Construal of motion events in Polish approximations of Caused Motion Construction

This paper explores a key role of construal in Polish approximations (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 2012) of structures belonging to Caused Motion Construction postulated for English by Goldberg (1995). The term construal is used here with reference to Langacker’s (2008) definition, which sees it as “our manifest ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways”. The study is based on empirical data elicited from Polish translators dealing with the sentence “Tom sneezed off papers from the desk”, which does not have a direct lexical/syntactic counterpart in Polish.

Proposals submitted by the translators were analyzed from the perspective of Talmy’s (2000) cognitive semantic schema of motion event, which takes into consideration the Cause of motion occurrence as an associated external co-event of motion. A multitude of construals found in the study demonstrates that the internal structure of a relatively simple event can be profiled in various ways by Polish speakers dealing with the problem of untranslatability (Głaz, 1998) in the inter-linguistic re-conceptualization.

References