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Notions of the Past

- a Cognitive Approach to Past Time Grammar with
Respect to EFL Learning

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To moments in time

and a choice

of viewpoints

"The major problem is quite simply one of grammar, and the main work to consult in this matter is Dr. Dan Streetmentioner's Time traveler's Handbook of 1001 Tense Formations. It will tell you, for instance, how to describe something that was about to happen to you in the past before you avoided it by time-jumping forward two days in order to avoid it. The event will be described differently according to whether you are talking about it from the standpoint of your own natural time, from a time in the further future, or a time in the further past and is further complicated by the possibility of conducting conversations while you are actually traveling from one time to another with the intention of becoming your own mother or father".

Douglas Adams

"The restaurant at the End of the Universe"

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This thesis originated from a question that, to be quite truthful, is not my own. It is the kind of inquiry, phrased almost as a demand, that students, in their struggle to acquire a language, hurl at their teachers in frustration. “Why? What does it mean? What is the difference?” Of all the people who deserve special mention here, I therefore want to first thank my students past and present for unfailingly pointing out where the English language takes a path that is foreign to us German speakers and is therefore of special interest. In this, I owe a special debt to Melanie Herzner, whose determination in this respect remains unsurpassed and whose appreciation for meaning-based descriptions of grammar issues was the starting point for the research question addressed in this thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

Acc	Accomplishment	Im	Landmark
Ach	Achievement	PaPr	Past Progressive
Act _d	Action	PaSi	Past Simple
Act _v	Activity	PaT	Past Time
Ad	Advance	Pr	Process
BNC	Brigham Young University - British National Corpus	PrPe	Present Perfect
CCxG	Cognitive Construction Grammar	PrSi	Present Simple
CDS	Current Discourse Space	PrTe	Present Tense
CG	Cognitive Grammar	R	Reference Time
E	Event Time	S	Speech Time
Ev	Event	St	State (Declerck and Vendler)
Ex	Extend	St _d	State (Declerck)
f	Figure	St _v	State (Vendler)
g	Ground	TAC	Tense Aspect Combination
		tr	Trajectory
		V	Verb

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1. Introduction

Grammar is a piano I play by ear, since I seem to have been out of school the year the rules were mentioned. All I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of that sentence, as definitely and inflexibly as the position of a camera alters the meaning of the object photographed. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences. (Didion 1976: 271)

While native speakers like Didion might play the piano called grammar by ear, foreign language learners do not have the privilege of being able to do so. The particular grammatical constructions under scrutiny in this study, those that English speakers use to refer to events prior to the moment of speaking - the notions of the past - pose a particular problem to EFL students. This is especially true for the tense-aspect combination (TAC) alternately called perfect, present perfect or HAVE-perfect throughout the literature (Housen 2002: 162), which is why it is given particular attention here. Differentiating between the past simple and the past progressive is almost as difficult for EFL students, and the source of much uncertainty and many inaccuracies. Therefore, these three TACS are examined in contrasted to each other with regards to their meaning and use.

While the English tense-aspect system is certainly complex, especially in the eyes of a learner whose first language is a non-aspect one, such as German, recent research has also come up with the suggestion that the traditional analyses leading to the “rules” mentioned by Didion might not provide the kind of insights necessary for language learners to acquire an adequate mental representation of the meanings of different forms (Schmiedtová & Flecken 2008: 358). Joan Didion wrote the words above in the late 70s, when language analysis was firmly in the hands of structuralists and generativists, intent on accurately describing language phenomena in accordance to the clear-cut criteria intrinsic to what was regarded as good scientific practice of these days. This goes hand in hand with Langacker’s (2008b: 3) assertion that even for native speakers the concept of grammar “represents the danger of being criticized for breaking arcane rules they can never quite keep straight.” In the quote at the onset of

this thesis, Didion acknowledges the rules these linguists have found, but contrasts them with her personal perception of what grammatical structures contribute to a sentence - an angle from which to look at a situation, instinctively chosen by native speakers. This is what cognitive grammarians attempt to establish, namely the way language constructions are structured in speakers' minds, the angle from which they view a situation, that lead to a given usage, rather than at a correct description of what Langacker (ibid: 3) calls a "system of arbitrary forms based on abstract principles unrelated to other aspects of cognition or human endeavor". Cognitive grammarians argue convincingly that grammar has a function beyond linguistic accuracy, it has meaning. Cognitive Construction Grammar (CCxG) stresses that this meaning is conceived, stored and used as one entity, even if it be made up out of component parts. The possible benefits for learners are self-evident; if this holds true, then grammar, and also past-time grammar, can be understood rather than having to be rote-learned.

Consequently, this thesis discusses only some of the many frameworks in which three of the English TACs that express pastness, namely the past simple (PaSi), the present perfect (PrPe) and the past progressive (PaPr), have been analyzed throughout the years. Their foundations are discussed in section 2. More importantly though, this thesis takes a close look at what the cognitive linguists' way of viewing these constructions reveals. In keeping with the current trend in cognitive linguistics, the perception of the TACs in this analysis exceeds the notion of them having mainly a temporal reference function and stresses these meanings in the mind of the language user, the particular way in which he or she perceives and, consequently, encodes a specific situation. A description of Cognitive Grammar (CG) and Cognitive Construction Grammar (CCxG) and what light they shed on the meaning of grammatical constructions therefore makes up section 3. This is done with the target group of EFL learners in mind, in line with Langacker (2008a: 8), who regards the pedagogical application of Cognitive Grammar (CG) as "an important empirical test for the framework". The analysis of what factors about the perspective a language user has on a given situation come into play when choosing one pastness TAC over the other

has clear implications for learning and teaching past time constructions. These factors point to the different senses of a construction and possibly help to develop the concepts necessary for selecting the TAC that expresses their own conceptualization of a situation best.

These theoretical considerations are followed up upon in a small-scale corpus study described in section 4. The mini-corpus assembled for this purpose is made up out of 300 text excerpts sampled from the Brigham Young University - British National Corpus. Equivalent situations in all three pastness TACs were isolated in randomized fashion and then analyzed in terms of their differences in conceptualization. This was done for each TAC separately as well as for all three in contrast. The core questions addressed in this second part of the thesis are what differences in conceptualization of the three pastness forms there are, what senses they represent and whether or not these senses correlate with specific language patterns the TACs occur in. The analysis aims at establishing a number of central and less central senses for each TAC. These senses are mainly connected to a speaker's perception of a situation in his or her mind rather than the actual situation as it takes place in the world. As they feature prominently in many pedagogic grammars for teachers and learners¹ (e.g. Swan & Walter 2011; Murphy 1993), special attention is also paid to the co-occurrence of those temporal adverbs that are commonly associated with the present perfect, the past progressive and the past simple respectively.

Whether or not the senses thus established are conveyed to EFL students in a meaningful way was originally intended to be part of this thesis as well. A close reading of the text book series *MORE!* (Gerngross et al. 2007) and the way it introduces the senses and meanings of the three TACs under examination would be an interesting way to go about approaching this issue, but unfortunately exceeds the scope of this project. Too little has been said about the pastness TACs meanings in CG

¹ 'Learners', in the context of this thesis, are foreign language learners of English, unless explicitly otherwise specified.

² While this might seem, prima facie, too obvious a fact to state, this contention is not an uncontested

and CCxG so far to already take the next step and measure the results against existing teaching material. So far the application lacks the firm theoretical basis necessary. With this thesis, I hope to contribute a small measure to this basis, leaving the text book analysis as a future project growing out of the work done here. In the present thesis, only some first indications of what is useful for learners and teachers of English when approaching the issues of choosing the appropriate TAC when writing or speaking about past situations are enumerated in section 5.

Carried out to a large degree within the cognitive paradigm, this thesis aims to canvass the analyses of the different ways pastness can be expressed in English in the light of what can be perceived as beneficial for language learners. In short, it explores how native speakers chose the Didionian camera angles with regards to pastness TACs in order to get a first idea of how learners might be supported in making the 'camera of English pastness TACs', as Didion might call it, their own, and chose the angle that will show the object of interest in the way they intend it to be seen.

2. Time, Tense and Aspect

As Michaelis (1998: 1) so deftly puts it:

Those who explore tense and aspect seek to relate presumably universal features of conceptual structure [...] to the language-particular resources which are available for talking about situations. It is only through careful examination of the latter that we arrive at the former.

While languages do indeed differ in their resources available for talking about it, there seems to be a universal agreement on the experience of time that exists independently of language. An entity capable of thought **is** at a certain point in time - the present - and if it still is an instance later, then it **was** at that point that is now past and **might still be** an instance later. In this way we arrive at a temporal categorization of past (PaT), future, and, fleeting as it may be, present². Nevertheless, the English language is said to have but two linguistic tenses, present and past, as only those two can be realized via inflection of the finite verb (e.g. Aronoff & Fudeman 2005: 160). Then other construction elements such as the perfective and the progressive are treated as modifications rather than part of the tense, in line with Comrie (1976:3), who defines them as aspects, as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation”. Declerck (2006: 22) identifies seven constructions as “form[s] taken by the verb to locate the situation referred to in time”, i.e. as tenses, as his categorization does conceive perfective constructions as tenses, but not progressive ones. Most grammarians agree to consider a combination of the two, the perfective and the progressive, like in *I have been sitting here all day* a form of the perfective aspect (eg. Michaelis 1994: 113; Depraetere & Reed 2000: 89). Textbooks

² While this might seem, prima facie, too obvious a fact to state, this contention is not an uncontested one. Whorf (1956: 57) , for example, famously writes that he finds it “gratuitous to assume that a Hopi who knows only the Hopi language [...] has the same notions, often supposed to be intuitions, of time and space that we have, and that are generally assumed to be universal”. The exact differences in temporal conception be as they may, it would be just as gratuitous to assume that speakers of, for instance, Kwakwaka, a language that does not encode temporality grammatically at all, do not differentiate between such universal experiences like situations in the past, the presence and the future. In any case it can be assumed that this temporal distinction is prevalent in Europe, Australia and North America, and is thereby shared by the learners in question and by a large part of the native speakers of the target language.

for learners (eg. Diwold et al. 2006; Gengross et al.2007) on the other hand, generally introduce each construction denoting elements of temporality in one way or another separately, which results in a total of a up to eighteen forms called *tenses*.

It does not inevitably follow from this divergence that any one of these theories is correct, or even closer to the truth than another one. The pivotal question to be asked in the context of this thesis is which description is most revealing in terms of making the meaning and use of English's TACs approachable for language learners. Superficially tempting but ultimately disappointing in this context is the notion of a cross-lingual meaning, function or use of a given construction, as has been explored by researchers such as Rothstein (2008). While this was, indeed, not the main focus of her study, Collins (2007: 299) showed once again that such analogous structures can lead to problems for language learners rather than possibly helping them via an opaque, underlying, overarching meaning. Just as it would be erroneous to presume that, simply because a pair of similar sounding words of two languages are likewise related in meaning if they come from the same etymological background, such as the English and German word *couch/Couch*, this should be true for all such homographs³, it should be seen as equally unlikely that analogous grammatical constructions always have one overarching cross-lingual meaning. As posited by cognitive grammarians, grammatical constructions carry meaning, signify a signified, so to speak⁴. Already Saussure (1959: 68) stresses that the signifier-signified relationship is unique to each language. Consequently, studies of this particular persuasion are disregarded in this thesis.

For two reasons the objects under scrutiny in this thesis are mainly the entire TACs rather than the aspects alone, separate from the tenses. The first reason for this is a practical one. The aim of this thesis is an analysis that has the needs of EFL learners in mind. State approved school textbooks as well as long-standing teaching traditions

³ To illustrate this, one might consider the rather significant difference in meaning, if a person is given the English *gift* or the German *Gift* [*poison*].

⁴ An extensive discussion of this can be found in section 3.1.

lead to EFL students generally learning the TACs as unified entities. An adequate application of the theoretical considerations and the empirical study to Austrian learner's needs would be difficult if they were not treated as such here. The second reason is of a theoretical nature. The approach that forms a large part of the basis for the analysis of the tenses and aspect in question and their respective acquisition here is that of Cognitive Construction Grammar (CCxG). Goldberg (2006: 69ff.) argues compellingly that elements reoccurring frequently in a given pattern are viewed as being stored in the mind as one entity with a particular meaning attached to the entire unit, and are learned as such⁵. Consequently, the subsequent analysis mainly examines the meaning of the respective constructions as a whole.

In the following, the nature of tense and aspect are discussed as they are relevant to the discussion of the TACs present perfect, past simple and past progressive in section 4. Despite the announcement at the outset that this thesis analyzes TACs in their entirety, these sections deal with the components TACs are made up of. While maybe seeming counterintuitive at first glance, this gains credence in light of Goldberg's (2006: 5) latest definition of constructions as also encompassing reoccurring surface forms the meaning of which can indeed be made up of its component parts. Nevertheless, they are processed as one entity and, hence, have meaning of their own.⁶ The two elements that make up the constructions in question are tense and aspect. Verb tense, though, is rarely discussed exclusively on its own, so 2.1. in part already comes back to a description of TACs while 2.2. and 2.3. deal with the aspectual components on their own.

⁵ The reasons for taking on this particular viewpoint and its core statements as they concern the matter at hand are delineated in section 3.

⁶ One might imagine this as a similar process to tasting a cup of hot chocolate. Yes, the flavor is made up of that of milk, cocoa powder and, possibly, sugar, but if asked to identify the substance, one would say "Tastes like hot chocolate" rather than "Tastes like milk and cocoa". Other aspects of what hot chocolate stands for, like, for example, comfort on cold nights or breakfast as a child, then accompany this identification, depending on the experience of the drinker. For a complete analysis, hot chocolate is seen as an entity, but it would be remiss to ignore the components it is made up of, as they determine its flavor. This is discussed more extensively in section 3.

2.1. Temporal deixis

No matter what categorization of tense or aspect be applied, a long-standing tradition in linguistic research assigns the tenses a deictic function, namely that of anchoring a situation in relation to another time frame, such as, most obviously, that of speech time (S). In Reichenbach's (1947: 71) words "[t]he tenses determine time with reference to the time point of the act of speech". This assertion has been expanded (eg. by Leuscher 1977) to include non-temporal functions as well, but linguists as well as textbook writers have focused on this temporal distance in order to elaborate on the senses of various tenses (cf. Dirven et al. 1989; Sinclair 2005⁷; Declerck 2006; Gerngross et al. 2007). For Radden and Dirven (2007: 202ff.) temporal deixis is also the most prominent meaning component of any TAC. All utterances have to be specified in relation to the moment of speech (commonly referred to as speech time, S) since this is the moment the speaker and listener share⁸, via a combination of the respective relationships between the perceived moment in time an event took place, i.e. event time (E), S and, in case of a shift of viewpoint, this newly established point in time, the reference time (R). Additionally, notions of time can be specified in absolute or relative terms, i.e. they can be coded lexically via independent time designations such as *May 17th*, or, more commonly, via ones relative to S or R, such as *yesterday*, *in two minutes* or *two hours later*. In their analysis, Radden and Dirven follow the terminology of Reichenbach, (1947: 280f), who established precedence (__) and simultaneity (,) of S and E as defining the three basic temporal relationships of past, present and future. These can therefore be represented as E_S, E,S and S_E respectively, since the past domain deals with events preceding the moment of speech, present time events are valid at the moment of speech and future events lie in a temporal domain following speech time. As far as ordering relations go, however, their account seems almost reminiscent of Jespersen's (1933: 230f.) three-fold distinction between present, past and future, the latter two of which are in turn

⁷ In fact, in the Collins Cobuild English Grammar, TACs can only be found under the chapter heading "Expressing time".

⁸ This relationship becomes more complex in written communication as the moment of encoding and decoding are not the same.

divided into before-past, past and after-past and before-future, future and after-future respectively, as Radden and Dirven (2007: 202ff.) consider temporal deixis as pointing at a variety of Es anterior and posterior to past, present and future.

All these temporal distances are assumed to be objectively determined⁹ and can therefore be seen as something of a universal experience. Students of all language backgrounds can be assumed to be able to relate to them at least to a certain extent. Consequently, textbook writers (e.g. Gerngroß et al. 1996: 35) often try to link the meaning and use of the different TACs to distances on the temporal axis.

In many cases, however, the temporal distance between S and E or the actual duration of an event will not necessarily be helpful to learners. In sentences like for instance (1), (2) and (3), they can, in fact, be the same.

(1) My brother and I **watched** *The Lord of the Rings* yesterday. What a great movie.

(2) Oh no! Not *The Lord of the Rings* again! We've just **watched** it.

(3) At eight o'clock my brother and I **were watching** *The Lord of the Rings* in our room and our parents were cooking, I think.

As addressees of these utterances, students will not be able to glean the full range of information with a temporal interpretation of these TACs alone in mind, and if faced with wanting to describe a situation and having to choose between the different constructions available to them, they would have little to go on. In Reichenbach's original model, (1), (2) and (3) would be noted down as E_S. Reichenbach (1947) recognized the insufficiency of this model and adapted it, introducing R, a reference point, a place in time where the utterance is grounded. This point of reference helps to disambiguate the three TACs to a certain degree by coding them differently as (1) R, E_S, (2) E_R, S and (3) R, E_S. While this sheds new light on the conceptualization of

⁹ This is, of course, not true for hypothetical future events, but only for those events as are focus point of this thesis, namely those that took place in the past.

the PrPe, it still leaves (1) and (3) with the same notation. Reichenbach (ibid: 72f.) tries to resolve this by giving a graphical illustration of the TACS:

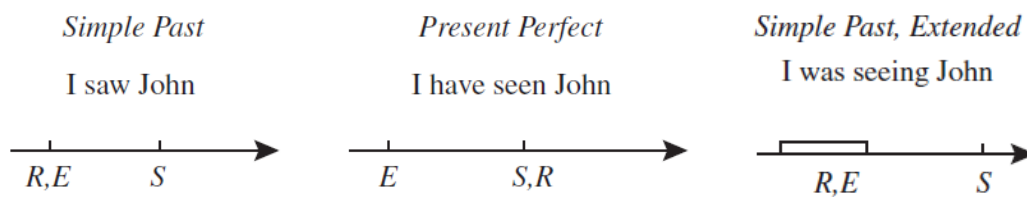


Figure 1: The difference between past time TACS in Reichenbach's model

Reichenbach (ibid: 83) accounts for the bar covering R and E in the PaPr (which he calls "Simple Past, Extended") by stating that the progressive implies duration or repetition. Both do not apply in (3), for example, since the act of watching takes the same amount of time in (1), (2) and (3), nor in (4), where the action that was perceived as the unlocking of the door cannot be considered as taking particularly long as such or being repeated.

- (4) [H]e found he had succeeded in locking it when he had thought he **was unlocking** it. (BNC H8T)

The illustration of the PrPe in figure 1 falls short for similar reasons. While it works well for the given sample sentence, it does not cover other prominent senses such as in (5), where E unarguable includes S as well and should therefore be noted down as such, rather than being distanced from S and R as it is in the model. Purely deictic models can account for neither of these speech samples.

- (5) Iris **has known** Philippe for quite a long time. (BNC GVH)

These are just some of the many possible examples that demonstrate that TACS do much more than just locate processes or states on the time axis. Already Reichenbach's model exceeds the notion of pure temporal deixis as R cannot be objectively fixed but is rather an agreement between addresser and addressee, and often depends on the context and co-text of an utterance, but has been shown it is not detailed enough. TACS can be conceived as a lens through which to look at a given

event in the past, tell the hearer that the speaker in this instance construes¹⁰ the past situation in a certain way and invites him or her to do so as well. There is more to them than only this element of viewpoint, although it is suspected that it will prove a very prominent element indeed. In Depraetere and Langford's (2012: 137) words: "When more than one form can be used to refer to a particular time-sphere, each of the alternative forms highlights a particular vision of the situation or time-sphere". What elements within this vision are determined by the use of TACs is what this study is about.

What students might be able to take from this kind of information, the mental concept they might hopefully develop, is that of a TAC as a construction with a certain meaning that filters the viewer's view on the situation in question. Depending on what the situation in question encompasses, the outcome may be different, but, ideally, can be related back to the prototypical meaning of the construction. It seems almost trivial to point out that the conception of a grammatical form as meaningful might have powerful implications for the language classroom. The rote learning of all the possible usage events calling for a given TAC will often be experienced as tedious or even daunting. In contrast, if the TAC has an inherent meaning that one may or may not want to accompany a sentence, the application of TACs turns into a conscious, informed decision that can, at one point, become automated. Having looked at the TACs' properties of temporal deixis and found them, while very valuable, incomplete in terms of describing the meaning conveyed by these structures, the next section comprises a closer analysis of what aspects are and what bearing they are generally said to have on a sentence's overall meaning in order to approach the issue from a different angle.

¹⁰Construals are explained in detail in section 3.1.

2.2. Aspect

Definitions of aspect throughout the literature tend to concur with that of Brinton (1988: 3), who defines it as “viewpoint or perspective on a situation”, be that of a temporal nature, as in Comrie’s definition mentioned in section 2 or more speaker-centered, as in Smith’s (1986:100). If the term is not compounded or specified, aspect usually refers to grammatical aspect, like in Radden and Dirven’s (2007: 196) definition that stresses that it is, indeed, a “grammatical form used by a speaker in taking a particular view of a situation”. However, they, as well as Smith and many others, also address what is here called lexical aspect, the type of event in a situation in question, i.e. the prototypical temporality it is conceived as inherently bringing with it, and address the interaction between lexical and grammatical aspect. Shirai and Andersen (1995: 744) point out that, essentially, both types of aspect that together make up the temporal viewpoint the addressee of an utterance is invited to infer from the speaker’s encoding are the speaker’s choice, since both are linguistic properties and only in part linked to the situation at hand. Granted, lexical aspect is more closely bound to the event in question than grammatical aspect, but there is a certain amount of leeway in choosing which elements of a given event to highlight. Thus, for example, deciding whether to state that someone *is on the run*, *runs*, *flees from the police* or *escapes* means deciding whether to use a state verb, activity verb, accomplishment verb or achievement verb respectively (cf. Vendler 1967). This influence on overall-meaning that furthers the TAC’s perceived opacity for learners and the fact that recent studies (e.g. Andersen 1991; Rocca 2002; Houses 2002) have debated the influence of lexical aspect on TAC acquisition in first and especially second language learning demand a separate discussion of this issue in the present thesis.

2.2.1. Lexical Aspect

In the interest of looking at the meaning of the component parts of TACs, Vendler’s (1967: 97ff.) and Declerck’s (2006: 49ff.) respective four way distinctions between types of actions that verbs can express on an ontological level are outlined and contrasted here. Many tests concerning, for example, the ways in which verbs with

different lexical aspects interacting with adverbials or conjunctions have been conducted (cf. e.g. Verkuyl 1972) to show how relevant this distinction is for an accurate analysis of the grammatical system. Special importance arises out of the fact that different types of verbs also interact differently with the grammatical aspects as such, and, consequently, have an effect on the acquisition of TACs (cf. Shirai & Andersen 1995).

Vendler (1967: 97ff.) differentiates between those actions that are made up of individual elements, such as *running*, and those that cannot be broken into individual smaller actions, like, for instance, *knowing*¹¹. While in the former, one lifts up a leg, extends it in a rapid fashion, sets it down on the ground and so forth, one either knows something or does not. If there are individual processes going on in the mind, we are not consciously aware of them and thereby do not perceive the act of knowing as such. Vendler (ibid: 101) calls verbs like *knowing* “homogeneous”, whereas verbs like *running* are considered to be “inhomogeneous”. The inhomogeneous verbs he subdivides further, pointing out that some of these have an inherent endpoint to them and some do not. He arrives at this conclusion by contrasting somebody *pushing a cart* and somebody *drawing a circle*. While it is equally possible to say

(6) Peter is pushing a cart. and

(7) Peter is drawing a circle.

the termination of the action in (6) will always result in the cart having been pushed, while (7) does not imply that a circle has indeed been drawn. Similarly, any part action of the action “to push a cart” represents, indeed, the pushing of a cart, whereas “to draw a circle” cannot refer to drawing the first quarter curve. The reason for this is

¹¹ In fact, Vendler’s first criterion as to which class the verbs belong to is whether or not they can typically be put into the progressive aspect or not. This is not completely salient for achievement verbs, as a progressive version might not be representative for what Vendler (ibid: 99) calls their “dominant use”, but they function well in strongly prototypical progressive constructions. Moreover, the argument becomes highly circular once researchers point out that “stative verbs do not have progressive forms” (Comrie 1976: 35), which would then be part of their definition rather than an observation of their grammatical behavior. True to a meaning-based account, this unfortunate criterion will therefore be disregarded for the discussion of lexical aspect in this thesis.

that (7) describes a telic action, one that has a goal which also signals the action's endpoint. Only if it is, indeed, reached, is the circle drawn.

Subdividing the group of actions that cannot be broken up into individual processes, i.e. the homogeneous verbs, Vendler points out that there are some verbs that signify a lasting state, even if just for a short amount of time, and others that, in fact, can only be predicated for the briefest of instances that are virtually over the moment they are carried out. *Knowing* would be an example of the former group, whereas the latter could be represented by *to reach something*. In both these features, homogeneity and duration, Declerck (2006: 51, 55, 57) makes the same distinctions¹². However, he adds a special type of homogeneous situation, namely those that describe evolvement of some kind, which he calls "process" (ibid: 67)¹³. Some of these processes would be classified as activities in Vendler's analysis (e.g. *to increase*), some as achievements (e.g. *to get dark*).

Another important point Vendler (1967: 106) raises is that some actions are undertaken deliberately and can be stopped at will, whereas others cannot. One cannot as such keep oneself from recognizing someone, but whether or not to greet that person is open to choice. Here, Declerck (2006: 53) adds the feature of agentivity.

A situation is AGENTIVE if any actualization of it is caused (i.e. performed or instigated) by an agent. The AGENT is the entity that is responsible for the actualization of the situation, in the sense that it actually does something that induces the situation to actualize

In most instances, agents are [+human], but other agents such as the tornado in *The tornado destroyed our school* are in use as well. Not all agents in subject position are followed by a verb that is ascribed deliberateness, however. In *When Harry stepped*

¹² His claim that Vendler classifies states as nondurative (ibid: 70) is not clearly explained, and since Vendler (1967: 106) writes that "For states: *A loved somebody from t1 to t2* means that at any instance between t1 and t2 A loved that person", it is highly doubtful that Declerck's interpretation is valid. Hence, this alleged difference between the two frameworks is disregarded here.

¹³ This category is taken over from Lyons (1977) in slightly adapted form.

outside, his eyes still closed, he inadvertently killed a ladybug that was crawling around on the porch, Harry can hardly be accused of intentionally killing a beetle.

Via his considerations, Vendler arrives at the following classification of verbs through the semantic features of telicity, punctuality, homogeneousness and dynamicity:

	Homogeneous-ness	Telicity	Punctuality	Dynamicality	Examples
Achievement	+	+	+	+	<i>lock, reach, shut</i>
Accomplishment	-	+	-	+	<i>bake a cake, read a book, go home</i>
Activity	-	-	-	+	<i>run, sing, dance</i>
State	+	-	-	-	<i>live, have, stand</i>

Table 1: Vendler's (1967) types of lexical aspect

Declerck (2006: 68ff.) foregoes a classification depending on telicity and homogeneousness for one that includes agentivity and whether or not a situation is evolving. He distinguishes between states and actions like Vendler, highlighting that actions have to be agentive. Evolving situations he classifies as "processes", non-evolving ones are called "events", as is shown in table 2.

	static	evolving	agentive	Examples
Event	-	-	-	<i>explode, rain, happen</i>
Process	-	+	-	<i>grow, develop, die</i>
Action	-	-	+	<i>walk, read, drink</i>
State	+	-	-	<i>be, need, believe</i>

Table 2: Declerck's (2006: 68) types of lexical aspect

This difference in classification, but especially the overlaps between the categories are very interesting in terms of general distribution as well as in terms of the implications on the effect a combination with grammatical aspect brings with it. What both authors call "states" are almost congruent in meaning with only a small number of exception. Vendler (1967: 107), for example, explicitly classifies "being born" as an achievement.

If Declerck does not disregard this classification entirely because of it being, in fact, passive, then he probably would classify it as a state, as it fulfills the features of being non-agentive, non-evolving and a static fact about a person. Of course, many of Vendler's achievements and accomplishments, such as *to start something* or *to chase somebody away* would be perceived as actions by Declerck because of their being [+agency]. Those accomplishments [-agency] are mainly processes, while the majority of the [-agency] achievements can be classified as events. Therefore, the overall class of actions is much larger than that of activities, but all activities are actions.

All seven terms, "state" (St_v for Vendler's and St_d for Declerck's; St if according to both definitions), "activity" (Act_v), "achievement" (Ach), "accomplishment" (Ach), "process" (Pr), "action" (Act_d) and "event" (Ev) will be used, and the study will explore how they all interact with different temporal and conceptual notions of aspect¹⁴. If the corpus analysis reveals a higher salience for Declerck's categorization, then this has an especially high implication for the perception of the influence of agency on the use of TACs, as this is the category where they differ most.

Vendler (1967: 106f.) assigns the four lexical aspects he has carved out specific time schemas.

[T]he concept of activities calls for periods of time that are not unique or definite. Accomplishments on the other hand, imply the notion of unique and definite periods. In an analogous way, while achievements involve unique and definite time instances, states involve time instants in an indefinite and nonunique sense.

This relates back to Ach and Acc being telic. Their having an inherent endpoint can be assumed to ground them differently in time than the temporally more open Act_v and St_v. It is important to note that this kind of atelic openness does not necessarily imply unboundedness, in a sense that it never reaches a temporal boundary. The ontological

¹⁴ In order to still be able to use some of these in a layman's conception fairly general terms for situations described by a verb, such as 'action' and 'event', I will in the following use the abbreviations to refer to the lexical aspects.

way of defining telicity by focusing on the realization of a situation type (following Depraetere 1995) is sometimes said to run counter to Vendler's distinction of homogeneous versus inhomogeneous. However, Depraetere makes abundantly clear why this is necessary and, in fact, congenial to Vendler's distinction, especially when one considers the meaning of TACs, even if telicity and boundedness are, indeed, closely related concepts. While (8) is telic and bounded, having an inherent endpoint which it has reached, (9) can be said to be telic and unbounded.

(8) I made the bed.

(9) I was making the bed.

In (9) there is a goal, the reaching of which is deliberately attempted, but the action is not complete at R. As can be seen when contrasting (8) and (9), boundedness and unboundedness come into play especially when lexical aspect combines with grammatical aspect; hence, they are often attributed to the grammatical aspect rather than the lexical one (e.g. Radden and Dirven 2007: 175ff.) and will be discussed as a type of construal in terms of perspective in section 3.3.3.

To this end grammatical aspect as such needs to be addressed, and for the lexical aspect as it regards verbs in what Vendler (1967: 107) calls "their dominant use", a linear relationship between telicity and boundedness shall be assumed.¹⁵

2.2.2. Grammatical Aspect

Grammatical aspect, forming the third component part of TACs, is much harder to define, as the literature ranges far and wide from defining only the progressive as a real, grammaticalized aspect (cf. Schmiedtová and Flecken 2008: 364), the perfective¹⁶ as the superordinate term with the progressive being one of the three non-perfective

¹⁵ This intimate interplay between lexical and grammatical aspect and the resulting difficulty of distinguishing between them in a successful and satisfactory way is elegantly resolved in Cognitive Linguistics, as the boarder separating the lexicon and grammar is dispersed with in the multitude of frameworks of this theory.

¹⁶ 'Perfective', here, has to be understood as referring to situations in their entirety, rather than 'perfective' as in 'Present perfect' and 'Past Perfect', which Declerck (ibid: 38) considers to be tenses.

forms (e.g. Declerck 2006: 30ff.), or progressive and perfective in their formal realizations of ‘be + present participle’ and ‘have + past participle’ as equally valid instances of *aspect* (e.g. Collins & Hollo 2010: 82ff.).

Consequently, for this thesis a decision had to be made what to consider as aspect at all. Since a comparison in meaning will be made between the three constructions present perfect, past progressive and past simple, which can all refer back to a situation whose distance to S is the same, as has been shown in 2.1., I actually propose a classification into three parts – into perfective, progressive and simple aspect.

From a purely analytic, linguistic viewpoint, this might seem surprising, maybe even counterintuitive or plainly wrong. The simple aspect is traditionally the unmarked choice, the default form, the norm. However, precisely this can lead to problems for learners whose first language does not distinguish between the above mentioned structures. Niemeier and Reif (2008: 349) address this fact in their discussion of German learners’ difficulties with the progressive aspect, but I suggest that it holds true for the perfective aspect as well.

Learners are often not aware of the concepts underlying the progressive and non-progressive forms, but tend to believe that omitting the progressive marker is tantamount to using a neutral form. Thus, they need to notice that also the non-progressive aspect, often misleadingly called the “simple” aspect, implies a certain mode of construal.

Comrie (1976: 3) most famously defines aspects as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal consistency of a situation”, Biber et al. (1999: 460) view aspects as “relating to considerations such as the completion of events and states described by a verb”, Radden and Dirven (2007: 175) call aspect “the grammatical form used by a speaker in taking a particular view of a situation”. All of these definitions apply to the simple aspect as well. As Niemeier and Reif (2008: 349) point out, it has its own “mode of construal”, there is a specific concept behind the use of the simple forms. In order for students to actually acquire the notion that their conceptualization of *past* needs to be broadened as there are a number of forms in English that can express it and

each of them has a specific meaning, is a specific lens through which a situation can be seen, then all these three forms need to be presented as equally valid choices. Their meaning and use are distinct from each other.

From a pedagogic standpoint, viewing them as three aspects that all combine with a tense and a lexical aspect seems absolutely promising. Therefore, in this thesis I will attempt to conduct an analysis with this assumption in mind. Whether or not a meaning for this simple aspect which spans the uses of present simple (PrSi) and PaSi, can be isolated, goes beyond the scope of this diploma thesis. However, although the overarching meaning of the progressive aspect is almost impossible to define either, nevertheless the notion that it is, indeed, one concept, is strong. The present progressive and the past progressive are similar in form, varying only in the tense of the auxiliary. The same is true for the present perfect and the past perfect. The present simple and the past simple do not have an auxiliary, but if the analogy is extended to their lexical verb, which constitutes the conjugated form there as the auxiliaries do in the progressive and the perfective form, then the similarity in form, at least, is present to a similar degree. A similarity in meaning can then at least be considered.

In order to do an analysis of these aspects justice, the cornerstones of Cognitive Grammar and Construction Grammar – the former of which would, in all likelihood discuss these aspects separately, making necessary a decision on the validity of a category called such; the latter might probably do without – is needed.

3. Cognitive Models

There is a long standing tradition among linguists that views language as an autonomous system, separate from all other aspects of human learning, cognition and social abilities, learned mainly¹⁷ via a special language acquisition device that takes in and sifts through linguistic data, formulates and tests theses about regularities in language and eventually develops a consistent network of rules more or less on its own (c.f. Chomsky 1966:10; McCawley 1976:171). This view is not an uncontested one, however. Researchers of different linguistic affiliations have started to take a number of cognitive abilities and processes into account or even see them as the sole means by which language is acquired and understood. Cognitive Linguists, for example, are of the conviction that meaning is intrinsically embodied. Consequently, they describe language in relation to domain-general processes, i.e. properties and mechanisms of the human mind not specific to language alone, rather than as a separate ability facilitated by a language acquisition device in the human mind. For Langacker (1987: 99ff.), conceptualization, mental experience, autonomous processing, focal adjustments and transformational abilities appear most relevant. Construction grammar theory according to Goldberg (2006: 12) conforms with Usage-Based Linguistics in considering categorization, analogy formation, chunking, cross-modal association and management of rich memory as the cognitive processes most vitally contributing to language learning (Bybee 2010: 14ff.).

Central to all cognitive models is the strong focus on meaning, how it is created and understood, how these processes are learned and how they refer to the concrete world and the mental perception of said world in the speakers' and addressees' minds (Langacker 2008b: 30; Goldberg 2006: 227). Within the paradigm, specific theories differ in their approaches and foci, but some central tenets hold true for the entire field. Verspoor (2008: 80) describes them as follows:

¹⁷ McCawley (1980:183), for example, concedes that some of the domain-general processes, which he calls "[g]eneral purpose learning faculties [,] clearly exist [...] and it is absurd to suppose that they shut off while language is being acquired", but he clearly agrees with Chomsky that "language acquisition cannot be accomplished purely by general purpose learning faculties".

Cognitive linguists hold that language is part of, dependent on, and influenced by human cognition, including human perception and categorization and that language develops and changes through human interaction and experiences in the world.

The two approaches that bring to bear on this thesis, CG and CCxG, complement each other in many ways, and the assumptions underlying them have already insinuated themselves into the previous chapter. They will mainly be treated as two frameworks highlighting different aspects of grammar that complement each other by shedding light on the same object of study from different vantage points within the same research paradigm without contradicting each other. This is how Goldberg (2006: 220ff.) and Langacker (2009a) themselves portray them as well. The differences between the frameworks, however, shall not go unnoticed and will be pointed out in the following section, which discusses the frameworks' main tenets as they are relevant to an analysis of the TAC constructions.

3.1. Grammar has meaning

Both CG and CCxG put great emphasis on the meaningfulness of grammar, which might run counter to the popular notion that grammar mainly has to do with correctness, and that meaning is encoded lexically and maybe on a pragmatic level, but certainly not via syntactic elements¹⁸. One way of establishing grammar's meaningfulness can be to look at Lewis Carroll's (1872: 202) famous Jabberwocky, the first two lines of which read as follows:

(10) Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe

¹⁸ That the notion of autonomous syntax would at one point be considered at least questionable was foreshadowed by developments within transformational grammar itself at the latest when the complex symbols such as Δ were introduced as part of deep structure. If, for example, the active and the passive do not share the same deep structure, how could one argue that they have the same meaning, or are derived from each other?

While without Humpty Dumpty's illuminating comments readers might be at a loss as to who or what *slithy toves* are, where they *gyre* and *gimble* and what this *gyring* and *gimbling* entails, they will in all likelihood still infer that the *toves* are the agents in this situation, imbued with the quality of being *slithy*, who are performing said actions at a specific place. The clues to this information may in part still be found on the word-meaning level, since familiar words like *in*, *and*, *did* and *the* help us to determine the overall sentence structure, but even these can be considered function words that are seen as being grammatical items rather than lexical ones in any case. It is the fact that *the* most commonly precedes a noun that facilitates meaningful inferences rather than any semantic component of the word as such. The morpheme *-y* supports the evidence the conventionalized construction [*the*-adjective-noun] provides for the conclusion that *slithy* is a feature of the *toves* in question. The primary auxiliary *do* in past simple and the [*in-the*-noun] construction signify that certain actions are performed at a certain place. The passive construction subverts this, but generally, the agents go first in a sentence, which helps readers to identify the *toves* as such. Deprived of any directly lexical clues, readers can, therefore, infer that a group of agents that share a common feature were performing two actions at a given place. Who could argue that that is not *meaning*¹⁹?

The corollary of considerations such as these can only be that meaning is not restricted to the field of lexical semantics but deeply pervades the levels of grammar up to that of entire constructions. Consequently, most strands of cognitive linguistics eschew a clear distinction between lexical and grammatical items, as both are conceived as conventionalized, and thereby learned, pairs of form and meaning. Langacker talks about grammar and lexicon as "a continuum of constructions (form-meaning pairings)" (2007: 421f.); as "assemblies of symbolic structures" (2009b: 1). Grammar, then, is symbolic in the very Saussurean sense, which, by implication, does away with the notion of a strongly autonomous syntax.

¹⁹ In fact, neurolinguistic studies (e.g. Bird et al. 2002) on just these function words support the thesis that they and their combination carry meaning.

Since different constructions, even if they are semantically similar, do not mean the exact same thing, CCxG firmly rejects the idea that constructions can derive from others. A passive sentence is not a differently shaped equivalent of an active counterpart that permits a speaker to omit the agent. On the contrary, both forms are meaningful patterns, which, when decoded, shares some of the information they relay, but both bring their own meaning components with them (Goldberg 2006: 10). This is significant, as it implies that they do not come to pass via the transformation of one deep structure, but are rather stored in the mind as two separate forms.

Another difference between the cognitive and the generative approaches, most especially, of course, dependency grammar, is that in CCxG in particular the head of the verb phrase is not considered to determine the argument structure of the sentence nor is it perceived to have a number of related or unrelated senses that do so. Instead, it is the construction itself, the structure of an utterance, that carries a large part of the meaning of the overall structure. Goldberg (2009b: 95) effectively illustrates how a given arrangement of elements can adjust the general meaning of a lexical item to accurately describe the situation at hand by conveying meaning itself with the following sample sentences.

- (11) (a) The chicken cooked all night.
- (b) Pat cooked the steaks.
- (c) Pat cooked the steaks well-done.
- (d) Pat cooks.
- (e) Pat cooked Chris some dinner.
- (f) Pat cooked her way into the Illinois State bake-off.

While the verb *to cook* signifies the process of food being heated in all these sample sentences, the situations they describe are vastly different.

The sentences in (11) show that one verb can be used in all possible complementation patterns, ranging from intransitive (d) to complex-transitive (c). This calls into doubt the traditional classification of verbs into in- mono- di- and complex-transitive ones, depending on how many arguments they take (cf. eg. Collins & Hollo 2010: 103f.).

Rather than having a number of uses of one verb, Goldberg suggests that it is, in fact, not the verb that determines what complementation patterns are possible. Instead, it is the argumentation pattern and its meaning that determines what words can fill the verbal slot within the construction.

Overall, constructions and verbs seem to be similarly equipped to predict sentence meaning, and the very frequent low cue validity verbs such as *get* and *make* are no match for constructions in that field at all (Goldberg et al. 2005). Since the number of possible verbs is higher than that of constructions, their higher category validity would tip the scale towards the construction being the more reliable indicator overall.

Goldberg (2009b: 95) convincingly argues that verbs do not come with labels such as *ditransitive* or even *perfective*, in fact, words do not come with the label *verb* at all. The fact that a given lexical item occurs in the verb position of a construction with sufficient frequency makes us think of it primarily as a verb, so we understand it as such if we consider it in isolation, but it might function as something else entirely as well. An example for this would be the lexical item *chest* that would not traditionally be seen as a verb and is not commonly defined as such in dictionaries (eg. Murphy 2005: 229), but does come up used as such in the BYU in sentences such as (12) and (13).

(12) I chested my way through. (BNC HOM)

(13) Ferguson's cross was chested over the line by Johnston. (BNC AA7)

Rather than having a separate entry in our lexicon for all the different uses a word can have, Goldberg suggests that it is the construction that provides the information necessary to decode the word properly in any case.²⁰ This makes it possible to successfully deal with many cases of lexico-grammatical ambiguity, such as, for example, between the –ing form in progressive sentences and the corresponding

²⁰ This almost monosemous perception of words, somewhat at odds with the general trend in Cognitive Models, will be dealt with in section 3.2.

gerund. Simply put, *swimming* in (14) and (15) is only different because in (15) the construction defines its last component as a noun rather than a verb.

(14) She is swimming.

(15) She likes swimming.

The suffix *-ing*²¹ highlights the unbounded situation of being in the process of swimming where *to swim* would focus on the action as a complete whole, but due to their position in the construction both describe the act rather than the activity, and would hence be considered nounier (one might say: a noun) than a traditional verb in verbal position as in (14).

The results of Kaschak and Glenberg's (2000) experiments with innovative denominal verbs support these theoretical considerations²². They show, to put it in their own words, that "adult participants are sensitive to the meanings associated with particular syntactic forms and that these meanings are not due to previously established meanings of verbs" (ibid: 524).²³

Bybee (2010) adds a diachronic element to the reasoning about grammar being meaningful. The studies about grammaticalization she discusses show that, more often than not, grammatical structures and markers actually arose out of lexical items, resulting in what she describes as *grammatical substance*:

[T]here is actual grammatical substance that can be handed down across generations in grammatical morphemes just as in lexical morphemes. That semantic substance is discernible and acquirable through the contexts of use of grammatical morphemes within constructions. (ibid: 166)

²¹ For a more detailed discussion of the meaning of the past progressive see section 4.2.3.

²² It should be noted, however, that, while their results lend themselves to an interpretation in favor of CCxG, the authors stress they do not rule out other existing approaches to form–meaning links.

²³ They do, however, add an additional semantic layer to the meaning of a construction, namely that of the affordance of each argument in the construction, similar to Lakoff's (1987) image schemas, that determine and restrict the metaphorical extensions possible, or, in this case, the verbal roles a noun can fulfill.

It is important to point out that, rather than this being actual, conscious knowledge about the history of one's language, this kind of grammatical substance is retained because the change is so gradual that some of the initially semantic regularities and restrictions remain in the usage, even though the purely lexical indications for them have faded.

3.2. Constructions

"Constructions (not 'rules') are the primary objects of description"
(Langacker 2007: 421)

So far, the term "construction" has been used throughout the chapter without it having been clearly defined. The reason for this lies in the term being, at least on the surface, rather straight-forward and almost intuitively understood. A construction is, as the term suggests, a meaningful element that can be used to build a larger meaningful element and that can, and usually is, in turn constructed of other such elements. On a deeper, more specific level, constructions are defined very differently by a number of linguists, which makes it necessary to discuss the concept in detail here.

Goldberg (2006: 5) most recently describes constructions as follows:

All levels of grammatical analysis involve constructions: learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function, including morphemes or words, idioms, partially lexically filled and fully general phrasal patterns. [...] Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist. In addition, patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency.

The first noteworthy point is that there are levels of constructions. So, different elements that are already seen as constructions can be combined to form larger constructions. Drawing heavily on Lakoff's work, Goldberg (1995: 70ff.) describes how the meaning of a smaller construction is largely retained in, or "inherited" into the

larger construction, unless some intrinsic element of the construction prevents this. For instance, in (12) and (13), the transitive construction has the information of [agent + action + object] ingrained ²⁴, which conflicts with the information of *chest* being an object. In the normal mode inheritance the information is then partially retained, so, of course, many affordances of *chest* play into what the actual piece of language then means, with the information of *chest* being an object being preserved in part, namely as the object that causes the motion required by the construction. Langacker (1987: 47) discusses this issue via motivation theory, pointing out that, while the meaning of a construction is not necessarily predictable from its component parts, there is, nevertheless, a semantic motivation to be found for the meaning. In general, however, his and Goldberg's assumptions concerning this are almost congruent.

However, Langacker (e.g.2009b: 2ff.) clearly does not concede that absolutely every learned pairing of form and meaning down to the morpheme level is a construction. For him, a construction can be either a schema - an abstract representation of an expression like the one given in square brackets above - or the expression itself, the realization of the schema in language use. In any case, it must be made up of more than one symbolic unit, thereby forming a symbolic assembly. On the one hand it makes sense to distinguish between complex constructions, the name of which already suggests that it might be made up of other, smaller elements, and units that cannot be separated into smaller meaningful elements. On the other hand, the process of abstracting the meaning of one of these smaller elements from usage events is highly similar to the process of abstracting the meaning of assembled units for Langacker (2009b: 154) as well. Both carry meaning in similar ways. The smallest symbolic units as well as the largest symbolic assembly can become entrenched in a speaker's mind and can also become conventionalized, i.e. recognized by the other speakers in a speech community, thus forming a linguistic unit (ibid 1987: 62). All of them are, to some degree, stored and processed as one entity. Therefore, it does not

²⁴ Within the very elaborate concept of inheritance, one would say it is encoded on a lower node, one that joined the tree of inheritance before the inheritance structure of the noun. A detailed description of this would go too far here, but can be found in Goldberg (1995) and Lakoff (1987).

seem necessary to really distinguish between these two types of symbolic elements, just as it is unnecessary to distinguish between lexicon and grammar. Bybee (2010: 76) diplomatically defines constructions as spanning all levels of language, like Goldberg, but then states that “the term is usually applied to a morphosyntactically complex structure that is partially schematic”. She even goes so far as to substitute the term *mental lexicon* with *Constructicon*, which she defines as “a lexicon with an inventory of constructions” (ibid: 73). In short, to put it in Goldberg’s (2006: 18) words, one can say “it’s constructions all the way down”.

Important to note here is that constructions can have some of their slots be partly filled already by other constructions (Bybee 2010: 78ff.). The more schematic a construction is, the more open are the slots. This, again, shows how closely lexicon and syntax interact and how conventionalized certain co-occurrences are. Syntactic structure can be lexically specific.

The last point in Goldberg’s description given at the onset of this chapter is, in fact, one where Goldberg herself has extended her definition, which results in the two last lines that might seem redundant at first glance. Whether or not it is necessary that “some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist” in order for a pattern to be recognized as a construction has been the object of some debate. This original description (Goldberg 1995) has been objected to. Langacker (2005: 161), for example, criticized that this definition “excludes from the linguistic system expressions that are definitely learned by speakers (‘entrenched’) and established as conventional usage in the speech community, but just happen to be fully regular”.²⁵ In broadening her definition, Goldberg now takes frequency of occurrence as the most salient factor for a construction, which Bybee (2010: 78ff.) also takes as being particularly important as it is especially the frequently used expressions that are, via the domain-general process of chunking, packed into one larger chunk, as construction.

²⁵ This, incidentally, is precisely what one could say about his exclusion of not-composite structures from a construction analysis.

In the end, however, the essential feature is not frequent co-occurrence as such. The highly frequent strings *of that is*, *of what is* and *of which is*, for example, most likely cannot be schematically be represented as [of + pronoun + is]. Since they are not entrenched in my mind and, to my knowledge, not conventionalized, do not form a unit that carries meaning, they are not a construction.

What matters, once again, is the pairing of form, no matter how large or small, and meaning, that enables a speaker to process this unit as one chunk. How much they are indeed processed as one unit, can be related to the autonomy of the structure (cf. *ibid*: 44f.). Langacker (1987: 292ff.) defines this facet of the semantic pole of a construction as being made up of two related but nevertheless distinct properties, namely compositionality and analyzability. Compositionality refers to the degree to which the meaning of the entire structure is, in fact, inherited from the meaning of the smaller constructions it is composited of. Analyzability has more to do with the actual language user producing or perceiving an utterance. It refers to the degree to which these are actually aware of the component parts and their contributions to the meaning of the chunk. To some degree, this distinction might appear arbitrary. After all, who but the speaker that analyzes the construction can determine its degree of compositionality, unless the issue is one of etymological knowledge that then, if generally absent in the speech community, will not influence the autonomy. Since these are gradable properties, however, they can be realized to a different degree. Langacker exemplifies this by pointing out the difference between the words *triangle* and *three-sided polygon*. While both are equally compositional in their meaning, the latter is, in all likelihood, immediately seen as a three-part word comprised of meaning components while the former is not readily analyzed into its component parts of *tri*, as in *three*, and *angle*.

In line with Goldberg (2006: 3), the structure of both of these, the simple noun and the modified one, are seen as construction, since both are “form and a meaning pairings”. Since the former is more directly entrenched and chunked into one unit of

meaning than the latter, it is more autonomous though, and therefore more constructiony, so to speak.

3.3. Construal

What is the difference though, between a triangle and a three-sided polygon? In terms of reference to the world there seems to be none. Cognitive linguistics, however, does not primarily focus on the relationship between language and the world but rather on a subjective perspective on said world. Using Verhagen's (2007: 48) words: in language we "capture aspects of conceptualization that cannot be sufficiently analyzed in terms of properties of the *object* of conceptualization, but, in one way or another, necessarily involve a *subject* of conceptualization". One could say, therefore that by using *three-sided polygon* instead of *triangle*, one draws more attention to the elements making up a Δ that are mentioned explicitly there, namely the fact that it is a polygon that has three sides. In choosing between these two viable options, a speaker decides whether to opt for the unmarked choice that, to some degree, gives prominence to the angles of the geometric figure, or to highlight the three sides of the structure. Which of the two is more relevant is a speaker based decision. This is analogous to the three utterances about the previous viewing of *The Lord of the Rings* given in section 2.1. Once again, it is not the factual situation in the real world that differs. In cognitive linguistics terms, what matter is how the speaker construes the situation. What, then, is a construal?

When speaking about any kind of event, be it real or imaginary, a speaker cannot help but provide at the same time less and more information than the situation objectively warrants. It can be conceived as impossible to describe every miniscule detail of a given reality, and the consequently necessary selection made by the speaker alone already provides information about the speaker's perspective on the situation in addition to the factual reference to reality. Choices of tense and aspect are no exception, something which Smith (1983: 480) illustrates most effectively:

Speakers can talk about an actual situation in more than one way. For example, suppose that Mary swims regularly at 5 PM on Mondays. I may talk about a certain swim as an event complete in itself, or as one of a series of swims; I may focus on the beginning or end of the swim, or on the middle; I may talk of the swim as an on-going process, or present it in a non-dynamic way. These are aspectual choices in the linguistic presentation of the swim; they are available even though the properties of the situation itself may not vary. The point here is simply that the properties of an actual situation should not be confused with its presentation in a given sentence.

The concomitant contention is not that a speaker's utterance does not have any referential power, but rather the referent is not, in any sense, the empirical world but rather a speaker's conception of a situation in his or her mind. This leads back to Depraetere and Langford's (2012: 137) words discussed in section 2.1. : "When more than one form can be used to refer to a particular time-sphere, each of the alternative forms highlights a particular vision of the situation or time-sphere". This element of choosing between more than one available form happens on all levels of constructions, be it morphological (e.g. *of* versus *'s* in the genitive construction), on the word level (c.f. e.g. *triangle* above) or in a multi-word construction like the TACs discussed here. Which variant is selected depends on how a speaker might be construing, how he or she is "conceiving and portraying" (Langacker 2009b: 317) the situation.

CCxG is sometimes criticized for undervaluing the notion of construal (e.g. Langacker 2007:422). The concept is not disregarded there (c.f. e.g. Goldberg 1995: 44ff. on profiling and participant prominence), but is not applied in depth. A small part of this gap as relevant to the subsequent analysis of TACs describing past situations will be bridged in this thesis.

The four general categories Langacker (2008b: 55) outlines for construals are "specificity, focusing, prominence and perspective". For completeness sake, all of them are described here in brief, but those most pivotal to the discussion of TACs in

the subsequent data analysis are given particular emphasis.²⁶ Ample illustration for their application to TACs is provided in the detailed methodology description in section 4.4.2., hence such exemplification is kept at a minimum in the following.

3.3.1. Specificity

Specificity refers to the granularity of a construction, i.e. from how distant a viewpoint a situation is described. The higher-level the category used is, the more schematic, i.e. less specific is the situation construed. Specificity can be achieved in a number of ways such as using lower-level words or modifiers. Langacker's example for a gradual increase in specificity as one moves downwards in the illustration is given in figure 2.

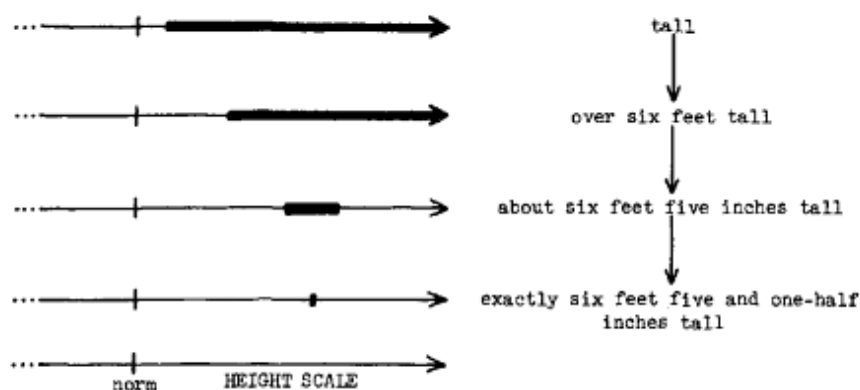


Figure 2: Increase in Specificity (Langacker 1987: 133)

The higher up in the figure, the more coarse-grained is the description the speaker gives. *Tall*, in fact, relies much more heavily on the relationship to the norm-element included in the representation than the other, less granular expressions do.

3.3.2. Prominence

Focusing, which is, in fact, a form of *prominence* is the manifestation in language of the constant cognitive process of organizing elements into foreground and background. It is, in fact, impossible to perceive anything unless it is in contrast to something else. A penciled line is gray in contrast to the white sheet of paper, touch is

²⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, this section follows Langacker's (2008: 55ff.) chapter "Construal".

felt in contrast to the areas of one's skin that are not touched, sound can be drowned out if it is not in contrast to its absence. This is a matter of perception rather than objective truth. An artist's focus might actually have been the white around the penciled line rather than the other way around. We can choose, or are compelled to by a variety of factors, what elements we regard as most prominent. Often, it is, to some degree, the actual situation that, if given without prior context, suggests one element as prominent over the other. A train in a snowy landscape presents itself as the object of focus, for example, by means of movement, color, shape and space it occupies. If the onlookers happen to be studying snow formations against the darker background of a train passing by, however, they will choose to still regard the snow as being in the foreground, despite the situational factor of the train's movement. But even if two elements compete for attention that are the same in all characteristics but one, it is almost impossible to not focus on one or the other. In these cases, it is even more clearly the speaker's subjective choice what receives prominence over what. This can be seen in figure 3, where none of the two elements that are delimited by each other can, indeed, be seen as objectively standing out against each other.



Figure 3: Scott E. Kim's "FIGURE-FIGURE Figure", taken over from Hofstadter (1997: 69)

In fact, in this piece of art Scott uses the same term Langacker (e.g. 1987: 120) would, calling the element that "within a scene is a substructure perceived as 'standing out' from the remainder (the ground) and accorded special prominence as the pivotal entity around which the scene is organized" *figure*. Inadvertently, one of the so called

figures has to serve as ground for the other, though, in order for the figure to be recognized.

The notions of figure (f) and ground (g), relating to foreground and background, again have to do with the choice of compositional paths described in the previous section. According to Langacker (2008: 60ff.), the component parts of a construction are always present in the background, even when the resulting construction is fully entrenched. Langacker (ibid: 60) explains this by means of the tree-diagram-like illustration depicting the meaning components of the word *lipstick maker* provided in figure 4.

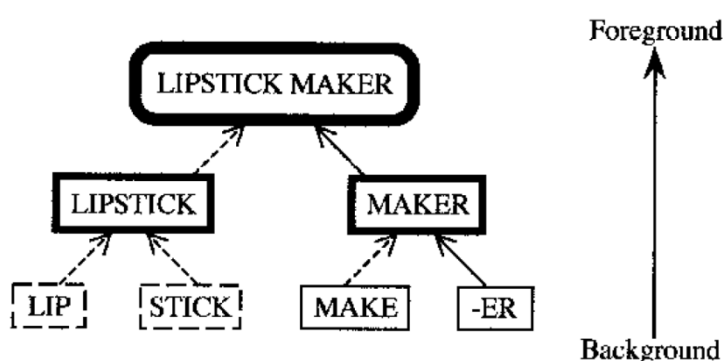


Figure 4: Compositional Path of *lipstick maker* and their relationship to foreground and background

The elements immediately making up the structure are in the foreground with respect to the smaller component parts contributing to these immediate elements. However, the higher the analyzability and compositionality, the more do these backgrounded elements have to be activated in order to make sense of the construction. In *lipstick maker*, *maker* can be perceived as being farther in the foreground than in a word like *troublemaker*, since *troublemaker* is, at least in my mind, more entrenched as one entity.

More directly, though, f and g have to do with the way a number of objects in a given situation are perceived to be in relationship to each other. Talmy (1983: 229ff.), from whose writing this distinction originates, indicates that this relationship to a large degree has to do with the objectively determinable properties of the scene.

Nevertheless, a number of factors can override this. His often-quoted sample sentence *The house is near the bike*, that, indeed, “sound quite odd” (inid: 231) could, for instance, be feasible in an (admittedly far-fetched) dialogue between two bomb specialists that inadvertently left their activated bomb on one of their bikes. *Nothing is close to it, it doesn’t matter if it just goes off there* could then be answered with *The house is near the bike. We need to get it now!* Then the bike, despite its worldly features, can function as ground to the objectively unmovable figure *house*.

Langacker (2008: 70ff.) expands on Talmy’s classification by pointing out that two elements in reference to each other can have focal prominence to different degrees. While the relationship between *The cup is to the left of the tea pot* and *The tea pot is to the right of the cup* is the same, it is the subject in both sentences that receives primary focal prominence. These elements Langacker calls “trajectories (tr)”, which are accessed via their “landmarks (lm)”, the elements that serve as reference points or specifies. Figure 5 shows how this relationship can be applied to temporal situations as well. Two situations following each other in time (t) can be viewed alternately as tr or lm, depending on whether they are connected via *before* like in (a) *The other guests all left before we arrived* or *after* like in (b) *We arrived after the other guests all left*.

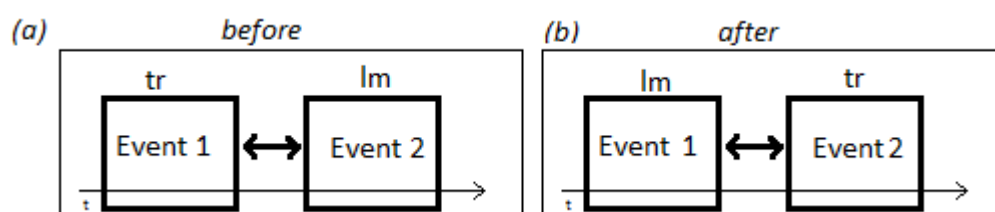


Figure 5: Trajectory and Landmark as temporal notions (from Langacker 2008: 72)

He, however, does not clearly explain whether this implies that one should distinguish between g and lm, and f and tr respectively, leaving the matter open to the interpretation that lm/tr are a type of a g/f pairing. Evans and Green (2006: 181) on the other hand clearly perceive a g as something that can serve as basis for one or two figures, of which one can then be the tr and the other its lm. In their schematic representation of *out* provided here in figure 6, they categorize the container as the

lm and the object moving out of the container as the tr. In their explanations Evans and Green (ibid) make clear that “[t]he container is represented as the landmark because the boundary and the exterior together [...] make it the figure, while its exterior is the ground”.

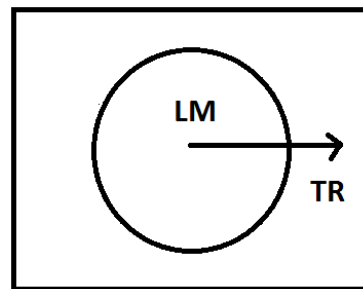


Figure 6: Image-schema for *out* (Evans & Green 2006: 182)

In this thesis, this difference between grounds and two types of figures, namely those that receive primary focus and those that receive secondary focus, is taken over, as it appears to serve well to classify many of the TACs analyzed in the present study. While in many cases only two verbs stand in relationship to each other, in some a third one apparently underlies both of the others, grounding them and serving as platform for the more prominent two. Then this third action is classified as a *g* in the present study.

The last construal notion classified under “focusing” within the group of construal types concerning prominence is that of scope. The immediate scope of any expression is what it directly activates and foregrounds; how far it extends within one’s viewing frame. Our viewing frame of a situation cannot be widened. All we can do is step back and adjust it (cf. figures 7 (a) and (b)). In a way, a viewing frame can be illustrated by a doodle like the one in figure 7 (a). All we see is a neck. However, the maximal scope of what we see is, of course, an entire giraffe, as it extends beyond our viewing frame.

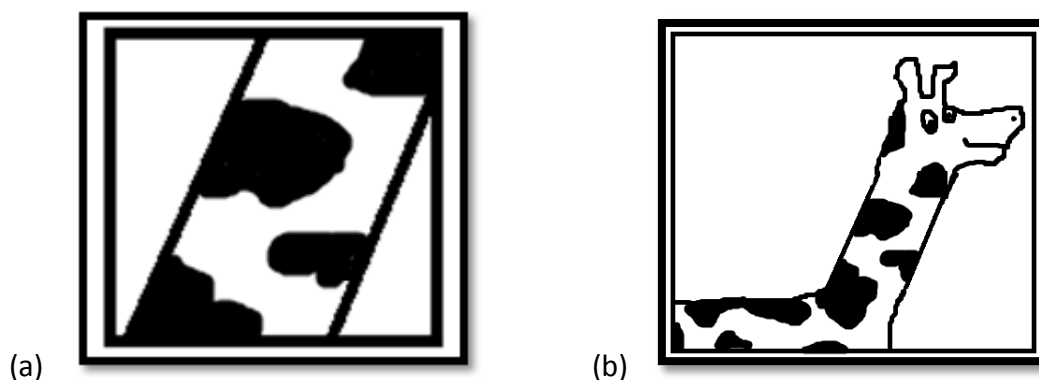


Figure 7: (a) Doodle of a giraffe

(b) Viewing frame adjusted for distance

The problem (or at the same time also the reason why doodles work so well as riddles) is because they actually provide less than the immediate scope. A neck cannot be understood without a head and a torso, because that is precisely what a neck is – the connection between the two other body parts. So, the immediate scope that is given prominence whenever the notion of *neck* is invoked, includes head and torso (like in figure 7 (b)), which are foregrounded in relationship to the entire body, the maximal scope, which is given less prominence. The same is possible for actions as well, as different constructions can cover a different range of the elements involved in a given situation. In Langacker's (1991: 297) words, it is a matter of "how much of the overall situation the speaker selects as the intended coverage of the expression".

The last way to construe prominence Langacker discusses is called "Profiling". Langacker (ibid: 66) defines the profile of an expression as "the specific **focus** of attention within its immediate scope". While the immediate scope of neck that serves as its base is everything we see in figure 7 (b), it is what we saw in 7 (a) that is profiled. Goldberg (1995: 44ff.) describes lexical profiling as part of the semantic description of verbs. By using *to rob* and *to steal*, two words that denote more or less the same situation, she illustrates that difference in meaning can lie in the profiling of the participants involved in the act. Just as *neck* includes a head and a torso, *steal* and *rob* imply the presence of a possessor, goods possessed and a person that illegitimately takes possession of these goods. By using *to steal* a speaker takes prominence from

the victim while profiling the stolen good. *to rob*, on the other hand, profiles the original possessor (see figure 8).

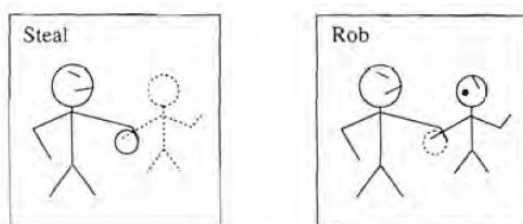


Figure 8: Graphical summary of the difference in semantics between steal and rob (Goldberg 1995: 47)

She, however, rejects this interpretation in favor of a difference in semantic frames, one of which has *victim* substituted with *source*:

rob <**robber** **victim** goods>
 steal <**stealer** source **goods**

She argues that this is a stronger claim – a claim which is based on the fact that one can be said to have *stolen from a safe*, but not *robbed a safe*. However, it is possible to say *He robbed a store* or *She robbed a bank*. In all instances though, an original possessor is still implied in any case, so the relationship remains even when this possessor is pushed into the background. While semantic frames are a valuable way of characterizing a verb, especially when showing how it interacts with the argument structure of a construction, they do not contradict the results of a profile analysis at all, but rather are an efficient way of representing and comparing them. Both characterizations work with the encyclopedic knowledge of the world and the resulting perceived obligatory elements involved in the actualization of a word.

3.3.3. Perspective

When talking about perspective, Langacker refers to the viewing arrangements between the interlocutors and the situation referred to. First and foremost, as with most classes of construal, they mainly deal with spatial issues which will have to be transferred to temporal notions in the subsequent analysis. However, for the two

construal processes classified as perspective, namely vantage point and dynamicity, Langacker already laid down a clear framework for temporal application.

In order for two interlocutors to meaningfully talk about a situation, a common time and place have to be established as referents. These can be real or fictive, but they have to be agreed upon. Otherwise, notions such as *in front of* and *behind*, but also *before* and *after*, cannot be meaningfully established. If the vantage point is, indeed, directly shared, little attention is paid to it. Otherwise, context and co-text are very important factors for the current discourse space (CDS) the interlocutors agree upon. This CDS serves as ground for all utterances. Figure 9 illustrates the current discourse space for (16) (a) and (b).

(16) (a) The triangle is behind the eraser.

(b) I'm not at home at the moment. Please, leave a message.

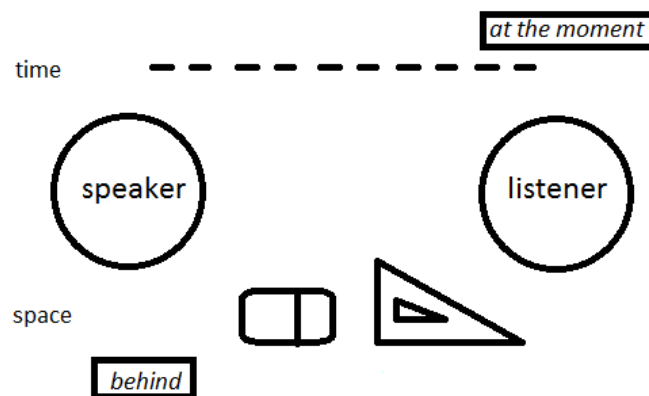


Figure 9: Vantage point in space and time

If (16) (a) is uttered in the situation illustrated in figure 9, the speaker requires the listener to give up his or her own vantage point in favor of the speaker's, while with (b) the opposite is true. Because of the way our universe is structured though, if the interaction takes place in real time, the interlocutors, in fact, have to experience the same moment in time, while it is impossible for them to be in exactly the same place (because no two solid objects can occupy the same space at the same time). Hence, temporal vantage points are most interesting in writing or in reported speech where the vantage points have to shift to accommodate the speaker. But as Reichenbach

(1947) already showed with his introduction of R, it is not only the immediate situation the interlocutors are in while conversing that influences the perspective on a speech situation.

This matter of perspective relates to the notion of boundedness that has already been briefly mentioned in connection with Vendler's (1967) telicity in section 2.2.1. Where a language user's viewpoint lies determines how much of the situation becomes the focus of attention. This is similar to walking up closely to, or magnifying, a painting of a certain width. Depending on where one stands, one will see the left end, middle or right end of the piece of art, with the rest still being perceptible in the peripheral vision, but out of focus, blurry and indistinct. The same is true for actions as well. Depending on where one places the viewpoint, the beginning, middle or end of an action can be brought into focus. Only if one takes a step back and distances the viewpoint does is the whole brought into sharp relief. Then the action is considered bounded (Niemeier & Reif 2008: 349ff.). Depraetere (1995: 3) notably distinguishes between actions that are bounded on the left, i.e. whose beginning is construed as part of the current perspective on the action in question, and those bounded on the right whose endpoint is conceived as present in the language user's communicational field of vision. Both texts agree that for a situation to be fully bounded, beginning and endpoint of the action have to be included in the conceptualization of the situation described. Fully unbounded situations are those where only the middle, the action in process are focused upon. Niemeier and Reif demonstrate the difference between the construal of a situation as unbounded or bounded by means of contrasting the sample sentences *Eric built a snowman* and *Eric was building a snowman* and illustrate it via the illustrations in figure 10 (a) and (b) respectively.

(a)



(b)



Figure 10: Boundedness and Unboundedness (Niemeier & Reiff 2008: 349f.)

While in (a) the whole process of starting, building and completing the snowman are taken into account, in (b) *Eric was building a snowman* at the point in time where the viewpoint, represented by the magnifying glass, is located. Hence the transition from not being in the process of building one to rolling the first bits of snow, as well as the moment where the snowman is complete with nose and hat are disregarded.

From a particular vantage point, such as, for example, the one magnified in figure 10 (b), a speaker phrases his or her words in a certain way that suggests to the listener that the speaker perceives this situation as part of a linear process. This is captured by the concept of dynamicity, the “evolution through processing time” (Langacker 2001: 30). There is a notable difference in sentences (17) (a) and (b).

(17) (a) I filled the beaker only after I had turned off the Bunsen burner and disconnected the pipe. I made sure to turn the gas tab off first.

(b) I turned off the gas tab. Then I disconnected the pipe, turned off the Bunsen burner and only then filled the beaker.

The listener’s conceptualization of the situation follows that of the speaker which, in (a) starts out with the end of the process as a vantage point. Possibly, this vantage point is shared by speaker and listener. Then, together, they backtrack, processing backwards to the start. In contrast, in b. the process is chronological. Which path is taken, once again depends on many factors, such as which elements are construed as new and topical information and what has been established as CDS before, in short,

what meaning the speaker assigns to the elements making up the described situation beyond his or her dictionary knowledge about them.

The last factor discussed here in terms of dynamicity is actually a thoroughly non-linguistic one that cannot really be considered a matter of construal in the strict sense of the word. It is, however, closely related to how a text develops through processing time. In order to not only account for the TACs' meanings, but also their uses, an integral element of understanding any grammatical feature (Larsen-Freeman 2003: 41), one element of use, namely whether the TAC is used to describe an advance (Ad) in storyline or an extend (Ex) is also addressed in this study. Ad refers to a move forward in the narrative, a next action or step. Ex, on the other hand, constitutes additional information, be it strictly necessary in a specifying function or additional information adding details, or descriptions (Johnstone 1999: 251, 253). To exemplify this, we turn again to an excerpt of *Alice in Wonderland*, which is provided in (18).

- (18) They very soon **came upon**^{Ad} a Gryphon, **lying**^{Ex} fast asleep in the sun. [...] "Up, lazy thing!" **said**^{Ad} the Queen, "and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, and to hear his history. I must go back and see after some executions I have ordered"; and she **walked off**^{Ad}, **leaving**^{Ex} Alice alone with the Gryphon. Alice **did not** quite **like**^{Ex} the look of the creature, but on the whole she **thought**^{Ex/Ad} it would be quite as safe to stay with it as to go after that savage Queen. (Carroll 1972: 110f.)

Those verbs marked as Ex in this paragraph constitute descriptive elements. While it says something about the Gryphon that he is asleep in the middle of the day, it does not move the story forward, whereas Alice and the Queen coming upon him does. That the Queen walks off is an action that changes the constellation of characters, while the fact that Alice is, as a result, left is not a new activity but a consequence described by the author. *thought*, the last verb marked in bold, could be classified as either, depending on whether one perceives this thinking process as an action similar to the Queen's saying something, or, as is more likely considering the accompanying adverbial *on the whole*, as an act of inert cognition like the disliking of the Gryphon's looks.

This distinction is a narratological issue in theater studies and, thus, most applicable to the different kinds of narrative texts. Since these make up a fairly sizeable portion of what can be told with pastness TACs, the classification seems applicable nevertheless.

There is, of course, more to say about dynamicity and about the notion of construal in general, but for the scope of the present study, the concepts delineated above will suffice. Most important is the general notion of construal defined by Langacker (2009: 341) as a speaker's "ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways".

3.4. Polysemy, Prototypes and Meaning Networks

Having established the meaningfulness of grammar and the category of constructions as the meaning-carrying elements that are processed to a large degree as one entity, this chapter now concerns itself with the organization of such meaning in general and specifically the meaning of grammatical multi-word constructions.

What has to be borne in mind is that, when learning a novel construction, the words and everything inferable about a speaker's construal of the world coincide, but they are not connected by a handy set of lines that match constructions to their meanings. Instead, (amongst others) one of the domain-specific processes intrinsic to our use of language comes into play, namely that of categorization.

Researchers such as Labov (1973) and Rosch (1975) have conducted elaborate studies about the way individual lexical items are categorized, what dimensions a cup needs to have in order to still be considered a cup and not a bowl, or how good an example of the category furniture a certain category member, such as for instance a table, is. Their research and that of others brought about a shift from the classical theory of categorizing by natural and expected features to prototype theory. The conclusion Rosch, as well as others, drew from these studies was that the membership to a

category is graded. People from roughly the same cultural background classify similar exemplars as more central members of the category, and others as less so. For example, a shirt might be seen as a very central, maybe even prototypical piece of apparel, while a scarf might border on being classified as an accessory. The boundaries of the categories are fuzzy, with some of the exemplars possibly belonging to more than one (cf. Taylor 2003: 43 ff). Two important dimensions named in categorizing are similarity and frequency of encounter (cf. eg. Nosofsky's experiments 1988). Those items that so establish themselves as prototypes are directly activated when the category is mentioned²⁷, but the large number of other instances is present in the background as well.

Taken to the extreme, this realization leads to the conclusion that the majority of lexical items, as clear cut as their meaning may seem at first glance, are polysemous, as each lexical item may refer to a whole range of factually, conceptually or culturally different referents²⁸. Speakers, according to Zelinsky-Wibbelt (2000:3) deal with this overarching polysemy "by learning to evaluate the contextually varying information as being irrelevant for determining the range of application which holds for a particular linguistic expression". Accepting that grammatical structures encode meaning too, it stands to reason that constructions can also encode more or less central senses²⁹ that are all members of the category's senses that are denoted via this construction. Rosch (1978: 98) calls this "the horizontal dimension" of a category. On this level, a number of very prototypical senses can be related to each other, with less prototypical ones surrounding them in satellite-like fashion. Theories of tense and time like Leuschner's

²⁷ That they are, indeed, activated in detail, rather than just a vague impression of possible features that describe the category, is one of the reasons why an encyclopedic rather than a dictionary knowledge of constructions is assumed here.

²⁸ Langacker, a strong advocate for polysemy, (2009a: 170) suggests that CCxG's "preference for monosemy might have been pushed too far", arguing that the highly frequent uses of words or constructions with different senses do carve out a polysemous representation on the mental landscape. While it is evident that Goldberg downgrades the meanings of lexical items in favor of construction meanings, and, hence, also maybe understates some of their complexity, she certainly recognizes that they are polysemous (cf. eg. Goldberg's 2006: 169f. descriptions of 'home' and 'baby').

²⁹ 'Senses' are considered more concrete meaning instances that form parts of the overall 'meaning' of a construction, following Frege's (1948: 207) distinction between 'sense' and 'reference'. Since 'reference' denominates something different in this thesis, namely temporal reference, 'meaning' is used for the overarching, gestalt-like conceptualization of the construction.

(1977) framework, in which he categorizes past tenses and non-past tenses as the distinction between *remote* and *non-remote*, for instance, might be extended to seeing the sense past-being-distanced-from-the-reference-point-called-*present* as the prototypical reading with the numerous other forms of remoteness such as politeness being meaning extensions of the same concept.

Rosch also illustrates a so called “vertical dimension” (1978: 93) that is recognized by both, Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar and Goldberg’s Construction Grammar. Both approaches underline the fact that constructions are related to one another by way of categorizing relationships or inheritance links in networks (Broccias 2008: 82). Within these networks, closely related senses stand together, are connected via a meaning chain or a sort of umbrella meaning that encompasses these senses. Unifying, underlying meanings are superordinate to the categories they describe. More specific descriptions are subordinate. This is illustrated in figure 11, which shows a relational network of writing utensils. The horizontal level is illustrated only for the word *pen* in form of a category circle with fuzzy boundaries that some members breach but not fully cross³⁰.

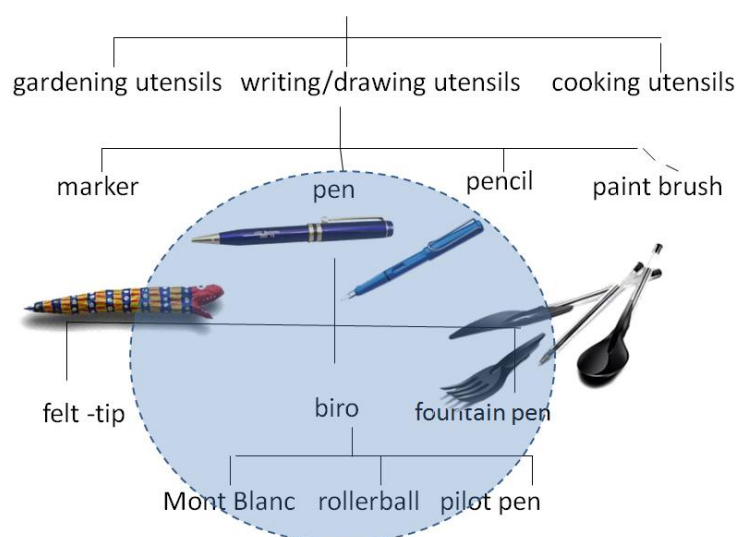


Figure 11: Categorization of writing utensils

³⁰ Langacker’s compositionality can be perceived as a third dimension of meaning. The fourth dimension, which is disregarded in this thesis but definitely constitutes a highly interesting topic for future considerations, is, true to scientific classification, that of time, i.e. a (e.g. Bybee’s) diachronical approach.

Of special interest here is the layer that is commonly called the basic level. Taylor defines the basic level as „the level at which (in absence of reasons to the contrary) people normally conceptualize and name things” (ibid: 50). In other words, when one looks at any of the pictures given in figure 11 in isolation³¹, one has the word *pen* in mind, rather than the superordinate category *writing utensil* or the subordinate one, which might be *fountain pen*, or, even more specific, *Mont-Blanc pen*. In part due to this fact, basic level terms are the ones used most frequently. An interesting criterion for the basic level is also, that the terms there are supposed to have the least in common with members of other categories, while “maximizing the number of attributes shared by members of the category” (Taylor2003: 52). In accordance with these criteria, one can say that in figure 11, the marker-pen-pencil-paint brush- level is the basic level, especially in light of the last point mentioned. While writing and gardening utensils have very little in common, so do their different types. In contrast, Mont Blancs, rollerballs and pilot pens have many features in common.

3.5. How Constructions are learned

Why are considerations like these important for the study at hand? For one thing, the explanations of the meanings of the constructions examined in the study take the form of the networks described above. For another, they require a decision on which descriptors of meaning, since there are so many, aligned in such complex ways, can be helpful for learners of English. To that end, a very brief, and in some aspects simplified, summary of how construction grammarians describe the process of language acquisition is given here, providing first insights into an issue that will be discussed in a more EFL learner centered manner in section 5.

The usage based approaches to language analysis, amongst which CG, CCxG and, of course, Bybee’s models, are counted, take as a central tenet that knowledge about and competences in using a given language are abstracted from the usage events a

³¹ Of course, if a number of them are present, one might use more specialized terms in order to differentiate between them.

speaker encounters (e.g. Langacker 2009b: 154). The approach's advocates (e.g. Dabrowska & Lieven 2005; Goldberg: 2006; Boyd & Goldberg 2009) conclude from a number of studies that children learning their L1 use statistical cues in their development of item specific knowledge as well as generalizations about structures in the language. Important to note is that these clues are language specific and result in a representation of one specific language. As Goldberg (2006: 71), states and emphasizes, **"there are no stable formal cues cross-linguistically** to identify word forms, grammatical categories, or relations".

Statistic cues are, of course, not presented to children by a linguist with a pie chart and a table of figures, but are experienced as children are confronted with tokens over tokens. The domain-general process of rich memory makes it possible to store a large number of the details of these experiences. Those experiences that are largely identical form a representation which Bybee (2010: 14ff.) calls an "exemplar". Chunking, which the cognitive psychologist Allen Newell (1990: 7) famously described as an "ubiquitous feature of human memory" then is the process of grouping frequently³² co-occurring elements together and processing them as one unit with a more holistic meaning. At a later stage, learners recognize that these chunks are made up of a number of different slots, some of which can take a variety of more or less analogous elements. Thereby, the sequence of learning can then be reversed as well; the meaning of the chunk that has already been understood, provides information about the nature of a novel lexical item appearing in one of these slots (Dabrowska and Lieven 2005: 447). Goldberg (2006: 77), describing her 2004 study with Casenhiser and Sethuraman, shows that, especially in mother-child language, constructions often have one or more slot filled at high frequency with only two or three words, designating "a basic pattern of experience". The meaning of these words then often resemble the meaning of the construction as such, which makes it possible for the child to build up a mental representation of the construction from the lexical basis.

³² Frequency plays a major role in the domain-specific processes assumed responsible for language learning and hence are assumed to have a major impact on construction learning (cf. Boyd and Goldberg 2009)

Once the construction is entrenched on the basis of this skewed input it can be filled with new words that then add less prototypical meanings to the construction and are, in turn, colored by the meaning of the construction. This, once again, underlines the close relationship between individual lexical items and syntactical structures.

To exemplify this, we take a renewed look at the caused motion construction that has already been touched upon in section 3.1, illustrating that 'chest' can function in a verby manner. The constructional meaning of caused motion patterns would be noted down as [X caused Y to move Z]. According to Goldberg et al.'s (2004) study, in the speech of a mother addressing her child the verbal slot in this construction is filled to 38% with 'to put'. Ninio's (1999) study of the language of young children speaking Hebrew revealed that the terms more or less equivalent to 'put' and 'bring' in turn are used to fill this slot to an overwhelming majority in children's speech. Her longitudinal study shows that after some time the construction is extended to also include less general verbs, presumably after the correlation between the meaning of the general purpose verbs and the construction have been established. Only then, once the construction is perceived as having a meaning on its own, can it be filled with words like 'chest' which, in turn, adds a nuance to the meaning of chest this lexical item did not have before. If it occurs frequently enough in this construction, for instance if the child is exposed to a lot of talk about soccer, where chesting is a quite normal occurrence, then this sense of 'chest' will become entrenched in the child's mind and form a strong mental representation of it.

Langacker (2004: 48) uses an often quoted metaphor for the mental representations of all these tokens, exemplars and chunks, be they prototypes or meaning extensions, encountered, that offers an alternative to the meaning networks described in the previous section. He suggests comparing their different senses or elements to a mountain range which covers a certain area, i.e. its meaning, but is made up out of a number of what he calls "peaks and valleys". At first glance, each sense seems to be easily discernible from the other, can be counted and named, but as they join each other at their feet, they begin to blend into each other. Only the most prototypical

uses are located at the peaks, those peaks are more schematic, almost abstractions. Most uses are situated towards the valleys.

The highest abstraction of the senses a construction has, an overarching meaning that really encompasses all tokens, is generally then often so loosely defined that it also encompasses other constructions of more or less similar nature. For some constructions it might even be impossible to deduce one. Langacker (1987: 371) suggests a network of related senses instead, which he calls a construction's "schema". Trying to find this schema for a grammatical structure is nothing particularly novel in the field of linguistics. While the usage-based models do not call the existence of such a meaning in question, they do cast a shadow of doubt on its centrality and importance. Bybee (2010: 101ff.) reasons that novel tokens are licensed in relationship to both the high-level generalizations and the exemplars and tokens stored in rich memory. She does not deny or undervalue the existence of these schematic representation, but argues that language users do not refer to them at the rate suggested by those that hope to explain language acquisition via these. Diessel (2011: 834), in his review of Bybee (2010), puts these doubts into a nutshell:

[L]anguage users will often draw on concrete tokens and low level generalizations to license a particular structure. [...] [N]ot every descriptive generalization unraveled by some clever linguist is psychologically real in the sense that it represents the language user's underlying linguistic knowledge.

Actual psychological realness is, of course, nothing any linguistic analysis claims to arrive at. What I understand from this statement is that these generalizations might, in fact, be on such a high level of abstraction that language users might not draw on similarities of this most overarching kind. Whether or not this is, indeed, the case is impossible to determine from a linguistic standpoint. Novel utterances are also not only understood in relationship to concrete tokens, but children seem to be able to produce them based on the generalizations they have made as well as on analogies to concrete tokens or exemplars. (Bybee 2010: 64f.).

What this implies for the subsequent analysis of TACs is that the aim is not necessarily to find one or more overarching schematic representations of the meanings of each TAC, which would account for all tokens. Especially for EFL learners that primarily need to develop a first mental representation of the TACs, meanings that can account for many of the tokens and don't overlap to a great extent with each other are preferable. Of similar importance is to find prototypical exemplars in the form of completely or partially filled constructions that may serve as salient bases for analogies. The contribution of lexical items will be given specific focus. Within the vertical dimension of the meaning network, the representations located on the basic level, are of greatest interest. While it would clearly go beyond the scope of the following corpus study to develop all these, an attempt is made to find at least a modicum of patterns that represent individual senses and see how they relate to each other and lay down partially filled constructions that might represent them.

4. Analysis of Past Time Constructions

This section consists of four major parts. It starts out with a description of the corpus study as such, how the samples were chosen, what criteria were used when and why to analyze these samples and what results might be expected. This is followed by the equally important description of the problems this particular study has posed and the limitations the study's setup brings with it in terms of data interpretation. The study itself is then comprised of two parts as well, the first of which is, at least to some degree, quantitative and describes the TACs in isolation, the second compares sample sentences in the three pastness TACs in a qualitative manner.

4.1. Data and Methodology

Language corpora have been en vogue ever since the technological advances have made them accessible to a large number of researchers and usable in a more convenient way than manually sorting through handwritten data on flashcards stored in shoeboxes³³. While corpora have their intrinsic limitations³⁴, especially when it comes to highly theory driven studies such as this one, their use is almost compulsory for researchers like me who study a language that is not their own and attempt to explore a language-particular phenomenon as subtle as that of TACs. Even a native speaker's intuition cannot be considered totally reliable, though, as not everything that is entrenched is also conventionalized. Also, learned and consciously known information can often override the sometimes subconscious awareness of patterns in language. The latter gains special significance in light of the fact that the information about TACs I, as the person categorizing and drawing inferences from the data, have is primarily that gained in a language acquisition context. If producing my own sample sentences, I would be very likely to come up with precisely what Austrian school textbooks have taught me and not shed light on native speakers' choices in accordance with their construals at all. Hence, the implications for teaching would

³³ And even then linguists such as Sapir were adamant corpus linguists.

³⁴ These limitations are, i.e. aptly summed up by Widdowson (2000).

simply be to keep the status quo. The question to be answered though, is what factors highly proficient or native speakers take into account in their choices when not primed to think of TACs in order to create awareness of these for EFL learners. Therefore, I have assembled a specialized corpus from a native speaker corpus and used descriptors laid down by researchers that did not learn what criteria there might be for TAC choices via Austrian schoolbooks.

4.1.1. Corpus Description

The claim of construal theory, as discussed in section 3.3., is that a language user chooses between different linguistic forms available to describe the same situation in the world on the basis of how he or she perceives the situation and what elements the addressee of the utterance is asked to pay particular attention to. Consequently, in order to differentiate between the different construals, samples that describe similar situations but use different TACs had to be found.

To that end, the base corpus from which the sub-corpus for this study was derived needed to be large enough to make the finding of such samples possible, tagged for verb type and syntactically parsed. Davies' (2004 -) monolingual, synchronic *Brigham Young University - British National Corpus* (BNC) lent itself to this purpose because of its immense scope of 1.000.000 words, its fairly reliable, if automatic, POS tagging and its ready availability. The choice to use the BNC, which focuses on British English rather than on General American or another variety, was made in consideration of the fact that Austrian learners of English are mainly confronted with British English at school, as the textbooks focus on this standard and the larger portion of high school teachers in Austria apparently prefer this variety³⁵.

³⁵ There is no socio-demographic data to back this up, but personal experience in schools as well as the course lists of Austria's English departments over the last years show that, while the number of students learning General American is increasing and the trend is moving towards a balance, they are still almost outnumbered 2:1 by those students preferring to learn British English.

From this corpus, then, 300 sample sentences and the provided context were extracted. This sample size seemed small enough to be analyzable within the scope of a diploma thesis, but still left me with 25 sample sentences for each lexical aspect per TAC, the smallest unit that presented itself as an interesting in the secondary literature as an interesting element of inquiry. The sample sentences were chosen according to a number of criteria. In order to achieve a measure of representativeness for the phenomenon under scrutiny, the basis for the choice of verbs was Biber et al.'s (1999: 367ff.) list of "most common lexical verbs in each semantic domain". Since the aim was also to examine whether the various lexical aspects as described by Vendler (1967) and Declerck (2006) contribute to the difference in construal, as they interact with the TACs in various distinct ways, necessitated that, from these lists, 25 verbs of each lexical aspect had to be chosen. Despite the high correlation between St_v and St_d , Ach and Ev, Act_v and Act_d and Acc and Pr respectively, the aim was to, in fact, not have a 1:1 relationship there in order to also somehow compare the two categorizations of lexical aspect. The selected word was then entered as a query for one of the three TACs. A number created by Haahr's (1998) randomizer gave the number of the sample to be analyzed. Lastly, a similar situation described in the other two pastness TACs had to be found within the corpus. To that end, a search query similar to the first one but in the other two TACs respectively was entered in order to receive a comparable frequency, but then the queries were continuatively adapted in order to find a sample sentence as close as possible to the first utterance chosen. If no satisfyingly analogous construction could be found, this verb was abandoned in favor of the next one on Biber et al.'s list.

All this already implies that the corpus assembled is highly specialized and not representative of the English language as a whole. In order to achieve a certain degree of balance and representativeness in respect to the pastness TACs, the registers of the sample sentences for each TAC were chosen in accordance to their distribution in the balanced corpus of Biber et al. (1999: 456, 461, 462)³⁶. Table 3 summarizes the

³⁶ This was of special importance as the BNC is not balanced in register, consisting of 90% written and 10% spoken English.

distribution of sample sentences over the different registers and lexical aspects for each analyzed TAC. It shows that the largest portion of sample sentences was taken from extracts of fiction, followed by news reports. Unsurprisingly, academic writing has the least amount of pastness TACs according to Biber et al. , and is therefore represented with only 33 samples in total.

TAC		Past Simple				Present Perfect				Past Progressive			
Register		News	Fiction	Conversation	Academic Writing	News	Fiction	Conversation	Academic Writing	News	Fiction	Conversation	Academic Writing
in total		28	53	10	9	42	19	19	20	14	55	27	4
Vendler	Act _v	5	14	3	3	6	6	7	6	5	10	9	1
	Acc	7	12	2	4	13	2	8	4	3	17	4	1
	Ach	8	13	3	1	10	4	6	5	2	17	5	1
	St _v	8	14	2	1	13	7	0	5	4	11	9	1
Declerck	Act _d	8	11	4	2	10	6	6	3	6	8	11	0
	Pro	4	18	1	2	8	3	7	7	2	20	2	1
	Ev	8	10	3	4	11	2	6	6	3	15	5	2
	St _d	8	14	2	1	13	8	0	4	3	12	9	1

Table 3: Distribution of sample sentences on the different registers and lexical aspects

The resulting subcorpus consists of a total of 300 sample sentences and their respective co-texts as provided in the BNC, amounting to a total of 52.122 words.

These were then analyzed in terms of temporal reference, functions in the text, co-text, reoccurring constructions and, most importantly, different types of construal factors as they were explained in section 3.3. As such an analysis of factors is necessarily a rather subjective process, bordering almost on an ascription of selfsame, the next section explains the criteria applied for the classification of sample sentences and illustrates their use by means of a number of sample categorizations.

4.1.2. Descriptors, Criteria and Categorizations

On the whole, the 16 descriptors used for each TAC analyzed within this study can be grouped into six parts. In the following, they are explained and exemplified in detail. This is necessary because the entire classification process is done in categories that are rather subjective in nature. In order to achieve a justifiable measure of transparency for the study and, hence, facilitate an assessment of the results, explanations that exceed the traditional scope of a methodology section are necessary.

4.1.2.1. Co-textual Factors

The co-text of the TACs was analyzed in terms of its overall tense. Refreshingly straightforward, this consisted of a separation into texts written in present tense (PrTe), in past tense, or those where the textual surroundings vary between the two. The focus here lies on whether or not R lies in an already opened pastness domain at the moment prior to the utterance analyzed, or in one of a present moment, and whether the sample itself opens up such a space or not. The other co-textual factor analyzed was the presence or lack of adverbials typically associated with the English pastness constructions. This was done in accordance with the lexical indicators listed by Zach and Gromes (2005: 72; 82) and Gerngroß et al. (2007: 67) as well as with what I myself know from my experience as a high school English teacher. The PaSi was expected to typically be accompanied by adverbials specifying a point in time, such as *in 1997*, *two years ago* and *yesterday*. If these points in time were further specified, including the actual time of day, as in *yesterday at eight p.m.*, a PaPr construction was expected. Other adverbs typically associated with the PaPr denote a co-occurrence of two actions in progress, like *while* and *during the time*. The TAC that is most explicitly associated with specific adverbials is the PrPe. Its textbook descriptions include a variety of words, amongst which one can most commonly find *ever*, *never*, *already*, *yet*, *just*, *always* and *this week*.

4.1.2.2. Specificity

In stark contrast to the co-textual factors, specificity is a highly subjective category that proved almost indeterminable. The scale from 1-5 that suggested itself from Langacker's (1987: 133) description illustrated in figure 2 on page 31 turned out to be almost inapplicable. The most obvious reason for this is that in Langacker's example of the specificity of a person's tallness varies in its modifiers, something which cannot be applied for the verbs under scrutiny in this thesis. In an attempt to provide a scale that might prove useful for the present study, the sentences in (19) were used as reference points in analogy to which the other sample sentences were analyzed.

- (19) (a) Police say they'd tried to flag down the stolen car and **were following** [...] it, when it crashed. (BNC K1J)
- (b) At the moment I couldn't cos I've got a bad knee but I **have run after** people and caught people, yes. (BNC FM7)
- (c) The two large men **chased** the smaller man, caught him and then proceeded to bash his brains out in front of everyone at the tables. (BNC CDT)

(19) (a), (b) and (c) were given the values 2, 3 and 4 respectively in the assumption that even more or less specific verbs would exist. The ranking of these three samples arose out of the consideration that *to follow* is not as specific in terms of speed and telicity as *to run after*, and *to chase* is even clearer than *to run after* in its purpose of actually reaching and catching the pursued person.

However, there was always an infinite number of intermediate steps between any two samples, and the scale is open-ended with regard to an increase of the amount of details provided by the verb. Also, further categories between (19) (a) and verbs like *to happen* and *to be* would have been necessary as well.

Nevertheless an attempt at a classification was made. The underlying aim of this was to see whether there is a correlation between more specific actions and figures/grounds within an utterance. Personally, I expected a higher specificity for

figures, but Talmy's description (1983: 231) suggests otherwise. As it turned out these considerations came to naught. Whether this was due to the unquantifiable nature of the descriptor or its simple non-salience for pastness TACs is difficult to say. The data suggests the latter, as the distribution was so varied as to resist any kind of generalization.

4.1.2.3. Prominence

Much more rewarding, if still challenging in terms of categorization, proved the factors relating to the prominence given to the different elements in the described situational context as well as the textual co-text.

First in line here were the distinctions between figure/ground and trajectory/landmark. As has been described in section 3.3.2. Langacker uses the Im/tr classification for temporal as well as spatial elements already, but it has to be noted that this is not the primary application they were intended for. This is even more true for f/g which is, in fact, explained by Talmy (1983) in a book called *Spatial Orientation* that discusses questions like "How do people know where in the world they are? How do they find their way about?" (ibid: vii). Cognitively, there appears to be a very high functional overlap between spatial and temporal information (Srinivasan & Carey 2010) and, according to Galton (2011), only few have challenged the close relationship between these two concepts³⁷. The application of a spatial set of features to a study that focuses on the temporal relationship between utterances nevertheless required a reexamination and adaptation of the criteria laid down for classification. Table 4 shows the contrast between f and g, following Talmy's (1983: 230ff.) discussion. A striking element of this table is, of course, that all features are relative rather than absolute, defined in relation to each other.

³⁷ Galton (2011: 703) himself is actually a critic of the sometimes implied one-to-one relationship between the notions of space and time, but in this article as well as in his earlier work mainly found the spatial metaphors lacking in terms of accounting for the processual change that time can, and often does, signify. Even he admits that, with caution, we "may, to be sure, celebrate and articulate in detail that range of linguistic and conceptual phenomena which we may summarise as the *spatialisation of time*".

Figure	Ground
location in time rather uncertain	location in time (relatively) certain
shorter duration	longer duration
simpler	more complex
less activated	more activated

Table 4 : Properties influencing the choice between figure and ground in time
(Adapted from Talmy's (1983: 230f.) descriptions for figure and ground in space)

This is not surprising, considering that Talmy's (ibid) chapter is entitled "Characterizing One Object's Spatial Disposition in Terms of Another's" and not at all a point of critique; in fact, it draws attention to the human process of categorizing elements in relationship to each other, via analogies and contrasts. Nevertheless, it makes classifying language samples a daunting task. True to the tenets of prototype theory, when in doubt, I also abandoned the categorization in terms of features in favor of analogies to the central members provided as textbook examples by Talmy (ibid.) and Langacker (2008).

The most salient element which I used to distinguish between gs and lms then is that of the prominence of the utterance in comparison to the rest of the text. In both sample sentences in (20), the emphasized actions³⁸ clearly relate to each other. However, in (a) both are part of the action sequence and much more foregrounded than in (b).

- (20) (a) Ace braced herself, but there was no pulse of escaping air. The gap **widened**^{lm}, and Ace **peered**^{tr} inside. Lights were coming on. It was a featureless box, big enough to take several shuttles, maybe even a couple of X-ships. (BNC F96)

³⁸The action underlined and marked in bold is the verb that was under scrutiny for the particular sample. The verb that constitutes a partner in a f/g or lm/tr relationship is marked in bold only. In the process of the study it has become apparent that another useful study setup would have been to analyze the TACs of all verbs within a paragraph in contrast, rather than only one predetermined one. This would be an interesting way to enlarge upon the results of the study at hand.

- (b) Well, sounds can carry on a quiet evening and you don't want your father asking why you were acting daft. Or your Jonna,' she added as an afterthought. As the freshness of spring **gave way**^g to the heat of summer, it **became**^{tr} obvious that Elizabeth was indeed pregnant. (BNC C98)

The difference becomes clearer when three clauses relate to each other, like in (21). The teachers' situation, described by means of two verbs, serves as g for both following fs, the latter of which is the direct effect of two former ones which are in apposition to each other and therefore on the same level.

- (21) Erm (pause) eventually er, one of my teachers in my school had migrated to this country and he **was living**^g in Southall at that time and he **was working**^g in a bakery. So I **wrote**^{lm} him a letter, **told**^{lm} him I'm here, I can't get a job, so he **managed**^{tr} to get a job for me. (BNC G4S)

It has to be said here that not all verbs examined in this study could be found to be in this kind of relationship with one or more other actions within the paragraph provided by the BNC. Almost a quarter of the sample sentences selected were not classified with regards to this parameter. Amongst these were comment clauses like (22) (a), action sequences without any links like in (b) or samples that simply did not lend themselves to a classification into g/f or lm/tr like (c).

- (22) (a) The ex-running champ sprinted like her idol Linford Christie to try to catch them after they raided her home. I ran after them like a demon and I'd do it again,' Iris **said** yesterday. The plucky pensioner returned to her flat from shopping to find the two teenagers rifling through her bedroom. (BNC CH6)
- (b) Anna **read** the letter with incomprehension, then put Charlotte into her secondhand pram -- donated by the Young Wives' Group -- and went out for a long and significant walk. (BNC CMJ)
- (c) Ee! Well I'm pretty damn rare that's rind here! (SP:PS10L) Right. (SP:PS08X) Have you **heated** the beans **up**? (SP:PS10L) Ooh no. (unclear) (SP:PS08X) Are we having tea with this? (BNC KBY)

Especially in the last group, many utterances were, in fact, instances of spoken language where elements of the speech event going beyond the text itself or the information available via the corpus played a role. For this study, I decided to rather

exclude these and take the inferences made from the remaining data as salient mostly for written English, rather than assign all samples a g/f or lm/tr relationship on the basis of a vague, underlining assumption of prominence.

In contrast, all samples were analyzed in terms of scope, i.e. in terms of how much of the situation implied by the verb as such is then, in fact expressed in the utterance. In order to encompass the high gradience of this category, I selected two utterances, namely (23) (a) and (e), as examples for minimal scope and maximal scope respectively. While in (a) only the moment of the object in mid-tip is referenced, not the reason or cause for the tipping, the entire action or any possible results, (e) includes all of them. (b), (c) and (d) were selected as intermediate steps consecutively increasing in scope. While (b) excludes the beginning or the source of the thoughts' flowing, they have a goal and some of them must have arrived if they are being absorbed. In (c), the notion of living, by inference at least, includes the moment of birth and all the living the speaker of the utterance has done so far, only excluding the potential future and death. (d) represents almost the maximal scope, including the cause and consequence, except for the fact that the action, being a prototypical state, is not concluded.

(23) (a) When he arrived, I wandered over. I was going to jump up and look in the trailer while it **was tipping**. I remember walking over. (BNC K5D)

(b) And Grainne smiled briefly, because it was certainly possible that these thoughts **were flowing** outwards and being absorbed by the ancient stones. (BNC G10)

(c) I am a Serb. I **have lived** in Yugoslavia all my life. (BNC AJM)

(d) Being a man of faith he **believed** in the truth, so he had no delusions about his feelings for Sarah. He loved her passionately. (BNC BP1)

(e) To steady himself, he hugged a sculptured torso. An arm **came loose** and fell off, revealing scrunched up newsprint where there should have been ligament, bone and muscle. (BNC ALI)

These five sample sentences served as prototypes for the values 1-5 on the resultant scope scale. All other language samples were classified in reference to them via

analogies and comparisons. The analysis has indicated that (c) and (d) are, in fact, very close to each other in scope as it was particularly difficult to decide between assigning either of these values. Nevertheless, this should not impede the deduction of tendencies from the resulting figures in undue measure.

Not at all quantifiable proved the last prominence feature, namely that of profiles. An initial foray through the data showed that the profiles were manifold and could not be encompassed in a set of predetermined options. Therefore, for this parameter, I looked at the respective situations in the three TACs in contrast, examined what situational elements are present in all three of them, and determined which element is profiled in the utterance because of the construction used rather than the situational context or the co-text that describes it. This was not always completely successful but mostly possible to a satisfying degree. In (24), for example, the profiling in (a) and (b) can be fairly clearly distinguished from each other. While the PaSi in (a) profiles the actual event of surfacing and, possibly, the existence of a temporal distance between the moment of surfacing and the heightening later on, which, overall, presents the entire sequence of events, the PrPe in (b) backgrounds the event in favor of the result, the now available note and its content.

- (24) (a) Concerns over its future surfaced a year ago and were heightened last week by the death of its director, Mr Brian Ponsford, whose body was found in a car at his north London home. (BNC A9N)
- (b) But a new note has surfaced, a note which points out that while philosophical scepticism may have nourished and stimulated the mind of Greeks trained in civic religious observances, it was not nourishing to modern minds trained on nothing at all. (BNC A6B)
- (c) Ludens had the impression that Marcus was pursuing a consecutive line of thought, sections of which were randomly surfacing for Ludens's benefit, or even for Marcus's benefit, at moments when Marcus felt it might clarify his ideas to verbalise them aloud, and even to listen to a response. (BNC APM)

This is depicted abstractly in figure 12, which also shows that in (c) the situation is simply not quite the same. The perceived repetition of the event is not really achieved via the PaPr but stems from the surfacing sections being in plural.

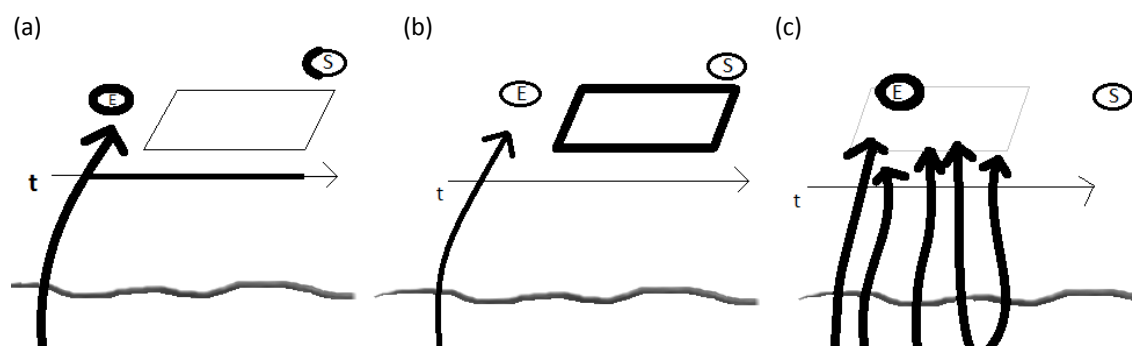


Figure 12: Example for the difference in profiling between (a) PaSi (b) PrPe and (c) PaPr of *to surface*

Although in both cases E is profiled, it alone cannot really account for the difference between (a) and (c). The PaPe in (c) becomes highly odd if the event is rephrased in PaSi or PrPe, so, in a way, the number in this case must be licensing either the PrPe or at least the adverbial *randomly*, which, in turn, works together with the PaPr to create the image of Ludens being in the middle of the event of surfacing. *Marcus' thought was surfacing for Ludens' benefit* simply creates a completely different picture, one, in which the thought is only emerging, not completely there yet, as the sections are in the text as it exists in the corpus.

Via such considerations, I arrived at a total number of 14 different elements that were given prominence by the pastness TACs in the samples analyzed. As their number is rather large, I grouped them loosely into the four classes heading table 5.

Past	Situation	Length	Present
Past State Reason Reference	Action Habit Contrast Sequence	Duration Process Progress Repetition	Current State Result Existence

Table 5: Data-based list of profiles for verbs in the pastness TACs.

In accordance with this table, (24) (a) is classified as profiling the sequential nature of the actions. (b) could either be classified as profiling the result of the action, the fact that after having surfaced the letter is now available for pursuit, or the current state. In this case they are, in fact, the same. However, the co-text shows that content of the note is of primary concern and its surfacing only relevant in terms of its existence, which had not been known before. Therefore, one can say that it is rather the current state that is in the foreground and not the relationship between the action of surfacing and the result. This is different from, for example, (25) where the relationship between the *complex sentence* and the resulting death of the patient is highlighted as grounds for the desirability of short and precise communication in an operating theater.

(25) By the time the surgeon had produced his complete sentence, the patient might well have bled to death: a victim of syntax. (BNC CBR)

The list in table 4 is in all likelihood not comprehensive nor applicable to all texts ever produced. In fact, 5 of the 300 sample sentences could not be identified as profiling any of the elements listed in the table above, nor did they suggest a clear profile not considered in this study. They were therefore disregarded for this part of the analysis. Another set of sample sentences might result in a very different list of profiles, some of which might be better suited even for a number of utterances in the subcorpus created for this study. As the categories arose out of the data rather than out of considerations what profiles are possible in language, this cannot be helped. However, it provides a first set of profiles that can be found in a TAC analysis to be modified and expanded in future research.

4.1.2.4. Perspective

The viewing arrangements the different temporal constructions suggest for the sample sentence in the corpus was analyzed in a threefold manner.

First, the actual viewpoint, Reichenbach's R, was determined, albeit with a more fine-grained set of categories in mind. As figure 13 illustrates, a total number of eight temporal CDS was considered, differing in the place in time addresser and addressee agree upon, the direction they chose to look in together, the width of their viewing scope and the distance to the event. The viewpoints closer to E are called "extended", as they perceive the event as extending beyond the visual field. Otherwise the line of vision influenced the naming of the categories as being previous (prev), central or posterior (post).

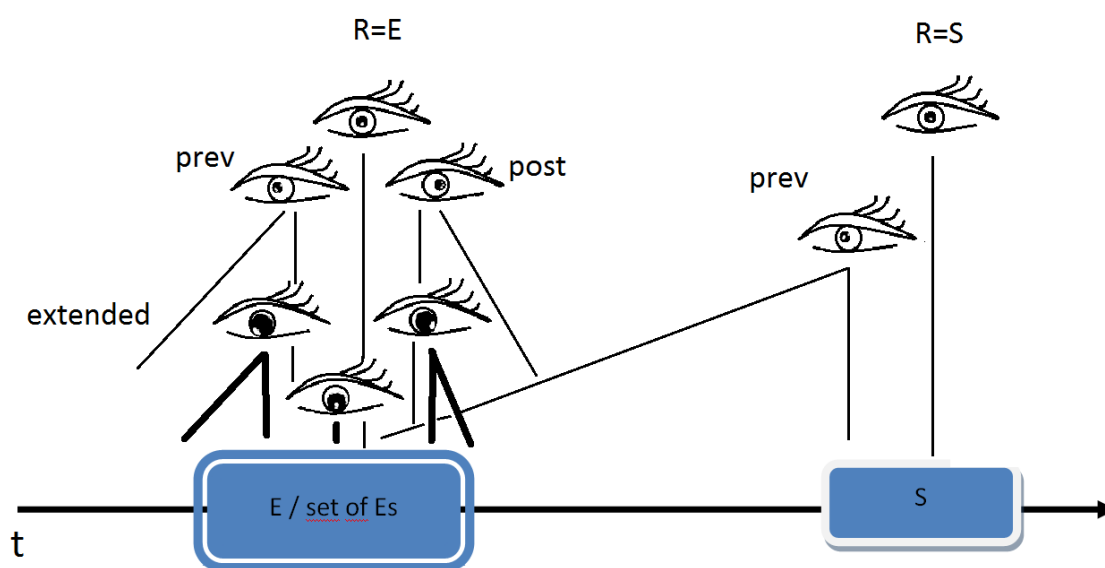


Figure 13: Viewpoint categories in the study

There is a relationship between the distance to E and the notion of (un)boundedness since the perceived proximity to the event results in parts of the action becoming unfocused and, hence, unbounded. However, the relationship is not intrinsically given. Notably resistant to this correlation, for example, were many of the St_{vs} as well as St_{ds} . In (26), for example, (a) is not conceived in a way that suggests a particular closeness of viewpoint to E, especially in contrast to (b) .

- (26) (a) " You'll come down, won't you", said Emma. "If you think I should." " Yes you must, Rachaela. She's your child." Emma **looked** pale and distraught. Rachaela said nothing and Emma went away. (BNC GUM)

(b) Sam hadn't looked too keen when Evelyn had brought her in. He was looking annoyed now, but it was at Evelyn.' So long as you do something,' he said. (BNC AEB)

There is a sequential element to the events in (a) that led me to classify the viewpoint as distant rather than extended. This is undoubtedly achieved via the use of the PaSi and therefore cannot be disregarded in this study as an insignificant variation. Nevertheless, Emma did not start to look pale in response to anything that happened in the related sequence and her paleness persists beyond the end of the excerpt provided by the BNC and are (and again, there is a difference, which will be explained in the following section) not part of the viewing arrangement the reader of this fictional text is invited into. Therefore, the situation is classified as unbounded, and, consequently, (un)boundedness is its own category in the study despite its close relationship to (non)extendedness. This also facilitated the classification into left-bounded and right-bounded situations as well.

The second parameter in the examination of viewpoint arrangement is the dynamicity represented in the text. Here, of course, the actual situation once again plays a major role as well. If a sequence of events is described, different options such as, for example, (counter)chronology are available to the speaker or writer; something that is simply not possible with a number of co-occurring actions. Noteworthy here is the fact that situations made up of a number of simultaneous events cannot, in fact be presented to the addressee as such. They need to be listed in some way or another, and a choice must be made in what order to arrange them.

Since the interest of this study lies on how situations in the different pastness TACs are construed rather than how the situations referred to evolved, all types of dynamicity were classified in terms of suggested viewing dynamics and not actual situations. This led to, for example, (27) being categorized as a chronological text element despite the *lurking* being implied as commencing before Shiona's going to bed and prevailing well into the brushing of her teeth.

(27) On Sunday night Shiona got ready for bed, knowing that by next morning Janice would be gone. At least in the meantime there would be no more cosy threesomes to endure, and she could put her mind to deciding how to conduct her battle to save Kirsty. But even more of a reprieve was lurking round the corner. As she was brushing her teeth, the phone in the hall began to ring. (BNC JXS)

The reason for this seems to lie in the way a reader of this particular excerpt, despite the 3rd person narration, follows the character's perception of the fictional world and, for the most part, sees it through Shiona's eyes and her emotional filter. The brief moment of reader-omniscience, where one knows of the upcoming reprieve and Shiona does not, is almost immediately resolved, resulting in the lurking being perceived as much more momentarily than its lexical aspect implies.

The originally expected set of categories of *chronology*, *counter-chronology*, *backshift* and *forward shift* was expanded to also account for other reoccurring patterns in the subcorpus, namely *temporal displacements*, *juxtapositions* and *lists*. Of these novel categories, *temporal displacement* is possibly in need of explanation, as the name does not clearly delineate what is surmised under this heading. (28) (a) is a prototypical example for them, as they all describe a verb that refers to a different place in time than its co-text, but, in contrast to forward and backshifts like in (b), does not really open up a temporal space there, but only mentions a fact that is not in clear temporal consistency with the co-text.

(28) (a) [T]he detainees must neither look out nor be seen from outside. In this detention centre, contemptuous and inhuman attitudes have hardened into set rules. The bedrooms are kept locked from 9 am. to 9 pm. (BNC A6V)

(b) Did the messenger put up much of a fight?" Huh! The Met think he was getting a cut, too. He swore it all happened so quickly, he could do nothing about it. (BNC ANL)

Lists and juxtapositions are just what their names imply, a row of activities, neither chronological nor counter-chronological, and a verb that is mentioned in contrast with another in a non-temporal fashion. Unfortunately, they are also as lacking in

meaningfulness concerning any actual dynamicity as their names suggest. Their individual elements, especially those of the juxtapositions, could, however, sometimes be classified in terms of g/f or l/t. This, in turn, lead to the introduction of an additional parameter for this aspect of dynamicity, namely that of the order of g, f, l and t where they could be identified. The list in (29), for instance, represents an example of glt with the first two verbs in bold together substantiate the speaker's aversion to slavery as a ground for the following two utterances³⁹.

(29) I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery **is**^g not wrong nothing **is**^g wrong and yet I **have** never **understood**^l the presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling and I **aver**^t that to this day I **have done**^t no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. (BNC JSK)

This order of elements, going from g via l to t, mimics the more intuitive path where conceptualizing element serves as basis from which the lm is accessed, which, in turn, serves as reference point in the Langackerian (2009b: 82, 107f.) sense, leading to the tr that follows.⁴⁰ However, the reverse, where, in fact the tr serves as reference point are equally possible and their difference in distribution and meaning is examined as part of the study.

Lastly, the dynamicity of the text excerpts was examined in terms of Ex and Ad. As the intrinsic characteristics of this distinction already foreshadow, a categorization into these suggested itself mainly for the narrative texts in the study. However, since these comprised a large part of the subcorpus and are also text types students have to frequently produce at the point in their studies where they traditionally learn about the PrPe and PaPr (cf. Gerngroß et. al. 2007), this analysis still seems valuable for the research at hand. As good example for the distinction serves the text in (30).

³⁹ The two ts are again considered to be in apposition to each other, as the act of averring is, in fact what follows after.

⁴⁰ Langacker elaborated on these notions primarily in connection with possessives, but also noted that he feels that "reference point organization represents so basic a cognitive ability that there may indeed be no linguistic phenomenon that does not involve it in some way" (199: 201). Therefore I feel that I am not using these terms in undue ways despite their being clearly associated with a very different grammatical concept for Langacker.

(30) Then he **went**^{Ad} up to every member of the family, **beginning**^{Ex} with Chola and **ending**^{Ex} with the twins, **marking**^{Ad} blood-red (-----) iks between their eyes. The fire **was dying**^{Ex}. The twins **stood**^{Ex} over it, **stirring**^{Ex} the last embers with their feet. For a moment bright flames **danced**^{Ad} out of the charcoal, then there was darkness. (BNC BNU)

What this example also shows, however, is that a future analysis of a similar corpus should actually take all TACs within the text into account rather than only a predetermined verb within the excerpt because of the interesting relationship that become evident here. This was not done within the course of this study, where, once again, only the underlined construction *was dying* was classified and recorded as part of the study.

4.1.2.5. Superordinate Constructions, Senses and Meanings

In section 3.4. about polysemy, prototypes and meaning networks it has been established that an overarching meaning of the TACs will, in all likelihood, be rather abstract and thus hard to grasp for students. The more one moves down the vertical dimension in the meaning network, the more concrete do the items become, and the clearer defined are their senses. In order to arrive at a level between the concrete utterances and this highest abstraction, an attempt was made to note down partially filled versions of the constructions used by the speakers and writers whose text productions make up the corpus. As an example for the processes behind the classification serves the following demonstration of the establishment of two fairly straight forward, related sense of the PaPr.

Within the analysis of the PaPr (31) (a), (b) and (c) were noted down as [SUBJECT₍₁₎ VPasi =when⁴¹ SUBJECT₍₂₎ VPPr (Object)], or, more learner-friendly [It happened when I was doing this]

(31) (a) He **was killed** when the police **were chasing** him. (BNC FBL)

⁴¹ =when meaning when or a synonym of when, in line with corpus conventions.

(b) [...] the bell **rang** as he **was making** coffee. (BNC CN3)

(c) Her mother **died** giving birth, when Eve **was being born**. (BNC CCM)

This is, of course, closely related to the construction for the sample sentences in (32) which was abstracted to [SUBJECT₍₁₎ VP_{Pr} (Object) when SUBJECT₍₂₎ VP_{Si}], [I was doing this when it happened].

(32) (a) The fireworks **were** still **exploding** when the procession **came to an end** over in hour later. (BNC G17)

(b) (SP:PSOM4) Did you have a bit of rain? (SP:PSOM5) Well it **was raining** when they **came**. And then it really brightened up. (BNC KDE)

The difference in dynamicity results in the slight variation in how the situations are construed in these two groups of instances. While in (31) the PaSi clearly has main prominence, with the PaPr giving a temporal reference, the sentences in (32) reverse this relationship as, again, the first element is grounded in time by the second. This goes well with Langacker's conceptualizations of Im and tr as delineated in section 3.3.2. which, in turn, can account for (33) where, again, the PaPr following *when* provides the temporal specifications for the PaSi.

(33) When I **was talking** to him I **asked** him what changes he saw taking place in the computing world. (BNC KRF)

In all of these instances, the construction describes a situation made up of an action in the PaPr, unbounded on both sides, and a PaSi action that occurs within the time spanned by the PaPr. The PaSi, in fact, locates the R and creates the perception of the PaPr as extending on both sides. Together, they can be said to form one (maybe even a prototypical) sense of the progressive. This contrasts nicely with the constructions in (34) [when SUBJECT₍₁₎ VP_{Si} SUBJECT₍₂₎ VP_{Si}] that imply near a simultaneity or close sequence of actions.

(34) (a) Then in 1976 when the sterling bubble **burst** the constraint **took** another twist, with a falling exchange rate helping to boost the inflation rate and depress real wages. (BNC FB5)

(b) And when Keith, 40, **collapsed**, Peter coolly **switched** to a mobile channel and **cried**: '19 for a Roger -- help!' (BNC CH2)

However, sentences like (35), despite following practically exactly the construction outlined for (32), do not have quite the same signification. The speaker probably does not construe the shopping trip as the temporal reference to the assault but uses it as a ground in an Ex function to base this consecutive Ad on.

(35) (SP:PS1DR) I **was** (unclear) **shopping** in town looking at some clothes when, suddenly I **got pulled back** from one of the, the changing room. I felt something horrible pressed against my head, talk girly and you're history! (BNC KBJ)

It is also quite clear that *was shopping* is not completely unbounded as the victim telling his or her story obviously did not continue the apparel hunt during and after the attack. Some of this lies in the combination of *when* and *suddenly*, but since this is the only instance of these two words co-occurring in the compiled subcorpus, no real inferences about this form can be made. A quick browse of the BNC itself indicated that the construction [SUBJECT(1) VP_{aPr} when suddenly SUBJECT(2) VP_{aSi}] is very common, accounting for more than half of the occurrences of *when suddenly*, many of the other uses conceptualize a meaning very similar to that in (34). About half of the remaining results for the [* when suddenly] query was made up of expressions such as *be about to*, *be going to* and simply 'be + adjective'⁴², all of which also imply this measure of unboundedness so typical for the progressive (Niemeier & Reif 2008: 344). Therefore, this construction is seen as a new sense of the PaPr, albeit one in close relationship to the one established above.

Tempting, but ultimately counterproductive proved those samples that are similar in meaning, but the form of which could not be completely verified as following one of the patterns due to the fact that, as Schiller aptly puts it, "natural language is messy, full of twists and turns". Consequently, a number of samples were not categorized into

⁴² The relationship between states in general, but, foremost of all, the forms of 'to be' and the progressive is a close one and will be discussed in section 4.2.3.

the construction patterns that might, indeed be following them, like, for instance, (36), which in all likelihood even contains the pattern twice.

(36) (SP:PS126) Is sometimes if like last night, they have, (unclear) a very nice production. (SP:PS0H7) What's the (unclear)? (SP:PS126) Erm, the Marriage of Figaro. (SP:PS0H7) Is it? (SP:PS126) The opera. (SP:PS0H7) Well, when I was staying a fortnight (unclear)2. (SP:PS126) Very nice, it was quite nice. (SP:PS0H7) Really? I didn't. (SP:PS126) Mm, production by The Vienna. (SP:PS0H7) Is it really? (SP:PS126) [...] (SP:PS0H7) Yeah. Quite nice. (SP:PS126) (unclear) (SP:PS0H7) You know I **saw** nothing of the sort when I **(unclear)** for a fortnight in a (unclear). Is (unclear) now in, in (unclear)? (BNC KCV)

In the first half of the example, the underlined sequence *when I was staying* probably serves as temporal reference to an event that occurred during that time, and if it were clad in language, would supposedly be in PaSi. In the second half this event is given, but where one might expect *was staying* the recording was apparently not sufficiently intelligible for a valid transcription. Because of such factors, similar samples were also not considered valid for inclusion in this part of the analysis.

On the basis of these considerations, two senses for the PaPr could thus be established, the [PaPr *when*] construction where the action following when serves as a Im fixing the other action in time and the verb provided in PaPr surrounds the one in PaSi in a temporal sense, and the [PaPr + *when suddenly*] construction that establishes the PaPr action as ground for the consequent figure in PaSi that interrupts and thereby terminates the action given in PaPr.

In order to illustrate what considerations went into this part of the analysis, this sample description was given in some detail. As we will see, not all of the instances of TACs could actually be analyzed this way. The PaSi lent itself comparatively well to this analysis, with the PrPe still being compatible with it and the larger number of the sentences in PaPr, belying the sample analysis given here, being almost impossible to group into constructions with similar patterns.

A more elaborate study with more firmly fixed criteria of what to include or exclude from the construction on which level, and certainly a larger database are necessary to really arrive at an approximation of a constructional network of senses for the pastness TACs. However, I strongly believe that in this kind of construction analysis lies a great potential for an EFL learner-friendly description, and therefore hope to contribute to the beginning of seeing TAC grammar in such a way.

4.1.3. Problems and Limitations

The preceding sections in this part of the thesis have already indicated some of the problems and consequential limitations of this study and have illustrated how they have been dealt with regarding the examples cited. Unsurprisingly, however, that is not all there is to it, as their main purpose was to describe what could be done within this study rather than what could not.

However, to some degree it already foreshadowed the now following discussion of what I perceive to be a sources of possibly erroneous results, namely the actual data analysis, the process of categorizing and classifying each language sample in accordance to 16 different criteria. In part, this stems from the inherent fuzziness of the categories used or, indeed, all linguistic categories as such. But a larger portion of the responsibility lies with the research setup itself. One problem here is that many of the categories are data based rather than ontologically defined. It is not that, for instance, the constructions or even the profiles the data was analyzed into represent all possible constructions or profiles possible or even likely to occur. They arose purely out of what could be found at a sufficient frequency (namely 3 times - again a rather randomly chosen threshold value) within the in the end very small number of 300 utterances.

It goes without saying that such small a sample can also only give first indications of what is actually used in language. It also was not statistically tested for significance values. While the BNC is only made up of native speakers, it describes what has been

said indiscriminately, including idiosyncratic language, dialectal variation and also sentences that are, in fact, ungrammatical and would appear so to the speakers themselves. However, especially in spoken language, exclusively well-formed language cannot be expected. This is absolutely clear when looking at utterance such as *They reckoned it was the place to come and live. And they **was** proud to come and live in it.* (BNC FYF) where *was* is clearly not in agreement with the subject. With uses of the TACs, I cannot make such grammaticality judgments, seeing as their use is the topic of this thesis. This brings with it the regrettable fact that highly untypical uses may come to bear on the results presented here. On the other hand, examples such as the *when suddenly* construction already show that there may be more structures in the BNC (which, again, is just a sampled collection, albeit a more representative one) than the assembled subcorpus reveals and senses may be marginalized or left out or completely because they are underrepresented in the subcorpus.

This example can also serve to show that my own meta-knowledge acquired before commencing the analysis process influenced my choices, which leads me to my own limitations as a researcher. For this construction, being quite convinced that it indeed can be seen as one, I went back to the BNC to get more detailed information about its frequency and importance. I did do that for some the utterances that did not seem to follow a reoccurring pattern, like for example for (37) as well.

(37) In the next second his arms were iron bands around her, and he **was seeking** and **finding** her mouth. (BNC JY1)

This is a somewhat atypical form for the situation, as the kiss did not clearly begin before the fierce embrace described in the PaSi, and the *finding* definitely succeeding the *seeking*. The simultaneity to the *arms being like iron bands* can be explained by the similar nature of progressives and states. The deviation from the typical form for sequential actions suggests that they are, in fact, construed as simultaneous. The narrator here represents the character as being almost overwhelmed by the situation, as perceiving the encircling arms, the *seeking* and the *finding* as all happening in this *next second* referenced in the beginning. This is, of course, typical for the overarching

meaning of the progressive. However, it could not be established as an individual construction denoting primarily this specific sense because it was the only instance of such a pattern in the analyzed set of sample sentences. A quick look through the BNC results for [was|were [vvg*] and [vvg*]] revealed a number of different senses of the PaPr, including, amongst others, real simultaneity, simultaneity conceived over a period of time and repetition of different action, and some instances of simultaneity construed despite situational sequence, as in (36). But it would have gone beyond the scope of this study to then read, analyze and quantify all these to substantiate this construction as representing a sense. Other such not reoccurring patterns were not even followed up with a BNC search at all, the criteria for the decision about which were purely my personal biases and not always all too educated guesses.

Another source of error that may have arisen out of me being the one researcher working through this data without extremely clear cut parameters for the choice of one categorization over another can be summed up under the heading of inconsistent classification.

The data-based nature of some of the categories necessitated that sometimes a new classification had to be established after a large part of the data had already been analyzed. For this reason, I went through the entire data twice, in order to then apply the categories established at a later time in the process. In this second run-through again a number of new categories arose that had to be encompassed within the study, while some others became redundant. In lieu of going through all the data over and over again, I then filtered for the individual categories and tried to determine their similarities. The resulting classifications are not entirely satisfactory to my mind. It would take at least a second researcher that classified the same data set completely independently from myself, and a subsequent discussion of all instances where we disagreed, to achieve a real semblance of consistency for the classifications. Lacking the possibility of teamwork, I decided to, if indeed very much in doubt, not classify the sample sentences that either did not fit any of the categories but were the sole samples of that kind at all. They were given the value 0 and are exempt from analysis

for that particular criterion. Included but nevertheless uncategorized were those instances where it seemed quite clear that they must be classifiable for this parameter, but no decision could be made as to what value to assign them at all as similarly valid reasons for one or another choice existed. These were marked as ? and appear in the subsequent sections as indicators of a group that might fit the criteria but could not be confirmed to do so as no classification was achieved. It goes without saying that both groups, the 0s and the ?s, were kept as small as possible. However, a non-classification seemed preferable to a wrongful one with regards to the salience of this research project.

Problems presented themselves even for the categories that arose out of the theory discussed in part 2 and 3, as they were not sufficiently entrenched in my mind to be able to classify into them with absolute confidence. The books I took them out of exemplified them with three samples at the most, something which most of the authors writing about them would themselves not consider sufficient frequency for the development of a category. The features that were described and the fact that the samples, of course, brought to the foreground a number of analogous language patterns from my own rich memory, served as additional grounds for the representations, but I cannot be one hundred percent sure that I therefore knew how to apply them successfully to all language samples. I also found that the classification of the items that preceded a given sample sentence under scrutiny had a noticeable influence on my choices. On the one hand that had a desirable effect, as the contrasts within the corpus helping to further establish the categories in my mind is a by all means a positive consequence. On the other hand, the influence of the immediately previous sample sentences proved much stronger than that of the more remote ones. I tried to avoid this halo-effect by randomizing the data set for the second run-through, and found myself reanalyzing many of the sample sentences in terms of theory-based classifications as well. A third look at the data sheets might again bring with it some changes. I feel that this could only have been resolved by the involvement of at least a second person in this project. I hope, however, and this is where my solitary execution of the project might be of advantage, that where I varied,

I varied with consistency. Then the lengthy discussion of how I classified provided in the previous section hopefully sufficiently lays my decisions open to scrutiny to make sure that all data interpretation can be seen in light of how this process was conducted.

A small number of limitations are posed on this study by other factors, notably some that the use of the BNC brought with it. Most important of these is that the overall frequencies for the occurrences of the individual verbs in the corpus have to be taken more as indications rather than as absolute figures. To some degree that has to do with the POS tagging being not completely reliable. Furthermore, due to the search query mask, it was not always possible to exclude all instances where the same verb occurred in a notably different construction. However, the query was the same for all three TACs, so in terms of proportions a certain number of inferences can still be made. Another difficulty proved the processing of the transcribed spoken data. Apart from the fact that units such as sentences were unsurprisingly absent, and it was therefore not always possible to determine where a sample unit began or ended, it was at times very difficult to really understand what a given utterance was about, let alone what its form said about the construal of the situation described. Lacking vital information such as context and intonation, some guesswork had to go into the analysis of some of these, as an exclusion of all of the not absolutely clear sentences would have brought with it a severe reduction of the rate of spoken data involved in the study. This would have been particularly lamentable as I see speaking English as one if not the most important skill I want my high school students to acquire. Disregarding or marginalizing what happens to the TACs in spoken language would therefore have been inconceivable.

But all in all, these corpus imposed factors are small in scope. Of more importance is that, in retrospect, another study setup might have proved much more informative and meaningful to a description of the pastness TACs examined here. As has been intimated before, a future analysis of a similar corpus should actually take all TACs within a group of selected texts that include past time situations into account rather

than only a predetermined verb within the excerpt. Only then can any real inferences about the textual dynamicity be made, as the TAC the verb is in contrast with is at least of equal importance, and it seems to be the relationship between them that often determines the particular sense evoked. In the present study, this was done only in part. While the co-textual TACs were taken into account as indication of the general temporal focus of the texts, they were not considered in, for example, *Im/tr* or *g/f* distributions. As the examples given in section 4.1.2. already showed, here the relationship between two TACs appears to be especially significant. The same might well be true for aspects of dynamicity or other factors. For the study at hand relationships were really only considered in the collection of construction, but in recurringly reviewing the data set I have come to the tentative conclusion that there is more importance in them than has been given them so far and would constitute an interesting goal for future studies.

4.2. A Construction and Construal Based Analysis of the Pastness TACs

In the following section, each pastness TAC is discussed with regard to its typical constructions as they appeared in this mini-corpus and to what they suggest about the language user's construal of the situation described. The basis for this is the corpus study of this project. However, where it seems expedient, descriptions of the TACs in secondary literature are cited to complete the picture. This section focuses on the most salient elements for the tentatively outlined meaning and constructions forming the senses of the TACs. In light of the realization about the possible improvement to the study's setup explained above, the matter of construal is also discussed in an additional, consecutive section where the three TACs are compared on the basis of sample texts in contrast.

4.2.1. Past Simple

As far as the secondary literature is concerned, the PaSi appears to receive comparably little attention. Even the most comprehensive *Longman Grammar of*

Spoken and Written English (Biber et al. 1999: 454) has but three lines to spare on its description of meaning and use in terms of referring to situations in the past:

Past tense most commonly refers to past time via some point of reference, especially in fictional narrative and description, where the use of the past tense to describe imaginary past happenings is a well-established convention.

In this passage, the authors already highlight some very important aspects of the form's meaning as it could be determined on the basis of the study at hand. For one thing, the PaSi is largely part of narratives focusing on past events. 88% of the data points can be found in text that solely focuses on past time and is, therefore, contextually surrounded by past tense utterances. For another, what Reichenbach (1947) established already and Declerck (2006: 331) stresses in his contrasting of the form to the PrPe, the actualization focus of an utterance in the PaSi lies in the past. All of the text samples focus their attention on a point of reference previous to S. However, there are nuances of differences within this group that are well worth mentioning. While, as figure 14 shows, the clear majority of the statements does indeed conceptualize the situation as a whole and views the elements making up the event equally and from a distance (R=E), about a quarter of the viewpoints show a slight shift towards unboundedness (R=E extended) or towards the endpoint or result of the action (R=E back).

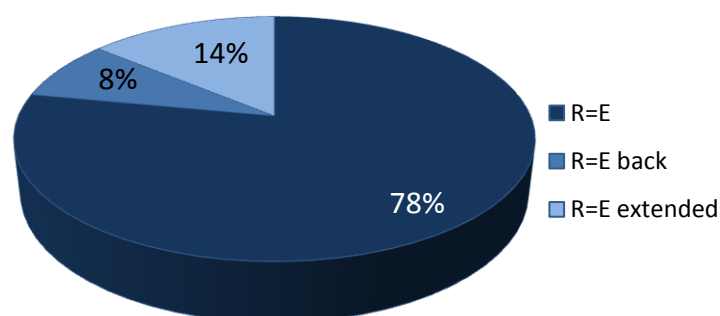


Figure 14: Actualization foci of samples in PaSi

In fact, R=E extended accounts for 40% of the meanings of St verbs in the PaSi, all of which imply a certain degree of unboundedness in at least one, sometimes both

directions. An example of this sense of the PaSi can be found in (38), where *believed* describes a rather permanent attribute of the character described.

(38) It put him in a predicament. Being a man of faith he **believed** in the truth, so he had no delusions about his feelings for Sarah. (BNC BP1)

R is profiled within the St as the current fact of his *believing* has direct consequences for the character's thoughts and decisions about the woman Sarah. The construction certainly highlights an aspect of the verb (V) that is not inherently prominent in the lexical item as such. However, undeniably, this love of truth is nothing new for the character and will very likely continue beyond R, so to some degree, the St remains stative. This comes as no great surprise, given the nature of Sts, but is, nevertheless, noteworthy, especially as many Sts are, indeed, almost fully activized or bounded through their use in the PaSi. An example of this is the St *to mean* in (39) that is limited to the occasion described.

(39) When I reached the Old Street roundabout, it was time to pick an ultimate destination -- which basically **meant** choosing somewhere to stay for the night. (BNC AOF)

After all, not everyone's reaching of this roundabout necessarily implies having to start searching for accommodations. Not only St account for the R=E extended reading, however. In (40), for example, a Pr is unbounded, as the increasing of the noise and traffic follows the narrator throughout his first hours at the market.

(40) Gradually, the noise and traffic **increased**, and as they passed through the meat market at Smithfield, Oliver was amazed by the sight and smells of so many animals, and by the huge crowds of people, all pushing and swearing and shouting. (BNC FRK)

Some of these examples are actually classified as St_v, even if they are not considered to be states in Declerck's terminology, such as in (41) where *use* is a habit that, in fact, is not exercised at R.

- (41) Angus Cameron stood up on the oak stump which Donald used as a chopping-block, held out his hand to each part of the crowd as though drawing them into the circuit of the ceremony, and said (BNC A0N)

Generally, at this point, Vendler's classifications seem to account a little better for the combinatory meaning of states and the PaSi. The tendency is not so clear when it comes to the instances of PaSi with a R=E back reading, which mostly have Accs and Pr_ds filling the verb slot of the construction. This is illustrated in (42) where the focus is rather towards the end of the action, the tragic result of the gardener's mishap, his death.

- (42) GARDENER Philip Hodges bled to death after falling on shears as he cut a hedge. One blade speared his jugular vein. The tragedy happened when he slipped on wet grass (BNC CH6)

However, the subsequent description of the event vindicates the use of the PaSi, as the reader's attention is realigned with E. This is a general trend within the set of samples classified as R=E back. While their viewpoint construal differs to a considerable extent from those clearly classified as R=E, the difference is by far not as strong as to the R=E extended viewpoints. What this highlights is that the PaSi as a construction is fairly powerful in its effect of proposing a viewpoint that construes the situation as one activity, but there is a certain gradience to the results in accordance to the affordances of the lexical item filling the verb slot.

This gradience depends in part, as has been shown, on the lexical aspect of the verb, but it also depends on the arrangement of element within the text. These patterns lead to a number of abstracted constructions, distilled from the highly diverse range of utterances examined, as has been shown for two senses of the PaPr in section 4.1.2.5. Due to all the issues described in the section *Problems and Limitations*, they are by all means not perfect. They represent a tentative first foray into this matter and shall be seen as such and no more.

Table 6 shows the different readings that could be identified for the uses of the sample verbs within the corpus assembled for this study. The corresponding constructions are given first as actualizations and then as unfilled or partially filled constructions. Most of them are also exemplified further in the following discussion.

Constructions Readings	total													
		VStPaSi VPaSi	VPaSi = VPaSi VPaSi	VPaSi VPaSi	VStPaSi = VPaPr	VPaSi x 4+	VStPaSi = VPaSi	VStPaSi	when VPaSi VPaSi	VPaPr VPaSi	VPaSi	VSt.PaSi VPaSi	VPaSi = VPaSi	others
Sequence	52	17	5	30										
Past State	17				7	4	3	2						1
Reference	11								9	2				
Summation	2										2			
Simultaneous Actions	14											2	12	
others	4													4

Table 6: Absolute frequencies of constructions and readings of the PaSi

⁴³ All sample sentences in the tables are taken from the BNC. For reasons of space, this is not indicated in the actualizations within the tables.

They are shown with respect to their distribution amongst the patterns found within the text excerpts that contain the PaSi verb under scrutiny. As the discussion above already indicated, lexical aspect plays a role in the meaning of the PaSi especially as St verbs are concerned. Therefore they are marked separately as such in the constructions. The patterns indicated also include one ontological element that is not typically found in constructions, but proved necessary to keep the senses apart, namely that of = standing in for actions that, from the context, can be clearly deduced as happening at the same time. This is not done in figure 13 where the constructions are noted down in more conventional form, but in the table they serve to illustrate how they, in fact, differ to form the senses that are here explained in turn.

What can be seen immediately is the overwhelming meaning of the PaSi as presenting actions in sequence. Even when another activity is suggested as simultaneous with one element in the sequence, or when one of the elements is a St, the sequential meaning clearly stays in the foreground. However, when a large number of PaSi verbs follow each other, all executed by the same subject, the resulting sense seems to be a different one. This can be seen, for example, in (43) (a), from which all adverbials or other temporal indicators that might influence the perception have been removed.

- (43) (a) He ████████ **visited** the local pub; he **shopped** at an anonymous supermarket in the county town; he **kept** his house startingly neat, ████████████████████ ████████████████ he **shot** on the range of a gun club in a nearby town.

The resulting sense of such a sequence of PaSi verbs seems to lean towards repetition as all verbs are then conceived as elements in one activity, similar to the effect of the progressive on momentary verbs, and the entire set of actions then forms a past state in the sense of a habit. The removed indicators support this reading, as can be seen in (43) (b).

- (43) (b) He never **visited** the local pub; he **shopped** at an anonymous supermarket in the county town; he **kept** his house startingly neat, never **invited** anyone there. Twice a week, he **shot** on the range of a gun club in a nearby town. (BNC FS8)

But even without them, the actions enumerated are clearly not to be taken as the sequence of activities a person performed on one specific day. Possibly, this conception is further underpinned by the relatively low specificity of the actions, but this speculation could not be confirmed in the study at hand. Since this pattern and its sense reoccurred three more times in the corpus, though, this form-meaning relationship is proposed here as one of the constructions signifying the senses of the PaSi that highlights not just the action at R=E but presents it in a more stative manner, even if its special relevance at R is foregrounded. This sense is otherwise mostly found with PaSi verbs in coordination with PaPr verbs or PaSi St.

True simultaneity between two PaSi forms is, in fact, rarer than the figures in table 5 suggest. While all of these 14 forms were classifiable under that heading, about half of them place on the periphery of the category, being almost construed as sequences or past states. In (44), for example, the St underlies the action and is therefore simultaneous with *cast*, but as both are in PaSi and not PaPr, the situation is rather construed as a series of castings and non-findings than a real co-occurrence of the two.

- (44) Smiling awkwardly, he **cast** around for a topic of conversation that wasn't personal and had difficulty in finding one. (BNC K8R)

An exception are those PaSi actions that are inherently linked, such as in (45).

- (45) Suddenly, the cafe **stopped** being the place where I worked and once again it became the bizarre oasis that I'd happened upon all those months earlier. And suddenly, I **was** that same, frightened Dorothy all over again. (BNC A0F)

Here the three actions are all reactions to the same utterance made by another character, and basically profile different aspects of this reaction that, indeed, appear to come to pass almost simultaneously.

As references have already been discussed on the basis of the PaPr exemplifications in 4.1.2.5. and will be revisited in the contrastive section of the analysis, no more needs to be said here than that the PaSi forms can be either linked to each other via a signal word or co-occur with a PaPr form.

Summations, finally, form a sense substantiated by only two sample sentences, and these are so much alike that their forming their own category does not seem overly optimistic. They are given in full in (46) to open the matter up to scrutiny as to whether or not they should be classified under another sense or whether they, indeed signify something new.

- (46) (a) 'So we made a plan to get ourselves off the ship', Dr Livesey went on. 'Hunter, Redruth, and Joyce helped us. Hunter **brought** the captain's little boat round under the cabin window, and Joyce and I **put** guns and food and my medicine chest in it. Redruth **took** four guns and **went** on deck with Trelawney and the captain. They were able to surprise Israel Hands and the other men, and they managed to persuade one man, Abraham Gray, to join us again'. (BNC FSJ)
- (b) You **took** the ferry at Dalmeny and then **used** the horses from the royal stables at Aberdour to journey to Kinghorn, and it **was** then you found the King's body lying on the beach?' The knight grunted. 'Yes,' he replied. 'That is what happened. (BNC BMN)

In both cases, the underlined verb sums up the sequence of actions, describing it as one entity, but no further meaning can be assigned to them that is not already clear from the context. In (46) (a), for example, one might say that *helped* explains how the subsequently enumerated actions of the three agents should be interpreted. However, it seems clear from the context already that these actions contribute to the plan to get ashore and, therefore, constitute help of some kind. Undoubtedly, in (46) (a) and (b) the PaSi summations construe the sequence of activities as one action rather than one state in the past. Therefore, in terms of relations to other forms, summations were grouped in figure 15, the network of senses of the PaSi, with sequences.

This network, now, serves to illustrate the different senses of the PaSi as they could be developed out of the data assembled for this study. This, of course, means that it exclusively concerns itself with the senses of the PaSi as they relate to pastness, and therefore does not encompass others such as politeness, hypothetical situations or pluperfect. The network also concerns itself with how the senses found relate to each other, but does not go into further subordinate patterns than what I, to the best of my knowledge, conceive as the basic level, as the senses there are rather distinct from each other, but within the category, while the patterns are still fairly diverse, the meaning that the PaSi contributes to the meaning of the utterance is fairly stable. The constructions that seem typical for each sense are given only as verb patterns below, elements such as subjects need to be added in order to form full constructions, but were left off here for spatial reasons.

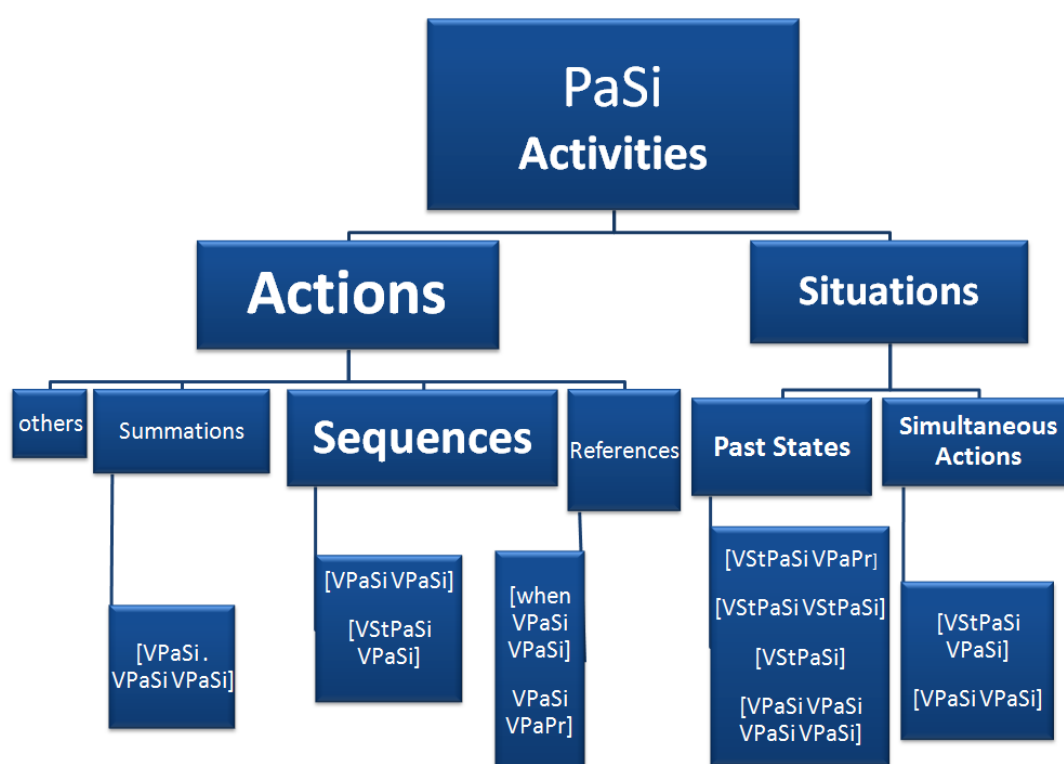


Figure 15: Network of senses and verb patterns of the PaSi when referring to past situations

What needs to be emphasized is that the patterns provided here are already highly simplified from the original constructions in the utterances not just in terms of

abstraction and ellipsis, but also in reduction of diversity. Under the construction [SUBJECT VP_{PaSi}, VP_{PaSi}], for example, fall 15 different patterns, some of which include linking devices such as *and*, *then* or *after*; some of which encompass sequences that go beyond the sentence boundaries and some do not; some of them, although the clear minority, even include a change in subject. In essence though, they can all be represented by [I did this, and then that]⁴⁴.

Within these constructions, the PaSi, true to its activating function, operates in the foreground rather than serving as background, as can be seen in figure 16.

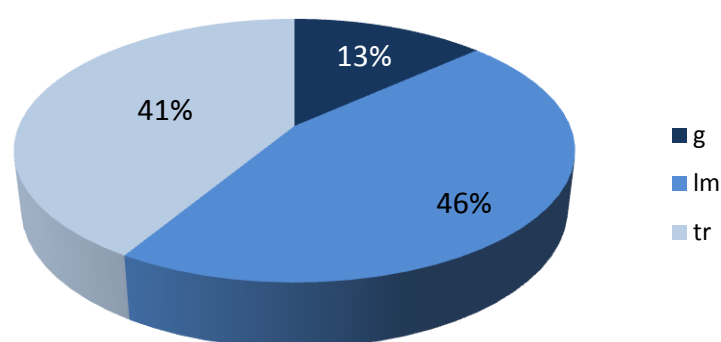


Figure 16: Prominence construals of the PaSi in terms of g, lm and tr

Only 13% of the PaSi verbs that could be identified as acting as either of these forms could be assigned a low enough prominence and a base function that let them be classified as g, leaving 87% to function as f of some kind. In total, most of the forms functioned as lm, but this point is mute as all of their corresponding trs were also instances of PaSi verbs.

In summary, it can be said that the PaSi highlights the active elements of each situation, bringing to the foreground the dynamic elements of most verbs unless their affordances clearly prevent this. This inference is supported by the fact that more than two thirds of the instances have an advancing function within the text rather than an extending one. Furthermore, the profiled elements in the utterances in PaSi, as figure 17 shows, in the majority correlate with the senses identified without a contrast to the

⁴⁴ An assembly of meaningfully filled constructions for EFL learners can be found in section 5.

other TACs, and also show that prominence is given to sequences and individual actions.

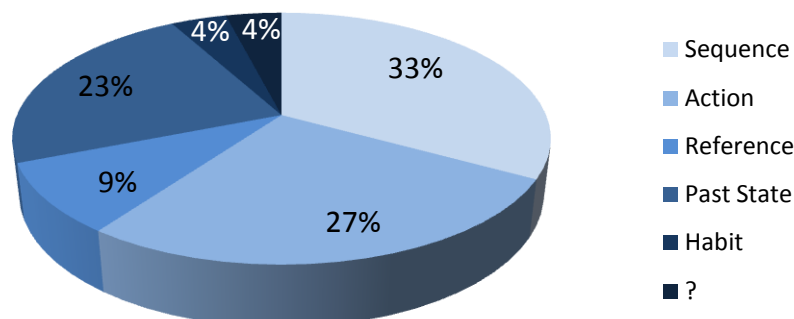


Figure 17: Profiles of the PaSi

4.2.2. Present Perfect

In contrast to the PaSi, the number of books written on the PrPe within different frameworks and paradigms is almost inaccessible - Davydova (2011: 4) alone names more than thirty on a single page - and a description of all of them would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Why then, is this thesis yet another instance of ink on paper dealing with, amongst others, this construction? For one thing, because the sheer number of publications and the similar-yet-different viewpoints they propose alone suggest that this form is of special opacity and has not been analyzed in all its depth yet. For another thing, even if little more could be added to its general description, the fact would remain that its mastery appears to pose a particular challenge to EFL students, especially those with Germanic or Romance language backgrounds (cf. Walker 1967: 16; Collins 2007: 295). Therefore, the PrPe deserves additional attention in light of the need of learners and teacher for a description that can serve as a means to a better understanding and acquisition of this construction. Last, but not least, little has been said about this form from a cognitive perspective.

One overarching feature of many of the descriptions is that they, once again, deal with the temporal reference of the PrPe. In this, the PrPe and the PaSi are two, as Michaelis

(1994: 115) calls them “closely aligned forms of past-time reference”. Historically speaking, the two forms were so alike in their discourse function at one point that Visser (1966: 750ff.), analyzing poetry and prose writing in Old and Middle English, found a degree of free variation between them that suggests the two forms to have been interchangeable in use. The two forms did neither merge nor did one oust the other though, because a pragmatic contrast was established between them at some point that could not be specified much further than as “after the time of Shakespeare” (ibid: 751).

In terms of truth value, the PrPe is defined as a construction that evaluates the implications of a given past event for the present interval, free of its context in the past (Michaelis 1994: 111). However, Michaelis (ibid: 112) also provides one of the sets of sample sentences that renders this traditional analysis insufficient. She contrasts the two sentences in (47) and argues that the temporal relationship between S and E is the same in both and the truth value of both holds during S, just as in the examples about having watched *The Lord of the Rings* given in section 2.1.

(47) (a) I have willed my fortune to Greenpeace.

(b) I willed my fortune to Greenpeace.

Once again, the difference can only be attributed to a difference in construal. Even account written as early as that of Jespersen (1954: 47) include such notions of construals in their description of the meaning the PrPe carries that sets it apart from the PaSi :

[F]irst the perfect is a retrospective present, which looks upon the present state as a result of what happened in the past; and second the perfect is an inclusive present, which speaks of a state that is continued from the past into the present time.

The PrPe is, as can be seen from this quote, one of the forms the polysemy of which has been recognized early on, Depending on the criteria used to determine whether a certain instance of the present perfect can be seen as denoting a distinct sense, or

whether this sense should be regarded as being subsumed under another one, one to five different readings have been identified by various authors examining the present perfect. Those authors that claim one meaning for the present perfect do not ignore the many different senses of this TAC, but rather call them uses and relate them all back to one most central element. Klein (1994: 111), for example, puts it like this:

The central problem is whether there is indeed a unique meaning of the perfect form, given the varying uses. I think there is [...]: TT [Topic Time] in posttime of TSit [Time of the Situation].

Other advocates of this monosemic view select different senses as the all-encompassing one. While Palmer's (1974: 50) view is closer to Klein's, stating that the central sense and superordinate meaning of the present perfect is "that in some way or other [...] the action is relevant to something observable at the present" while Comrie (1976: 52) identifies "the continuing relevance of a past situation" as the sense of all senses.

The authors making a case for a two-reading approach appear to be more in agreement. They generally claim that the present perfect can be used either for events happening at an indefinite point in the past or for those continuing into the present or even the future (eg. Jespersen 1954; Palmer 1924). The three, four and five reading accounts all identify readings as separate. Of these accounts, that of Declerck's (2006) account has had the greatest influence on the present study, as it does not only includes all the senses described by other researchers in his framework, or at least leaves room for them as additional sub - meanings, but also relates them to each other, forming a possible schema of the present perfect, as can be found in figure 18.

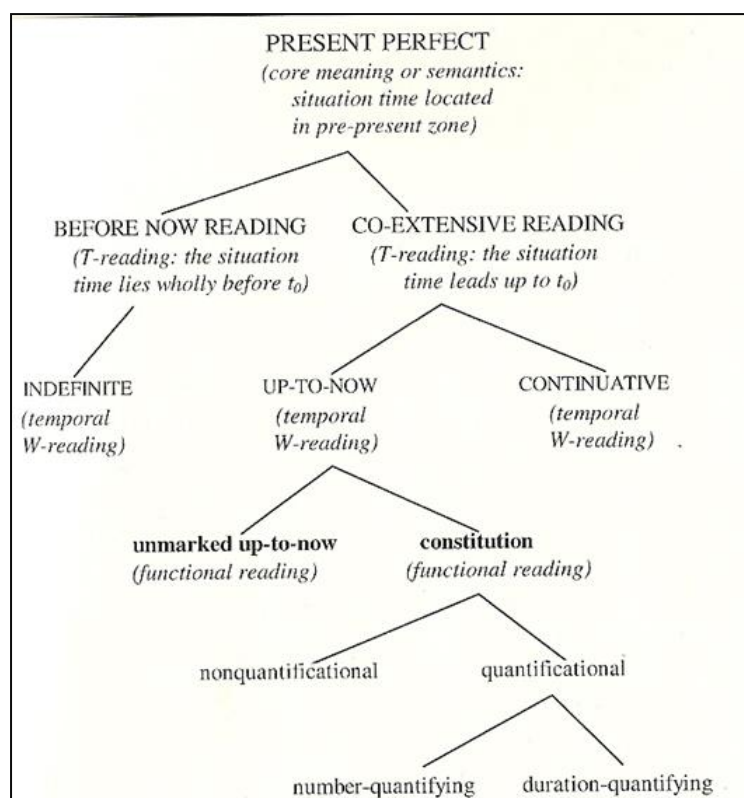


Figure 18: Declerck's network of senses of the PrPe (2006: 217)

Working from a monosemic, superordinate meaning downwards, categorizing senses under different subgroups, he arrives at a very solid description of the different readings the present perfect make possible. He differentiates between objectively analyzable elements of a situation (T-readings) and such that are determined by contextual factors (W-readings). If *S* is not part of *E*, then an “indefinite” sense is proposed, meaning that no part of the action takes place at the moment of speech. The event happened at an indefinite point in time that is not adjacent to or overlapping with *S*. If, however, *S* is included in *E* or the action can even be conceived as continuing beyond *S*, then this is one of the so called “continuative” uses of the PrPe. The remaining category, which refers to actions the *E* of which is seen as leading up to *S* but not quite including it, is called “before now”. This last group can be subdivided into those that are marked as referring to one or a number of instances that took place during a given time span by explicitly stating the number or the time

frame, which are called “constitutions”, and those that are not, which are, hence, called “unmarked up-to-now” readings. (ibid: 218ff.).⁴⁵

Conspicuously absent from these definitions is an examination of where R fits into the use of the PrPe; Declerck (ibid: 573ff.) only takes into account when contrasting the form to the PaSi. Since he successfully describes the meanings of the different senses without it, this is not at all a point of critique. It is, after all, the contrast to other TACs that is also of most interest here, as, as has been explained at length, exactly this difference poses a problem to EFL learners. The categories of meaning description that are most significant for the study at hand are, therefore, those that learners need to newly acquire in order to successfully understand and use the pastness TACs, which often are those that help to differentiate between two forms best, not always those that are the absolutely best representations for their meaning.⁴⁶ Hence, for this study, R plays a significant role, as can be seen from the distributions of viewpoints in figure 19.

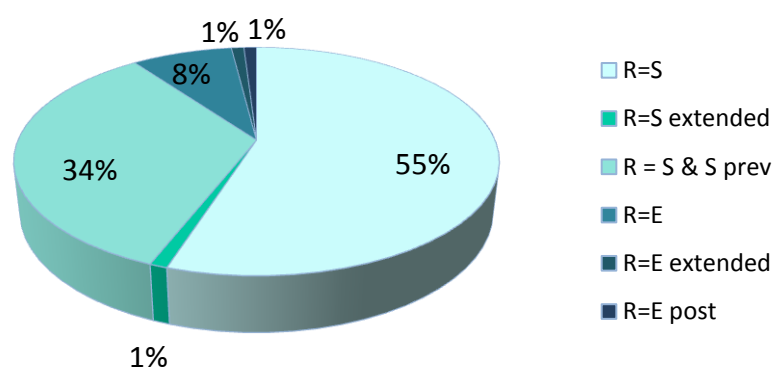


Figure 19: PrPe viewpoint distribution within the study

Only in 10% of the samples was R not S but E, with the overall majority of 55% of the viewpoints falling solidly on S and more than another third of the total including S but

⁴⁵ The further subdivisions given in figure 16 are not considered in this analysis and are only provided for completeness sake.

⁴⁶ This is similar to the process via which German speaking learners of English have to become aware of the difference between the words *finished* and *ready*, both of which translate to *fertig* in German. While the meaning aspects *with something* and *for something* are probably not forefront on a native speaker’s mind when thinking of the meaning of these words, they are on a learner’s because learners have to be acutely aware of this differentiating factor in order to keep these forms apart.

widening the focus to the time before S or extending it to both sides.⁴⁷ The present perfect, as the name already suggests, seems to be intrinsically linked to the present. I would go so far as to say that it is not at all a form that described “past event with current relevance”, but indeed, presents current states which originated in a past time event. Only 15% of the utterances under examination were anchored in PaT via TACs in the co-text, and figure 19, showing the situational elements the PrPe gives special prominence to, shows that this is also by far the most common profile found in the mini-corpus analyzed.

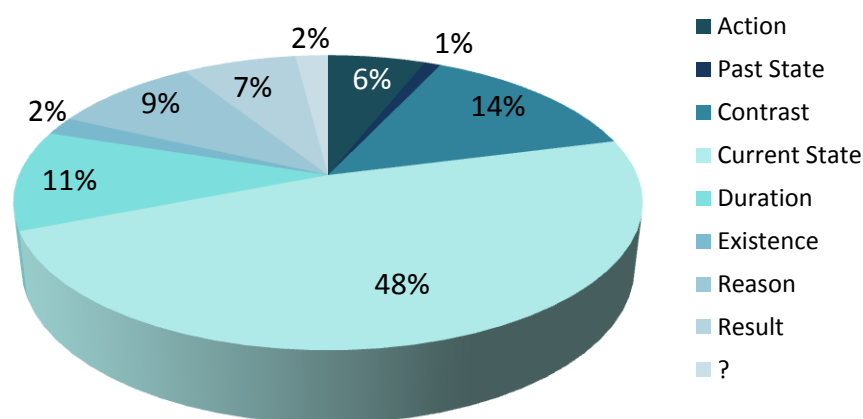


Figure 20: Profiles of the PrPe

The overall diversity of elements given prominence by the PrPe again underlines the form’s polysemous nature, but a closer look at the profiles reveals that, in fact, many of them again underpin this relationship to the present. Apart from the fact that almost half of the utterances actually profile the current state the PrPe utterance leads towards, profiles such as *existence* and *result* also relate to present time rather than PaT. Even *contrast* here stresses this relationship, as the clear majority of the samples classified as such, namely 11 out of 14, juxtaposes an action in the PrPe with

⁴⁷ The reason for R=E extended being so rare despite its being typical for the continuative reading of the PrPe lies in the setup of this study. The continuative reading is largely associated with the present perfect progressive, which was not examined in this study. Nevertheless, sentences such as the accusatory *This, from an administration which [...] have starved rail freight services* were classified as being read as R=E extended, as the administration is, as can be gleaned from the context, not perceived as having improved much, and the starving probably continues still.

another one, most commonly a St, in a PrTe TAC. In (48), for example, it is contrasted with such a St. in PrSi.

(48) Nealle said he had his bus pass. Police **have found** his ring, but the bus pass isn't there. (BNC K5D)

Were the second main clause in PaSi, the first would probably follow. *Police found his ring, but his bus pass wasn't there* would then profile the past actions, the police's searching of the area and their partial success in retrieving the objects. The way this utterance is phrased suggests that the speaker construes both elements as present, focusing on the current situation, on the ring's presence and the bus pass' absence, and not on the police work that brought about these states.

Even clearer becomes the meaning of the present perfect as concerning itself with present issues rather than with past ones when considering (49) and (50).

(49) In our erm canteen at work until quite recently used to do spam fritters.
(SP:D8YPS002) Mhm. (SP:D8YPS00M) I mean they're **not** they **haven't** sort of **died out** (unclear) (BNC D8Y)

In (49) the speaker almost opts for a St in PrTe before changing his or her mind and using the PrPe. Of course, this might be the speaker's monitoring device preventing a tense choice that is, in fact, conceived as inaccurate in the speaker's mind, and therefore an improved utterance is substituted. More likely though, seems to be the interpretation that no fitting adjective came to mind at the moment. *extinct*, the adjective signifying to die out, for instance, would not fit well in the context of cafeteria food, but *to be extinct* can be equated with *to have died out*, possibly leading the speaker to make this choice.

If this seems speculative still, then (50) can further serve to support the claim that, in essence, the present perfect is more closely related to present time than to PaT.

(50) This, from an administration which routinely **blocks** moves to a cleaner sea, which **gives** occasional wrist slaps to regular industrial polluters, which **encourages** the import of dangerous waste for processing, which **has starved** rail freight services and **increased** road haulage and which somehow **thinks** the answer to the giant car-park which masquerades as the M25 is to add yet more lanes in which to crawl. (BNC K5J)

In this newspaper article, a series of grievances is listed, all serving to illustrate the shortcomings of the British government. Almost all of them are in PrSi, stressing the habitualness of the actions and, thereby, turning their recurring execution into an attribute of the agent, in a similar way as *She smokes* implies *She is a smoker*. Amidst these attribute ascribing verbs in PrSi are two actions in the PrPe, filling the same kind of slot as all the verbs in PrSi do. In this kind of repetitive construction the conclusion presents itself that the PrPe here also fulfills the same function as the other actions named do, namely that of attributing a negative feature to the government. In this case this is done via assigning blame by naming an undesired action in the past rather than a repeated one that is expected to happen again in the future, but the effect is the same. What is stressed is an attribute of the administration rather than a specific action in the past.

While apparently following textbook descriptions in his conclusive remarks about the present perfect, describing it as being “a periphrastic means of indicating past time (with respect to RP [here: R]) with the added nuance that the completed event continues to be relevant” (Langacker 1991: 224), Langacker (ibid: 220f.) supports this conclusion about the present tense like nature of the PrPe in his analysis of its compositional elements. He describes *have* as grounding the utterance in present time and therefore aligning its R with S. The sense of the past participle within this construction is that of signaling that the action is in the past while also making it atemporal in the sense that a summary of the previous time is given rather than a reproduction of its coming about. While this analysis describes the English PrPe very

well, which is why it is given here in brief, it cannot be presented wholly without doubts. The German *Perfekt* EFL learners in Austria use to express almost all past events in, unless the utterance is part of a narrative, is formed precisely in the same way as the English PrPe. Both, *have* and the past participle, also seem to have the same general meanings in both languages. The difference in meaning and use between the English and the German construction can then only be one of different whole-unit-conventionalization, which stresses the meaning of the construction rather than that of its component parts. The component parts, however, receive their meaning via their use and hence, to some degree, have to carry some of the meaning of the construction. This use is different in English precisely because, but not limited to, the PrPe and its meaning. This does not change the fact that the use of *have* in PrSi as part of the construction for the English PrPe underpins the grounding in present time.

In terms of a monosemic view, Klein's , Palmer's and Comrie's assertions are verified by the data. However, I would go so far as to make an even stronger claim in light of wanting to create a most distinct picture for EFL learners. The PrPe can mostly be seen as a **present tense** that describes **present states or actions** in light of actions in the past. In light of the data analyzed here *Current State brought about by past event* can be seen as the most general, overarching meaning of the PrPe.

For a more diverse perception focusing on the PrPe polysemy, the data was analyzed in terms of the readings laid down by Declerck's (2006) as explained above. Almost all of the sample sentences analyzed could be classified in accordance to Declerck's categorization, except for two that both follow the pattern in (51).

- (51) St George have been unmoved by the Italian threat and have still chased Ofahengaue. The pressure again began to take its toll so Ofahengaue slipped away to visit his family and relatives in Tonga. Despite his absence, the headlines that Ofahengaue was set to sign with St George still appeared.
(BNC CB2)

The PrPe here does not inclusion of or adjacency to S, so, by process of elimination, it should represent an indefinite reading. It does not seem analogous to those patterns either, as it is not S where the fact that at one point the chasing took place is relevant. The result of *have still chased* is also in the past. An overtaxed Ofahengaue went to visit his home because of it. The chasing started at an indefinite point in the past, but continued onward until this result came to pass. So the action here is adjacent to R, in this case the place in the quasi narrative the writer and reader are concerned with at that point. Out of these consideration arose the name “Unmarked up-to-R” for this, admittedly small, group that did not quite fit any of the other readings.

Most well represented in the study is, as can be seen in figure 21, the indefinite reading, which accounted for more than half of the sentences analyzed.

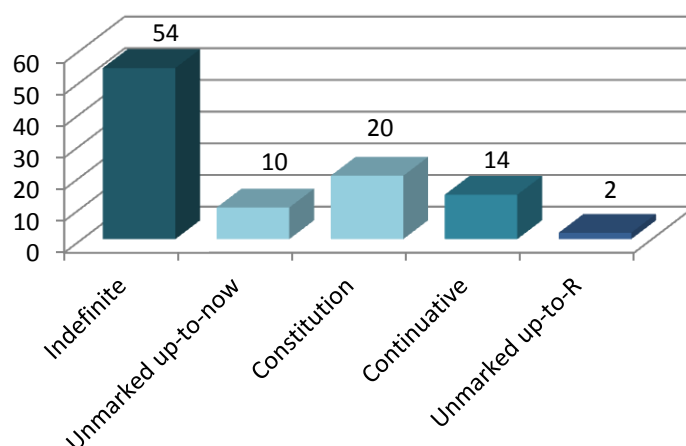


Figure 21: Distribution of Declerck's (2006) readings of the PrPe throughout the data

The two coextensive readings together make up about a third of the data, leaving the group of continuatives rather underrepresented. This last point follows quite logically from the exclusion of present perfect progressive forms, which Declerck considers part of the PrPe, from the data set. The goal of this part of the analysis was to find the constructions that typically fulfill the different readings described by Declerck (2006) in a similar way as was done for the PaSi. As can immediately be seen from table 7, this goal could not be achieved.

Constructions \ Readings	total	so now	because	and now	at one point	x times	always	for	since	which	could
Indefinite	54	30			10					12	2
		11	2	17	10					12	2
Unmarked up-to-now	10	7								2	1
		2	2	3						2	1
Constitution	20	2			3		12			3	
		1	1			3	4	7	1	3	
Continuative	14	2					10			1	1
			2				5	2	3	1	1
Unmarked up-to-R	2	1					1				
		1						1			

Table 7: Instances of Declerck's readings and constructions in absolute figures

It is quite obvious that none of the patterns grouped under the constructions above can be assigned one of the readings, nor do the readings clearly prefer one group of constructions over another. This might, of course, be due to an erroneous grouping of constructions on my part, or even just an equally valid one, but not in accordance to the categories that would fit Declerck's readings. He, for example, distinguishes between those sentences describing one instance happening at an indefinite point in time, and those that happened several times. These two construction groups at least would then both clearly belong to one reading each. However, at least in the data of this study, the focus of the latter also lies on the fact that this has indeed happened, if not in the same than at least in a quite similar fashion as in this kind of indefinite reading, as (52) shows.

- (52) (a) Farmer Colin points out that this selfless operation is always carried out with a complete lack of regard for personal safety and reminds the committee that Josh **has several times fallen** off his load just outside the King's Head.' (BNC CFC)

(b) At the moment I couldn't cos I've got a bad knee but I **have run after** people and caught people, yes. (BNC FM7)

While in (a) the repetition is specified, it is implied in (b) as well, and in both cases the focus of the utterance lies on the existence of these occurrences and on what that means for the addressee's perception of the agent in both situations. From a meaning-oriented point of view, this grouping can therefore be justified. Two further groups that might not be immediately obvious from their names in table 6 necessitate some explanation. The construction [*which* PrPe] encompasses all such constructions, most of which are relative clauses, that clearly only serve to attribute an action to an agent or patient, thereby imbuing this entity with a quality, as can be seen in (53).

(53) (a) Now that the genie is out of the bottle, we have to face the fact that the monarchy as we **have understood** it since Victorian times is virtually over. (BNC CBF)

(b) But there is one glimmer of hope for Becky, who **has** just **started** school. She is beginning to pull through her ordeal. (BNC CEN)

While (a) is co-extensive and (b) indefinite the difference does not seem to come to bear on what the clauses governed by the PrPe verbs do within the respective sentences and are therefore grouped as one in this study.

The [*could* PrPe] construction has been discussed by Declerck (ibid: 583, 587), but only in brief. Regarding the sample sentences analyzed in the present study, it represents sentences such as (54).

(54) (a) No. No, no. That car **could not have tipped over** of itself. (BNC A0D)

More than one third (10984 of a total of 17388, to be precise) of all PrPe utterances in the BNC proper are combinations of modals and the PrPe, so in this study they were actually marginalized via the sampling process. What exactly their specific meaning suggests could not be determined via the 4 samples that were found in the mini-corpus, but constitutes an interesting element for further studies on the PrPe constructions.

Having found Declerck's classification highly applicable to PrPe instances but not as generalizations over constructions and their meanings, I approached the matter from the other direction. Grouping constructions that are similar in their internal structure together, I tried to determine what they generally had in common that distinguished them from those constructions making up other such groups. Thus, I arrived at the classifications of PrPe constructions and their readings describe in table 8.

Constructions Readings	total	A number of vintage aircraft have crashed in recent years... so are old planes unsafe? (K1S) The emphasis has moved towards data because [...] programming presents much less of a problem. (HRK) She says the Government has starved the health service, and now close to an election it comes up with money. (K1F) Our grandmasters, who have chased Soviet supremacy for a decade, are now aged 30-35 (A89) The scheme has included the designs of A R Penck, Matazo Kayama and the pop artist, Andy Warhold. (K1P) Josh has several times fallen off his load just outside the King's Head. (CFC) I have always believed in the middle-market spending the restaurants represent. (K59) I have shopped here for as long as I can remember. (K3C) I said I loved the kennel and hated the dog. He hasn't talked to me since. (AoU) By the time the surgeon had produced his complete sentence, the patient might well have bled to death (CBR)									
		VPrPe so now VPrTe	VPrTe because VPrPe	VPrPe and now VPrTe	S which VPrPe, VPrTe	VPrPe at one point	VPrPe x times	VPrPe always	VPrPe for	VPrPe since	could VPrPe
Results For Now	42	15	7	20							
Feature	18				18						
Existence	13					10	3				
Time Span	23							9	10	4	
Modality	4										4

Table 8: Absolute frequencies of constructions and readings of the PrPe

If this has not been noted in the previous table, it becomes obvious now at the latest that the constructions in this section build less on the patterns of co-occurrences with other tensed verbs, but rather on the temporal adverbs the PrPe is often categorized in the light of. In fact, considering the different senses commonly assigned to the present perfect and the way they are illustrated by researchers, this connection between temporal adverbs and TAC constructions is often and most meaningfully brought into sharp relief. Michaelis (1994: 113), for example, illustrates her three primary readings of the present perfect as follows:

- (55) (a) universal/continuative reading
We've been sitting in traffic for an hour.
- (b) existential/experiential
We've had this argument before.
- (c) resultative
The persons responsible have been fired.

While the sample sentence for (a) is in fact the present perfect progressive, a very enlightening fact remains. If the sentences illustrating (a) – in the present perfect- and (c) were stripped of their temporal adverbs it would be impossible to distinguish between three meanings.

- (56) (a) We've sat in traffic
- (b) We've had this argument
- (c) The persons responsible have been fired.

The same holds true for other such accounts, as, for example Lucko's (1981: 120f., parenthesis added)

- (57) (a) She has improved her performance (since last term).
- (b) I have worked hard.
- (c) We have increased our output (several times before).

Prima facie, this seems to only leave room for two interpretations. Either the form is, in fact, not polysemous at all, but rather the meaning of the sentence is modified by the temporal adverbs it encompasses, or it is polysemous indeed, but its different senses pose constraints on the adverbs that can accompany them in accordance to their compatibility in meaning (as is assumed by Dirven et al. 1989: 336ff). Upon closer examination, the possibility presents itself that, true to the theories delineated in the first half of this thesis, constructions do not have to be seen completely detached from specific lexical items or even a group of almost synonymous ones. Hence, in a construction grammar theory of the PrPe, these adverbials become part of the pattern which, as a whole signifies a sense on the collection of all constructions of the PrPe.

In table 7, all samples are categorized as if they indeed contained such an adverbial. This is, in fact, not true. Only about 40% of the PrPe forms analyzed were accompanied by such a word. However, all of them could, and the meaning they signify can be summed up by precisely this adverbial. In (58), for example, the sense of the PrPe evoked is clearly that of existence, or lack thereof.

(58) He's had other Lovebirds in his aviary. But none **have needed** this much attention. (BNC K26)

While no adverbial is present, *ever* more than just suggests itself, meaning exactly that - existence or complete lack thereof. In the network in figure 22, the constructions are again related to each other via the senses they encode.

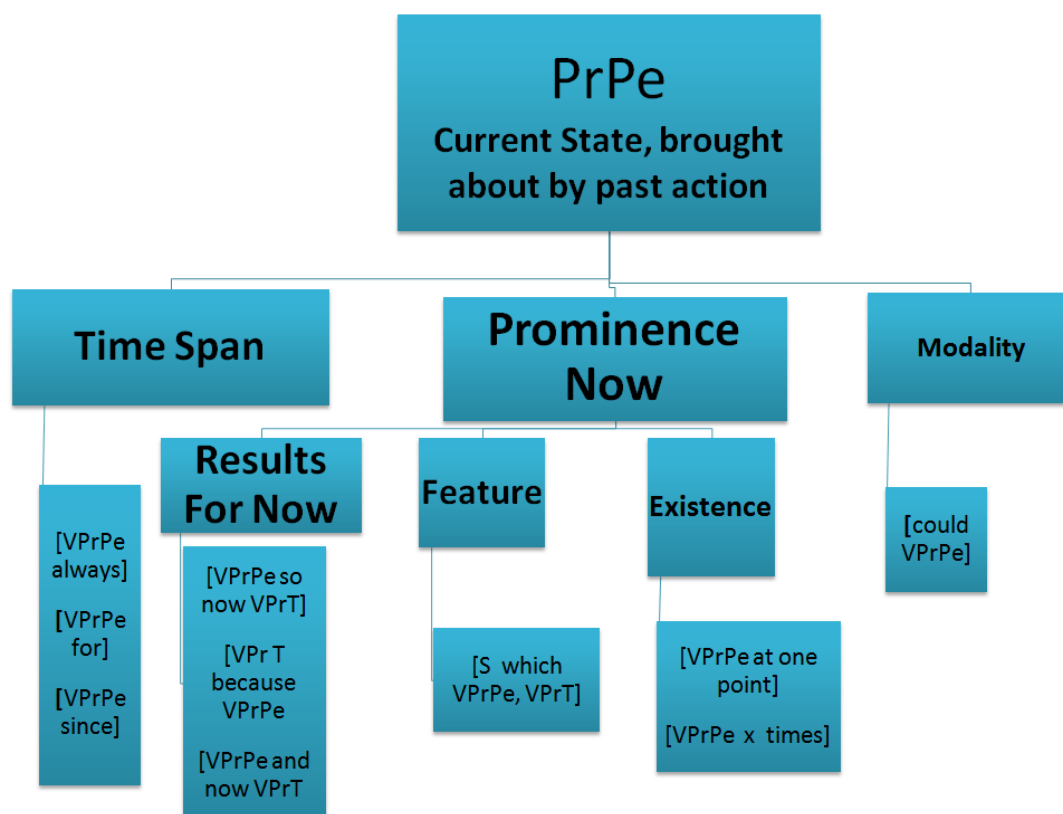


Figure 22: Network of senses and verb patterns of the PrPe when referring to past situations

This time, all of them are partly filled, encompassing just such an adverbial. It has to be understood though, that they do not necessarily have to be there. This might be odd from a descriptive linguistics point of view, but makes sense when one considers that this, once again, serves to provide learners with the necessary information to understand the constructions. Where they retain their meaning without the adverbial, these can be left out, but it is still the meaning that this adverbial encodes that is profiled by the PrPe in those utterances.⁴⁸

What we arrive at is a total of ten constructions that, once again, symbolizes a variation thereof, even with other adverbials in place. *Always*, for example, also encompasses its negation *never* (but not *never before*) and the phrase *and still do*, as

⁴⁸ Such a meaning, linked to a lexical item that has a more or less precise equivalent in German, but whose signification is much more tangible than that of any grammatical form, might prove very helpful to EFL learners. While lexical items cannot be translated literally either, they nevertheless are more concrete and thus easier understood than most grammatical ones.

they all signify this kind of time span that includes S and profiles the longitude of the validity of a state. To the best of my knowledge I have chosen the most prototypical adverbial for each sense, hoping to hereby represent a number of constructions manageable for learners that still, in its entirety sufficiently represents the meaning of the PrPe.

4.2.3. Past Progressive

The literature consulted (Collins & Hollo 2010; Declerck 2006, Römer 2005) seems to be pretty uniform in its assertion that the PaPr “presents an event as being ‘in progress’: in other words, considered from a particular point in time, we would normally understand the event to have an earlier starting point and a later finish point” (Collins & Hollo 2010: 83); the viewpoint R is place so closely to the event that E exceeds it on both sides (R=E extended). The data examined in this study supports this description, as figure 23 shows.

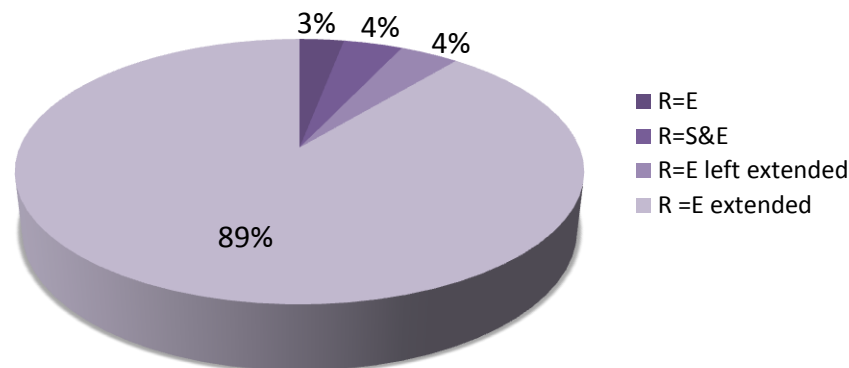


Figure 23: PaPr viewpoint distribution within the study

In the overwhelming majority of the situations, the viewpoint is such that the action exceeds it on one (R=E left extended) or even on both sides, with only 7% giving a slightly different perspective. A central viewing arrangement seems certainly to be a most salient and defining element of the meaning of the PaPr, which goes hand in hand with the perception of the actions as unbounded, as seen “through a keyhole” (Niemeier & Reif 2008: 351). More than 80% of the utterances in PaPr examined in

this study could be clearly ascertained as such, most of which made R very explicit, either via a PaSi verb or a deictic adverbial. If R is only implicitly connected to the PaP, as in (59), it becomes much more difficult to understand the use of the TAC. Reading only (b), it seems that there is a sequence that does not grant the perception of *was heating* as a past state.

(59) (a) Raynor had tipped a basket of logs on to the fire, and warmth and light were washing over the room. But -- shall I ever be warm again? thought Grainne. Shall I ever be able to shut out the sight and the sound?

(b) Raynor had fetched wine from a corner cupboard, and was heating it with a thin iron rod which had been resting in the fire's embers. Grainne took the hot fragrant wine gratefully, and cupped her hands about the goblet for warmth. When she said, 'Tell me. Tell me everything,' she saw his eyes soften and knew that he would surely tell her all there was to know. (BNC G10)

Only with the inner monologue signified by *thought* in (a) does *was heating* make sense as the scenery to Grainne's action of thinking.

This averment is not, on the whole, very different from what slightly more traditional grammars perceive as the meaning of the PaPr, namely that it "describes activities or events that are in progress at a particular time" (Biber et al. 1999: 470), the latter of which also seems to be the basis for the descriptions given in current school textbooks (cf. e.g. Gerngroß et al. 2007; Diwold et al. 2005; Zach & Gromes 2005). There is, however, a discrepancy between them that must not be overlooked. While Biber et al. (as given above) prescribe the use of the PaPr on the basis of a feature of the event, narrowing down the total of all possible to those that are in progress, Collins and Hollo claim this TAC to be applicable to virtually all events whenever the language user wants to, to use Collins and Hollo's words again, "**present** [...] an event as being 'in progress'" (2010: 83, emphasis added).

This, in turn, implies that the PaPr is, in fact, applicable to all situations if the language user wants the meaning profile the PaPr imposes on actions to be exerted on the situation at hand. Especially grammars for learners often lay down that rules such as

“Many stative situations are incompatible with the Progressive. [...] Verbs of involuntary perception (see, hear, smell, taste) are incompatible with the Progressive [...]. Verbs of cognition (know, believe, understand, wonder, suppose, realize) do not normally admit the Progressive” (Downing & Locke 2002: 369). While none of the books really claim such statements as absolutes, they are rarely brought into a relationship with what the PaPr construction means, and would probably mark sentences such as those in (60) as ungrammatical.

- (60) (a) Morse had insisted on travelling by what he called the 'scenic' route -- via Cirencester but, alas, the countryside was not appearing at its best: the golden days were gone, and the close-cropped fields where the sheep ever nibbled looked dank and uninviting under a sky-cover of grey cloud. (BNC HWM)
- (b) I laughed, and then he laughed too. But it was true, he was tired. I could see it, and others could see it too. But the company was always wanting new plays, and we had two theatres now. (BNC FS3)

Both sentences do not seem odd in the context they are used in, even if, in isolation *The countryside was not appearing at its best* and *The company was always wanting new plays* might seem grammatically questionable. Langacker (2008b: 65) illustrates what way of looking at a situation verbs in the PaPr, even Sts like in (60), suggest in terms of the scope of an action, as can be seen from the illustration in figure 24.

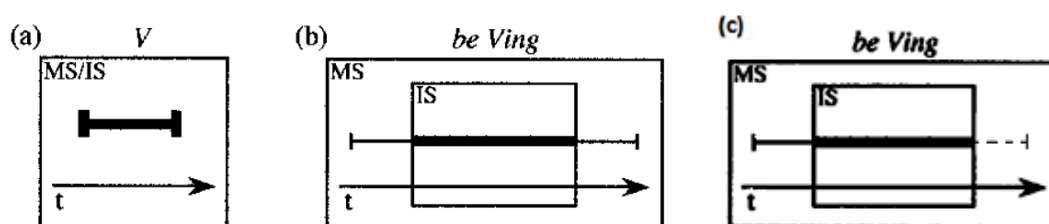


Figure 24: Langacker's (2008b: 65) illustration of the progressive as backgrounding the maximal scope: (a) the base form of the verb (b) the verb in the PaPr (c) my adaptation of an illustration of the verb in the PaPr

Of the entire action lasting for whatever time span, only the immediate scope is seen as of relevance, with the prior or further duration of the action being backgrounded as non-relevant for the situation described. The average realization of scope of PaPr utterances in the study at hand, in accordance with the scale detailed in 4.1.2.3., was

2.33, much lower than that of the PaSi (4.43) or the PrPe (4.3). In terms of completion though, Langacker's visualization could be improved upon by indicating that the immediate scope of the action in (b) does not have to be placed in the center of the action. It can also be towards the back, as some of the typical utterances in the PaPr, that imply an interruption and consequent abrupt ending of the action. The openness of this continuation is shown in (c).

This now, can be done with all situations. The immediate scope of the PaPr actions then also brings with it a homogeneity, where every individual step of an action can be represented by the entire action. *She was making coffee* can, therefore, refer to any of the actions within the process of coffee making, be it the filling of the machine with water, the adding of the ground coffee or the pushing of the on-switch (c.f. Niemeier & Reiff: 2008: 343; Langacker 2009b: 190) . What one arrives at is then either a progress the point of development of which is not specified, a process perceived as homogeneous or even, if the activities within the process are blended even further, an action that is, in fact, akin to a state. This is represented in the different aspects of the situation that are profiled via the use of the PaPr in the sentences analyzed in the present study, as figure 25 shows.

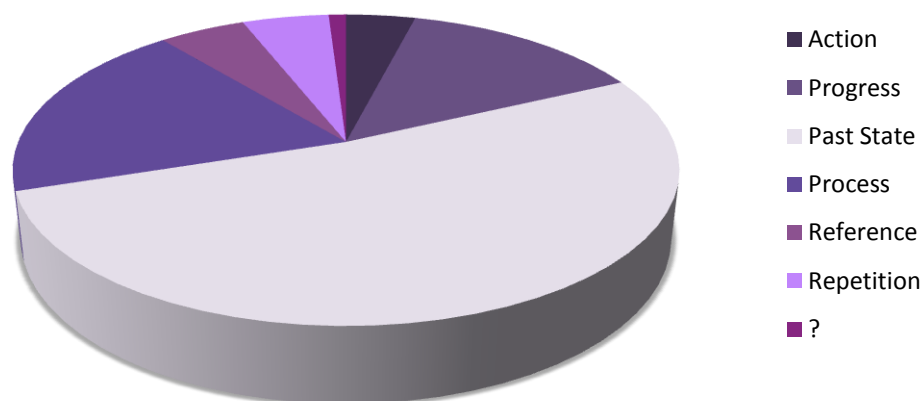


Figure 25: Profiles of the PaPr

More than half of all samples conceptualized the action in a stative way, profiled not a part of an action as such, but a situation in which the action or process was

prominent, a state honeycombed and accentuated by the activity that was ongoing at that time. (61) illustrates this nicely, showing that, indeed, the action proper does not even have to take place during every instance of the time frame for which this state is proposed.

(61) I must tell the truth. I wanted to take a laser gun and kill all those monsters. They weren't hurting me. They **were helping** me. They were nice. But something in my mind hated them. (BNC FSB)

The monster did not help the narrating character at the moment of his inner monologue, but repeatedly, continuously throughout his stay with them. It is the construction's meaning that superimposes itself on the verb, changing it from an action to a state. Therefore, analogous to *cheded*, we can also combine lexical and grammatical aspects that are expected not to function well together. This conceptualization of the PaPr as signifying something stative leads back to the comparative rareness of St in the PaPr construction (about 1:2 in comparison with the PaSi). Langacker (1991: 208), in his discussion of the progressive here encapsulates the logical consequence of this profile:

It is manifestly reasonable that only perfectives [=Act, Acc, Ach] should take the progressive, since the function of this construction is to derive an imperfective clausal head. The vacuity of imperfectivizing a verb that is already imperfect is sensibly avoided by the collective wisdom of conventional English usage.

Again this assertion is underpinned by what can be gleaned from the compositional elements of the construction. The St *to be* already marks the verb phrase as presenting a stative proposition. The following present participle, then, as is illustrated in figure 25, highlights the homogeneity of the verb in this construction and presents it as in progress, just as it does if no full PaPr construction is present.

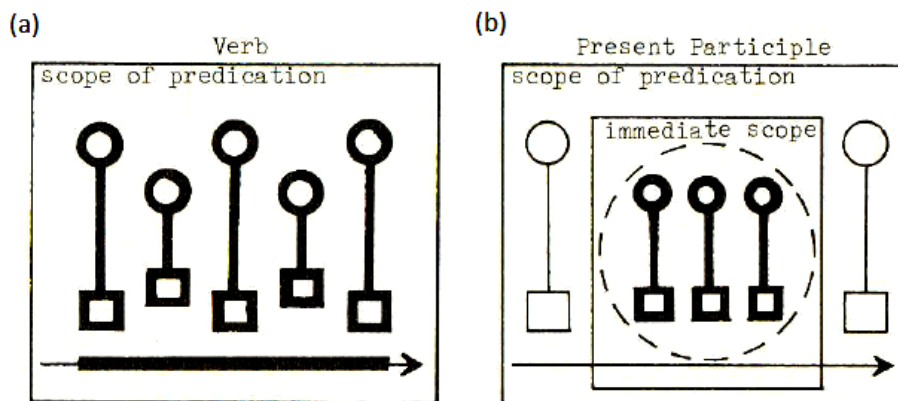


Figure 26: Langacker's (1991: 26) visualization of the present participle

This remains true even if R should be placed at any point on the t-axis that does not precisely coincide with one of the elements or instantiations of the action. While always inadvertently triggering wider scopes as well, the immediate scope is strongly foregrounded. Together, these elements create the meaning of a state in the past during which a homogeneous activity is in process, which, in turn, is said to be entrenched as one holistic meaning unit that is triggered in its entirety by the construction [was/were present participle].

In fact, this most central meaning seems so strong for the PaPr, that allocation of different senses to different constructions proved very difficult. Whether the construction implies repetition, gives the temporal reference to another action, aligns two activities in the PaPr, it mostly retains this sense of a past state. The boundaries between the sense were immensely fuzzy, with all of them relating back to a very similar notion of past stateness. Consequently, no network of senses was drawn up and table 9 provided in the following is to be taken as a tentative categorization of co-occurrences. It shows one way the PaPr utterances in the study can be divided up, but it is by far not the only one.

Constructions Readings	total												
		VPaPr when VPaSi	VPaSi when VPaP	VPaSi as VPaPr	VPaPr when VPaSi	VPaPr, when suddenly VPaSi	that VPaPr	VPaSi REL VPaPr	VPaPr REL VPaS	VPaPr	VPaPr VStPaSi	VPaPr while (were) VPaPr	various
Temporal Groundings	9	5	4										
Interruptions	7			2	4	1							
Descriptions of Things	4						4						
Descriptions of People	5						5						
Descriptions of Situations	25							25					
Descriptions of Processes	16								9	7			
Alignments with PaSi	14		9								5		
Alignments with PaPr	13										3	10	
others	7												7
		It was raining when they came. (KDE) He was killed when the police were chasing him. (FBL) The bell rang as he was making coffee. (CN3) The police were following [...] it, when it crashed. (K11) I was (unclear) shopping in town looking at some clothes when, suddenly I got pulled back from one of the, the changing room. (KBj) She watched him go to the box that was standing on the end of the sideboard (CK9) 'So have I,' I used to say. But I don't think we were understanding each other. (FPF) It was getting dark so he pulled the curtains and put on the overhead light. (CR6) The fire was dying. (BNU) Besides, although she was still finding life at Levantire exciting, it was also exhausting. (CEY) the Government was starving the NHS of resources while building up the private sector. (K55)											

Table 9: Absolute frequencies of constructions and readings of the PaPr

What is more, the constructions proved much more varied in the case of the PaPr than in the other TACs, with those given on top of the column being sometimes the most common, sometimes the most distinct from others, but not necessarily completely representative for the tokens found within the data. It would have gone too far to list all of them in the table. Whether or not this has to do with the PaPr's senses being closer in their signification to its possible underlying meaning than others, or whether there are patterns that I was not able to discern and the error is mine is hard to say. A more detailed study of the constructions with regards to the construal each of them imposes might shed further light on the matter and would be a desideratum.

The PaPr's main function within a sequence of verb phrases or even entire texts does not come as a surprise considering this generalized meaning discussed. In almost three quarters of the cases, the PaPr constituted the element farther in the background in verb phrase pairs, and in 44% it actually served as the ground for more prominent actions, as is depicted in figure 27.

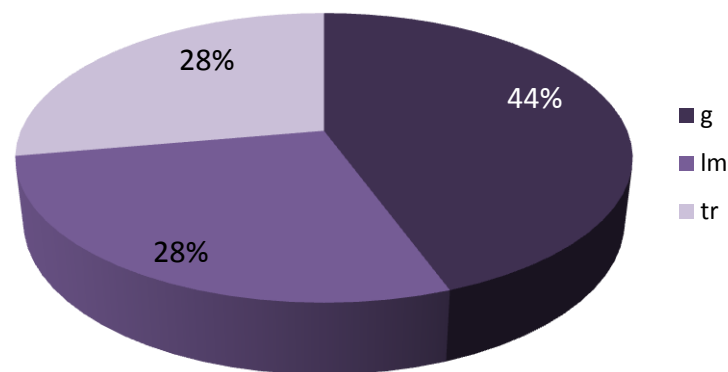


Figure 27: Prominence construals of the PaPr in terms of g, lm and tr

Within the text excerpts, the PaPr constructions had an extending function in three out of four cases, stopping the narrative to focus, elaborate on and add details to the situation the narrative was situated at at that point rather than moving the narrative forward.

When it does function as Ad, it still conceptualizes a homogeneous, stative situation that the addresser invites the addressee into the middle of, even in situations made up of clearly sequential elements like the *seeking and successive finding* of the mouth of the girl suffering a sexual assault that was described in (37).⁴⁹

4.2.4. TACs in contrast - a construal juxtaposition

As was explained at the onset of section 4., the verbs of interest in the sample excerpts assembled into a mini-corpus for this study were the same for each pastness TAC under examination here. In this, representativeness was abandoned in favor of stabilizing the influence of frequent co-occurrences of certain lexical aspects. This study setup also allows for a different kind of investigation that might be particularly helpful in terms of examining for what aspects learner awareness needs to be raised in order for them to achieve a sufficiently accurate mental representation of the pastness TACs. German learners, due to their L1 experience, are likely to have one form of the verb in their mind when thinking in past tense but have to choose between three realizations that each bring their own unique set of senses into the match. In order to do so successfully, they need to understand how the situation is construed respectively in each construction. In the following, this process will be mimicked. Starting out from one verb, the three realizations in the different TACs, describing roughly the same situation, will be compared in terms of what it is the TAC itself brings to the resultant conceptualization.

Comparisons between the TACs have been conducted before, as can be seen in figure 28 where Langacker graphically contrasts the PaSi and the PaPr.

⁴⁹ In full: In the next second his arms were iron bands around her, and he was seeking and finding her mouth. (BNC JY1)

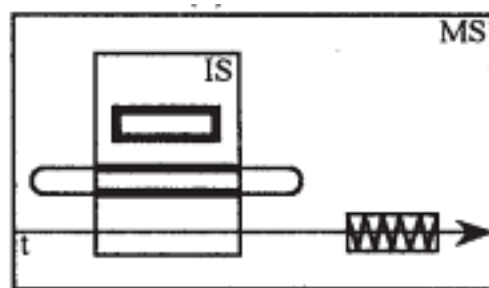


Figure 28: Langacker's (2009b: 191) illustration of *past*

In this figure he highlights the difference in scope between the two forms. Both TACs are distant from *S*, the zig-zagged box, but in the case of the PaSi the entire action is within the viewing frame, whereas the PaPr extends beyond it, with only the immediate scope in the foreground and its beginning and ending radiused, indistinct. A detailed comparison of the PaSi and the PrPe is given by Declerck (2006: 316ff; 589ff.), who summarizes that “the speaker is concerned with NOW when he uses the present perfect and with THEN when he uses the preterite” (ibid: 317). The results of the present study are in line with both of these assertions. A threefold comparison between the PaSi, the PrPe and the PaPr, though, is not common practice, as it mainly makes sense from an EFL learner's point of view as native speakers acquire all TACs simultaneously, in context and as three separate constructions. Austrian high school students, however, learn all three as relating back to one structure in their L1, which makes the threefold distinction staggeringly elusive for them. Thereby this contrasting of all three pastness TACs may shed some new light on the matter by summing up and bringing together what could be found in the analysis of the individual TACs and directly juxtaposing the main difference.

In the following, four verbs are considered in their PaT realizations as they were found in the corpus that forms the basis of this study. Their description serves to further illustrate the results from the study in a contrastive manner on the basis of concrete language examples, and extends it to the difference the lexical aspects bring to the overall meaning of the constructions.

The first set of samples described here is the Act_v and Ev *to snow* in (62).

- (62) (a) Oh lovely (SP:PS0W2) and er it wasn't bad, the snow wasn't very good to start with but it **snowed** on the Thursday and then we, you know, we skied quite a bit after that, but poor girl she got sciatica on the Wednesday. (BNC KE2)
- (b) It is not difficult -- though may be expensive -- to hire a guide for a day (or a week) so that you find the best snow available at each time of the day and each season, whether it **hasn't snowed** for a week or is blizzarding as you start the day. (BNC G2W)
- (c) They sprayed cold water on my dog when it **was snowing** and all her fur froze. (BNC KPA)

The most striking difference between the three realizations is probably that of viewpoint, as is illustrated in figure 29.

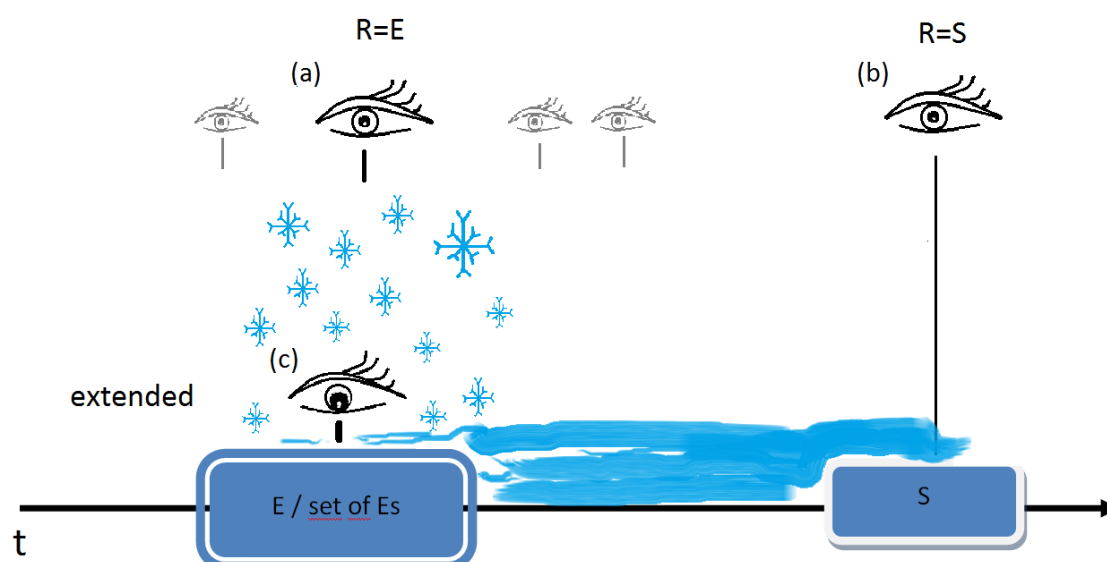


Figure 29: Viewpoints in contrast: (a) PaSi (b) PrPe (c) PaPr

In (a), the speaker relates a series of events and invites the listener to move from R to R, which always coincides with the events presently relevant, moving from the 'state before snow' to the snowing, the skiing made possible by the snow and the episode of sciatica pain. In (b) now, the actual event is rather irrelevant to the speaker except for the subsequent state of snow covering the ground or lack thereof. In (c) then, the viewing focus is on the spraying of cold water that happened at some point during the time span in which it snowed. The viewpoint is very close to the actual event, focused

on one moment within the continuous Ev of *snowing*. The moment where the snowfall began and that of its ending are disregarded. The falling snow flakes are the backdrop to the action, present during the entire time *sprayed cold water on my dog* takes up, homogeneously unchanging like a state. The snowing is relevant especially with respect to the state of coldness it implies that lets the listener conceptualize the action as an act of cruelty rather than a welcome form of refreshment.

Co-textually, (a) and (c) are entirely in the past, relating bygone events, whereas the text in (b) is mainly written in PrSi, stating a situation as generally true. In the last clause, the situation is concretized, projecting the reader into the very situation of a skiing adventure, hence the *blizzarding* is given in present progressive. In this situation, the PrPe comes in form of a brief backshift as the present narrative is retained but the skiing conditions are described with reference to recent snowfall or its absence.

In this respect, (62) is not dissimilar to (63), which exemplifies Ach/Act_d verbs via the verb *to reach*.

- (63) (a) During his six-month stint on the surgical wards, the two were seen going everywhere together, and all her friends could hear wedding bells. Just as Stewart **reached** the end of his term at Yonder, news **began** to filter through of his engagement -- to a nurse at Tewkesbury General. (BNC JY0)
- (b) If the quality of public services has achieved a higher political profile in general, it **has reached** a positively frantic pitch in health care. A casual browse through the monthly newsletter of the NHS Management Executive reveals an almost obsessive preaching of quality lessons to health service managers. (BNC HXT)
- (c) No one was about in the suburban roads and avenues. In Sir Walter Raleigh Park, however, the activities of Ring's Amusements **were reaching** a crescendo: tomorrow afternoon, at one forty-five, the booths and stalls and whirligigs would welcome the public.. (BNC H7A)

The main difference between the PaSi sentence in (63) (a) and (62) (a) is that here in (63) (a) it is not the PaSi verb itself that constitute the action in the foreground but the

beginning of the filtering through of the news. The clause centering around the verb *reached*, here, serves as a temporal Im from which the reader arrives at the tr, the action given most prominence, the arrival of news about the engagement. They are construed as occurring simultaneously, with *reached the end of his term at Yonder* being located more firmly on the temporal axis, as the surgical rotation has a predetermined temporal endpoint. While the PaSi and the PaPr both function as Im and tr, the PaPr readily functions as Im for the PaSi while the reverse is not true. If the PaSi is the Im, then the tr will also be a PaSi verb, or, in the case of catenative verbs, a to infinitive, like in *They both knew enough **to realise** that the equipment stacked around was sophisticated* (BNC BPA). The most important difference between (a) and (c) though is once again, one of viewpoint. The crescendo is construed as not quite having reached its peak yet, although Ach, true to their nature, tend to still put the viewpoint rather towards the end of the action, even if in the PaPr. A jota of intensification of the crescendo is still possible in (c), distinguishing it from (a), but even more so from (b). There, the *has reached* is equated with the resultant perceived ubiquity of quality lessons, which is phrased in the PrSi. The action is fully realized and its evidence is presented to the reader. This last point presents a clear difference in scope that is also typical for the PrPe, the implementation of which into Langacker's (1991b: 191) illustration above is provided in figure 30.

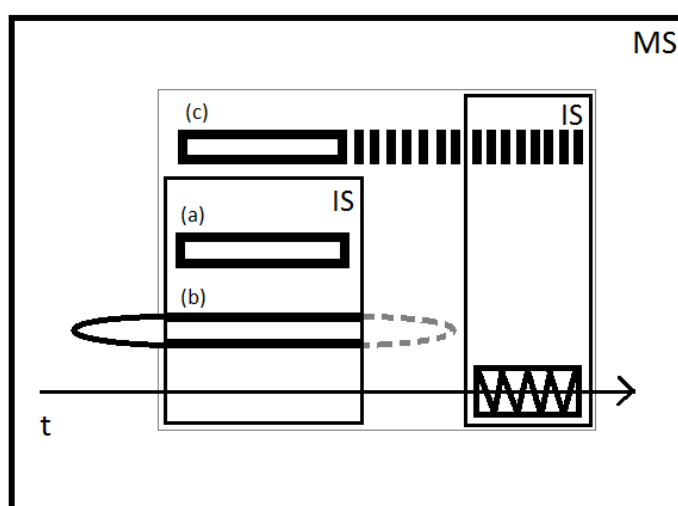


Figure 30: Adaptation of Langacker's illustration of *past*: (a) PaSi (b) PaPr (c) PrPe

While the action mentioned in the PaPr is clearly prior to S, the immediate scope of the utterance is its still prevalent aspect, be it its continuation, result or any other implication of its prior realization. In comparison to the other TACs, however, the next wider scope is profiled more strongly when the PrPe is used, and is therefore part of the representation as a thin, grey line.⁵⁰

In this, Accs and Prs are slightly different, as can be seen in (c) in (64), the sample set presenting these lexical aspects, namely *to blacken*.

- (64) (a) The magazine in her hand plumed upwards in a long flame, belching smoke. He realized that she was a mad woman, utterly mad.' Fifteen pounds,' she repeated, dully. Then the flames licked at her fingers and she dropped what was left of True Love at her high-heeled feet. The pages **blackened**, crinkled, and curled. (BNC ADA)
- (b) The atrocious cruelties committed in the name of 'god' and religion, which **have blackened** religious history, are all too well known, at least in the west. (BNC BM2)
- (c) We brought the stone back with us to examine more closely. It was certainly the instrument of death. As Aldhelm's blood **was blackening** on the stone, so fragments of lichen and stone-dust were embedded in Aldhelm's wounds. His head was crushed, and the stone coldly fitted back into its mound. (BNC GOM)

While a sufficient degree of blackness is reached in (b), rendering religious history a shade of darkness that is recognized as black, a further increase of blackness is still possible. This is analogous to other almost all Prs, like, for example, *I have got old while I was not looking* (BNC AC7) or *many educated people have hardened themselves against science* (BNC A6V), but not to all Accs, like, for instance, *Goldsmith has built a moat in which he is sheltering a large number of crocodiles* (BNC AJP) and *I have just read the article 'Who's the new girl sitting in my seat?'* (BNC CDK). This goes to show that telicity is also subject to gradience and depends on how clear the nature of the goal is. Colors are notoriously fuzzy in their boundaries (c.f. e.g. Taylor 2003: 1ff.),

⁵⁰ For the sake of completeness, the illustration is also adapted to encompass those instances of the PaPr that are only unbounded on one side. As this is more common, the right side was chosen as potentially bounded, hence its extension beyond the viewing frame is indicated in form of a grey, dotted line only.

hardness is a matter of subjective perception, but an article presumably ends with the last full stop and Goldsmith's moat is a moat only once the crocodiles can swim in it.⁵¹ In the case of (64) (b) *have blackened* not only denotes the history as now black, but, in fact, describes the current state the *cruelties committed in the name of 'god' and religion* are in, imbuing them with this notion of past actions as a current feature. This is clearer in samples such as *several of our grandmasters, who have chased Soviet supremacy for a decade, are now aged 30-35* (BNC A89), where the modified NP head is a more typical agent in the activity described in the peripheral dependent. In any case, both, the Ach and the Pr, when in the PrPe, highlight the currently resultant state as sufficient achievement of the goal, even if the process can be carried forward still.

This is different from (c), where Aldhelm's blood, while in the process of blackening, is not perceived as black yet. If it were washed off at the moment that point of time in the story, it would never be black at all. Within the story, this described blackening once again does not move the narrative along like its finding and analyzing do and but gives a rather graphic description of the situation. This puts it into contrast with (a), where the blackening of the *True Love* magazine signifies its destruction, making it unobtainable for the male protagonist

On the whole, though the construals vary slightly depending on the lexical aspects of the verbs used in the respective TACs discussed so far, they constitute differences in nuances rather than real discrepancies. St verbs, now, are a somewhat different matter, as (65) illustrates.

- (65) (a) They **sat** in the parlour, on the evening of Saturday, September 2nd, **waiting** for Menzies' man Allan Stewart to come back with the news from Blair Atoll. They **were disputing** strategies for the resistance and **drinking** red wine from France -- sour claret, which had proved hard to sell. The room **had** the look of a tattered nest -- piles of newspapers **were** stacked

⁵¹ This is stating it a bit extreme, of course. A moat is still a moat if it was used as such in medieval times and now does not carry water, or even could not at all, as some of the dams have broken, but for the purpose of establishing the difference between these types of categories, this generalization may suffice.

against the walls, empty stone bottles **stood** about with dust on their shoulders like soldiers after a battle. (BNC A0N)

(b) MILLIONAIRE squire Sir John Pollen has pulled the plug on the public phone box that **has stood** in his village for 30 years. (BNC CH6)

(c) Aye, where else?' she said as she, too, rose from the settle and returned to the couch, from where she **watched him go** to the box that **was standing** on the end of the sideboard, and from it **take** a piece of silver, then button his coat across his broad chest, **take** his cap from his pocket and, **having put** it on at an angle, **salute** her, saying, 'Your servant, madam.' (BNC CK9)

With states, which by nature extend beyond the immediate scope, the PaSi can, in fact, provide a perspective similar to that typically assigned to the PaPr. This is due to the fact that, as has been pointed out before, there is a high similarity between the construal of an activity in PaPr and a past state. In (a), all the verbs, be they in PaSi or in PaPr are part of the same description of one state. While the activities *to dispute*, *to drink* and *to wait* are in the PaPr, the Sts *sit*, *have*, *be*, and *stand* are in the PaSi. In (c) now, only *was standing* is stative, and backgrounded in contrast to the very active PaSi verbs surrounding it. There would, however, not be too much of a difference in construal were *was standing* in PaSi instead, as it is in (66)

(66) With a gesture almost roguish, as if she **slapped** a hand away, she **tossed** the frills back before **lifting** the lid off the biscuit box (velvet-covered and braided) that **stood** on her bedside table, to **choose** from its varied collection the biscuits most suitable for breakfast two crackers and two water biscuits. (BNC JY7)

There is a slight tendency discernible from the BNC lists for the PaSi to be used in cases such as this to place the state in contrast to a preceding action represented in gerund form, but no clear pattern could be found in the course of this study. The precise difference between Sts in the PaSi and the PaPr could not be fully ascertained, except for with verbs of extreme duration that are construed as **past** states in the PaPr still, and consequently limiting the overall duration in order to, in fact, construe them as past, as valid only for a bygone time span, as can be seen from the difference between (67) (a) and (b).

(67) (a) Groups or pairs of ladies, often sisters or cousins, ran hotels of the kind she required and they understood the necessity for quietness and a late-night pot of tea, for Egyptian cotton sheets and a hot water bottle and plenty of cushions. (BNC AD1)

(b) Men have needs,' that's what Francis used to say.' Needs'.' So have I,' I used to say. But I don't think we were understanding each other. (BNC FPF)

In (a), the character thinking of these ladies construes them as having a deep-rooted, permanent understanding of these necessities, which will outlast the moment of thought. In (b) on the other hand, the lack of understanding is limited to the times of conversation during which the two talked at cross purposes. This difference cannot be assumed valid for all St Verbs, though, as (65) (c) does not necessarily imply that the box has by now be removed, nor does (66) mean that the box is a permanent fixture of the bedside table either.

So, in summary, what can be said for the TACs in contrast is that the constructions do appear to have different meanings that to a large degree adapt the conceptualization of the item filling the verb slot for their own purpose. Generalizing most liberally, it can be said that the PaSi tends to construe the situation according to what the lexical aspect suggests, be it actions or states or a series of these, which are foregrounded and wholly within the viewing frame the R of which aligns with the respective E the verb describes. If the language user wants to view the same situation from the inside instead, especially if the focus is, in fact, on a co-occurring activity in the PaSi, then he or she will in all likelihood use the PaPr to convey this perspective, giving the verb used the notion of a state lasting for a time span in the past. The PrPe then takes away the prominence of the action itself altogether, focusing on the situation present at S that has originated in a past activity.

The previous sections have painted a more diverse picture, taking into account separate senses and some of the frequently occurring constructions signifying them. In the following section, these will be brought together again, and connected with ideas as to how these more holistic superordinate meanings as well as those on a

more concrete level can possibly help learners to achieve a sufficiently clear representation of the pastness TACs.

5. Implications for the Teaching of Past Time Constructions

One of the most appealing aspects of CCxG for the purpose of this thesis is that one of its main issues of inquiry is in fact that of how languages are learned. It is via studies on patterns of acquisition and the relationship between input, understanding, production and extension to lexical items and grammatical structures so far unused in connection with a novel construction that construction grammarians (e.g. Boyd et al. 2009; Ellis & Ferreira-Junior 2009) arrived at their current description of the conceptualization of language. A clear result of the form-meaning relationship as posited by advocates of CL is that rules of syntax are not arbitrary, but rather subject to a semantic explanation (cf. Taylor 1993: 207). This focus on the symbolic nature of construction, deductively taught as well as inductively detected or acquired via exposure and use, gain a new level of meaningfulness in this context and can be understood rather than having to be memorized.

5.1. Category learning via explicit instruction

At first glance, usage-based models of language acquisition and explicit grammar teaching might seem very much at odds with each other, almost contradictions in term. An approach that bases its most central tenets on the domain-general processes that make language acquisition possible solely on the basis of generalization from input might seem a surprising choice for a chapter on meta-language instruction for EFL learners.

Explicit instruction is something of a necessity in EFL teaching, however, for a number of reasons. For one thing, being old enough to be consciously aware of linguistic patterns in their L1 already and used to their meaningfulness, students demand meta-knowledge and explanations from their teachers and are highly frustrated if appeased with the reassurance that they will develop an intuition with time. For another, their L1 has taught them to consider certain factors as linguistically salient and, by virtue of contrast, others as not encoded in language. Learning to pay attention to something

that one has practiced the disregarding of for years can be considered to be needful of particular attention. The potential of explicit instruction in relationship to a usage-based grammar has been recognized (e.g. Roehr 2010; Niemeier & Reif 2008) and some of it is discussed here with respect to what insights could be gained regarding pastness TACs within the present study.

The first implication of a usage-based approach for explicit teaching is that a purely meta-linguistic description will not yield the desired result of furthering understanding. If, as is the case with, for example, learners that have German as their L1, the students have not yet acquired a mental representation of salient factors in construal differences, there is little point in naming them as important. In other words, it does not follow from the descriptions in section 4 that students will benefit from being told that the PaPr presents events as unbounded as the viewpoint is centered and the stative, durative aspect of the situation is profiled. Even in a less linguistic terminology, these categories cannot be useful before they themselves have become entrenched. Since the German tense system does not distinguish between three different viewpoint aspects, the difference cannot be made apparent without sufficient illustration, and even then it will take some time for the learners to accept this new factor.⁵² If there were, indeed, a LAD that does not discriminate between country of origin, then all that would be necessary would be an activation of an innately pre-specified system of linguistic knowledge that would have to, by necessity, include the viewpoint distinction already; then the German learners of English would have the difference in conceptualization formed in their minds already, just as English native speakers do. What is necessary then is to raise awareness of the difference in construals based on language samples, but also on visualizations, or any other means the teacher can think of to clarify something that is inherently difficult to explain with language - a difference in conceptualization. Maybe the metaphor of camera angles

⁵² As a more well-known analogy of this problem, one could take the [v]/[w] distinction, which poses an incredible difficulty for learners while the difference is almost painfully obvious to native speakers of English. After the initial use of [v], the sound present in German as well, students often hypercorrect, using [w] as the perceived English equivalent. This, then can fossilize even in users that are frequently exposed to a native speaker pronunciation, as the difference is simply not perceived at all until it is explicitly addressed and the student has learned to notice the difference and perceive it as meaningful.

and grammatical viewpoints given at the beginning of this paper even provides a means to relate to the topic, following Martin Scorsese, who once said that “[c]inema is a matter of what’s in the frame and what’s out.” He might well be talking about a grammatical viewing frame. This means also raising the awareness for the central role of the speaker making the utterance rather than forever presenting the difference between the TACs as a property of the way different situations are described in the English language.

The second consequence of taking a usage-based approach on language learning and teaching has, to my knowledge, not been empirically tested, but seems to follow logically from the prior considerations. From how I understand the notion of the TAC construals, they are something that can only be understood if contrasted to each other. If one accepts the proposition that TAC choice does not relate to the situation described, but to the perspective one takes on it, then this differences in perspective needs to be shown via juxtaposition to make it clear. As Niemeier and Reif (2008: 347) emphasize, learners need to become aware of the fact “that in English, the speaker has to make a choice between the progressive and non-progressive aspect every time he/she wants to refer to a situation”. Therefore, at least those two TACs need to be presented together as two equally possible options, and not, as is the case in current textbooks, following the Austrian school curriculum for EFL teaching, one and a half years apart. Concerning the PrPe, the results of this research project in fact suggest a total turnabout from the present way of teaching it. Its strong profiling of the current state seems to lend itself better to a contrast to the PaSi and an explanation that here the resulting situation is described with respect to something that happened in the past, but the narrative space never really leaves the present.

To further illustrate this fact, the explicit instruction should include not only the TACs meanings but also their difference in use on a textual level. The simple fact that the PrPe is used in present tense texts rather than in past tense ones, for example, is easily mentioned and brought into connection with the forms meaning. To wait for

the students' unconscious absorption of this fact seems highly impractical as this is so easily clad in words and exemplified.

Rules such as "Manche Zeitwörter werden normalerweise nicht in der -ing Form verwendet, z.B.: be, like, love, hate, know, remember, hear see" [Some verbs are usually not used in the -ing form, e.g.: be, like, love, hate, know, remember, hear see] (Diwold et al. 2005: 55) then lose some of their intimidating character, as they do not need to be memorized but can be understood in the context of the TAC's meaning. Instead, such statements can then be seen as a means of making this meaning more concrete. This is beneficial to learners in two respects. For one thing, no rote learning of apparently arbitrary language laws is necessary. For another, no exceptions to the rule, like the one implied here by the use of *normalerweise* [*normally*], have to be remembered and encompassed into an already rule-governed representation of the form. This does not mean that explicit teaching needs to be abandoned, but that it might benefit from an adaption that works with central meanings in contrast that can serve as bases for analogies in order to arrive at a conceptualization that can account for differences in construals rather than situations.

5.2. Category learning via input and use

Explicit language knowledge and learning can be contrasted with implicit language knowledge and learning in terms of both representation and processing. Explicit knowledge appears to be characterized by stable, discrete, and context-independent categories with clear boundaries.

[I]mplicit knowledge is characterized by flexible and context-dependent category structure which is subject to prototype effects. [...] Implicit learning is primarily exemplar-based or bottom-up. (Roehr 2010: 9)

In keeping with this concise summary of the difference between these two collateral teaching methods, the section on explicit teaching focused on the slightly more generalized and abstract aspects of TAC construal that suggest clearer boundaries delimiting the categories at hand than their use in free speech suggests. In the

following, the focus lies more on the constructions typical for the TACs and the senses they denote.

Throughout the literature experts agree that key aspects in furthering learners' acquiring of the necessary form-meaning relationships are the "reliability and availability of the linguistic cues they are exposed to" (Ibbotson & Tomasello 2009: 59). For a child learning his or her first language, living in a rich language environment and being exposed to all kinds of forms and constructions in use more or less simultaneously from the very beginning on, the constructions addressed to him or her most frequently are, in all likelihood, the ones most necessary for expressing him or herself in the situations of the daily life of a child of the respective age. With increasing age, the constructions used in addressing a child begin to be of a more complex nature, the mean length of utterance increases, and all the while the language the child overhears represents the range of constructions available in its first language (Plunkett & Wood 2004: 174f). In such an environment, forming prototypes and constructing sense networks in accordance to frequency and earliest presentation is a viable strategy.

In the case of foreign language learning, however, such an environment does not exist a priori. To a certain degree it cannot even exist, since L2 students have already undergone a certain cognitive development and have different language needs than a two-year-old might have. The language environment has to be created by the language teacher and by the respective coursebook. Especially in the lower secondary, Austrian teachers generally follow the progression of the coursebook and use the texts and activities in it, firstly because these progressions are convenient in their gradual increase in difficulty, and secondly, because these standard progressions make it possible for students to adapt to new teachers or even schools, since the vocabulary and structures covered in a certain grade are roughly the same throughout the country.

Advocates of the communicative language teaching approach (eg. Nunan 1999: 212; Pachler et al. 2009: 280f.) largely continue to argue that authentic texts, as defined by Harmer (2007: 273) as “language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers”, are most beneficial to learner’s language abilities. However, even they acknowledge that some adaptations are necessary, mostly regarding the vocabulary and structures as well as cultural references that might prove difficult or demotivating to students. Many also recognize Widdowson’s (1979:165) questioning of the inherent authenticity of any text used in a classroom when it has been taken out of its natural context, and his assertion that only the receiver and his or her response constitute authenticity.

Golderberg’s (2006: 75ff.) evidence about construction learning throws a different light on this issue. Her studies with young children (Casenhiser & Goldberg 2005) as well as those with undergraduate students (Boyd et al. 2009) suggest that what she calls skewed input in fact furthers learner’s ability to generalize the meaning of a given construction and fosters successful production as well as retention of the knowledge. This is supported by the research of Ellis and Ferreira (2009) who tested language acquisition via input texts that were compiled according to Zipf’s law, i.e. that had twice as many tokens of the lexical item most commonly co-occurring with the construction in question in the text than tokens of the second-most frequent one. This, then again, occurred twice as often than the lexical item found third-most often in naturally occurring speech of native speakers. While stressing that this skewed input is certainly not the only factor influencing successful language acquisition from input texts, Ellis and Ferreira (ibid: 381) conclude that “[c]onstruction type/token frequency distribution in natural language might [...] optimize learning by providing one very high-frequency exemplar that is also prototypical in meaning and widely applicable.”

In terms of lexical items occurring frequently with the TACs under scrutiny in this study, the present research cannot contribute anything, having not examined this factor but presumed the same lexical items as occurring with all of them. However, in

keeping with a construction that does not distinguish between more lexical or grammatical items, the senses and related constructions of the TACs can equally be conceived as tokens of the form, and an application of Zipf's law to the more frequently occurring senses and their respectively most common constructions can be suggested to be equally worth of examination in terms of benefits got EFL learners. Basing the relationship purely on the very small corpus analyzed in this study, the PaSi, for example, would be represented in such a text by a relative majority of sequential construction [PaSi then PaSi], followed by half as many sequences including a St [StPaSi PaSi], and, again, half as many referential constructions [when PaSi PaSi]. These three, correspondingly, constitute the three largest bubbles in the arrangement of fully filled constructions as they could be encountered by students given in figure 31.

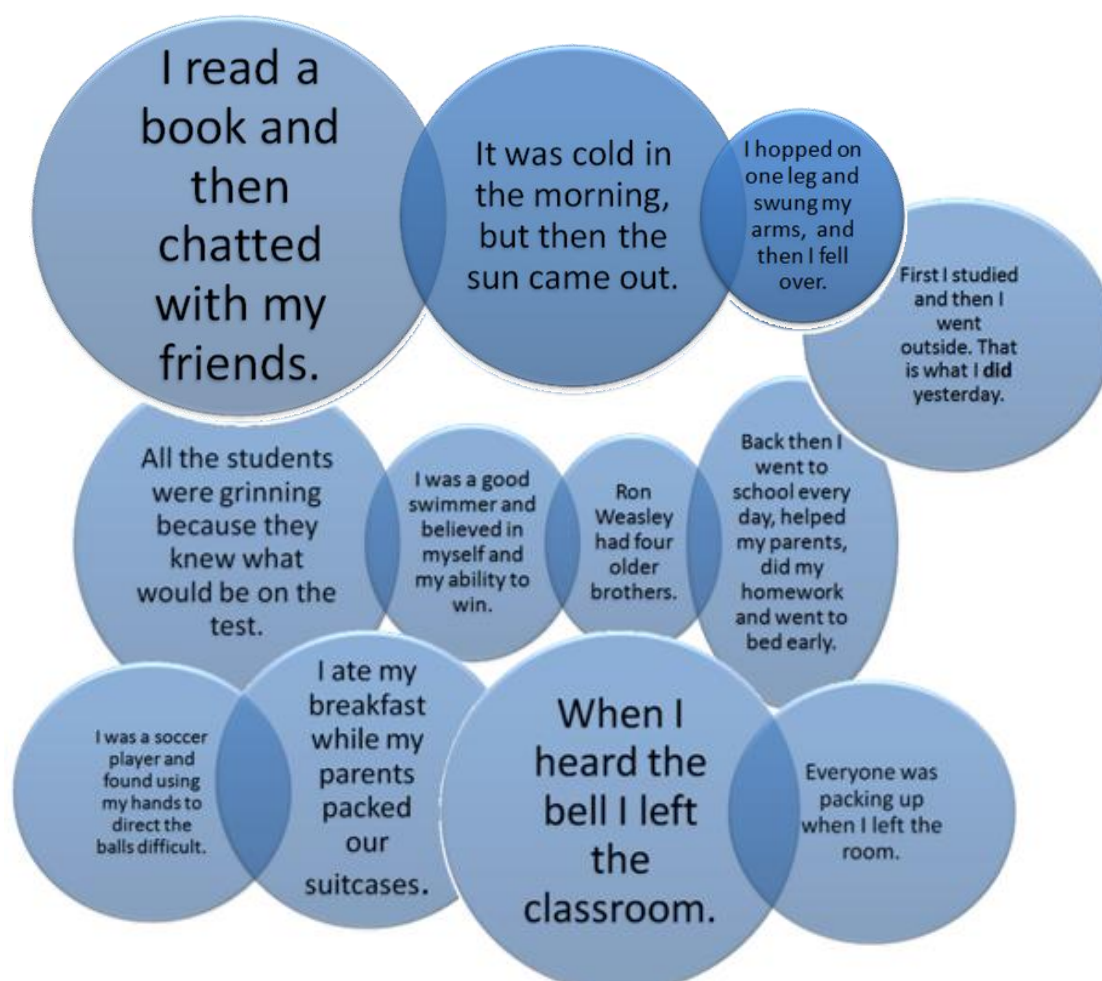


Figure 31: Completely filled prototype constructions for EFL learners

The other, less frequently occurring constructions, however, need to take up a more central role once the initially presented patterns are recognized by the students. Otherwise, the low type frequency suggests the pattern as much more restricted and less subject to meaning extensions as it indeed is, and hinders the full generalization on the basis of the richness of detail and variation in nuances this variety provides (Langacker 2008a: 25).

In order to also understand the nuances of meaning the TACs bring with them, actualizations such as those in figure 28 and others, analogous in structure, need to be actually used in texts and their function according to their construal effects. While the analysis in this project was originally planned on the basis of individual sentence, it became soon apparent that much of the meaning was lost that way, and that a repeated consultation of at least the paragraph the TACs occurred in was necessary. It follows then, that students need full texts as well to develop a satisfactory conceptualization of the TACs. After all, as has been established in section 3.2., all constructions are part of larger constructions and what they do within these also influences their meaning. What the PaPr then, for example, does in a text, namely describing past states that serve as grounds for the narrative, painting scenes for the past action to take place, is an integral part of its meaning and needs to be retained as such.

In terms of creating useful exercises, this, of course, also means that a fair amount of context needs to be provided in order for the students to understand what construal the given co-text suggests. This is especially relevant when it comes to any type of fill-in exercise where students have to show their grasp of the pastness TACs meanings by choosing one of them. Even if the cloze is, in fact, a fully connected narrative, some slots can sometimes be filled by more than one form, depending on what slight shift in perspective the language user wants to achieve. Therefore clozes should not be created by virtue of deleting all verbs in a text written by a native speaker and the original text taken as the one correct way to perceive the situation described, as is

common practice. The equally widespread transformation exercises, where students are asked to change one TAC into another without any awareness of the consequent change in construal must even be seen as counterproductive in light of the considerations and research findings presented in this study.

If, however, such transformations are conducted precisely for the purpose of recognizing the resultant difference in meaning, they then become a very useful exercise for awareness raising, just as recognizing what TAC can fulfill a function within a text where a blank space is provided can. For EFL teachers that means that, in fact, all of the tasks that are common practice have value as long as they are conducted with the appropriate mindset. With its general focus on language use and meaning in context, a CCxG approach to language teaching may well be the means by which the gap between communicative language teaching and an awareness of grammatical construction can be bridged.

5.3. Category learning via adverbials

*Vielleicht erinnerst du dich aber an die **“Reizwörter” für past tense: yesterday, last, ago,...** . Wann immer also ein Satz eines dieser Wörter enthält, musst du past tense verwenden .*

*[But maybe you remember the **“signal words” for the past tense: yesterday, last, ago,...** . Whenever a sentence includes one of these words, you have to use past tense.] (Zach & Gromes 2004)*

What, in turn, the TAC construction itself is filled with has, in the present study, only be examined in terms of adverbials, which have mainly proven interesting when it comes to the sense of the PrPe. There, however, they constitute such an interesting contribution that a word needs to be said on such “signal words”, as they are called in the context of TAC teaching.

There is a long-standing tradition in Austria of teaching foreign language students of English that certain adverbials, as a rule, demand the verb of a given clause to be put into one specific tense. Researchers like Walker (1967: 18) used to stress the salience

of what he called “indicator words” and their use (and limitations) in language teaching. The Communicative Language Teaching approach in its moderate form, which is currently on vogue in language teacher education programs, has turned away from grammar rules like the one provided above. Undoubtedly, the absolutes in the statement taken from a grammar focused practice book leave something to be desired and are, in their extreme, mainly useful for successfully filling in cloze sentences without context. But even textbooks with a strictly communicative angle (eg. Newby 2001; Murphy 1993) explicitly point out the temporal adverbs that tend to indicate appropriateness of the use of certain TACs. The apparent usefulness that has permitted this practice to withstand the test of time gives rise to the question whether the negative connotation these so called signal words have acquired with the turn towards Communicative Language Teaching is, indeed, justified.

According to Langacker (2008a: 25), competent language users are those that have taken into account certain co-occurrences and have abstracted respective patterns, so-called *units* from them. The combination of certain adverbs and constructions can be perceived as forming such units. As has been pointed out by Niemeier and Reif (2008: 330), students connect specific words with specific TACs as well. It stands to reason that they also draw conclusions about the meaning and use of these TACs, which are unfamiliar concepts to them, in accordance with the co-occurring lexical items. Following Langacker’s (2008a: 8) assertion that “[g]rammatical meanings are generally more abstract than lexical meanings” it seems feasible that learners would make use of the more concrete meaning the lexical item provide, which they can often relate to a specific semantic entity in their L1 and connect it to a given sense of the corresponding, more elusive grammatical structure. That learners might benefit from this bridge of a concrete, lexical entity is further supported if one considers the evidence provided by Slobin and Bocaz (1989) in their cross-linguistic study. While not suggesting a clear language structure – world perception correlation in a neo-Whorfian sense, their research does give rise to the conclusion that what a given language encodes grammatically does influence what aspects of situations the speakers of this language attend to. German does not provide the syntactic or

morphologic resources to marked many of the conceptual structures, such as, for instance, duration, completeness and current relevance, that are readily encoded in English. Hence, Austrian students have to first develop an awareness for these concepts and understand what they are asked to represent in their language output.

In fact, Newby (2001: 84ff.) teaches the different senses of the PrPe in a fashion that suggests little relation between them, but by means of focusing on the meaning of those temporal adverbs that signify that particular sense. The present study underpins the feasibility of such a teaching method, provided that a sufficient number of tokens in the input also lack the adverbial in order to not create a sense of its strict necessity. Declerck (2006: 589ff.) dedicates the entire final chapter of a book to the relationship between temporal adverbials and the choice between the PrPe and the PaSi, so while the present study did not prove as revealing with respect to the latter's determination by adverbs, further research in that direction is likely to succeed where the present project failed. In terms of a transfer of meaning from the adverbial to the construction this approach is wholly in line with Goldberg's (1995: 60) research that repeatedly indicates a strong ability of words to lexically designate a type of construction via the alignment of their meanings.

6. Conclusion

This study arose out of a dual need - that of the EFL students I have taught in recent years, who have valiantly struggled for an understanding of the threefold distinction the English language makes when referring to actions or events in the past, and that of my own, as I have equally grappled in my attempts to put into words what I only knew by intuition and via the rules I myself had been taught via school textbooks. The aim was therefore to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of the difference between (68), (69) and (70), that were given as samples (1), (2) and (3) at the very beginning of this diploma thesis.

(68) My brother and I **watched** *The Lord of the Rings* yesterday. What a great movie.

(69) Oh no! Not *The Lord of the Rings* again! We've just **watched** it.

(70) At eight o'clock my brother and I **were watching** *The Lord of the Rings* in our room and our parents were cooking, I think.

This difference that was to be established needed to go beyond commonplace grammar teaching truisms such as "We use the past continuous tense to express a **long** action"(Essberger 1979) as most of these do not apply to the variety of verbs commonly found in the different pastness TACs and, in any case, cannot account for the difference between sentences such as (68), (69) and (70), which all refer back to one and the same situation. The framework that was chosen for the analysis of the mini-corpus consisting of 100 of such TAC triplets assembled from BNC samples is a combination of Cognitive Grammar and Cognitive Construction Grammar. Both are usage-based models, putting emphasis on the learners' ability to acquire languages on the basis of language use because of general cognitive abilities they all have and utilize in their learning and undertaking of all endeavors, and both approaches adhere to the tenet that grammar is inherently meaningful and that differences in grammatical constructions signify differences in meaning. With respect to EFL learners this means that they all have the ability to gain a representation from the main source teachers can provide for them, namely language, on the basis of their general abilities and not via a mystified device responsible for their learning that, as some of my students fear,

might have fallen into disrepair since the point in time they perceive as the moment of mastery of their L1. More importantly, the last point implies that there is, indeed a difference in meaning between (68), (69) and (70), one that can be understood and, consequently, applied to other bits of language as well.

The difference that was established via the comparison of what the TACs themselves brought to the meaning of the different sample sentences forming each TAC set seems to be mainly one of construal. The forms differ in how they can portray one situation in terms of from what viewpoint it is regarded, what elements are given prominence, how they are suggested to interact with other actions within a text and how much of the action and its associative dependents is considered. On a highly generalized level of an overarching meaning, the samples analyzed in the corpus study permit the conclusion that the PaSi construction construes the elements put into its action slot as actions viewed in their entirety, often in a sequential relationship to other such actions or states that are then perceived as comparatively active, as they are conceived as bygone, succeeded by the next action the language users' viewpoint has shifted to. In contrast, PaPr construction appears to construe even bygone actions in a rather stative way that implies their homogeneous continuation by means of placing the viewpoint at a moment where the action, however short, is unbounded, i.e. in process at the point in time. This moment is profiled, with the beginning and the end of the action becoming unfocused. The PrPe constructions now, contrary to what EFL textbooks in Austrian high school suggest, appear to, while mentioning a past action, lay their focal point squarely on the situation prevalent at the moment of speech and not on the action itself, only the consequences of which are of concern to the speaker.

These kinds of generalizations need proper adaptation for a use in an actual language classroom where such abstract categories, not established in the learners' minds because of the lack of their significance in tense choice in German, are difficult to put into words and challenging to understand lacking the categorizations necessary for an accurate representation. However, by means of metaphors and, most of all, language samples that illustrate the difference, they can be made use of in explicit instructions.

However, TACs, as appears to be true for all signifying elements, are polysemous and therefore the actual constructions language learners encounter when confronted with naturally occurring language do not all relate back perfectly to these abstract meanings, or even if they do, seem to profile something else on a more immediate level. These constructions, completely filled and grounded in language use, are what learners need to comprehend and use successfully in real time interaction with other speakers. Therefore, their immediate meanings, forming the different senses of a given construction, are of even more concern for the learners. These cannot be conceived detached from the overall meaning, but are more concrete and tangible than the abstract, overall notion. At the same time, it cannot be the goal of a language teacher to determine the meaning of each and every filled construction in language use as the sheer amount would be inconceivable, and no room for novel utterances would be left. The goal for the construction analysis was therefore to establish a number of senses that encode distinct aspects of the constructions' meanings, which in turn are expressed by constructions that can be grouped together as all signifying this sense with only nuanced differences in what precisely they express. This admittedly ambitious goal could be reached only in part, as the constructions found in the corpus were filled to different degrees, the sentences convoluted and the differences in meanings often hazy. The resultant constructions carved out as most typical for a signification of a certain sense and the network they were put into can therefore only be seen as first propositions of that kind. They were drawn up by means of categorizations of a rather subjective, and a renewed analysis of the same data might bring about different results. They do, however, represent one possible way of grouping together the constructions in the mini corpus that can be made use of in teaching the TACs' senses. This fact, thereby, suggests that it is possible to conduct such an analysis, although it would take a much more detailed kind of study to arrive at a truly representative representation.

The same can be said for the implications for teaching this small-scale analysis or, indeed, the entire set of frameworks of usage and cognition based language analysis

has on EFL teaching in general and specifically the teaching of pastness TACs. They were only touched upon here and are certainly in need of further investigation. Their promise is one of a more meaningful description of grammatical forms that can, due to precisely their inherent meaningfulness, help language learners to arrive at a conceptualization of grammatical constructions that goes beyond rule based correctness. In this application of linguistic theory lies the potential to enable learners to utilize grammar to suit their needs and to make use of the variety of camera perspective structures such as the pastness TACs provide them, turning them from followers of language rules perceived as meaningless into successful users, directors that know the about camera angles of grammar. With this thesis, I hope to have contributed a step, small as it may be, to further this process.

7. References

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⁵³ Apparently due to the number of authors contributing to this chapter of the book, their first names are only indicated via initials, and a detailed online research did not prove fruitful, hence the inconsistency in format.

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Appendix

Abstract

„I was just saying it when you came in yesterday, I said it then, so I've said it before – tense grammar is tough stuff for learners”

The present thesis concerns itself with three tense-aspect combinations (TACs) of the English language referring to events in the past, namely the past simple, the present perfect and the past progressive. Since their difference in meaning and use cannot be determined from the past situation they refer to alone, they pose a special problem to EFL learner whose first language does not distinguish between different pastness forms.

What the TACs do differ in is the way they construe the situation they refer to, i.e. what elements are foregrounded, under what light from what viewpoint the actions described are seen and how the addressees of an utterance are therefore invited to read the circumstances described. With regards to this, Langacker's Cognitive Grammar offers many insights into what elements might be salient concerning the difference between the TACs discussed. Consequently, a small scale corpus consisting of 300 sample sentence taken from the BNC that contain these pastness TACs is analyzed in terms of what types of construals they evoke. Most central to a distinction proved the notions of viewpoint, prominence and scope, a combination of which appears to sufficiently explain what differences in meaning the three TACs encode. On a generalized level the past simple construction construes the elements put into its action slot as activities viewed in their entirety and often in a sequential manner the language users' viewpoint shifts along. In contrast, the past progressive construction appears to construe even bygone actions in a rather stative way, placing the viewpoint at a moment were the action, however short, is in process at the point in time. Only its immediate scope is activated. The present perfect, contrary to what EFL textbooks in Austrian high school suggest, appears to, while mentioning a past action, lay their focal point squarely on the situation prevalent at the moment of speech and not on

the action itself, only the consequences of which are of concern to the speaker. These results were consolidated further via a comparison of very similar situations that were clad into the present perfect, the past simple and the past progressive by native speakers.

In order to not only arrive at a very general description of the pastness TACs under scrutiny, but also one that could explain their more concrete senses, the sample sentences were grouped according to similar patterns and examined in terms of a similarity in meaning of a less abstract kind. This was done in line with the framework of Goldberg's Construction Grammar, in which the correlation of grammatical forms and specific meanings is emphasized. The resulting constructions were grouped into a network of senses according to similarities of meaning for all TACs but the past progressive.

Subsequently, the results from the analysis conducted in this thesis as well as the general tenets argued for by grammarians subscribing to a usage-based perception of language learning, amongst which both Cognitive Grammarians and Construction Grammarians are counted are discussed in terms of their implications on the teaching and learning of the pastness TACs. Out of the construal analysis conducted arose the understanding that explicit language teaching needs to concern itself with helping students to acquire novel factors for classification, such as those of viewpoint and scope. In terms of implicit instruction, a skewed input in accordance with the more common senses of each TAC as identified in the mini corpus study suggests itself as useful. Furthermore, these constructions can be used in their partially filled forms where the lexical items present mirror the meaning of the TAC they are used in. Then the word meanings can help inform the construction's meaning which, once sufficiently understood, can then be extended to other lexical items. This gives new credence to the use of so called signal words in language teaching, which have been frowned upon in recent years.

Abstract in German (Deutsche Zusammenfassung)

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit drei der Englischen Zeiten, die sich hauptsächlich in Elementen des Aspekts unterscheiden. Behandelt werden die Past Simple, die Present Perfect und die Past Progressive, deren unterschiedliche Bedeutung und Gebrauchsweise nicht alleine von der Situation auf die sie sich beziehen selbst verstanden werden kann. Diese Zeiten stellen ein spezielles Problem für deutschsprachige Lernende der englischen Sprache da, da hier die Muttersprache keine Unterschiede dieser Art zwischen verschiedenen Vergangenheitsformen vorsieht.

Worin sich diese drei Zeiten unterscheiden ist hauptsächlich die Art, in der sie eine erzählte Situation betrachten, beziehungsweise wie die Adressaten eingeladen sind, die gemachte Äußerung zu lesen. Im Bezug darauf bietet Langackers Kognitive Grammatik viele Einblicke in Überlegungen, welche Elementen für eine bedeutungsvolle Besprechung der englischen Vergangenheitsformen hilfreich erscheinen. Folglich wurde im Zuge dieser Diplomarbeit ein Korpus, bestehend aus 300 Beispielsätzen, die alle zumindest eine dieser Formen enthalten, aus dem BNC exzerpiert, zusammengestellt und im Hinblick auf bedeutungsunterscheidende Elemente nach Langacker analysiert. Als von zentralster Bedeutung für die Unterscheidung zwischen den drei Formen Past Simple, Present Perfect und Past Progressive erwies sich eine Betrachtung des Blickwinkels, den die Sprechenden auf die Handlung haben, Überlegungen, welche Aspekte der Situation im Vordergrund stehen und zu welchem Ausmaß die Gesamthandlung für den momentanen Fokuspunkt der Erzählung relevant ist. Eine Kombination aus diesen Faktoren erklärt in hohem Maße, welche Unterschiede in Bedeutung die drei Zeiten ausdrücken. Sehr generalisierend kann gesagt werden, dass die Past Simple eine Handlung in ihrer Gänze betrachtet und diese oft als Element einer Handlungssequenz verstanden wird. Im Gegensatz dazu lassen sich selbst dynamische Handlungen in der Past Progressive als nahezu zustandsartige Beschreibung der Vergangenheit verstehen. Im Gegensatz zur Past Simple wird hier allerdings nur der kleinste weiter Assoziationsrahmen zum

tatsächlichen Fokusmoment aktiviert, das Hauptaugenmerk liegt also auf einem Teilaspekt der Handlung. Entgegen der üblichen Darstellung in Schulbüchern scheint es sich bei der Present Perfect gar nicht um eine Vergangenheitsform im eigentlichen Sinne zu handeln. Zwar wird eine vergangene Handlung erwähnt, im Vordergrund betrachtet werden aber deren Konsequenzen für die Gegenwart. Diese Ergebnisse wurden über einen Vergleichsstudie zwischen von Natur aus sehr ähnlichen Situationen, welche nichtsdestotrotz von englischen Muttersprachlern einmal in Past Simple, einmal in Present Perfect und einmal in Past Progressive formuliert wurden, weiter untermauert.

Um nicht nur auf eine sehr allgemeinen Beschreibung der Vergangenheitsformen einzugehen, wurden ähnliche Satzkonstruktionen die diese Zeiten enthalten zusammengefasst und auf mögliche Ähnlichkeiten in ihrer konkreteren Bedeutung untersucht. Dies geschah in Form einer Konstruktionsgrammatikanalyse nach Goldberg, welche die Korrelation zwischen spezifischen Formen und einer diesen gemeinsamen Bedeutung unterstreicht. Die resultierenden Konstruktionen wurden gemäß ihrer Ähnlichkeiten in ein Netzwerk von Sinnen zusammengestellt.

Anschließend wurden die Resultate dieser zweigliedrigen Studie in Hinblick auf ihre Konsequenzen für den Sprachunterricht untersucht und mit weiteren grundlegenden Annahmen einer gebrauchsorientierten Grammatik in Verbindung gebracht. Es ergibt sich die wichtige Schlussfolgerung, dass im explizit vermittelten Wissen über grammatische Formen besonderes Augenmerk auf die Faktoren gelegt werden muss, welche eine Entscheidung für oder gegen den Gebrauch einer der untersuchten Formen beeinflussen. Auf dem Gebiet des impliziten Spracherwerb präsentieren sich didaktische Texte, die den Bedeutungen der Konstruktionen ähnliche Verben, und andere lexikale Verständnisunterstützungen, wie die derzeit tendenziell missachteten Signalwörter, als über unkontrollierte, authentische Texte erhaben.

Curriculum Vitae

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Education

2006 - ongoing	University of Vienna Diploma program for English and American Studies Teacher qualification program for English Teaching German as a Second/Foreign Language Sinology
2004 - 2006	Medical University of Vienna
2003 - 2004	Sacré Coeur Pressbaum High School - Lower Austria graduated with honors
2002 - 2003	Strongsville High School - Ohio, USA graduated with honors
1996 - 2002	Sacré Coeur Pressbaum High School – Lower Austria
1992 - 1996	Zieglergasse Primary School – Vienna

Relevant Work Experience

2012 - ongoing	Tutorial for Language Analysis at the university of Vienna
2012 - ongoing	EFL teacher at Phönix Realgymnasium Vienna
2001 - ongoing	Private English tutoring for students of all ages and language levels
2012	sfa English language camp in Aigen/Ennstal
2008 - 2012	English Immersion Project for Karl-Berger-Gasse KMS students
2006 - 2012	Circus school for kids Graz
2006 - 2011	Narrenschloss - interactive theater for kids
Mai 2010	“Project German” in Esztergom, Hungary
2004 - 2006	CIG Event management GesmbH
2002	Odyssee Travel agency Vienna

Selected Presentations given at Linguistic Conferences:

- ❖ “Notions of the Past - Teaching Past Time Grammar to EFL Students”. Sprachendidaktik: Der wissenschaftliche Nachwuchs im Dialog (4). 7. Tagung der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Sprachendidaktik. PH Oberösterreich, Mai 2012.
- ❖ „Practice makes Present Perfect - a small scale study about the meaning concepts of the present perfect in experts’ and laypeople’s minds“. IV Österreichische Studierendenkonferenz Linguistik. Universität Innsbruck, November 2011.
- ❖ “The right not to like it. Utilizing students’ negative attitudes towards literary texts in the EFL classroom”. Sprachendidaktik: Der wissenschaftliche Nachwuchs im Dialog (3). 6. Tagung der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Sprachendidaktik. Universität Wien, Mai 2011.

Additional Skills and Interests :

- ❖ MS Office as well as managing online learning platforms
- ❖ International theater experience from modern improv theater to conventional productions
- ❖ English literature, especially young adult literature and children’s literature
- ❖ Making small-scale amateur movies and stop-motion films