How to sneeze off papers from the desk in Polish translation

This study discusses possible paths for re-conceptualization of the sentence “Tom sneezed off the papers from the desk” given by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2015, p. 21) as an example of a construction that is specific for English, but not lexically/syntactically possible in Polish. The example is analyzed from the cognitive semantic perspective of Talmy’s (2000) core schema of motion event, as an instance of linguistic structure that conflates, apart from four basic components of motion, an associated external co-event relating to the Cause of motion occurrence.

Taking a cognitive approach to translation (Deckert, 2015), the paper argues that the lack of a correspondent pattern of the Caused Motion Construction (Goldberg, 1995) in Polish derives from the involuntary non-intentional characteristics of sneezing, as opposed to blowing whose intentional character is realized in Polish with the perfectivizing verbal prefix “z/s-” (cf. Tabakowska, 2003), as in “Tomek zdmuchnął kurz z biurka” (Tom blew off the dust from the desk).

The paper explores different paths of re-conceptualization (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2010) of the event proposed by Polish translation trainees, which include rendering the meaning with an instrumental adpositional phrase, e.g. “Tomek zdmuchnął papiery z biurka kichnięciem”, (Tom blew off the papers from the desk with a sneeze) or coining a neologism based on general principles of verbal prefixation in contemporary Polish, which enables importing the construction into Polish, e.g. “Tomek skichnął papiery z biurka”.

Keywords: motion events, Cause, Caused Motion Construction, re-conceptualization, cognitive approach to translation

References


