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A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS ACCOUNT OF VIEWPOINT IN ACADEMIC PROSE

ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with viewpoint-related phenomena in academic texts. Traditionally regarded as a highly impersonal type of communication, academic prose has recently drawn the attention of researchers exploring manifestations of author subjectivity and a growing body of linguistic research has demonstrated that research articles, monographs, university textbooks, etc. are far from objective or “faceless” acts of communication. Since Cognitive Linguistics is particularly well suited to the study of subjective aspects of linguistic meaning, this paper argues for a Cognitive Linguistics approach to the study of viewpoint in academic texts and proposes a model of viewpoint based on Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar designed specifically for the study of academic discourse. The model encompasses three aspects of viewpoint: vantage point, subjectivity and the conceptualizer’s identity. The discussion is illustrated with linguistic material from Cognitive Linguistics articles and monographs and, hopefully, demonstrates the relevance of Cognitive Linguistics research into viewpoint-related conceptual phenomena in academic discourse.

Keywords:

viewpoint, academic discourse, subjectivity, cognitive grammar

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cognitive linguistic interest in scientific or, more broadly, academic discourse remains rather limited.¹ Most of the cognitive linguistic research to

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date that has to do with academic prose is concerned with metaphor (e.g. Jäkel 1996, 1997; Nerlich & Dingwall 2003; Seškauskienė 2008, 2011; Herrmann 2013; Tabakowska 2015) or terminology (e.g. Temmerman 2000; Faber 2009, 2012; Tercedor Sánchez 2011; Diederich 2017), with a frequent theme being the role of metaphor as a vehicle of broadly defined ideology, or worldview, underlying scientific models and the associated terminology (cf. Dirven et al. 2007: 1232). A separate strand of research deals with evidentiality and epistemic modality (e.g. Nuyts 2001, 2014; Langacker 2017), though the existing cognitive linguistic studies rarely focus on linguistic material taken from academic prose, which is quite surprising given the significant role of these two categories in claim making and argument presentation.

The concept of viewpoint has an already well-grounded tradition in Cognitive Linguistics, but it has mostly been applied to the more “imaginative” genres, especially literary narration, advertising, news narratives and political discourse, as well as in research on sign languages and gestures; more recently, it also became a major topic of cognitive linguistic studies on multimodal communication (cf., e.g., Dancygier & Sweetser 2012; Dancygier et al. 2016; Dancygier and Vandelanotte 2017; Sweetser 2017; Vandelanotte 2017; van Krieken et al. 2019). So far, however, viewpoint has not been regarded as a useful concept in the cognitive linguistic research on conceptual phenomena typical of academic prose. Yet, if “the content is *never* independent of viewpoint, and viewpoint expression is crucial to human communication” (Dancygier & Sweetser 2012: ix; italics added), it should follow that the expression of viewpoint must also be an inherent element of communication among researchers and academics.

While a perspectival nature of linguistic meaning is posited as one of the fundamental tenets of Cognitive Linguistics, the significance of viewpoint-related linguistic phenomena in academic discourse has been most widely voiced by linguists from outside the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise. Notably, Ken Hyland has repeatedly argued that “[a]cademic writing involves ‘positioning’, or adopting a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues” (2005a: 175). As one of the writer-oriented aspects of interaction between discourse participants, the use of linguistic devices for the expression of viewpoint is often considered to be aimed at enhancing the persuasiveness of an academic text. According to some researchers, the nature of academic discourse is “essentially persuasive”:

Whether an academic writes an article expressly for other academics working in the same discipline or for a different specialized public, the affirma-

tions s/he makes are never simply 'matter of fact'. Knowledge claims come in the form of arguments, and arguments have to be convincing if they are to elicit attention and support. (Silver 2003: 362)

This surely makes manifestations of viewpoint in academic prose a noteworthy object of linguistic research.

There have been several theoretical approaches proposed in the literature to account for viewpoint-related phenomena in language, including those based on the notions of hedging, modality, evidentiality, subjectivity, stance, appraisal, evaluation and affect (Gray & Biber 2012). Some of the most extensive work on viewpoint in academic discourse has been done by Hyland (e.g. 1996, 1998, 2005a), who has put forward his own model of "stance" as expressed in academic prose. Hyland's (2005a) model embraces four types of linguistic markers of stance, namely: hedges, boosters, markers of attitude, and the author's self-mention in the text. The first two are basically markers of epistemic modality and evidentiality, either limiting (in the case of hedges) or strengthening (in the case of boosters) a claim. Linguistic markers of the third category pertain to the notions of evaluation and affect, expressing the author's attitude to the information presented in the text, while the fourth category includes various grammatical means of self-reference or its avoidance.

Admittedly, Hyland's model may serve as a neat taxonomy of the broad range of linguistic resources used for the expression of viewpoint in academic texts, even if Hyland himself rightly cautions against a structuralist take on the four discrete categories (2005a: 176-177). What his model does not seek to do, however, is to shed light on the cognitive mechanisms underlying the viewpoint-related linguistic phenomena or to account for their conceptual interrelatedness. This is precisely where Cognitive Linguistics can prove its mettle.

2. A COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS MODEL

On the Cognitive Linguistics approach, viewpoint is taken to be a cognitive phenomenon that can be verbally expressed in discourse. Subjectivist semantics and the perspectival nature of linguistic meaning, which belong to the fundamental tenets of Cognitive Linguistics, presuppose that no linguistic description – whether a political speech, a news report or a scientific article – is fully objective in the sense of reflecting reality as it is. For one thing, the use of language involves categorizing the world in ways that reflect "generalized" viewpoints of whole speech communities and cultures (Geeraerts & Cuyckens 2007: 5); for another, users of language can mentally portray a given situation in different ways, depending on their communicative intentions,

and choose from the available repertoire of linguistic means (both lexical and grammatical) to describe it accordingly, a cognitive ability that Langacker refers to as “imagery” (1987) or, more recently, “construal” (e.g. 2008). The crucial role of the conceptualizer, i.e. the individual who mentally views a scene in a particular way, in the construction of meaning entails that his/her viewpoint must be embedded in the semantics of any text. Thus, human knowledge of the world and its linguistic description – whether in everyday talk or in a research article – presuppose and express a particular point of view (cf. Lakoff 1987: 260-261).

The model of viewpoint to be presented below is based on Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar (1987, 1991, 2002, 2008) and has been developed specifically to account for viewpoint phenomena in academic texts. Unlike the models proposed do date in the literature on academic discourse, it emphasizes the cognitive nature of the phenomenon, rather than focusing on the various linguistic mechanisms and their functional characteristics. This does not mean, however, that a cognitive account of viewpoint is in any way at odds with or superior to the existing functional or formal models. Rather, it should be seen as complementing and supporting them by grounding the viewpoint-related linguistic phenomena that they describe in the mechanisms of human cognition.

The model proposed here comprises three components: vantage point, subjectivity and conceptualizer. It must be noted, however, that the boundaries among them are far from clear-cut and, as will be shown below, each one is conceptually related with the other two.

2.1. VANTAGE POINT

In Cognitive Grammar, vantage point is considered to be the central aspect of viewpoint; it is defined as the location from which a mental scene is viewed (Langacker 1987: 123). To put it in other words, it is the conceptualizer’s position in relation to the conceptualized entity.

The most obvious domains in which the conceptualizer’s location is indicated in language use are space and time, where certain lexical or grammatical items, such as deictic adverbs, demonstrative pronouns or exponents of tense, point to the conceptualizer’s position in space or on the temporal axis with respect to the conceptualized entities. Typical examples include:

(1)

SPACE:

here – there; in front of – behind; this – that

TIME:

now – then; before – after; this – that (e.g. this week, that day).

That the semantic structure of such expressions crucially includes the conceptualizer's vantage point becomes evident once we realize that one and the same scene can be described with the use of either element of the pairs of words above, depending on where the conceptualizer is actually located, as in:

(2)

- a. The tree is in front of the fence.
- b. The tree is behind the fence.

In a similar vein, examples (3a-b) indicate two different positions of the conceptualizer on the time axis with respect to the situation that is referred to, with (3a) indicating temporal proximity (concurrency) and (3b) signaling temporal distance:

(3)

- a. We have no choice now.
- b. We had no choice then.

However, as Langacker (2008: 76) contends, the notion of vantage point is a useful construct for describing viewpoint-related phenomena in other domains as well. When it comes to academic prose, I would argue that the key domains in which the conceptualizer's vantage point is manifested are the domains of **discourse**, **knowledge** and **attitude**, each of which will be outlined below.

2.1.1. DISCOURSE

Some of the deictic spatial and temporal expressions, including those in (1) above, are also used in academic texts, as in:

(4)

- a. I will not explore the topic further **here**² (Wilcox 2004: 125)
- b. As I noted **above**, the central difficulty in analyzing... (Dancygier 2017: 2)
- c. we return to **these** points **below** (Glynn 2010: 3)
- d. Let us **now** consider the same lexemes, though combined with... (Glynn 2008: 232)

2 In each of the examples quoted in this paper, the linguistic element in question has been put in bold.

In these examples, however, rather than pointing to the conceptualizer's location in space or time, the deictics in bold illustrate a metaphorical extension of the notion of vantage point onto the domain of discourse. For instance, the adverb *here* used in (4a) does not refer to the author's (or reader's) spatial position; instead, it could be paraphrased as 'in the current discussion'; similarly, *below* in (4c) does not refer to a spatial relationship: rather than indicating a region in physical space that is "below" from the author's (or reader's) vantage point, it refers to 'the following part of the text'. The same is true about the demonstrative pronoun *these* in (4c), which is to be interpreted as 'the ones we are discussing', while the temporal adverb *now* does not refer to the time at which the text is being written by the author or read by the reader, but to the current stage of the discussion presented in the text.

2.1.2. KNOWLEDGE

Another important domain where viewpoint is often manifested in academic prose is that of knowledge, which could therefore be called "epistemic". In this case, the vantage point is a correlate of the conceptualizer's degree of certainty or commitment to the claims made in the text, as illustrated by the following examples:

(5)

- a. The relation between grammar and meaning is **probably** the most crucial issue (Langacker 2000: 1)
- b. The discussion **clearly showed** that the family of sounds... (Taylor 1989: 230)
- c. This **strongly suggests** that focal colours are perceptually... (Taylor 1989: 11)

On the account presented here, epistemic viewpoint is taken to be a metaphorical extension of the spatial sense, where the conceptualizer's degree of certainty that a claim put forward in the text is true is an analogue of the spatial vantage point in terms of its proximity to the observed entity: the greater the distance from the scene, the less certain the conceptualizer is that the claim is true. Accordingly, just as in the case of the spatial and temporal domains, epistemic viewpoint involves "a **proximal/distal** contrast in the epistemic sphere", with the most proximal, i.e. zero-distance, vantage point indicating that the conceptualizer "accepts the designated process as part of known reality" and any non-zero distance between the vantage point and the scene indicating a more or less probable irreality (Langacker 1991: 245; emphasis retained).³

³ In fact, Langacker (1991: 240ff) himself uses the term "epistemic distance", which supports a viewpoint-based reading of epistemic commitment.

Epistemic viewpoint undoubtedly plays a significant role in academic texts, especially in articles and monographs reporting own research or proposing novel claims, where it has a “face preserving” function (cf. Hyland 1996: 434). Yet, since this is a well-known characteristic and one of the most thoroughly covered research areas connected with academic discourse, let us now turn to a domain of viewpoint that may be less obvious in the context of academic texts, i.e. that of beliefs, affect and axiology.

2.1.3. ATTITUDE

Following Hawkins (1999), Dirven et al. (2007: 1227) contend that “ideology is akin to time and space in that it constitutes a cognitive domain that plays a role in the meaning-making process of deixis”. Thus, as with the conceptualizer’s epistemic commitment, elements of subjective meaning connected with axiological evaluation, affect or, generally, attitude can be subsumed under the category of viewpoint. In fact, in some cognitive approaches to epistemicity and ideology, the two domains are conflated into one “evaluative axis,” which “represents a deictic conceptualization of ‘right’ versus ‘wrong’ both in their epistemic and in their moral sense” (Hart 2014: 165). Although the boundary between epistemic and ideological viewpoints may indeed sometimes be fuzzy, in the model presented here the two domains are held apart,⁴ if only because in most (non-cognitive) studies of academic style two separate categories are distinguished, i.e. personal attitude and epistemic commitment, with the latter being regarded as “considerably more important in academic research writing than the attitudinal meanings” (Gray & Biber 2012: 19).

Despite the generally stronger emphasis on the role of epistemic viewpoint, it is at the same time argued that academic discourse “abounds” in ideology (Dirven et al. 2007: 1232), which can be broadly defined as the conceptualizer’s attitude to a given situation. However, as already mentioned, the expression of ideological viewpoint in academic discourse is usually linked with the use of metaphor in the terminologies and theoretical models of particular disciplines, notably in science. Apart from having a heuristic function, such metaphors can often indicate particular attitudes. For example, the IT term *computer virus* suggests a negative evaluation as a result of the associations preserved from the source domain of health/biology. In a similar way, the linguistic term *head* suggests an element of the greatest importance, by analogy with the importance of the head in the animal body. However, the expression of attitude is not limited to terminology or scientific models: it is

⁴ Vantage point in the domain of attitude corresponds to the semantic category underlying “attitude markers” in Hyland’s (2005a) model.

often manifested in the ways ideas and claims are framed in academic texts.⁵ To illustrate this, let us consider the following examples (6):

(6)

- a. **Unfortunately**, none of these syntactic accounts explains how... (Gibbs 2007: 708)
- b. Finally, **it is worth** mentioning some phrasal expressions... (Taylor 1987: 29)
- c. Synonymy or near-synonymy is a very common and **intriguing** linguistic phenomenon. (Liu 2013: 68)
- d. **Important** limitations to the explanatory power of Cognitive Grammar are identified... (Glynn 2008: 216-217)

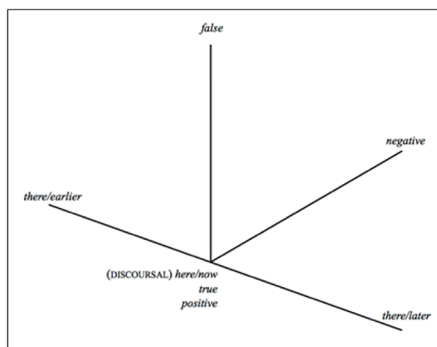
In each of these examples, viewpoint is manifested through expressions indicating the conceptualizer's evaluation of a situation (6a), process (6b) or thing (6c-d) described in the text. Thus, it can be argued that such evaluative elements indicate the conceptualizer's position *vis-à-vis* the conceptualized entity on the axis, or scale, pertaining to such notions as desirability (6a-b), interest (6c), or importance (6d).

The ideological character of such viewpoint expressions follows from the fact that they reflect the conceptualizer's beliefs, affect or, generally, personal attitude resulting from the need to realize a particular communicative intention at a given point in discourse. Of course, the range of the possible domains for this kind of evaluation is much broader than what can be illustrated with these few examples, but it is not the aim of this paper to exemplify them all. The point is that the various possible domains in which attitude can be expressed seem to be based on a schematic axis whose end points could be characterized by such notions as good – bad, right – wrong or positive – negative (cf. Haart 2014: 165). This schematic distinction between positive and negative attitudes is also supported by Biber and Finegan's earlier work (1988, 1989).

To summarize the discussion in sections 2.1.1–2.1.3, the conceptualizer's vantage point is commonly expressed in academic prose relative to scenes involving three conceptual domains: discourse, knowledge and attitude. Because of the deictic character of the notion of vantage point, these domains can be schematically represented as three axes, with the conceptualizer's position at the deictic center, as illustrated in Figure 1.

⁵ It may even be argued that in the case of metaphor-based terminology and scientific models, once they become established in a language, we deal with dead metaphors, expressing conventionalized, or generalized, viewpoints (cf. Langacker 1987: 124; also cf. Tabakowska 1993: 26) and there is usually no alternative for authors other than using the established terminology. By contrast, the expression of ideology through the choice of a particular expression or grammatical structure in a text indicates a viewpoint that can be ascribed to a particular conceptualizer, and hence it belongs to subjective aspects of meaning.

Figure 1. A deictic representation of the conceptualizer's vantage point in the domains of discourse, knowledge and attitude (an adapted version of Figure 6.1 from Haart 2014: 165)



The expression of the vantage point taken by the conceptualizer in these three domains represents the first aspect of viewpoint in the model delineated in this paper.

2.2. SUBJECTIVITY

The second general aspect of viewpoint that is of special relevance to academic prose concerns the degree of explicitness with which the conceptualizer's viewpoint is actually marked in the text. The range of possible options in this respect is delimited by two opposite rhetorical strategies: that of "impersonal objectivity" and that of "reflexive awareness" (Hyland 2014: 100). The Cognitive Grammar concept that will be used to account for them, as well as for all the other viewpoint configurations that fall in between the two ends of the scale, is subjectivity (Langacker 1987: 128ff, 2002: 315ff).

The notion of subjectivity as used in Cognitive Grammar refers to the conceptualizer's role, or involvement, in the conceptualized scene. The conceptualizer is said to be construed subjectively if s/he remains offstage as an uninvolved, external "observer"; if, however, the conceptualizer becomes more or less, directly or indirectly, involved in the scene, his/her role is construed more objectively. Thus, the two opposite conceptual configurations are tantamount to: "profiling and explicit mention" of the conceptualizer (objective construal) and a situation in which the conceptualizer is only "an implicit locus of consciousness" (Langacker 2008: 77). The significance of subjectivity for semantic structure in academic prose can be illustrated with the following examples:

(6)

- a. **It seems to me** that two general reactions can be (Stefanowitsch 2010: 357)
- b. **it seems** perfectly reasonable to continue to make use of...

(Newman 2010: 93)

The evidential expression in (6a) involves an explicit mention of the author through the use of the personal pronoun *me*, thereby putting him onstage and in profile as the experiencer of the mental state designated by the verb *seem*. As a result, the conceptualizer, or his viewpoint, is maximally objective here. By contrast, the lack of explicit reference to the conceptualizer in (6b) makes his role more subjective in the sense that the conceptualizer, who is at the same time the experiencer of the mental state, is only the implied locus of consciousness. This kind of subjectification⁶ of the conceptualizer’s viewpoint brings about a sense of impersonality and rhetorical objectivity in the text.

The manipulation of viewpoint along the scale of subjectivity is often evident in passages of academic texts referring to research, cognitive or communication activities performed by the author. In such cases one of the obvious options is to use first-person verbal structures in the active voice, whereby the researcher/author is fully objectified, as in:

- (7)
- a. In this paper, **I have examined** various cases in which Cora locationals show... (Casad 1988: 373)
 - b. In the discussion above **I have emphasized** the need to bear these alternatives in mind in working with a corpus. **I believe** that the alternatives **I have reviewed**... (Newman 2010: 94)

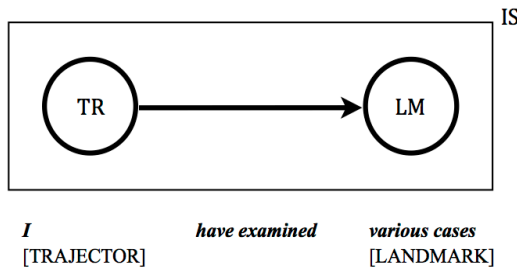


Figure 2. Conceptualizer’s role as agent construed objectively in a first-person active voice construction

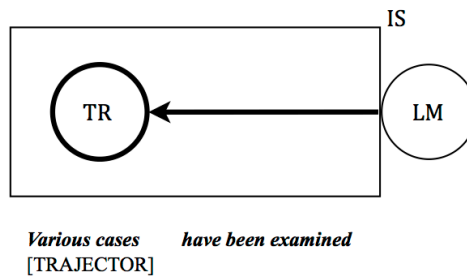
However, authors of academic texts often decide to subjectify their role by hiding their agency in the processes described in the text through the use of various grammatical means. The prototypical grammatical structure to achieve this in English is the passive voice, as in the following examples:

6 I am using the term “subjectification” in a non-diachronic sense, to denote a shift from an explicit indication of the conceptualizer and his/her viewpoint to a more subjective construal where the conceptualizer remains offstage (cf. Langacker 2000: 297).

- (8)
- a. ...the grammatical categories that **are examined** in the study... (Glynn 2008: 223)
- b. **It has been demonstrated** in this article that... (Panther 2011: 42)

The effect of using this strategy is a much smaller prominence of the author's role as the agent of the processes denoted by the verbs. As illustrated in Figure 3, in the case of the passive voice, the agent of the process has a landmark status and – at least in the agentless construction – remains offstage as an unspecified, schematic entity. Of course, this is not to say that the author's viewpoint is totally absent here because, as Langacker points out, “[b]eing implicit is not the same as being absent” (2008: 77). What is important, however, is that it is much less prominent, which is why the use of a passive-voice description lends itself to evoking the impression of impersonality. And, as Hyland puts it, “controlling the level of personality in a text becomes central to building a convincing argument” in academic discourse (2000: 41).

Figure 3. Conceptualizer's role as agent construed subjectively in an agentless passive voice construction



Depending on the language, there may be other options for achieving a higher or lower degree of subjectivity as far as the conceptualizer-as-researcher viewpoint is concerned. For example, apart from the passive voice, Polish authors frequently employ impersonal verb forms, as in:

- (9)
- a. **Przeanalizowano** różne przypadki
‘[one] examined various cases’
- b. **Wyciągnięto** wniosek, iż...
‘[one] concluded that...’

The Polish impersonal construction, however, imposes a slightly different viewpoint configuration on the conceptualized scene. In this case, the agent of the process retains its trajector status, as in the case of an active voice construction, but it has no linguistic specification, thereby remaining offstage and implicit, as shown in Figure 4 below.

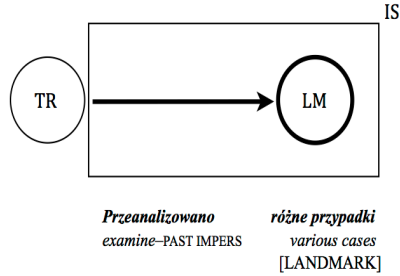


Figure 4. The Polish impersonal construction with an unspecified agent assigned the trajector role

In contrast to a passive construction, where the agent of the process can be specified by means of a *by*-phrase (or its equivalent in languages other than English), the use of impersonal structures, like the ones in (9) above, does not allow a linguistic specification of the agent. For this reason, the Polish impersonal construction might seem to represent an even greater degree of subjectivity than in the case of the passive voice, where one can easily ask a question about the agent’s identity (“By whom?”).⁷ However, another conceptual difference between the semantic structures of the two constructions suggests that it is the passive which involves a greater degree of conceptualizer subjectivity. The difference lies in the fact that the agent of the process specified by the verb, equated with the default conceptualizer, i.e. the author/researcher, is conceptually more salient in the case of the impersonal construction (with the role of the trajector, or figure within the profiled process) in comparison with the one in the passive voice construction, where it takes the role of the landmark (or ground within the profiled process).

Yet another possibility to make the author’s agency implicit is the use of a construction with the so-called “abstract rhetor” (Halloran 1984), i.e. an inanimate, typically abstract noun in subject position with a verb denoting a process that presupposes a human agent. Since abstract rhetors are particularly frequent with verbs profiling research-related activities as well as cognitive and communication processes (Biber et al. 1999: 378), their use can be regarded as a kind of personification, as in:

- (10)
 a. **The study only considers** six of the most likely candidates... (Glynn 2008: 223)

7 The use of the English impersonal *one*, as in the glosses for examples (9a-b), is similar, though not identical, in this respect. First of all, although the “By whom?” kind of question seems equally incongruous in the case of the English *one*, the agent is linguistically specified, albeit schematically. Secondly, the English impersonal *one* is rarely used to describe the various steps in the research process, while the Polish impersonal construction is typically used to refer to a series of research activities performed by the author.

- b. **The large difference** in the number of occurrences on this point **suggests** that... (Glynn 2014: 127)
- c. **Our discussion above indicates** that this may also be problematic since... (Gries 2005: 647)

Abstract rhetor constructions like these have been analyzed in terms of the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, with one of the most frequently identified metaphors being research is a person (Šeškauskienė 2009; also cf. Low 1999). At the same time, however, certain abstract rhetor constructions, especially those involving endophoric reference, can be regarded as instances of a conventionalized type of conceptual metonymy (Radden & Kövecses 2007) where an academic text/study, or its part/element, stands for the author/researcher in accordance with the principle of contiguity (cf. Šeškauskienė 2006: 274-275). This is illustrated by the following examples:

(11)

- a. **The present study has shown** a range of linguistic devices that... (Newman 2018: 57)
- b. **This chapter has examined** the forms and uses of... (Scheibman 2002: 157)
- c. **Section 3 discusses** practical considerations and **identifies** areas of study... (Hilpert 2006: 243)

On the cognitive grammar approach, examples like (11a-b) can also be argued to represent the setting-subject construction (Langacker 1991: 346), in which the subject position in an active-voice clause is occupied by a nominal that would normally function as an adjunct profiling the setting in which an activity takes place. On the conceptual level, this results in shifting the primary focus to the setting (Langacker 2000: 42).

Such abstract rhetor structures represent instances of marked coding since the choice of the subject does not conform “to the most natural construal of an event on the basis of its conceptual content” (Langacker 2002: 226).⁸ In other words, here the choice of an inanimate abstract noun for a relational figure (i.e. trajector) in the process designated by the verb does not follow from any objective factors; instead, the reason for conferring the trajector status on the entities profiled by such nominals as *this chapter* or *the present study* “is purely subjective, in the sense of being imposed extrinsically as part of the conceptualization process itself” (Langacker 2002: 223). On the one hand, then, examples like (11a-b) illustrate an attempt at a complete removal of the author’s agency from the conceptualized scene, thereby max-

8 The corresponding “unmarked” coding of (10a-b) would be: a) In this chapter, I have examined....
b) In the present study, I have shown....

imally subjectifying, or implicating, his/her viewpoint; on the other hand, however, the very choice of such marked coding makes the conceptualizer's role quite evident and therefore not totally subjective.

Yet another strategy often employed to subjectify the conceptualizer's role in the research activities described in an academic text consists in the use of a nominal instead of a verb phrase to denote a research or cognitive process, as in the following examples:

(12)

a. **The conclusion** is that (1) the way a form is conventionalized can... (Tuggy 2003: 51)

b. The present article is **an attempt** to contribute to an elucidation... (Panther 2011: 23)

In cases like these, the use of a noun denoting an action makes the role of the agent much less prominent than in the corresponding verbal structure because the underlying processes of summary scanning and reification bring the action itself into focus as a conceptual gestalt, thereby obfuscating the role of its participants and component elements (cf. Langacker 2008: 111). For this reason, the use of a nominalization may be considered an extreme case of viewpoint subjectification.

2.3. CONCEPTUALIZER

“... once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it”

In their analysis of the above passage from *Alice in Wonderland*, Lu and Verhagen (2016) observe that it initially reflects the default conceptualizer's viewpoint, i.e. that of the narrator. The researchers argue, however, that the second part (“but it had no pictures or conversations in it”) represents a viewpoint shift from the narrator to Alice in that it is “her worldview and [unfulfilled] expectations” – or broadly defined ideology – that are expressed here (Lu & Verhagen 2016: 173). Of course, *Alice in Wonderland* is not an academic text but, I would argue, quite similar conceptualizer shifts can often be identified in academic prose.

Consider the following passage from a Cognitive Linguistics article:

(12)

Therefore, when faced with an utterance that does not correspond to an established unit, they should reject it categorically. **Of course, matters are slightly more complex: speakers do have the option of comparing the utter-**

ance in question to schemas to which it corresponds partially. [...] However, the mechanism of partial sanction... (Stefanowitsch 2011: 113)

Whereas the first sentence is a claim made by the author of the text, the beginning of the second sentence resembles the “but it had no pictures” passage from *Alice in Wonderland* in the sense that it shifts the viewpoint from that of the author to that of the reader by introducing a potential objection on the latter’s part. In other words, although it is the author who is responsible for the wording in the second sentence, what he is doing in it is acknowledging an argument that he expects the reader could raise with regard to the claim made previously; this is indicated by the expression *of course* and the emphatic *do*, one of whose functions is to agree with the interlocutor. Later on, with the sentence beginning with *However*, the viewpoint shifts back to the author, who replies to the objection raised by the imagined reader.

This type of shift in the conceptualizer’s identity is well accounted for by Langacker (2008: 448), who points out that the notion of a conceptualizer is a “virtual entity” as it does not have to be identified with the speaker/writer. Obviously, the speaker/writer may be the default conceptualizer, but the viewpoint may also shift to another person. That is because the speaker/writer can conceptualize (or “imagine”; note the expression “imagined reader” at the end of the previous paragraph) how a given situation would appear from another individual’s vantage point and “portray it accordingly, irrespective of his actual vantage point” (Langacker 1987: 140). It can be argued, then, that (12) illustrates a kind of mental transfer involving a viewpoint shift.

Conceptualizer shifts are quite common (though, of course, not limited to) in academic prose; let us just note an example very similar to (12), taken from the same text by Stefanowitsch:

(13)

Of course, individual examples do not prove or disprove the possibility that [...] However... (Stefanowitsch 2011: 112)

where, again, the expression *of course* introduces a passage in which an objection is formulated that the writer expects from the intended reader, presumably a member of the same research community. And, as in (12), once the counterargument has been acknowledged, the viewpoint shifts back from the reader to the author, who then introduces his response with *However*. Examples like (12) and (13) illustrate Hyland’s observation that “any successfully published research paper anticipates a reader’s response” (2005a: 176).

However, it is not only anticipated arguments that lead to conceptualizer shifts in academic texts. Arguably, this category of viewpoint phenom-

ena also includes the formulation of questions that the author expects the reader could pose with regard to the claims made in the text, as in:

(14)

Despite this conceptual discrepancy, *know* can be used in imperatives in English; and this usage is by no means exceptional – there are hundreds of examples in the American English online corpus COCA. **How can these conflicting meanings, i.e. the construction meaning and the lexical meaning be reconciled?** A simple but appealing solution to this problem is... (Panther and Thornburg 2017: 285)

The mechanism underlying this type of viewpoint shift from the author to the reader is basically the same as that evidenced in examples (12) and (13): while making a claim that may be considered surprising or at odds with the existing literature, the author anticipates particular misgivings on the reader's part, and the formulation of an adequate question allows him/her to offer an answer that substantiates his/her argument. The question itself, however, reflects the reader's "worldview", just as the already-mentioned "but it had no pictures" passage reflects Alice's viewpoint.

Another type of change in the conceptualizer's identity involves an extension of the viewpoint to include both the author and the reader. This viewpoint shift underlies the use of the so-called inclusive *we*, a frequent rhetorical strategy in academic prose, as in the following examples:

(15)

- a. Having established that the theory of Cognitive Linguistics is inherently empirical, **can we say**, however, that the paradigm is empirical in practice? (Glynn 2010: 3)
- b. Before **we can consider** the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative Cognitive Semantics, **we must set straight** two common misconceptions... (Glynn 2010: 10)
- c. These two points are crucial for quantitative corpus-driven semantic research and **we return** to these points below. (Glynn 2010: 3).
- d. This is not to say that collocations and syntactic patterns are no longer important within the field, as **we will see** in the following chapters, but... (Glynn 2010: 10).

Based on a conceptualization of the author and the reader as not only members of the same academic community but also participants in the same research process, with common goals and similar understandings, the use of inclusive *we* in an academic text helps the author ascertain readers' solidarity and guide them through the text towards a desirable interpretation

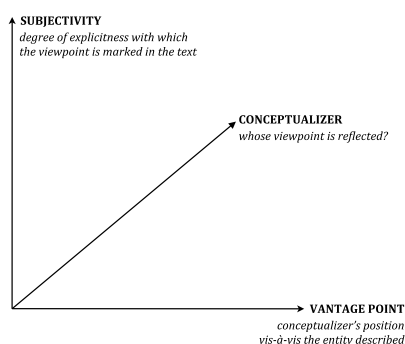
(Hyland 2005a: 182-183). Because of its use as a text organizing device, the inclusive *we* is often employed, as in (15c-d), in the context of endophoric metadiscourse, i.e. references to other parts of the text (cf. Hyland 2005b: 41).

To sum up, as far as the conceptualizer's identity is concerned, there seem to be three major options to choose from for authors of academic texts: by default, the author expresses his/ her own viewpoint; in order to increase the persuasiveness of the text, however, the viewpoint may be either shifted from the author to the reader or extended to include both parties.

3. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to propose a Cognitive Linguistics account of viewpoint-related phenomena in academic prose. As follows from the discussion presented above, the notion of viewpoint as applied to the study of perspectival aspects of meaning in academic texts is a complex concept that can be explored in terms of three broad aspects or components illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. A three-partite Cognitive Grammar model of viewpoint in academic prose



In the narrow sense of the term, referred to as “vantage point”, viewpoint pertains to the conceptualizer's location *vis-à-vis* the conceptualized entity (usually a process) in a particular domain. As shown in section 2.1, the conceptual domains that seem to be particularly relevant here are those of discourse, knowledge and attitude. While the vantage point in the domain of knowledge, or epistemic commitment, is commonly acknowledged to be one of the key aspects of claim-making, the expression of viewpoint in terms of attitude, or ideology, has mostly been linked with metaphors underlying scientific concepts and the related terminology. What deserves closer attention from Cognitive Linguists is the ways in which axiological judgement is passed through lexical and grammatical means with regard to claims made in academic writing.

Another aspect of viewpoint that merits close investigation is how explicitly the conceptualizer's viewpoint is actually marked in the text, or the

extent to which the conceptualizer is visible on the stage. This is an area where Cognitive Linguistics, and especially Cognitive Grammar with its notion of subjectivity, proves particularly useful, as it enables fine-grained semantic distinctions in the identification of what is usually referred to as “authorial visibility”, “personal stamp”, “voice” or “self-mention” (cf. Sancho Guinda & Hyland 2012: 1; also cf. Khedri 2016).

Finally, the third component of the concept in question is the actual source of viewpoint, or the identity of the conceptualizer. As argued in section 2.3, although the default conceptualizer is to be equated with the author of the text/the researcher, in order to achieve certain rhetorical effects, and in particular to engage the reader (cf. Hyland 2005a), the author can temporarily shift the viewpoint: on the one hand, s/he can decide to look at his/her own claim from the readers’ vantage point in order to acknowledge their doubts; on the other, the viewpoint may be extended so that it is shared by both parties, i.e. the author and the reader.

Given that the deployment of viewpoint-related linguistic devices in an academic text contributes to increasing its persuasiveness and helps “preserve” the author’s face in the case of a claim being proved false, the recently growing body of linguistic research into the kinds of phenomena outlined in this paper is surely warranted. A Cognitive Linguistics approach to these issues offers two assets: first of all, it highlights the semantic (or, ultimately, cognitive) mechanisms underlying the various viewpoint phenomena manifested in language use, rather than merely focusing on the classification of linguistic forms; secondly, with its subjectivist and perspectival view of semantics as well as its conceptual apparatus designed to account for the ways in which a fact (including a scientific one) can be differently construed by different people (cf. Seškauskienė 2011: 47), it is sensitive to semantic detail, making it possible to identify and systematically describe subtle differences among particular linguistic devices.

A line of research that offers considerable potential in terms of exploring the significance of viewpoint-related phenomena in academic discourse is translation analysis, where the translated text may manifest viewpoint differences in comparison with the original. Of course, some of the viewpoint shifts that can take place in the process of translation will stem from differences between the two language systems; others, however, could turn out to be a result of the translator’s subjective decisions. In this context, it would be interesting to carry out corpus-based quantitative research in order to determine the frequency of viewpoint shifts in the translation of academic prose, preferably considering different language pairs and different academic disciplines. This in turn could yield some implications for translator education.

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STRESZCZENIE

PUNKT WIDZENIA W TEKŚCIE NAUKOWYM Z PERSPEKTYWY JĘZYKOZNAWSTWA KOGNITYWNEGO

Zainteresowanie językoznawców kognitywnych zjawiskami językowymi związanymi z dyskursem akademickim pozostaje wciąż niewielkie. Większość publikacji kognitywistycznych poświęconych tym problemom dotyczy metafory lub terminologii, przy czym głównym tematem pozostaje rola metafory jako nośnika określonego światopoglądu w modelach i teoriach naukowych. Choć istnieje wiele prac wykorzystujących aparat pojęciowy językoznawstwa kognitywnego w badaniach nad ewidencjalnością i modalnością, prace te niezmiernie rzadko bazują na materiale językowym pochodzącym z tekstów akademickich, co wydaje się zaskakujące w kontekście istotnej roli tych zjawisk w formułowaniu tez i wniosków w publikacjach naukowych. Ugruntowaną tradycję w językoznawstwie kognitywnym mają natomiast badania nad punktem widzenia (ang. *viewpoint*), jednakże prace te dotyczą przede wszystkim narracji literackiej, komunikacji multimodalnej, a także języków migowych i gestów.

Tekst naukowy utożsamiany jest często z bezosobowym i obiektywnym opisem faktów. Jeżeli jednak – jak podkreślają Barbara Dancygier i Eve Swetser – „treść nigdy nie jest niezależna od punktu widzenia, a wy-

rażanie punktu widzenia stanowi istotny element komunikacji międzyludzkiej” (2012: ix; tłum. Ł.W.), należy wnioskować, że punkt widzenia musi być również ważnym aspektem dyskursu naukowego.

Językoznawstwo kognitywne jest szczególnie dobrze dostosowane do badania i opisu subiektywnych elementów struktury semantycznej ze względu na przyjmowanie subiektywistycznej koncepcji semantyki oraz tezę o perspektywicznej naturze znaczenia językowego. Tymczasem na znaczenie zjawisk językowych związanych z wyrażaniem punktu widzenia w tekście naukowym zwracali dotychczas uwagę przede wszystkim badacze spoza kręgu kognitywistycznego, zwłaszcza Ken Hyland, który zaproponował model zjawisk związanych z punktem widzenia w dyskursie akademickim oparty na klasyfikacji środków językowych służących jego wyrażaniu (Hyland 2005a). Zarówno Hyland, jak i inni językoznawcy twierdzą, że wyrażanie punktu widzenia w prozie naukowej nastawione jest często na zwiększenie perswazyjności tekstu. Wobec powyższego podjęcie problemu punktu widzenia w tekście naukowym z perspektywy językoznawstwa kognitywnego wydaje się w pełni uzasadnione. Właśnie dlatego celem artykułu jest zaproponowanie kognitywnego ujęcia zjawisk związanych z wyrażeniem punktu widzenia w tekście naukowym oraz przedstawienie modelu punktu widzenia w dyskursie naukowym opartego na założeniach gramatyki kognitywnej Ronald Langackera. W odróżnieniu od dotychczasowych opracowań niniejsza praca podkreśla pojęciowy charakter omawianego zjawiska i prezentuje jego model odnoszący konkretne typy językowych wykładników punktu widzenia do mechanizmów poznawczych człowieka.

Proponowany model punktu widzenia (ang. *viewpoint*) obejmuje trzy wzajemnie powiązane aspekty: (1) miejsce oglądu (ang. *vantage point*), (2) subiektywność (ang. *subjectivity*) oraz (3) tożsamość konceptualizatora (ang. *conceptualizer*) jako podmiotu dokonującego oglądu danej sceny mentalnej.

Punkt widzenia rozumiany jako miejsce, w którym znajduje się konceptualizator, przekłada się na bliskość lub oddalenie od sceny będącej przedmiotem oglądu, co w tekście naukowym przejawia się w trzech domenach: w domenie dyskursu, w domenie wiedzy oraz w domenie postawy ideologicznej czy też wartościowania. Pojęcie bliskości/oddalenia w domenie dyskursu wyraża się poprzez określanie elementów dyskursu jako bieżących (za pomocą wyrażen deiktycznych takich jak *tutaj*, *te* czy *teraz*), podczas gdy oddalenie dotyczy odniesień do poprzednich lub kolejnych partii tekstu (za pomocą wyrażen takich jak *wcześniej*, *później* czy *dalej*). W przypadku domeny wiedzy bliskość konceptualizatora względem konceptualizowanych treści przekłada się na pewność co do formułowanych tez, natomiast oddalenie wiąże się z brakiem pewności i, w konsekwencji, zastosowaniem na płaszczyźnie językowej wykładników modalności epistemicznej. Z kolei w przypadku postawy ideologicznej chodzi o ocenę opisywanych scen za

pomocą wyrażen symbolizujących określoną wartość na skali dobry – zły, gdzie pozytywne wartościowanie związane jest z bliskością konceptualizatora względem sceny, zaś wartościowanie negatywne wskazuje na oddalenie.

Subiektywność jest tym aspektem punktu widzenia w tekście naukowym, który odnosi się do stopnia, w jakim konceptualizator ujawnia się w tekście. Zakres możliwych punktów widzenia w tym rozumieniu wyznaczony jest przez dwie przeciwne strategie retoryczne stosowane przez autorów tekstów naukowych: obiektywizacja przekazu oraz prezentowanie subiektywnej refleksji. O ile w tym drugim przypadku mamy do czynienia z użyciem zaimka *ja* oraz pierwszoosobowych form czasownika, obiektywizacja obejmuje zastosowanie form bezosobowych i konstrukcji bezagentywnych. Oczywiście, pomiędzy tymi dwiema skrajnościami występuje szereg możliwości pośrednich, w których mamy do czynienia z większym lub mniejszym stopniem subiektywizacji w rozumieniu Langackera. Wybór jednej z nich jest nastawiony na podniesienie wiarygodności prezentowanych tez i „ochronę twarzy” autora tekstu jako członka danej społeczności akademickiej na wypadek, gdyby formułowane tezy okazały się nieprawdziwe.

Trzeci komponent proponowanego modelu punktu widzenia odnosi się do tożsamości konceptualizatora kryjącego się za wywodem prezentowanym w tekście naukowym. Domyślnym konceptualizatorem jest autor tekstu, będący zwykle również osobą, która przeprowadziła opisany w tekście proces badawczy. Jednakże, jak podkreśla Langacker, konceptualizator jest pojęciem wirtualnym, co w tekście naukowym uwidacznia się sytuacjach, w których punkt widzenia przesuwają się z autora na czytelnika bądź też obejmuje obydwu uczestników dyskursu: autora oraz czytelnika. Przypadek pierwszy występuje w tych miejscach tekstu, w których autor antycypuje pytania, wątpliwości lub inne reakcje ze strony czytelnika, natomiast z rozszerzeniem punktu widzenia na obydwie osoby mamy do czynienia w sytuacjach użycia form 1. os. liczby mnogiej w odniesieniu do autora i czytelnika, czyli tzw. inkluzywnego „my”.

Omówienie poszczególnych zagadnień ilustrowane jest w pracy autentycznym materiałem językowym pochodzącym z artykułów i monografii z zakresu językoznawstwa kognitywnego. Na koniec zarysowane są możliwe kierunki badań nad tekstem naukowym oparte na kategorii punktu widzenia, m.in. badania nad zmianami punktu widzenia w przekładzie tekstów naukowych.

