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The English adversative coordinate structure with but: A Cognitive Grammar approach

ABSTRACT

According to Langacker (2012: 556), "coordination is a notoriously complex topic that poses serious descriptive and theoretical challenges." Indeed, the packaging of information across elements or clauses of an adversative coordinate structure, which this study focuses on, unveils a spectrum of cognitive mechanisms that are activated for the conceptualisation of a contrasting relation. Unfortunately, few studies have conducted a systematic analysis of English adversative coordinate structures from a purely cognitive perspective. This paper attempts to characterize, within the framework of Langacker's (1987, 1991) Cognitive Grammar, the semantic structure of the English adversative coordinate structure with *but*. In particular, the characterization involves analysis of the semantic properties of the conjuncts joined by *but*, with the aim of observing the organisation of information across them. It is shown that, although the clauses joined by *but* express a complete meaning and can be syntactically independent in accordance with the premises of English grammar, they are semantically dependent on each other and, thus, one needs the other for the communication of a contrasting relationship between them. In other words, the two clauses constitute two parts of a whole, hence they are conceived as a single unit. Moreover, by illustrating the cognitive routes which speakers of English follow for the conception of the content of an adversative coordinate structure, the analysis reveals that there is an inherent asymmetry housed within it. Finally, this study argues that behind the visible contrasting relationship between the two clauses joined by *but*, there are abstract, hidden relations across them which are inferred at the time of their simultaneous conceptualisation. The observation of the patterns of these schematic, invisible links will elucidate a range of cognitive capacities of the human mind to achieve high levels of conceptualisation.

Keywords: **cognitive grammar, coordination, figure-ground, whole-part, asymmetry**

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1. Introduction

This study attempts to depict the innate asymmetry of the English adversative coordinate structure with *but*. It is argued that the two clauses joined by *but* are structured on the principle of figure-ground organisation (Talmy 2000a, b) rooted in the distinction introduced by Gestalt psychologists (Koffka 1935). In particular, the clause introduced by *but* is the figure-clause, while the other is the ground-clause. An analysis of their semantic properties indicates that these clauses, despite the semantic asymmetry between them (Lakoff 1971), rely on each other for the meaning of the entire structure; thus, they are conceived as a whole, that is, as a gestalt (Wierzbicka 1980). An illustration of the conceptualisation of the two conjuncts as a gestalt can help explain the more complex, schematic relations that exist within them. The main aim of this study is to characterize these invisible links with a view to detecting identifiable patterns. Identifying these patterns should help elucidate the cognitive abilities of the human mind to conceive, at an abstract high level, meanings and relations that are not explicitly communicated.

The content of this paper is organised into seven sections: Introduction (Section 1), Previous studies of adversative coordinate structure in English (Section 2), Methodology (Section 3), Theoretical assumptions (Section 4), Analysis of primary data (Section 5), Dimensions of conceptualization of contrast (Section 6), and Conclusion (Section 7). Section 1 states the main aim of the study. This is followed by Section 2, which reveals the lack of existing studies with a purely cognitive analysis of English adversative coordinate structures. Section 3 discusses the methodology which the study employed to fulfil its aim. Section 4 elaborates on the tenets of Cognitive Grammar upon which the examination of the sample was based. Section 5 presents a discussion of the primary data included in the scope of the analysis. Section 6 discusses the relevant dimensions of conceptualisation of contrast. Section 7 presents the conclusions of this study.

2. Previous studies of adversative coordination in English

A large number of studies have been conducted on the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic properties of adversative conjunctions (Blakemore 1989; Fraser 1998; Givón 1990; Grice 1989; Halliday 2004; Haspelmath 2007; Lakoff 1971; Rouchota 1998; Sweetser 1990; Talmy 1988; Vicente 2010; Wilson & Sperber 1993). As far as the semantics of adversative conjunctions are concerned, Lakoff (1971) discussed the semantic constraints of irreversibility of *but,* as well as its semantic dimensions, i.e. semantic opposition and denial of expectation. Lakoff (1971) argued that the former dimension is symmetric be-

cause the clauses, joined by *but*, are equal and independent, while the latter dimension is asymmetric because the meaning of the second clause clashes only with an implied meaning which stems from the first one. Sweetser (1990) disagreed with Lakoff's (1971) generalisation about symmetrical and asymmetrical relations of the adversative coordinate structure and, in turn, examined these relations on pragmatic grounds. In particular, in an attempt to highlight the ambiguity of the conjunction *but*, Sweetser (1990) investigated it in the epistemic and speech act domain. According to Sweetser (1990), Givón (1990) argued that the use of *but*, along with the conjunctions *while*, *though*, and *yet*, entails a shift of the subject and, consequently disruption of the thread that runs across the elements of an adversative coordinate structure. In contrast, the use of *and* implies a maintenance of the subject and the preservation of a thematic unity over the entire structure. Finally, Talmy (1988) observed that when *but* is used, one of the interlocutors realises that the other one has surprisingly different expectations than those revealed during the conversation.

Interestingly, there are few cognitive analyses of adversative conjunctions conducted from the diachronic perspective. Matras's (1998) study on the behaviour of languages in the use of adversative markers within a bilingual environment revealed that the use of adversative conjunctions is associated with a higher degree of intensity "with which the speaker is required to intervene with hearer-sided mental processing activities" (Matras 1998: 305). In response to this study, Ramat & Mauri (2011) suggested that the incessant pursuit of novel ways of expressing contrast on the part of the speakers renders the nature of an adversative conjunction's subject continuously transformative. This claim was reinforced by Heine's (2008: 586) Transfer Model, which accounts for the tendency of tangible meanings to transmute gradually into more abstract ones. Traugott (1986), Sweetser (1988), and Hopper & Traugott (1993) confirmed this assertion. In particular, Traugott (1986) argued that the development of the contrasting meanings of the adversative conjunctions mirrors a proclivity of the human cognitive system to perceive spatial and temporal relationships asymmetrically. Traugott (1986: 145) attributed this tendency to "the extra-linguistic fact that our sightline runs along a back-front, not left-right, axis." Moreover, in an attempt to explain the diachronic development of the adversative conjunctions, Traugott (1986) claimed that only words that comply with the asymmetric schema of proximal-distal deixis are incorporated into the inventory of the adversative conjunctions. Talmy (2000a, b) also explored the cognitive aspects of adversative coordination; in particular, he discussed the syntactic and semantic relationships that extend across adversative coordinate structures. These relationships were examined with regard to figure-ground events and in

terms of the unidirectionality constraint, i.e. in terms of whether or not a language allows for the inversion of figure-ground events.

As to systematic cognitive explorations of coordinate conjunctions within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, it seems that there have never been any apart from the study of the conjunction *and* conducted by Wierzbicka (1980) and Langacker's (1991, 2009) studies of the conjunctions *and* and *or*. As regards Wierzbicka (1980), she claimed that the predicates conjoined by *and* imply a third predicate, the so-called common denominator, whereas Langacker (1991, 2009) argued that the conjuncts joined by *and* and *or* are co-equal and mentally juxtaposed. Langacker (1991: 429) also discussed the conjunction *while*, claiming that "the speaker, subjectively, is simultaneously willing to entertain each of two attitudes or propositions." A study conducted by Veloudis (2010) on the Greek adversative conjunction *αλλά* 'but' is also worth mentioning. Veloudis (2010) argued that the conjuncts joined by *αλλά* constitute a whole, and that the speaker using *αλλά* estimates the length of the part that must be excluded from the whole in order to convey a message. The hearer, in turn, must infer the meaning of the removed part.

3. Methodology

This study aims to investigate ways in which the human mind can organise and process information for the conceptualisation of an abstract contrasting relationship between two events, states or actions. In order to fulfil its aim, this study attempts to investigate

- how the information is structured across the conjuncts linked by *but*;
- what cognitive mechanisms are activated for the conception of the meanings of the conjuncts;
- what the maximal scope of the adversative coordinate structure is;
- what patterns are exhibited by the abstract relations hidden within the adversative coordinate structure.

Given that this study focuses on characterizing the content of the adversative coordinate structure with *but*, the analysis has been conducted in terms of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991). This theory seems optimal for this purpose because it addresses the cognitive strategies and abilities which the human cognitive system engages for the conceptualisation of things and relations.

The methodology of the study is example-based, and the analysis of the selected extracts (see below) is qualitative. In the course of the analysis each case, that is, each instance of the adversative coordinate structure with *but*, was examined in terms of the semantic properties of the two component clauses. In particular, each clause was either labelled as a clause-ground or

a clause-figure on the basis of the organisation of the semantic elements it comprises. Subsequently, the semantic relationship between the two clauses was investigated in order to determine whether or not they are semantically dependent on each other. Furthermore, the study attempted to investigate the visible or non-visible entities whose function as reference points in each clause allows mental access to other visible or non-visible entities in the other clause. Figures that show these entities corresponding mentally to their counterparts illustrate a range of hidden abstract relations (i.e. cause-result, condition, addition-deduction, comparison, etc.) which evoke the full content – that is to say, the maximal scope – of the adversative coordinate structure. Finally, the patterns of these symbolic interconnections were observed to exhibit a range of structures that the human mind can create to express a contrasting relation.

Because the study is introspective and aimed at developing an initial understanding of an under-researched topic, the primary data were selected based on non-random criteria. Nine cases were extracted with the convenience sampling method from a small range of resources such as news, online magazines, online forums, and interviews (personal communication).

4. Theoretical assumptions

In accordance with the rules of English grammar, a coordinate conjunction joins two clauses which are independent and equally important (Swan & Walter 2011). For example, if we isolate the clauses *It is cold* and *It is pleasant* from the sentence *It is cold, but it is pleasant*, we will notice that they can both stand on their own in terms of syntax and semantics. Nevertheless, from the cognitive point of view the two coordinated clauses are not conceived as two independent parts, but as a whole – in other words, as a single unit (Langacker 1987, 1991). This whole may be represented diagrammatically as a square with four lines of symmetry EG, HF, AC, BD (Figure 1). The line of symmetry AC bisects the square into two right-angled triangles situated opposite each other and equal in length. The equal length of the hypotenuses that run parallel to each other symbolizes the equal status of the two clauses of the coordinate structure *It is cold, but it is pleasant*. The conceptualisation of the content of the two clauses entails the activation of a cognitive mechanism where the clause-figure, *but it is pleasant*, moves away from the clause-ground *it is cold* and takes a salient position against it (Figure 2). Evidently, the clause-ground behaves like a static reference point, or as the context, for the conceptually prominent location of the clause-figure (Talmy 2003), indicated by the heavy lines (Figure 3). Despite this detachment of the clause-figure from the clause-ground, the two components, that is, clauses, are semantically dependent on each other; thus, they are integrated into a

symbolic composite structure and are conceived as a whole (Langacker 1987, 1999), which is in turn symbolized by the circle enclosing them (Figure 4). The integral character of the clause-ground is presented in Figure 4, where it remains intact when the other part, the clause-figure, is extracted.

However, for the contrasting relation between the two clauses to be conceptualised, another cognitive mechanism must apply, and the line of symmetry AC does not connect the two opposite vertices A and C, but divides the square into two conceptually asymmetrical parts (Figure 5): the clause-figure and the domain. In particular, this asymmetry can be explained by the non-symmetrical positioning of the clause-figure with respect to the domain. The domain constitutes the whole conceptual content of the adversative co-ordinate structure, and is conceived in the background. In other words, the domain – or, according to Langacker (1987, 1999), the conceptual base – is the maximal scope of the structure which involves the whole range of the visible and invisible meanings and relations that are situated in its content. The clause-figure is profiled and understood (Clausner & Croft 1999; Albertazzi 2000; Langacker 2006) to be oriented asymmetrically in relation to this domain (see Figure 6). The semantic value of the entire structure resides in this asymmetrical relationship between the domain and the profile of the clause-figure (Langacker 2006).

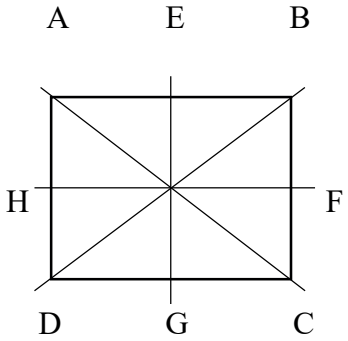


Figure 1. Conception of two clauses joined by but as a single unit

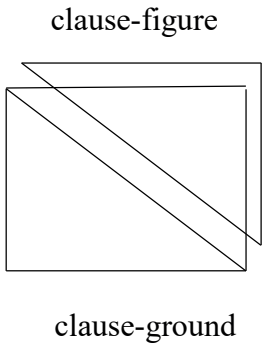


Figure 2. Partition of a single unit into two elements

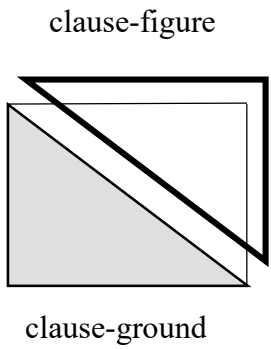


Figure 3. Detachment of clause-figure from clause-ground

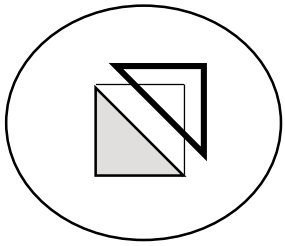


Figure 4. Integration of clause-ground and clause-figure into a whole

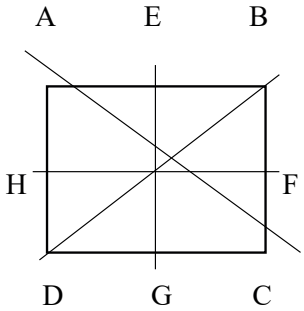


Figure 5. Division of the whole into two conceptually unequal parts

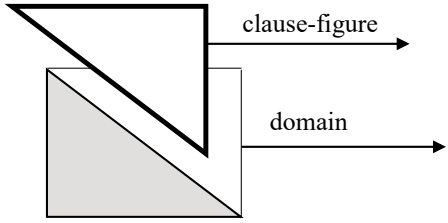


Figure 6. Asymmetrical position of clause-figure relative to domain

The question that has not been answered or investigated in detail thus far is where the roots of the notion of contrast lie. If we examine the etymology of *but*, we find that it derives from the Old English *be ūtan*, which means "outside" ("But" 2018). In Modern English, one of the definitions of *outside* is "not within or part of something" ("Outside" 2018). Therefore, the original meaning of *but* implies that a part is not within something; in other words, it is outside

something. Studies have demonstrated that this concrete meaning of the adverb *be ūtan*, grounded in a physical experience, has become more abstract over time (Traugott 1986; Sweetser 1988). Traugott (1986) contends that this diachronic semantic change is rooted in our perception of two objects not sharing the same place and thus possessing an asymmetrical position with relation to each other. This could be parallelised with the disconnection of the clause-figure from the clause-ground "in a relatively undefined way" (Traugott 1986: 143), as shown in Figure 6. This disconnection entails that the clause-figure and clause-ground do not share the same conceptual space, that is, the domain.

However, it is uncertain whether or not it can be assumed that the abstract concept of contrast stems from an asymmetric image schema, since an image schema structures bodily experiences (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987). Research has not determined whether the concept of contrast originates from bodily experience, that is, in other words, from the interaction of our bodies with the external environment. Indeed, no input from the physical environment (Jackendoff 1988) would help to attribute the notion of contrast to a non-symmetrical relation between two objects. For example, according to Johnson (1987), the figurative meanings of the prepositions *in* and *out* stem from concrete meanings based in a physical experience. Johnson (1987: 119) stated that the connection of two abstract entities with logical connectives, such as *but*, is not grounded in a physical connection; hence, he attempted to adduce our ability of "connectedness in our understanding" to a Link schema. Interestingly, Bergen and Feldman (2008) have suggested that the use of conjunction is a mechanism which enables us to connect pre-existing abstract concepts to create new ones.

In addition, it could not be argued that the notion of contrast derives from a mental image, because a mental image, like an image schema, entails a reflection of "visual and spatial representations" (Gibbs & Colston 2006: 248). However, studies have shown that a mental image does not necessarily involve a visual or spatial representation. Hence, the origin of *but* may not necessarily be a physical experience of an asymmetrical relation between two objects, but the conceptualisation of a symbolic image or the concept of asymmetry.

5. Analysis of primary data

Case 1: "*We currently have a number of people in hospital all being treated for different injuries* ***but thankfully most do not appear to be life-threatening at this time****," Detective Superintendent Dobbie Dooley said.* (PD1: ABC news, 2018)

The sentence in Case 1 illustrates a semantic asymmetry between the clause-ground *We currently have a number of people in hospital all being treated for different injuries* and the clause-figure *but thankfully most do not appear to be life-threatening at this time*. More specifically, on the one hand, there are a number of people with different kinds of injuries, and on the other hand, a large number of these injuries are not life-threatening. However, behind this seeming contrast of the two clauses, there is a semantic interdependence between each other. The clause-figure cannot be understood without the background provided by the clause-ground. In particular, the clause-figure *but thankfully most do not appear to be life-threatening at this time* is paired with the preceding clause-ground to create the meaning of the whole sentence. The hearer or reader of this sentence would not be able to comprehend what the determiner *most* refers to in the clause-figure without first becoming aware of the context, that is, that there are a number of injured people in hospital. Hence, in this example there is an anaphoric relationship between the unreduced antecedent *injuries* in the clause-ground and the reduced anaphor *most* in the clause-figure which renders them co-referential (Langacker 1991: 490) and facilitates the cognitive processing of the content of the sentence.

This semantic dependence of the clause-figure on the clause-ground invokes the conception of the meanings of the two clauses as a gestalt, namely, that there are a number of injured individuals in hospital, of whom most are not very serious. At a higher level of conceptualisation, we can observe that the connector *but* establishes schematic relations among the entities of the sentence. In particular, the determiner *most*, via *but*, triggers mental access (Langacker 1997b: 251) to its invisible antonym *few*, while the verb phrase *do not appear life-threatening* – to a new entity *more serious*.

Therefore, behind the contrasting relation between the two clauses, there is a hidden contrast between *Most of the injuries are less serious* and *Few of the injuries are more serious*.

If we combine the small number of injuries that are more serious (*few*) with the large number of injuries that are less serious (*most*), we obtain the total number of injuries in hospital. If we deduce the total number of injuries from the large number of injuries, we get the small number of injuries, and vice versa (Figure 7). Thus, behind the contrasting relation within the sentence, there is an abstract relation of addition-deduction (Veloudis 2010) among the two visible parts, that is, the clause-ground and clause-figure, and the inferred part. The integration of the visible part (clause-figure) with the invisible part comprises a single unit, i.e. the clause-ground (Langacker 1987).

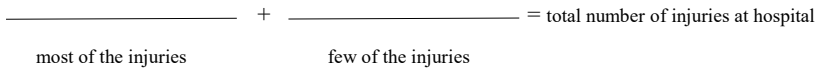


Figure 7. A relation of addition-deduction between clause-ground and clause-figure

From the analysis, it is evident that if we attempted to conceive the meaning of each clause separately, we would not be able to delve into all of these symbolic relations and meanings that were determined from the unification of the clause-ground and clause-figure. These relations and meanings comprise the domain – in other words, the background knowledge which is left to the hearer/reader of the sentence to be inferred. The profiling of the clause-figure within the domain in an asymmetrical position to it features the concept of contrast (see Figure 6). An attempt to render this conceptual phenomenon in words would result in the following sentence: *Few of the injuries are more serious* (domain), *but thankfully most of them do not appear to be life-threatening at this time* (clause-figure).

Case 2: *I have no idea what the next three years will bring,* ***but if it's possible to get even happier,*** *I'll take it.* (PD: Personal communication 2018)

The sentence in Case 2 expresses a contrasting relationship between the two statements made by the subject *I*. The statement in the clause-ground *I have no idea what the next three years will bring* concerns a real situation, which consists in the subject not knowing anything about the future, and the statement in the clause-figure, in the form of a conditional clause *but if it's possible to get even happier,* refers to a possible situation of the subject becoming happier than now. Essentially, there is a contrast between the statement about a real situation in the clause-ground and the statement about a hypothetical situation in the clause-figure. Behind the ostensive contrasting relationship between the clause-ground and clause-figure, there is a temporal contour that runs through the entire sentence: from a certain point at present to a certain point in the future, which is the next three years. In particular, the time to which the clause-ground refers stretches from the present until three years in the future, and in exactly the same way, the span of the clause-figure is these three years. This time-related conceptual overlap (Langacker 2012) between the two clauses renders their conceptualisation as a whole. The person who hears or reads the sentence conceives the two clauses as one entity, which is the state of happiness of the subject, conceptually situated in the present (time scale 1) and in the future (time scale 2), simultaneously (Figure 8).

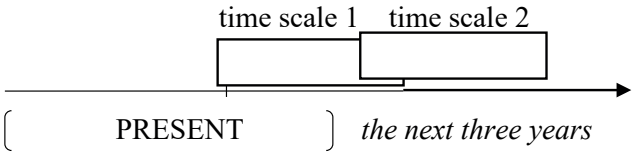


Figure 8. Integration of two different time scales across clause-ground and clause-figure

Thus, the clause-figure semantically hinges on the background given by the content of the clause-ground. If we isolated the clause-figure *but if it's possible to get even happier,* we would not understand the temporal dimensions of it, that is, whether the possibility for the subject to become happier is about just now, next month, in the next four years, etc., because there would be no foundation for it.

The point at present situates the subject within a state of happiness, on an abstract conceptual level, whereas the point in the future sets a possibility that the subject could be happier than now. It seems that within the two clauses there is a hidden symbolic relation: a comparison between the current state of happiness and the possible, hypothetical state of being happier in the future. The comparative form of the adjective *happy* functions as a trigger reference point (Langacker 1997a) in a hypothetical situation, which activates the target reference point *happy* in the reality of the speaker. Put simply, *happier* – a possible hypothetical state – is a reference point that, because of the connector *but*, triggers the assumption that the subject is happy at present, although not as happy as s/he would like to be. In this case, we notice a cognitive route that follows a reverse path, i.e. a reference point, in an unreal situation, which leads the hearer or the reader of the sentence to the reality of the speaker. The identity of the subject remains unchanged across the two time scales; what changes are the values that the subject takes, i.e. from being happy now to becoming happier in the future (Fauconnier 1985). In summary, within the contrast between the clause-ground and clause-figure, there is a comparison between the state of being happy at present and being happier in the possible future.

From the analysis, it appears that the maximal scope of the entire sentence, that is, the domain, is that the subject is happy now. The clause-figure is profiled within the domain and possesses a conceptually asymmetrical position to it (see Figure 1.6), which can be verbalised as *I'm happy now* (domain), *but if it's possible to get even happier* (clause-figure), *I'll take it.*

Case 3: *All appeared to be well when she and 11 family members left the property in mid-June,* ***but a massive wildfire known as Parry Sound 33 was creeping closer.*** (PD2: Roy 2018)

The abstract concept of contrast is not easy to identify when reading or hearing the sentence of Case 3. The reason is because the clause-ground *All*

appeared to be well when she and 11 family members left the property in mid-June and the clause-figure *but a massive wildfire known as Parry Sound 33 was creeping closer* do not share common elements that can function as counterparts. For example, in the clause-ground there are two substructures, joined by the subordinating conjunction *when*, which seem not to share a common topic. Rather, the clause *when she and 11 family members left the property in mid-June* appears to disrupt the calmness that the preceding clause *all appeared to be well* exudes. However, the unified clause-ground contains vital elements for the conception of the meaning of the clause-figure. In particular, it informs the hearer/reader that the event it describes (she and the eleven family members leaving the property) started at a particular, albeit unspecified, point in the past. Hence, the hearer/reader processing the past progressive of the clause-figure *was creeping* understands that the fire had already started before that particular point in the past. Thus, the two clauses are both situated within the same temporal space: the past. In other words, the event of the clause-figure started and progressed in the past. Similarly, the state *all appeared well* and the event *when she and 11 family members left the property*, described in the integrated clause-ground, are both situated in the past, taking place after the event of the clause-figure. Therefore, the temporal scope is the same in both clauses; we only conceive it at two different time scales (Figure 9).

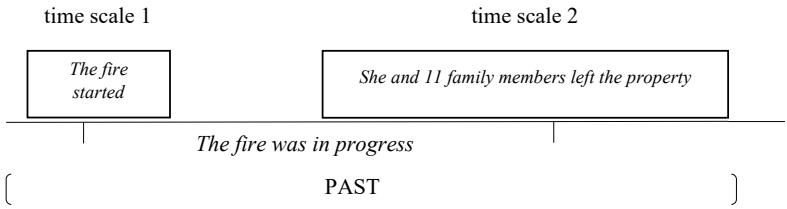


Figure 9. The actual vs. conceptualized order of the events in the sentence of Case 3

Figure 9 illustrates that the order of the events described in the sentence of Case 3 is not conceptualised the same way as the order in which they actually occurred because the event of the fire creeping took place before, and not after, the event of the clause-ground (Figure 10). It therefore appears that a cognitive mechanism of reconceptualization is activated for understanding this sentence, which requires additional cognitive effort (Langacker 2005).

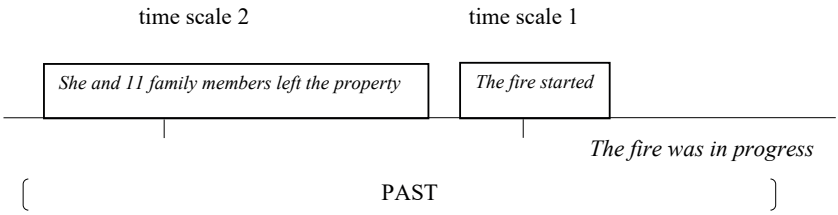


Figure 10. Order of events as described in the sentence of Case 3

Regardless of the reverse order in which the events are described in the sentence, the fact that their time scales run along one temporal axis renders their conceptualisation as a single unit. The clause-ground consists of two merged clauses which constitute the immediate scope for the conception of the content of the clause-figure at a higher level, and they jointly evoke the maximal scope of the entire sentence (Langacker 1999). In other words, the conceptualisation of this integrated ensemble of clauses uncovers the hidden meaning, which is that the participants of the event in the clause-ground had the impression that there was no fire. Thus, the information of each clause is organised in a certain way so as to facilitate the processing of the information.

More specifically, the clause *all appeared to be well* in the clause-ground conveys the meaning that the participants thought that either there was no fire or that the fire was under control when there was a fire. Also, the clause, through the conjunction *but*, activates a new entity which is the reality of the fire in the clause-figure. The conceptual gist of the sentence is a contrast between reality and the impression that is inferred by the person who hears or reads it.

If we expressed in words the conceptually asymmetrical position of the clause-figure against this conceptual content (see Figure 6), namely the domain, it would be as follows:

She and 11 family members had the impression that there was no fire (domain), *but a massive wildfire known as Parry Sound 33 was creeping closer* (clause-figure).

Case 4: *Citizenship issue is a can of worms,* ***but it has to be opened.*** (PD3: Ireland 2017)

When first reading or hearing the sentence of Case 4, it is hard to understand where the notion of contrast resides; indeed, it is not clear what entities are contrasted by the conjunction *but*. Thus, it is necessary to examine the meanings of the two clauses joined by the conjunction. The clause-ground lays the foundation for the conception of the succeeding clause and informs the hearer or reader that the issue of citizenship involves a number of challenges. This is achieved by the correspondence between the unreduced subject of the clause-ground, *the citizenship issue*, and the reduced subject of the clause-figure, *it* (Langacker 1991, 1997a).

Through the conjunction *but*, the latter clause introduces two new entities in a new hypothetical mental space (Langacker 2005) – that the citizenship issue is closed, and that if it opens, it will be shown that it is a can of worms; in other words, the activation of the new entities reveals the hidden meaning of the sentence: if the citizenship issue opens, then the reality will

be made known, i.e. everyone will learn that it is a can of worms and that it is closed.

The analysis reveals that it is impossible to conceive the meaning of the clause-figure without first conceiving the meaning of the clause-ground, and vice versa. If the condition of the clause-figure is fulfilled, the meaning of the clause-ground – that the citizenship issue is indeed a troublesome issue – will be shown to be true. Behind this contrast there is a hidden first conditional: *If the citizenship issue opens, it will become known that it is a can of worms.*

The sentence of Case 4 also involves a temporal interdependence of the two clauses. The situation of the citizenship issue being a can of worms started at one particular point in the past, and since then it has not changed. Thus, similarly to what we had in Case 3, there is one topic here which runs across the same temporal axis, but is conceived at two different time scales: in the past and now (Figure 11).

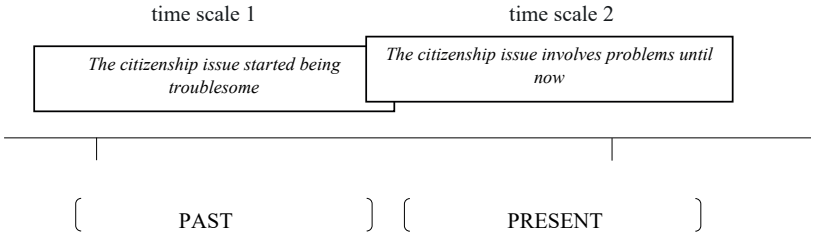


Figure 11. Conception of clause-ground and clause-figure at two different time scales

However, the order in which the clauses are placed within the sentence is not the same as the order in which their meanings are conceptualised. The clause-figure contains, at an abstract level, the condition *if the citizenship issue opens,* which is normally positioned at the beginning of the first conditional clause, while the clause-ground contains the apodosis *the citizenship is a can of issues* upon the fulfilment of the condition, which would otherwise be placed at the end of the first conditional clause.

Irrespective of this creative way of ordering the clauses, the semantic interdependence and conceptual coincidence of the two time scales between the two conjuncts contribute to their conceptualisation as a gestalt and to the conclusion that the citizenship issue has not yet been opened – this constitutes the pre-supposed hidden knowledge of the entire content of the sentence. The profile of the clause-figure within this background knowledge, namely the domain, and being at a conceptually asymmetrical position relative to it (see Figure 6) could be articulated as *The citizenship issue has not been opened yet* (domain), *but it has to be opened* (clause-figure).

Case 5: *Australia is a better society,* ***but even in the Trump era America still dazzles***. (PD4: Tovey 2017)

On the surface, the two clauses in the sentence of Case 5 contrast Australia's society with that of America. The noun phrase *better society* of the clause-ground *Australia is a better society* creates, through *but*, a new, invisible entity *worse society* in a hypothetical mental space (Langacker 2005). Put simply, it is implied that Australia is a better society, while America is a worse society. The prepositional phrase *in the Trump era* of the clause-figure *but even in the Trump era America still dazzles* entails, via the element *even*, that America's society has problems because of the Trump presidency. This reference point in turn creates, via *but*, a new entity suggesting that there might be problems in American society because of the Trump presidency; nevertheless, America dazzles. This meaning sounds fragmentary (Croft & Cruse 2004) without the latent comparison, again through the connector *but*, with Australia: Australia does not dazzle, even if it is a better society. Hence, the hearer/reader needs to retrace his/her steps and be led back to the clause-ground and from there deduce the conclusion that Australia is not dazzling in contrast to America (Figure 12). It seems that within the two clauses of the sentence there are three comparisons between a visible and an invisible element circulating at an abstract level: (1) Australia is a better society, but America is a worse society, (2) America is a worse society, but dazzles, and (3) America dazzles, but Australia does not.

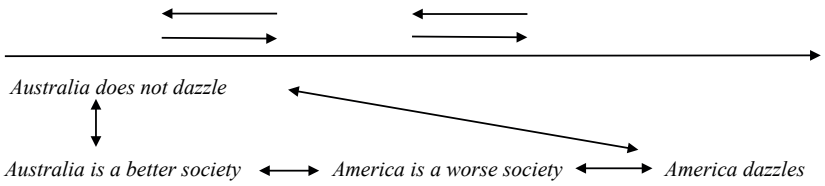


Figure 12. Hidden comparisons among vising and invisible elements of the clause-ground and clause-figure

The illustration of the three hidden comparisons in the sentence of Case 5 reveals a semantic connection between the two conjuncts joined by *but*, which renders their conception as a gestalt. If the clause-figure is separated from its anchor clause-ground, it will be meaningless. Because the clause-ground semantically supports the clause-figure to create the meaning of the entire sentence, the two clauses are conceived as one entity. Because of their integration into a unit, it can easily be inferred that the conceptual setting (i.e. the domain) of the entire sentence is that America's society is worse than Australia's society. The content of the clause-figure is profiled within the domain in an asymmetrical position to it (see Figure 6). This phenomenon can be articulated as *America's society is worse than Australia' society* (domain), *but even in the Trump era America still dazzles* (clause-figure).

Finally, as was the case with the previous samples, the two clauses joined by *but* are situated in the same temporal scope. The reference point *still* indicates that America has never stopped dazzling from the past until today,

while it is implied, via *but*, that Australia has not been dazzling throughout this time (Croft 1998). Thus, the two situations have been occurring within the same temporal space, from the past until today.

Case 6: *We put $300 million into foreign aid in Indonesia,* ***but the reality is we're making $3 billion worth of trade in agricultural products to Indonesia****, Mr Littleproud said*. (PD5: SBS news 2018)

At a superficial level, the sentence in Case 6 contrasts two amounts of money, *$300 million* and *$3 billion*, through the conjunction *but* in order to emphasise the importance of the investment in Indonesia. Although the adversative conjunction is supposed to contrast the two amounts of money, in this case it does not. Rather, there is a continuous topic across the entire sentence: that of the investment made by the same subject *we*, which ties the two clauses together. In particular, the clause-ground *We put $300 million into foreign aid in Indonesia* constitutes the context necessary for the hearer/reader to make sense of the content of the clause-figure *but the reality is we're making $3 billion worth of trade in agricultural products to Indonesia*. The situation of the latter clause would not exist without the situation described in the clause-ground. Put simply, there would be no gains if there were no investment. Because of the investment, there are gains. This indicates a hidden relation of cause-result behind the opaque contrasting relation between the clause-ground and clause-figure. The investment is the reason why there are profits. This relation is linguistically reflected in the use of the verbs *put* and *are making* in the clause-ground and clause-figure, respectively. The verb *put* is conceptually grouped (Langacker 1997a) with the verb *are making* and, taken together, they express a cause-result relation. The action of giving money results in the situation of making money.

In addition, the entity of *$300 million* mentally corresponds, via *but*, with its counterpart *$3 billion* in the clause-figure. Moreover, the amount of the clause-ground is smaller than the amount of the clause-figure and, consequently, it can be inferred that *but* creates a comparison between the two entities. The comparison is that the amount of money gained from the investment in Indonesia is bigger than the amount invested.

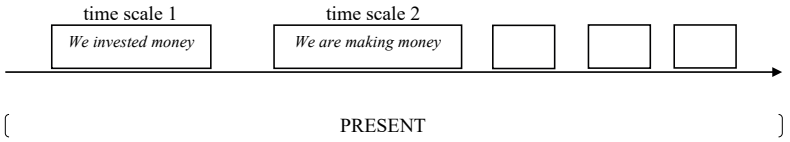
This comparison automatically elicits an addition-deduction relation among the amount of the clause-ground *$300 million*, the amount of the clause-figure *$3 billion*, and an amount that is inferred upon the conceptual amalgamation of the two clauses into a gestalt. If we deduce *$3 billion* from *$300 million*, we are left with $2.7 billion. If we add *$300 million* to $2.7 billion, the amount soars up to *$3 billion* (Figure 13). Based on this addition-deduction relation, the person who hears/reads the sentence infers that the profits of the investment are indeed considerable.

Figure 13. A relation of addition-deduction between clause-ground and clause-figure

300 million		2.7 billion	
———	+	———	= 3 billion
clause-ground		inferred amount	clause-figure

From a temporal perspective, the cause-result relation between the clause-ground and clause-figure entails an inherent temporal priority of the cause against the result. More specifically, the action of investing money precedes the result of making money. As in the previous samples, there are two different time scales here, conceptualised along one temporal axis because of the integration of the two clauses into a whole. Interestingly, in contrast with Case 3, the order of the situations is in line with the order in which they occur and are conceptualised. It could also be argued that the choice of the present progressive is not random here. This tense aims to stress the continuous profitable results of the investment, and the gradual change that this situation entails (Croft 1998), as indicated by thee additional boxes (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Integration of two different aspects across clause-ground and clause-figure



The analysis indicates that behind the apparent contrast of the two amounts of money, the symbolic relations are hidden, and these relations function as a cognitive mechanism for the activation of one another. For example, the schematic cause-result relation triggered the abstract relation of the comparison between the two amounts of money, and this comparison in turn evoked the addition-deduction relation across the clause-ground and clause-figure.

However, there is one more reference point in the sentence in Case 6 whose mental correspondence to a new, invisible entity evokes the background knowledge of the entire meaning of the sentence. This reference point is *in reality* which, via *but*, enacts a new entity in a hypothetical mental space. This new entity is not visible, but it is implied. In particular, it is inferred that, according to common sense, the amount of *$300 million* invested in Indonesia is huge.

For this reason, through the connector *but* the speaker contrasts, on a symbolic level, reality with common logic – specifically, with what the common logic would dictate about this substantial amount of money invested in Indonesia. This background constitutes the conceptual base of the sentence, namely that the investment in Indonesia is high cost. Within this base, viz. the domain, the clause-figure profiles its content in a conceptually asymmet-

rical position to it (see Figure 6); thus, the relation between the clause-figure and the domain is conceptualised as contrast. This can be verbalised as *The investment in Indonesia costs a lot of money* (domain), *but the reality is we're making $3 billion worth of trade in agricultural products to Indonesia* (clause-figure).

Case 7: *Earlier, in 2013, he brought up the experimental drug that Innate was developing in a hearing about brain research,* ***but did not mention his financial stake in the company***. (PD6: Thomas & Kaplan 2018)

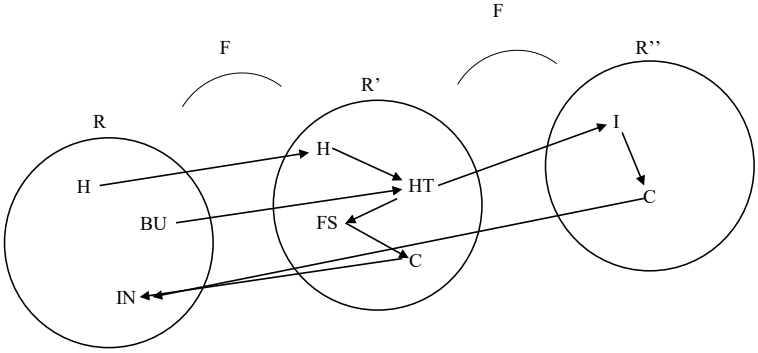
The sentence in Case 7 contains two clauses that are in an obvious contrast to each other. The meaning of the clause-ground *Earlier, in 2013, he brought up the experimental drug that Innate was developing in a hearing about brain research* contradicts the one in the clause-*figure but did not mention his financial stake in the company.* Seemingly, the conjunction *but* contrasts two real situations: the situation of the subject *he* discussing an experimental drug in the company Innate, and the situation of the zero anaphor (Givón 1998) *he* not mentioning his financial stake in the same company. However, the analysis below reveals that the conjunction contrasts a real situation with a hidden truth rather than two real situations.

In particular, the space builder *brought up* (BU), along with the entity *Innate* (IN), establishes a parent space (R) in reality. Subsequently, it corresponds, via *but*, with the space builder hidden truth (HT) in the daughter space (R') in reality again. The space builder HT is formed by the negative form of the verb *mention*, i.e. by the fact that the subject *he* did not mention that he has a financial stake in the company Innate. Thus, he hid the truth. In the R space, the entity *Innate* (IN) mentally communicates with *the company* (C) in the R' space and vice versa. One can observe that, instead of moving from a general entity to a more specific one, the specific name *Innate* leads us to the more general term *the company* (Figure 15). However, despite this odd transition, the definite article with the noun *company* refers to Innate, which has already been mentioned; hence, it builds up a mental relationship with it. This is in agreement with the assumption that the clause-ground maps information onto the following clause-figure. Supposedly, if the clause-ground did not contain the information regarding the name of the company, and we moved from a general term to a specific entity, the sentence would be rendered as *Earlier, in 2013, he brought up the experimental drug that a company was developing in a hearing about brain research, but did not mention his financial stake in Innate.* Obviously, the lack of the name Innate in the clause-ground would cause semantic anomaly (Langacker 1999) because it would give the impression that the sentence refers to two different companies, of which the first would be left unspecified.

Therefore, the space builder BU along with the entity IN in R corresponds to the space builder HT in R'. HT, in turn, mentally connects with the entities *financial stake* FS and C in R'. This mental correspondence leads the hearer/reader to the conclusion that the subject *he* is involved (I) in the Innate company; namely, he has a financial stake. Consequently, the mental correspondences among the entities in both clauses results in the creation of a new mental space R", consisting of the element *he has a financial stake in Innate* (I). However, the new entity I is completely missing from the sentence. It constitutes a gap which the hearer/reader must fill. In essence, what is in contrast is not the visible mental space R and the visible mental space R'. In reality, R' is, via F, at variance with R"; in other words, the inferred sentence *he has a financial stake in the company Innate* is at variance with the clause-figure. An interesting point to note at this stage is that the speaker chose to situate the two situations in the past and let the hearer/reader infer a conclusion about the present.

Figure 15. Correspondences among elements of the clause-ground and clause-figure in mental spaces

F: but
R/R'/R'': reality
H: he
BU: brought up
IN: innate
HT: did not mention
FS: financial stake
C: company
I: he has a financial stake in the company Innate



If we ventured to verbalise this contrast between the inferred conceptual content of the sentence, that is, the domain, and the conceptually asymmetrical meaning of the clause-figure to it (see Figure 6), we would have the following sentence: *He has a financial stake in the company Innate* (domain), *but did not mention his financial stake in the company* (clause-figure).

From the semantic perspective, it seems that the substructures of the clause-ground *he brought up the experimental drug* and *that Innate was developing in a hearing about brain research* comprise the intermediate scope for the conception of the clause-figure and, hand-in-hand, evoke the maximal scope of the sentence, namely the domain (Langacker 1987, 1999). This attests the assumption that the clause-ground and clause-figure are semantically in-

terdependent and are conceptualised as a whole. Regarding this point, an attempt to swap *the company* with *Innate* would cause semantic confusion, which indicates that the meaning of the adversative coordinate structure is inherently coherent. If we examine this deeper, at the level of semantics, it is evident that the subject *he* is involved in one situation only: that of the subject having a personal interest in the company Innate. Literally, the function of the clause-ground is only to build the context and, by the activation of its reference points, guide the hearer/reader to the truth. This is achieved by the use of the negative form of the verb *mention*, which removes the veil. Illustrated in Figure 16, we can see that the clause-figure is the part that is removed from the domain and reveals the truth. The separation of the clause-figure is linguistically indicated by the negative form *not mention*.

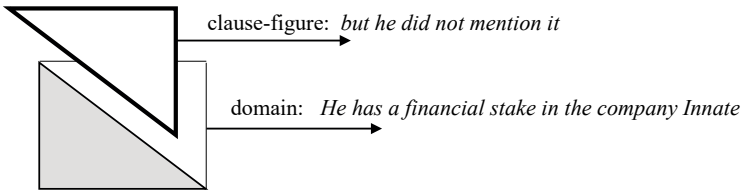


Figure 16. Separation of clause-figure from the domain

The entity *did not mention* enacts a new, non-existent entity *I*, namely that the subject has a financial stake. This can be explained by a series of simulations that the human mind operates. Empirical evidence from tests indicates that the human mind first portrays the negated situation and then the real one. Supposedly, in this case, we would first simulate the situation of *not mentioning* and afterwards, the real situation of *having a stake* (Zwaan & Madden 2005). Therefore, there is a presupposition that the subject has a financial stake, which emerges out of the negated verb *mention*. According to Fauconnier (1985), this presupposition is inherited because the speaker is aware of the truth: that the subject has a financial stake in the company. It seems that the presupposition, as implied by the undressing of the negative form, is satisfied in R, that is, the subject has a financial stake.

Case 7 has been analysed in line with the theory of mental spaces, as delineated by Fauconnier (1985). According to Fauconnier (1998: 251), mental spaces bring to light "the processes that take place behind the scenes as we think and talk." Mental spaces are incomplete assemblies which comprise elements linked with each other. The hearer/reader must make a cross-space mapping of these elements to reconstruct the partial meaning conveyed through a sentence (Fauconnier & Turner 2006). Therefore, the entire meaning of the sentence arises out of the interconnections among the entities of the mental spaces.

In Case 7, both the clause-ground and clause-figure contain entities which did not suffice for the conception of the meaning of each sentence and of the whole structure. These entities, after establishing a base mental space, had to correspond as reference points, via the connector *but*, to their counterparts in another mental space or function to activate new fictive entities in a hypothetical mental space (Langacker 2005).

More specifically, from the analysis of the sample, the base space – i.e. the space that is first established – can be accessed anew for the enactment of a new entity (Fauconnier 1998).

Furthermore, while the entities of the structures are normally depicted in two input spaces, the analysis of Case 7 illustrates that there is a third space which is born out of the two input mental spaces. This space is known as the generic space, and it is created by two elements, each of one input space (Fauconnier & Turner 2006).

Case 8: *Pena Nieto emphasized to Trump, in a call Trump broadcast over speakerphone, that he wants a three-way agreement,* ***but Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo later said the Mexicans were willing to do a deal with the U.S. alone if it is necessary***. (PD7: Dale 2018)

The sentence of Case 8 contains many reference points which function as conceptual signposts for the hearer/reader to determine the final meaning. Initially, one may notice that the clause-ground *Pena Nieto emphasized to Trump, in a call Trump broadcast over speakerphone, that he wants a three-way agreement* and the clause-figure *but Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo later said the Mexicans were willing to do a deal with the U.S. alone if it is necessary* have different subjects: *Peno Nieto* and *Ildefonso Guajardo*, respectively. This presumably suggests two different situations. However, a more careful analysis will reveal that the contrast does not lie between the two different subjects and an assumed different topic that they could entail.

The two clauses are semantically connected with each other by means of the background information provided by the clause-ground. The clause-ground contains all the necessary visible elements for the conception of the clause-figure. In particular, the entities *Trump* and *Pena Nieto* in the former clause construct, through metonymy, the context and enlighten the hearer/reader that the sentence is about an agreement between America and Mexico. The phrase *three-way agreement* of the clause-ground corresponds to *a deal with the U.S alone* of the clause-figure. However, within the clause-ground and clause-figure, there are further correspondent entities. For example, the element *agreement* dovetails with the entity *deal* by virtue of synonymy, while the reference point *three-way* activates a new entity: its inferred antonym *two-way agreement*. Similarly, the verb *wants* in the clause-ground is related

to the adjective *willing* in the clause-figure. Finally, the element *Trump* in the clause-ground corresponds to its counterpart *U.S.* by means of metonymy. In other words, it appears that the choice of the noun *Trump* is made to be representative of the entire country America. Likewise, the metonymic *Pena Nieto* agrees with the entity *Mexicans* in the clause-figure.

It appears that the element *Ildefonso* functions only as a linking device between the entities *three way-agreement* and *a deal with the U.S. alone*. Ildefonso's role as a representative of the Mexican population is to inform the hearer/reader that the Mexicans are willing to reach an agreement with the U.S. only, which is compared to the desire of Pena for a three-way agreement. Similarly, the element *Trump* functions as an aid to link the different desires of Pena and the Mexicans. The use of indirect speech in both the clause-ground and clause-figure (*emphasised that* and *said that*, respectively) transfers the two different desires, the desire of Pena with that of the Mexicans. It could be argued that the indirect speech is a linguistic device which bridges the two different wants at an abstract level (Figure 17).

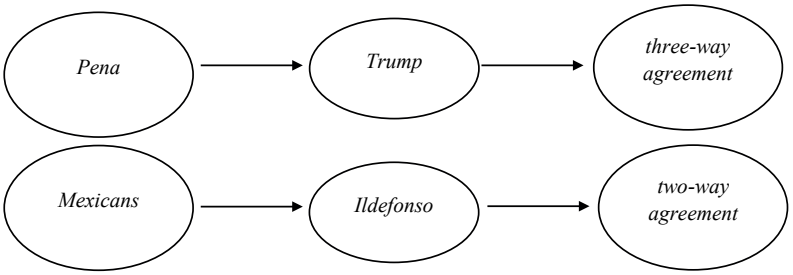


Figure 17. A representation of the linking devices between elements of the clause-ground and clause-figure

The analysis indicates that, on the surface, the conjunction *but* contrasts the elements of the clause-ground and the clause-figure. However, this contrast is conceived at a more schematic level. The choice of the verbs *emphasised*, *wants*, and of the adjective *willing* reveals the true aspects of the contrasting relation between the two clauses joined by *but*. In particular, the verbs *emphasised* and *wants* indicate a determined, decisive stance towards a three-way agreement on behalf of Pena. Conversely, the adjective *willing* suggests a tendency for negotiation. This good will, implied by the adjective, is enhanced by a substructure included in the clause-figure, that is, the conditional clause *if it is necessary*. The clause-figure, in combination with the choice of the adjective *willing*, reveals the true meaning of the clause. The Mexicans, if necessary, will make a two-way agreement. Therefore, the contrast resides within the fixed, unshaken attitude of Pena and the submissive attitude of the Mexicans towards the issue of the agreement. One can notice that the conditional clause *if it is necessary* does not form any type of conditional along with the preceding clause *the Mexicans were willing*. It only

functions as a means of emphasizing the contrast between the unassertive attitude of the Mexicans and the assertive attitude of Pena. The speaker includes this last conceptual piece of knowledge only at the end of the sentence for the hearer/reader to match it and make up a whole.

At this stage, it will be instructive to examine the sentence in Case 8 from a temporal perspective. Both clauses are situated within the past on two different time scales. The phone call between Peno and Trump occurred before what Ildefonso said. The entity IL positions the clause-figure temporally after the clause-ground. First, the phone call was made, then the Minister transferred the Mexicans' desire (Figure 18). However, the desire of the Mexicans and Pena pre-existed before the phone call. Literally, the actions are presented as if they occurred at two different scales with the clause-ground occurring before the clause-figure; however, they are both situated and conceived in the past at an abstract level. In this case, indirect speech is a tool used to illustrate that the phone call occurred before the words of Ildefonso; hence, the sequence of the events of the two clauses is artificial. It is another ability of the human mind to present two contrasting situations. Finally, the additional substructure *if it is necessary* is in the present simple and thus, does not constitute, in terms of grammar, a conditional with the past simple verb form *were*. It could be argued that the function of this clause contributes only to the establishment of the meaning of this sentence, and not to the temporal orientation of its position within the sentence.

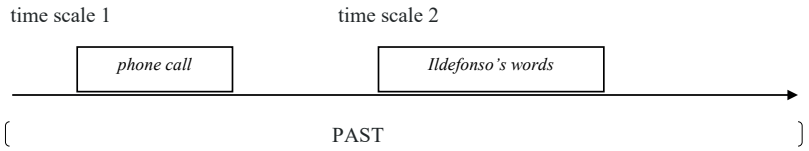


Figure 18. The sequence of the two events in clause-ground and clause-figure

The analysis of the sentence of Case 8 demonstrates that two clauses joined by *but* are conceptualised as a whole. What is particularly interesting about this sentence, however, is that each component clause consists of two substructures. Specifically, the clause-ground comprises *Pena Nieto emphasized to Trump, in a call Trump broadcast over speakerphone* and *that he wants a three-way agreement*, which together constitute the immediate scope for the conception of the clause-figure. In turn, the clause-figure includes *but Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo later said* and *the Mexicans were willing to do a deal with the U.S. alone if it is necessary*, which function as another immediate scope and jointly with the clause-ground evoke the maximal scope of the sentence (Langacker 1987, 1999).

Case 9: *I feel like they are affiliated to the UK by heritage and culture* ***but Australians are so much more than that***. (PD8: Schon 2016)

The sentence in Case 9 clearly attempts to illustrate that there is a difference between Australians and British people without, however, specifying where this difference lies. Therefore, the conceptualisation of the meaning of this sentence involves the activation of ambiguous entities and consequently, ambiguous meanings.

Contrary to the previously examined samples, the clause-ground *I feel like they are affiliated to the UK by heritage and culture* partially establishes the context. It does not contain all the information the hearer/reader needs to figure out the topic of the sentence. The only clue that is given is the entity *UK*, which implies that the sentence concerns the United Kingdom. However, the hearer/reader does not conceive the meaning until s/he comes across the entity *Australians* of the clause-figure, *but Australians are so much more than that*. At this point, s/he must return to the clause-ground and group the antecedent-pronoun *they* with its anaphor *Australians* (Langacker 1997a). Along this conceptual path, the hearer/reader must extract, via the reference point *UK*, a new entity *British* by virtue of metonymy and through analogy to the plural form of the noun *Australians*. Only then can it be understood that the conjunction *but* contrasts the British with Australians.

Nevertheless, *but* does not contrast Australia with the UK. It compares the two populations. The clause-ground establishes their similarities – a common culture and heritage – and then, through the use of the word *but*, it is made clear that the Australians are distinguished from the British. The similarity is made explicit in the clause-ground, while the difference between Australians and the British is left for the hearer/reader to infer via the comparative *more*. Again, in order for the hearer/reader to conceive this distinction between the British and Australians, s/he must refer to the similarity indicated by *they are affiliated to the UK by heritage and culture* in the clause-ground. The comparison lies between this common characteristic and the fact that Australians are more than this characteristic. Obviously, the comparison is purposely vague, so that the person who hears/reads the sentence can conceive that there is clear similarity, but only an obscure difference between the British and Australians.

What is striking in this sample is that each clause contains visible and invisible elements which correspond to each other. First, the antecedent-pronoun sequence is violated (Langacker 1999). We would expect the nominal *Australians* to precede the pronoun *they*; however, even if the opposite occurs, it still does not cause any semantic anomaly, but only anticipation on behalf of the hearer/reader to discover the piece of knowledge needed to grasp the whole meaning – that is, *Australians* in the clause-figure. Experiments have revealed that concepts distinguished by cataphoric devices are mostly prominent (Gernsbacher 1990). It could be argued that the anticipation of the hearer/reader to match the entity *they* with another entity in the following

discourse entails that the cataphoric device *Australians* provides easy access to the already activated *they*.

Secondly, *UK* is a similar case of antecedence. In particular, Langacker (1999: 280) refers to the phenomenon of metonymy preceding "metonymic antecedence." The hearer/reader activates the hidden entity *British* from the entity *UK*, which in turn precedes its counterpart *Australians*, and is in contrast to it. Furthermore, the demonstrative *that* is an entity which refers to the entire meaning of the sentence and in combination with *more* allows for a comparison between the two nations. Thus, *more than that* refers back to the entire content of the preceding clause-ground and evokes its conceptual content, which is that Australians share similarities with the British.

Therefore, the entity *UK*, by virtue of metonymy and by analogy to *Australians*, enacts a new entity *British*. Subsequently, the entity *Australians* finds its conceptual match via *but* in the antecedent *they* in the clause-ground.

The analysis indicates that this sentence contains many conceptual gaps which must be filled in order to be conceived. In particular, it reveals that, despite the impression that the clauses contain different elements, in essence, the elements are the same; they differ only in terms of their visibility. The sameness of the elements between the two clauses, such as *they = Australians*, *UK = British*, and *are affiliated to the UK by heritage and culture = that*, renders the conceptualisation of the sentence as a whole. However, the true aspect of contrast is implied in the abstract comparison contained within the clause-figure, as indicated by *more than that*.

6. Dimensions of conceptualisation of contrast

In this section, the results of the analysis of the primary data are discussed in terms of several dimensions of conceptualization.

6.1. Figure-Ground organisation

Although only nine samples were analysed, they revealed a range of dimensions which the conceptualisation of an adversative coordinate structure entails. This shows that there are no boundaries in the creation of structures, or conceptual structures (Kemmer 2003), even by speakers of the same language. We observed a great deal of variation in the fashion in which pieces of information are structured across a sentence; however, the examination reveals that the adversative coordinate structure was identical for all the samples. In particular, each situation, action, or event is packaged within either the clause-ground or the clause-figure. This allocation does not happen fortuitously. The grammatical closed-class conjunction *but* is responsible for the establishment of a symbolic frame for figure-ground organisation

(Talmy 2006). More specifically, the clause-ground establishes the context upon which the meaning of the clause-figure is based. Subsequently, by the activation of the cognitive mechanisms, the profile of the clause-figure is projected in a conceptually asymmetrical position (via *but*) within the conceptual base (viz. the domain) of the entire sentence. This interaction evokes the background content of the domain (Talmy 2003). If *but* did not play a role in structuring the content of an adversative coordinate structure with figure-ground distinction, we would not be able to conceive a contrasting relation between two situations, events, actions, ideas, attitudes, feelings, etc. The abstract entities would be scattered and meaningless. *But* functions as a knot which conceptually ties two abstract elements, thus achieving a cognitive cohesion. The integration of the clause-ground and clause-figure into a single unit, by means of *but*, results in their conceptualisation as a whole.

For the conception of the two clauses as a gestalt, a series of mechanisms conceptually group entities with their visible or non-visible counterparts from one mental space to another and, in this way, are conducive to the elicitation of the maximal scope of the sentence (Langacker 2005). Through this complex cognitive processing, this study demonstrates that behind the superficial contrasting relation between the two clauses joined by *but*, there are many more hidden relations and meanings on a schematic level.

Case 1 and Case 6 both reveal the abstract relation of addition-deduction (Veloudis 2010) across the elements of the adversative coordinate structure. There is an inferred part which, whether it is added or deduced, comprises the total visible number, as indicated in either the clause-ground or clause-figure. Surprisingly, the examination of the Cases 1, 2, 5, and 9 reveals that, within two clauses linked by *but* there is a comparison between two, or even four, visible elements, with other invisible elements. This can be explained by the fact that the use of *but* involves a continuous effort to stress the properties of a situation, action or event in comparison with something else under the disguise of an antithesis between them. Similarly, the situation whereby a conditional clause or a hypothesis is housed within the two clauses joined by *but*, as Cases 2 and 4 have shown, reveals that the conjunction *but* is employed to express contrast. Other interesting cases include Cases 3 and 6, where the contrast is hidden between reality and an impression or common belief. The speaker in both samples chooses to depict this odd antithesis using *but*. In essence, the use of *but* contrasts the visible reality, utterly explicitly with the hidden, inferred impression or common belief. Cases 6 and 8 constitute unique cases for this study. In the former case *but* puts in a hiding place the relation of cause-result between the clause-ground and clause-figure. Meanwhile, in the latter sample, *but* contrasts two attitudes. Case 7 is also a solo case in which the reality clashes with a hidden truth. Lastly, the use of the word *but* in Case 2 contrasts the present with a possible future.

6.2. Whole-part relation

The analysis of the data showed that there is an inherent asymmetry in the conceptually asymmetrical position of the clause-figure against the conceptual content of the entire adversative coordinate structure, that is, the domain. This phenomenon is reflected in the asymmetry between the subjective interpretation of the background knowledge of the entire sentence and the objective interpretation of the content of the clause-figure. In particular, the abstract relations determined by the analysis are 'offstage' (Langacker 1990) and are only inferred upon the integration of the clause-ground and clause-figure into a whole. The emergence and interpretation of the abstract relations, such as comparison, cause-result, condition, etc., varies from individual to individual. Each would infer conclusions and symbolic meanings from his/her own perspective. As Croft (2004: 98) pointed out, "meanings are something that we construe" according to our world knowledge, expectations, pre-suppositions and awareness of the broader context, as well as from our ability to infer and activate cognitive mechanisms (Langacker 1987, 1999). Therefore, the construal of the conceptual content of the entire sentence is subjective. Conversely, the meaning of the clause-figure is 'onstage,' easily viewed and accessed and thus objectively interpreted (Langacker 1990). Consequently, there is an asymmetry immanent within the adversative coordinate structure, between the subjective construal of the domain and the objective construal of the content of the clause-figure. This asymmetry does not emanate from bodily experience, but from the cognitive processing of the information of an adversative coordinate structure.

The asymmetry between the two ways of construing the conceptual background of an adversative coordinate structure and the clause-figure symbolises a meronomic whole-part relation (Clausner & Croft 1999), or partonomy, according to Langacker (1997b), between them. More specifically, the analysis of the samples reveals that the two conjuncts linked by *but* are conceptualised as a gestalt (Wierzbicka 1980). A gestalt consists of parts, and this can be attributed to our perception of our bodies as a whole, with parts such as fingers, arms, feet, etc. (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987).

With regard to the maximal scope of an adversative coordinate structure, the integration of the two clauses joined by *but* evokes the whole conceptual content of the sentence through an array of cognitive mechanisms. The conception of each clause does not suffice for the entire meaning of the sentence to arise because it would reflect only on fragments of the pre-supposed knowledge of it. The amalgamation of the two component clauses into a composite symbolic structure, namely the domain, allows for the hidden context to surface. In turn, the conceptual asymmetrical position of the

clause-figure to the domain realises the contrasting relation between the two clauses joined by *but* (Figure 6). Consequently, the conceptualisation of the meaning of an adversative coordinate structure veils a whole-part relation between its disguised conceptual content and the conspicuous content of the clause-figure.

6.3. *But* from a temporal perspective

The examination of the samples not only unveiled the range of their hidden abstract relations and meanings, but also their temporal dimensions. Interestingly, the findings indicate that the events, situations and actions of the clause-ground and clause-figure are all situated on the same temporal axis, regardless of whether or not they were depicted on two different time scales.

From the analysis, it is evident that the conceptualisation of two clauses joined by *but* entails that we are temporally positioned in the present time of speaking (MacWhinney 2005). In other words, we conceptualise an event, situation or action in response to the time of speaking. From there, we are propelled either into the future (Case 2) or the past (Cases 3, 4, 5, and 8), or we simply remain in the present (Cases 1 and 6). However, the examination of Case 7 reveals that we can move from the past back to the present via an inferred, abstract conclusion.

This ability to conceptually manoeuvre from the time scale of the clause-ground to the time scale of the clause-figure, and vice versa, explains why the two clauses are conceptualised as a gestalt. Langacker (1987, 1999) refers to this as summary scanning. In particular, Langacker (2012) contends that each clause constitutes a conceptual window of attention on its time scale. The time scale of each clause conceptualised is the baseline. However, the resilience of the human mind to spring from one-time scale to another renders the conceptualisation of the two clauses as occurring within the same temporal interval. Admittedly, because of this ability, the effort we exert to process an adversative coordinate structure is minimal (Zwaan & Madden 2005).

However, the analysis of Cases 3 and 4 demonstrates that there are cases where the temporal iconicity is not maintained, and thus the hearer/reader is required to exercise more cognitive effort to process *but*. In particular, in Case 3 the events occurred in the past on two time scales, as the aspects of past simple and past progressive imply. However, the order in which they were presented was not the same as the order in which they occurred, and consequently, with the order in which they were conceptualised. Thus, the speaker appears to have interfered with the natural sequence of events and, in this way, forces the hearer/reader to backtrack the information (Langacker 2005) contained within the clause-ground and clause-figure to determine the

final meaning of the sentence. Similarly, in Case 4 the swap of the protasis with the apodosis of the hidden conditional requires the hearer/reader to first restore their reverse order and then, conceive the meaning of the structure. Cases 3 and 4 contrast with Case 6, due to the fact that the iconic relation between the time at which the actions occur and the order in which they are portrayed is not disturbed.

Lastly, the observation of the temporal facets of the adversative coordinate structures allow for their distinction, according to whether or not their content involves a change. Based on Croft's (1998) categories of event types, we argue that the states described in Cases 4 and 5 do not entail any change, but are spread over a period of time (the present to the past). The situation in Case 2 and the actions in Case 6 do entail change which is extended in time. However, the change that is implied in Case 2 can only be conceived on a hypothetical level. Regarding Case 6, the speaker chose to use the present simple to describe an action that is recurrent *put* and present progressive *are making* to describe a situation that is extended in time on a continuous basis. Even if the present progressive is normally used for a process and not a state, which is what happens in Case 6, it can be used because the time scale of the clause-figure is not confined to the current time. However, it exceeds it on an abstract level (Croft 1998). This triggers the assumption that the situation, namely the result of investing money, is gradually changing. More specifically, the action of investing money brings about a progressive change, that of making money (Croft 1998). Finally, the situations, events and actions of Cases 1, 3, 7, and 8 are just points in time which do not signify any change.

6.4. Cognitive mechanisms for the processing of but

The conceptualization of the two clauses joined by *but* as a whole entails an array of cognitive mechanisms for their processing. Firstly, it could be argued that the foundation which the clause-ground sets for the conception of the following clause-figure indicates that the mechanism of the Advantage of First Mention (Gernsbacher 1990) operates. Experiments have shown that when this mechanism is activated, the first clause establishes the basis for unfolding the meaning of the entire sentence, and maps information onto the succeeding clauses (Gernsbacher 1990). Examination of the adversative coordinate structure substantiated the findings of these experiments, but it also revealed that, in addition to the Advantage of First Mention, the human mind leaves gaps in the conceptual knowledge for the hearer/reader to fill in. In other words, the clause-ground sets the context, but does not contain all the information that the speaker wishes to convey, only "partial clues" (Croft 2004: 98). For these clues to be conceived, there is a body of cognitive mechanisms activated on behalf of the hearer/reader of the sentence.

Namely, the reference points contained in the clause-ground function as entities which build a mental space. Subsequently, either they trigger new entities in a new mental space, or mentally correspond with other reference points of the same or neighbouring clause. The analysis demonstrates that these trigger referents are not necessarily visible, but could be hidden or activate invisible entities in a hypothetical mental space.

Another cognitive mechanism which contributes to the processing of *but* is the Advantage of Recency (Gernsbacher 1990). According to experiments, this mechanism renders the most recently heard or read clause as the most accessible one (Gernsbacher 1990). Indeed, the elevated clause-figure is easier to remember and retrieve because it follows the clause-ground and is freshly conceived. The two mechanisms, the Advantage of First Mention and the Advantage of Recency, indicate that each clause carries its own focus of attention. Following Langacker's (1999) claims, it could be asserted that the clause-ground is the Focus 1, the clause-figure the Focus 2, and the gestalt which emerges out of their combination, the Focus 3. By moving from one clause to another, the focus of attention changes, and each reference point withdraws to allow the newly activated reference point to dominate and elevate the content of the clause to which it belongs.

However, we noticed that the human mind must also overcome obstacles, and for that it employs several strategies. For example, in Cases 1 and 7 there is a whole piece of knowledge that must be inferred. For the conception of the final meaning of Case 5, the hearer/reader must return to the initial clause-ground to compare its visible element with the element that emerged from the conception of the clause-figure. In response to this, in Case 8, the hearer/reader seems to keep the information in a state of dormancy until s/he comes across the last conditional clause, and thus makes sense of the true aspects of the contrasting relation between the clause-ground and clause-figure (Langacker 2005). Furthermore, in Cases 2 and 4, the hearer/reader must traverse a reverse conceptual path by enacting hypothetical entities to arrive at the truth of the reality. In addition, the results indicate that the time scales of each clause, as demonstrated by the use of grammar tenses, is not always identical to the time of their conceptualisation. Finally, in Case 9, because of the violation of the natural order antecedent-pronoun, the hearer/reader must return to the clause-ground to conceive the comparison lying behind the adversative coordinate structure. Based on an examination of all the samples, pieces of information are always missing from the information contained within the clauses, and thus the human mind enacts dormant entities through reference points. All of these obstacles are indicative of the lack of coherence that runs across an adversative coordinate structure, which necessarily entails more cognitive effort for its processing.

Despite these mechanisms, which are activated for overcoming the complexities of the conceptualisation process, the experiments reveal that there is a point where the two clauses are "equally accessible" (Gernsbacher 1990: 31). This claim is reinforced by the findings of this study regarding the processing time of the two clauses joined by *but*. The analysis of the samples demonstrates that each clause is processed and conceived on different time scales; however, the events, situations or actions described in them are situated on the same temporal axis, and are thus conceived "as a single moment" (Langacker 2012: 565). It could be argued that this conceptual overlap (Zwaan 2004) is instrumental in the integration of the two meanings of the clause-ground and clause-figure, and consequently in their conceptualisation as a whole (Langacker 2012). The temporal facets involved in the processing of an adversative coordinate structure reaffirm Langacker's (1999) belief that the nature of conceptualisation is dynamic.

On the whole, by elaborating on the organisation, processing and conceptualisation of information across the two clauses of an adversative coordinate structure with *but*, this study demonstrates that:

- The information across two clauses joined by *but* is organised in terms of the figure-ground distinction.
- The clause-figure possesses a prominent position against the clause-ground.
- The clause-ground and clause-figure are semantically mutually inclusive and are thus conceptualised as a whole.
- The events, situations and actions of the clause-ground and clause-figure are situated on the same temporal scope.
- The clause-figure is profiled against the conceptual content of the entire adversative coordinate sentence, viz. the domain, in an asymmetrical position.
- The domain and clause-figure have a whole-part relation.
- The interaction of the clause-figure with the clause-ground shapes additional symbolic meanings, not mentioned explicitly, which are conceived on a high schematic level.
- There is an ingrained asymmetry between the subjective construal of the content of the offstage domain and the content of the onstage clause-figure.

7. Conclusion

This study reveals the power of the human cognitive system to manage loads of complex information and condense it into manageable portions of conceptual knowledge (Fauconnier 1999); to suppress information and leave the hearer/reader to infer it on an abstract level; to elevate a part of a sentence

into a more prominent position; to integrate two distinct entities into a single unit; to use a range of structures to realise a contrasting relation; and to overcome constraints on time created by grammar (Fauconnier 1998).

This study also reveals that there are patterns to these structures. Their recurrence renders them conventionalised within the inventory of the human language system. These conventionalised structures, or cognitive routines (Bybee 2003), function as a platform upon which new structures are created (Fauconnier 1999). According to Langacker (1987), the novel structures are compared with the extant symbolic ones and, if they are compatible, they are espoused and entrenched by the cognitive system. The flexibility of the human cognitive system to adapt its already-existing structures according to "changing expressive needs" (Geeraerts 1985: 141) without transforming its internal fabric, reveals its dynamic character (Geeraerts 1985; Jonhson 1987). It is unknown how many of these structures can be created by the human mind. Further research should investigate whether there is a limit to the various ways in which information can be structured within a sentence and consequently, to the number of the abstract meanings created by the conceptualisation of a sentence's meaning. Moreover, cross-linguistic studies on coordinate structures could help explain the relations between different languages from the cognitive perspective (Kemmer 2003; Resnick, Levine & Teasley 1991).

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Streszczenie

Przeciwstawna struktura współrzędnie złożona ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim. Analiza w modelu gramatyki kognitywnej

Artykuł stanowi pilotażowe studium, mające na celu zbadanie struktury semantycznej przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim z punktu widzenia gramatyki kognitywnej Ronalda W. Langackera. Mówiąc ściślej, w artykule zastosowano aparat pojęciowy gramatyki kognitywnej (Langacker 1987, 1991) do analizy niewielkiego korpusu przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but*, której celem było ustalenie (a) na czym polega relacja między strukturami semantycznymi zdań składowych współtworzących strukturę semantyczną przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but*, (b) jakie mechanizmy i operacje kognitywne umożliwiają konstruowanie struktury semantycznej takich zdań oraz (c) co mieści się w maksymalnym zakresie

predykacji przeciwstawnej struktury współrzędnie złożonej ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim.

W toku analizy ustalono, że struktura semantyczna przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim opiera się na zasadzie tzw. organizacji figura-tło, wywodzącej się z rozróżnienia sformułowanego na gruncie psychologii przez teoretyków percepcji ze szkoły *Gestalt*. W szczególności zdanie składowe wprowadzone przez spójnik *but* to tzw. *zdanie-figura* (ang. *clause-figure*), wykazujące względnie wysoki poziom wyróżnienia pojęciowego w relacji do drugiego zdania składowego, które stanowi słabiej wyróżnione pod względem pojęciowym tzw. *zdanie-tło* (ang. *clause-ground*), funkcjonujące jako punkt odniesienia dla konceptualizacji treści komunikowanej przez zdanie-figurę w strukturze semantycznej przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim. Na kolejnym etapie analizy ustalono, że w strukturze semantycznej takich zdań spójnik *but* sytuuje profil zdania-figury w asymetrycznym położeniu względem maksymalnego zakresu predykacji całego zdania współrzędnie złożonego, określonego w artykule mianem domeny tego zdania (ang. *domain*). Ten aspekt struktury semantycznej zdań objętych zakresem materiałowym przeprowadzonych badań znajduje odzwierciedlenie w asymetrii między subiektywną interpretacją całego zdania a obiektywną interpretacją treści zdania-figury. W szczególności rozliczne odpowiedniości między elementami struktury semantycznej na poziomie całego zdania pozostają „poza sceną" (Langacker 1990) – są one ukryte, dopóki konceptualizator nie ustali ich w procesie wnioskowania, co może uczynić dopiero po zintegrowaniu struktury semantycznej zdania-tła i struktury semantycznej zdania-figury w jedną całość. Jednocześnie treść zdania-figury pozostaje „na scenie" – jako pojęciowo jawna i łatwo dostępna dla umysłu konceptualizatora – i jest ona przez niego konstruowana obiektywnie (Langacker 1990). Podsumowując, struktura semantyczna przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim wykazuje inherentną asymetrię pomiędzy subiektywnie konstruowaną domeną całego zdania a obiektywnie konstruowaną treścią zdania-figury.

Przeprowadzone badania wskazują też, że znaczenie całej przeciwstawnej struktury współrzędnie złożonej ze spójnikiem *but* nie ogranicza się do sumy znaczeń zdania-figury i zdania-tła, mimo że stanowią one główne składniki sensu całej tej struktury. Dopiero pojęciowa integracja obu struktur składowych za pośrednictwem spójnika *but* pozwala konceptualizatorowi skonstruować strukturę semantyczną całego zdania współrzędnie złożonego, co z kolei umożliwia ujawnienie ukrytych odpowiedniości między elementami struktury semantycznej takiego zdania. Na przykład w zdaniu *We currently have a number of people in hospital all being treated for different injuries but thankfully most do not appear to be life-threatening at this time* ('Obecnie

w szpitalu przebywa wiele osób, które są leczone z powodu różnych urazów, ale na szczęście większość z nich nie wydaje się obecnie zagrażać życiu tych osób') integracja struktur semantycznych zdań składowych za pomocą spójnika *but* umożliwia ustalenie odpowiedniości między znaczeniem wyrazu *most* ('większość'), które jest składnikiem zdania-figury, i wyrażenia *different injuries* ('różne urazy'), które jest składnikiem zdania-tła. Ustalenie tej odpowiedniości oraz wiedza ogólna (w tym przypadku znajomość podstawowych działań matematycznych: dodawania i odejmowania) pozwalają konceptualizatorowi na wywnioskowanie relacji kontrastu pomiędzy dużą liczbą urazów niegroźnych dla życia pacjentów szpitala i niewielką liczbą urazów zagrażających ich życiu – mimo że relacja ta jest ukryta „poza sceną" w strukturze semantycznej powyższego zdania.

Analiza zdania przywołanego powyżej oraz pozostałych zdań z materiału badawczego pokazuje, że interpretacja przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim odbywa się w taki sposób, że struktura semantyczna pierwszego zdania składowego (tj. zdania -tła) stanowi kontekst, względem którego interpretowane jest drugie zdanie składowe (tj. zdanie-figura). Istotne jest jednak to, że maksymalny zakres predykacji przeciwstawnych zdań współrzędnie złożonych ze spójnikiem *but* w języku angielskim zawiera cały szereg elementów usytuowanych na różnych poziomach wyróżnienia pojęciowego. Mianowicie chodzi tu nie tylko o profilowane i nieprofilowane elementy struktur symbolicznych tworzących takie zdania, odpowiedniości ustanowione między strukturami semantycznymi jednostek symbolicznych należących do tych samych zdań składowych (np. *people* i *hospital* lub *this* i *time* w omówionym wcześniej przykładzie) oraz odpowiedniości ustanowione na poziomie całego zdania złożonego między strukturami semantycznymi jednostek symbolicznych należących do różnych zdań składowych (np. *most* i *different injuries* w omówionym wcześniej przykładzie), lecz także o bardziej abstrakcyjne relacje ukryte „poza sceną" w strukturze semantycznej całego zdania (np. kontrast pomiędzy dużą liczbą urazów niegroźnych dla życia pacjentów szpitala i niewielką liczbą urazów zagrażających ich życiu), które konceptualizator musi niejako ujawnić w procesie wnioskowania, korzystając z uprzednio nabytej wiedzy ogólnej.

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