This paper discusses the role of construal in linguistic structuring of events re-conceptualized (Lewandowska-Tomaszczuk, 2010) by Polish translators approximating (Lewandowska-Tomaszczuk, 2012) structures belonging to Caused Motion Construction (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 51 native speakers of Polish studying at the MA level of English philology in the Institute of English Studies of the University of Lodz to become translators. Their task was to translate the sentence “Tom sneezed off the papers from the desk” as precisely and naturally as possible into Polish. Please note that this sentence is as an example of a construction that is specific for English, but not lexically/syntactically possible in Polish. Since English sentences belonging to Caused Motion Construction do not have direct counterparts in Polish, translators dealing with such structures must re-conceptualize the event from scratch in order to render the meaning in a subjectively optimal way.

The submitted proposals 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 re-conceptualization paths found in the study demonstrates that the internal structure of a relatively simple event can be construed in numerous different ways (cf. Davidson, 2001). The results indicate that what translators present while structuring the target language message for such scenarios is their individual view of the world, which is partly dictated by new construal parameters in the target language form (grammar and semantic structures), a particular context, but also brought about by subjective preferences of the translator in picking up or devising particular target language forms to profile the situation in a particular manner. From a broader perspective, these different proposals indicate that Event Structure poses a challenge for translators (cf. Tabakowska, 2000).

References

Word Count: 328