative of the directly reflexive group B. This, I believe, will help me prove that her divisions are, in fact, unnecessary; that most – if not all – of the material she gathered can be explicated by the use of these same cognitive grammar constructs and that any discrepancies between the individual examples of reflexive constructions result from their contextual uniqueness because on a more abstract level of conceptualization they all instantiate a single phenomenon. The construction I choose to analyze in detail is exemplified by the expression

(6) a. Janek **wyprowadza się**.
     'Johnny is moving out.'

At the first level of constituency, the processual predicate [WYPROWADZAĆ] is integrated with [SIĘ] to form a more elaborate processual predication [[WYPROWADZAĆ]-[SIĘ]], which is an established unit of Polish. Subsequently, [[WYPROWADZAĆ]-[SIĘ]] combines with the nominal predication [JANEK] at the second level, deriving the composite structure of the overall expression, see Fig. 2.

At the lower level of constituency [WYPROWADZAĆ] designates a transitive process in which the trajector, through time, performs a succession of actions directed towards the landmark and aimed at changing its location from being inside to being outside. It is an autonomous predication and the one that determines the profile of the whole construction. The relational reflexive marker [SIĘ] converts the verb taking n arguments into one that takes only $n-1$ arguments instead. It is a dependent predication which is responsible for the principal characteristic
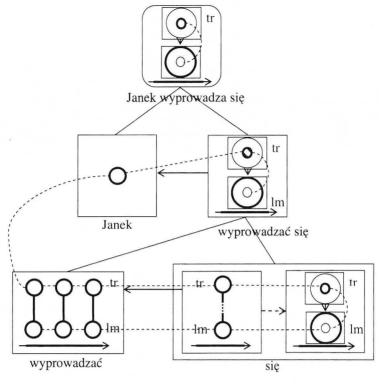
Fig. 2

of reflexive constructions in general, i.e. the identity of the two participants that would otherwise be coded as the subject and object of a transitive verb.

The verb in (6a) sublexically specifies that the trajector of the process it designates assumes the role of an agent, whereas the landmark assumes the role of an experiencer – a participant who can actively take part in the process and at the same time undergo it passively (e.g. *wyprowadzać kogoś* 'to walk sb. out' vs. *wynosić kogoś* 'to carry sb. out', *wywlekać kogoś* 'to drag sb. out'). In addition, [SIĘ] profiles the whole process and a reflexive relation between the trajector and the landmark of this process. In the case of the processual predication in (6a), the reflexive relation consists in narrowing the elaboration possibilities of the landmark to the trajector's **sphere of possession.**[17] Then, at the second level of constituency, the nominal predication [JANEK] elaborates the schematic tra-

---

[17] This notion is used by Dąbrowska (1997) in her analysis of the Polish dative; it is similar to the notion of the dominion/neighborhood of the reference point in reference point constructions (cf. Langacker [1991:172; 1999b:173-174], Taylor [1991; 1994; 1996:136])

jector (and landmark) of the composite structure [[WYPROWADZAĆ]-[SIĘ]]. In the grammatical construction ([JANEK]-[[WYPROWADZA]-[SIĘ]]), the trajector assumes the role of the agent, actively performing the activity of changing the landmark's location from being inside to being outside; however, it also functions as the landmark which, in turn, assumes the role of the experiencer and by means of [SIĘ] is construed as analogous not only to the trajector, but also to its whole sphere of possession. Thus, at the second level of constituency, we can again observe the trajector-landmark (or an agent-experiencer) identity.

3. Seemingly spontaneous events[18]

Another type of interaction between the relational reflexive marker [SIĘ] and the semantic pole of the verbs it co-occurs with is encountered in Wilczewska's passive-resultative-spontaneous verbs and passive verbs. [SIĘ] changes their transitive form into the intransitive one in such a way that in the scope of predication, which subsumes the entire agent-instrument-theme action chain, it confines the clausal profile to the final portion of the action chain, i.e. its tail, and invokes the efforts of an agent as part of its base. As in directly reflexive verbs, the theme becomes the subject of the clause, thereby receiving the trajector status. From the perspective of the experiential vs. intrinsic A/D alignment, however, the theme is the sole participant of a thematic relationship. Thus, with respect to the experiential A/D alignment, which reflects the actual alignment of lexically encoded concepts in a clause, the breaking of the glasses receives an absolute construal (i.e. it is coded linguistically as if it were an autonomous event component) in (7a), whereas (7b) portrays it in force-dynamic terms.

(7) a. Okulary **stłukły się**.
        'The glasses broke.'
     b. On stłukł okulary.
        'He broke the glasses.'

However, with respect to the intrinsic A/D alignment (i.e. in terms of how the event is organized conceptually), the event portrayed in (7a) is conceptually dependent – it is always perceived as being caused by someone or something that provides the energy responsible for the occurrence of the event. I suggest, therefore, that the force-dynamic interpretation (i.e. the obligatory presence of the dependent notion of causation) of such event-types as the one mentioned above is imposed conceptually (intrinsically) and encoded linguistically (experientially) by

---

[18] By a seemingly spontaneous event I mean an occurrence coded linguistically as if it were happening on its own. The reason for such a construal of an event may be the fact that certain causal factors (e.g. gravity, temperature, etc.) tend to be transparent to human cognition.

the relational reflexive marker *się*. Such an interpretation of this type of thematic relationships in Polish can be supported by comparing it to English examples.

(8) a. The glasses broke.

      'Okulary **stłukły się**.'

   b. *Okulary stłukły.

Experientially, (8a) receives an absolute construal whereby the verb itself subsumes both the conceptually autonomous thematic relationship of breaking and the conceptually dependent notion of causation. In Polish, on the other hand, there are no such constructions as the one exemplified by (8b), in which the verb would similarly subsume both of these notions. That is why I may suppose that one of them is coded by *się*. As was previously mentioned, I suggest that the notion of causation is encoded by *się*, whereas the verb codes only the thematic change-of-state process of breaking.

The objective level of physical energy (provided by a person or a natural force) is only one factor involved in determining whether a process receives an absolute or a force-dynamic construal. An occurrence that is energetic in actuality may nevertheless be portrayed as absolute, either because its force-dynamic character is experientially non-salient or simply because the speaker opts to present it in that fashion. The force-dynamic character of an energetic occurrence is experientially non-salient when (1) the energy is provided by forces whose influence we do not normally detect (natural forces, such as gravity, temperature, etc., governing the laws of nature or muscle contractions of the human body producing various types of involuntary movements escape our perception; in this sense, they are 'transparent' to us, cf. 9a-e) or

(9)   a. Matka stała przy kotle, w którym **gotowała się** szynka.

      'The mother was standing beside a cauldron in which the ham was cooking.'

    b. A tam, gdzie **kołysze się** ta ściana, zabiło mi kolegę.

      'My friend was killed right there where this wall is swinging.'

    c. Ponieważ papier był porowaty, atrament **przesączył się** w głąb dalszych kartek.

      'Because the paper was porous, ink had seeped deep into successive pages.'

    d. Także jej skóra na czole **fałdowała się** podczas mówienia.

      'When she was speaking also the skin on her forehead was creased.'

    e. Landrynki były tak kwaśne, że usta **wykrzywiały się** same.

      'Fruit drops were so sour that the lips twisted instinctively.'

(2) owing to the general character of the occurrence, the causing force (human, natural, or other) is unimportant, cf. 10a-e.

(10) a. Wyraz wykonawstwo **upowszechnił się** w języku polskim dopiero po drugiej wojnie światowej.

'The word execution did not become widespread in Polish until after
the second world war.'

b. Ta postawa wstrzemięźliwości [...] **rozpowszechniła się** w filozofii
nowożytnej.

'This attitude of moderation [...] spread in modern philosophy.'

c. Drugiego czy też może trzeciego dnia sytuacja **wyklarowała się** na czysto.

'Either on the second or the third day the situation became clear.'

d. Nagle sprawa zaczęła **się komplikować**.

'The matter suddenly started to become complicated.'

e. Ten stan rzeczy, o który walczyliśmy, **ugruntował się**.

'The state of affairs we fought for consolidated.'

In turn, the speaker may opt to present an energetic occurrence as absolute
because (1) he does not know the agent, (2) he knows the agent but he does not
want to reveal him, or (3) the agent's identity seems unimportant for the occur-
rence itself, cf.

(11) a. Okulary **stłukły się**.
    'The glasses broke.'

b. Klucz **obrócił się** w zamku.
    'The key turned in the lock.'

c. Gdzieś **zapodziała się** jej złota broszka.
    'Her gold brooch was mislaid somewhere.'

d. Przy szarpaninie **rozkrwawił** mi **się** nos.
    'My nose got cut in the scramble.'

e. Głowa **wciskała się** głębiej w poduszkę w nagłym znużeniu.
    'The head was pressing deeper into the pillow with sudden fatigue.'

Also, either a physical or an abstract conception of energy may be relevant for
linguistic purposes, cf.

(12) a. Twarze **rozjaśniły się** nikłymi uśmiechami.
    'Faces lighted up with faint smiles.'

b. **Zatarły się** w pamięci ich nazwiska.
    'Their names were blacked out from memory.'

c. Oczy **wytrzeszczyły się** męką nie do zniesienia.
    'Eyes goggled in extreme agony.'

d. Moja teoretyczna wiedza lekarska znów **się** bardzo **pogłębiła**.
    'My theoretical medical knowledge again advanced greatly.'

e. Zobaczyłem, że twarz mu **się zmieniła**, jakby z gniewu czy cierpienia.
    'I saw that his face altered, as if with rage or suffering.'

Whatever its physical basis, an event can sometimes be construed either as
absolute – because it conforms to expectations, desires, or the conception of the

normal course of events – or as energetic – because it diverges from this flow or even runs counter to it, cf.

(13) a. Śnieg **się stopił**.
         'The snow melted away.'
      b. Nagle zaczęło **się chmurzyć**.
         'Suddenly it started to cloud over.'
      c. ...**zadeszczyło się**, jak zwykle w listopadzie.
         '...it became rainy, as usual in November.'
      d. **Ściemniło się**, zaświeciła błyskawica.
         'It got dark, a bolt of lightning flashed.'
      e. Oni spotkali się przypadkowo na ławce w parku. **Zawiązuje się** romans.
         'They met accidentally on a park bench. They are striking up an affair.'

It is important to realize that the groups of sentences are not clear-cut categories or box-like structures of any sort. In fact, I deliberately chose examples whose status is highly ambiguous to enhance the tentative character of the groupings. By this I mean to indicate the natural heterogeneity of linguistic material and remind that, as a matter of fact, at the highest level of specificity every individual example could be treated separately–as a contextual realization of a higher-order schematic unit. The crucial point is that despite the great variety of event-types the reflexive constructions portray on different levels of abstraction, they may all elaborate a single schema and, as a result, can be subject to one type of analysis.

4. Reciprocal relationships[19]

There is yet another type of relationship between the reflexive marker [SIĘ] and the verb it co-occurs with. Owing to the peculiar transfer of energy underlying the reflexive constructions expressing reciprocal relationships, Wilczewska labels this relationship regular bidirectional (regularna dwukierunkowa) (Wilczewska [1966:87]). As regards the transitive variant of a verb, the reciprocal relationship is usually expressed by means of coordinate clauses with *i* or *a* 'and' conjunctions. The participants involved are coded separately by the subjects and objects of the two clauses; each participant assumes a different semantic role in each clause, cf.

         A/AEx. P/PEx.   A/AEx. P/PEx.
(14) a. Kochamy ich   i oni nas kochają.
         'We love them and they love us.'

---

[19] By a reciprocal relationship I mean a relation in which two (or more) entities act analogously on each other (one another).

  b. Bardzośmy polubili tego człowieka, a on nas.
     'We grew fond of that man and he did of us too.'

In such constructions, there are two separate agent-instrument-theme action
chains – each underlies one simple transitive clause. In the first action chain, the
energy is transferred from the agent/active experiencer (A/AEx.) to the patient/
passive experiencer (P/PEx.). In the second, the flow of energy is exactly reverse:
the roles are exchanged and the participant that previously initiated the transfer of
energy now becomes its sink and the other way round.

Such a manner of expressing reciprocal relationships in language does not
seem a particularly effective one. A natural consequence of speakers' aim to econ-
omize linguistic expression is their search for other constructions that would con-
vey these same relationships but in a more efficient form. This demand seems
to be satisfied by the reflexive constructions, whose considerable productivity
in expressing reciprocal relationships adds to their naturalness in such contexts.
Their efficiency is rather straightforward, as the reflexive marker [SIĘ] merges the
above-mentioned two (or more) action chains and makes it possible for them to be
coded by a single linguistic construction, cf.

(15) a. Te panie **trąciły się** i spojrzały pogardliwie na mnie.
        'These ladies nudged each other/one another and looked at me with
        contempt.'
     b. Ale tak **się kochamy**, jakbyśmy byli dopiero co po ślubie.
        'But we love each other so much as if we have only just got married.'
     c. Chodź, **przeproście się** i będzie spokój.
        'Come on, why don't you make peace.'
     d. …usłyszeli jak przez mgłę **nawoływania się** tych ludzi.
        '…as if through a haze they heard these people calling to
        each other/one another.'
     e. Czy pani wie, dlaczego oni tak **się nie znoszą**?
        'Do you know why they are not able to stand each other/one another'?

The reflexive marker changes the transitive verb form into its intransitive
counterpart in such a way that in the scope of predication subsuming the two
agent-instrument-theme action chains, it superimposes one action chain upon the
other and creates one bidirectional action chain encoded in a thematic relation-
ship. This thematic relationship, however, is not a prototypical one. Firstly, it most
often involves at least two participants. The second participant's presence is cru-
cial in such cases, as it makes possible for the energy to be transferred to it. Other-
wise the relationship would be unidirectional, portraying one participant acting
on himself, as was the case with the directly reflexive verbs discussed previously.
Secondly, only one action chain underlies a typical thematic relationship whose
profile is confined to the action chain's tail; or, in less prototypical examples, the
whole action chain is profiled (cf. directly reflexive verbs).

By contrast, in the reciprocal constructions, the thematic relationship's profile encompasses two (or more) entire action chains, superimposed onto one another, which results in its subject's complexity: each element of the complex subject is one action chain's head and at the same time the other action chain's tail. This fact has its obvious consequences in identifying the trajector and the landmark of the predication. Both elements of the subject receive the trajector status, and simultaneously each of them functions as the other predication's landmark: a participant towards whom the energy is directed and where it becomes exhausted without further transmission.

It has already been pointed out that one of the most characteristic features of reflexive constructions in general is their trajector-landmark identity. However, owing to a great diversity of event-types the reflexive constructions portray, this characteristic may both be subject to some modifications, and its presence in different predications may not be equally prominent. In the reciprocal reflexive constructions, the trajector-landmark identity is not as evident as, for instance, in the constructions involving directly reflexive verbs. Here we come across what might be called **a reciprocal trajector-landmark identity**: one predication's trajector corresponds to the other predication's landmark and the other way round.

5. Conclusion

As this discussion indicates, there are three general types of interactions between the relational reflexive marker [SIĘ] and the semantic pole of a verb it co-occurs with. As a result, the use of the reflexive constructions discussed above makes it possible to convey one of the following three types of information: an entity acts on itself, an event seemingly happens on its own, and two (or more) entities act analogously on each other (one another). Consequently, I postulate three broad senses of Polish reflexive constructions: (1) constructions expressing reflexive relationships, (2) seemingly spontaneous events, and (3) constructions expressing reciprocal relationships – each constituting a separate grammatical category, closely related to the others. These three senses/grammatical categories form a crucial part of the schematic network model of Polish reflexive constructions. I use the term part deliberately, in order to accentuate that the data I have discussed comprise only a small fragment of the unlimited collection of Polish reflexive expressions which – by means of extension and elaboration – enter such a network model and contribute to its overall growth. Importantly, on the basis of the similarities perceived between the representatives of the categories labeled 'reflexive relationships' and 'reciprocal relationships' I have managed to extract a higher order schema – the trajector-landmark coincidence schema – which takes all the representatives of these two categories as its instantiations. As a result, I may risk an assumption that perhaps at some, presumably very abstract, level of conceptualization it would be possible to extract an all-embracing schema – the archetype of Polish reflexive constructions – that would subsume all lower-levels

schemas together with their instantiations and, consequently, form a complete network model of Polish reflexive constructions.

References

Berlińska, M. (2005). *A Cognitive Grammar Analysis of Selected Polish Reflexive Constructions*. M.A. thesis, Uniwersytet Wrocławski, ms.

Carston, R. (2002). *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.

Chomsky, N. (1964). *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

Chomsky, N. (1968). *Language and Mind*. New York, Harcourt: Brace and World.

Dąbrowska, E. (1997). *Cognitive Semantics and the Polish Dative.* [Cognitive Linguistics Research, vol. 9]. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kański, Z. (1986). *Arbitrary Reference and Reflexivity: A Generative Study of the Polish Pronoun się and Its English Equivalents.* Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

Kardela, H. (1985). *A Grammar of English and Polish Reflexives.* Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie.

Katz, J.J. and Fodor, J.A. (1963). "The structure of a semantic theory." *Language* 39, 170-210.

Katz, J.J. and Postal, P.M. (1964). *An Integrated Theory of Linguistic Descriptions.* Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

Katz, J.J. (1966). *The Philosophy of Language*. New York: Harper and Row.

Lakoff, G. (1965). *Irregularity in Syntax*. New York: Holt.

Langacker, R.W. (1986). "Settings, participants, and grammatical relations". *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Linguistics Conference* 2, 1-31.

Langacker, R.W. (1987). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, vol. 1: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Langacker, R.W. (1988a). "A usage-based model". In: B. Rudzka-Ostyn (ed.), *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics.* [Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, vol. 50]. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 127-161.

Langacker, R.W. (1988b). "Case and grammatical relations in cognitive grammar (with special reference to Newari)". *Linguistic Notes from La Jolla* 14, 57-94.

Langacker, R.W. (1991a). *Concept, Image, Symbol. The Cognitive Basis of Grammar.* [Cognitive Linguistics Research, vol. 1]. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Langacker, R.W. (1991b). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, vol. 2: Descriptive Application.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Langacker, R.W. (1993). "Reference-point constructions." *Cognitive Linguistics* 4, 1-38.

Langacker, R.W. (1999). *Grammar and Conceptualization.* [Cognitive Linguistics Research, vol. 14]. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lubowicz, A. (1999). "Two views of Polish reflexives." In Bird, S., Carnie, A., Haugen, J., Norquest, P. (eds.) (1999). *WCCFL 18 Proceedings.* Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 337-350.

Rozwadowska, B. (1992). *Thematic Constraints on Selected Constructions in English and Polish.* Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Schenker, A.M. (1988). "Slavic reflexive and Indo-European middle: a typological study." In Schenker, A.M. (ed.) (1988). *American Contributions to the 10ᵗʰ International Congress of Slavists*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 363-383.

Taylor, J.R. (1991). "Possessive genitives in English: a discourse perspective." *South African Journal of Linguistics* 9, 59-63.

Taylor, J.R. (1994). "'Subjective' and 'objective' readings of possessor nominals." *Cognitive Linguistics* 5, 201-242.

Taylor, J.R. (1996). *Possessives in English: An Exploration in Cognitive Grammar.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Wilczewska, K. (1966). *Czasowniki zwrotne we współczesnej polszczyźnie*. Toruń: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.