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**COGNITIVE DOMINANTS IN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF
RELATED EVENTS**

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Abstract

Cognizing and interpreting the world around, an individual is able to fix related events as holistic fragments of reality, which in the language display finds manifestation in composite sentences (sentences with coordination and/or subordination) constructed with due regard to a composite sentence as a specific knowledge format. This format accumulates data on cognitive processes, principles, linguistic categories, schemas and cognitive operations activated or configured by an individual to convey the ontological nature of related events and their knowledge status as given or new in the course of communication. Status-of-knowledge determination and transfer are obligatory in successful communication, and in its course the speaker targets the necessity to present the given and the new about the events. The given and the new are conceptually regulated by the function of status-of-knowledge determination that finds its realization in composite sentences through a number of schemas reflecting an individual's dominant understanding of the world through making some blocks of knowledge about related events certain conceptual foci. Such schemas are conceptual foundations for composite sentences categories shaping the general status-of-knowledge category objectified by various linguistic means. They are of metacognitive character as information distribution depends on the ability of an individual to make previously construed representations concerning the ontology of the related events the subject of the status-of-knowledge determination analysis.

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Keywords: Related events, knowledge format, composite sentence, cognitive dominant, interpretation, status-of-knowledge determination and transfer.



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1. Introduction

Cognitive activity of an individual implies his or her ability to conceptualize separate or related events. In the human mind, knowledge about an event is structured in the form of a proposition that acts as a cognitive model of an event and includes a basic predicate, its arguments, and their relations. Conceptualizing related events involves construing a propositional complex that consists of two or more propositions and a propositional connective that marks the idea for events unification. Such complex is correlated with a cognitive model of a hyper-event, i.e. includes two or more predicate-argument structures.

Focusing on related events as a single fragment of reality requires holistic conceptualization accessible through the processes of conceptual integration (Fauconnier & Turner, 2006). At the same time, profiling processes (Langacker, 2008) are of much importance: in assessing a hyper-event as a state of affairs, an individual can endow events with a certain degree of isolation. The state of affairs can reflect equal distribution of attention (symmetry) within a hyper-event or indicate a greater emphasis on a particular event (asymmetry). Symmetry and asymmetry of the events reveal themselves in a variety of sentences with coordination and/or subordination, hereinafter referred to as composite sentences.

The knowledge of propositional complexes, conceptual integration and profiling mechanisms are not the only data an individual has in mind creating composite sentences. To reflect two or more related events, the speaker constructs syntactic units on the basis of generalizations over recurring experiences of language use (Goldberg, 2006). Herewith, the speaker addresses the data on categories of linguistic means, schemas and operations to present the world in a language as a result of his or her knowledge of the system and structure of this language, its basic units and categories, as well as the laws of meanings creation (Boldyrev, 2011).

This implies that a composite sentence can be considered both a syntactic whole endowed with a certain meaning and a knowledge format (Vinogradova, 2014). This format accumulates data on propositional complexes and linguistic categories, schemas and principles underlying them, cognitive processes and operations activated or configured by an individual in the course of communication to convey knowledge on related events (Vinogradova, 2014, 2015).

2. Problem Statement

Conceptualizing related events and choosing linguistic means to convey its outcomes are regulated by interpretation and dominant character of cognition (Boldyrev, 2017; Boldyrev & Vinogradova, 2016, 2018; Vinogradova, 2017, 2019).

Interpretation is ensured by the fact that the speaker acting as a reference point for conceptualization has the ability to manipulate concepts as blocks of knowledge directed to the ontology of the world and to the ontology of language. Predetermined by the functioning of cognition and linguistic cognition in particular, interpretation is based on a dominant understanding of the world and making some of the above-mentioned blocks of knowledge certain conceptual foci.

Physiologically and psychologically speaking, the dominant perception of the world results from an individual's interpreting his or her experience in search for prevailing reactions (Ukhtomsky, 2002)

and their multiple confirmation as personal constructs that shape the conceptual system and help to form a line of behavior (Kelly, 1963). A dominant understanding of the world accompanies the work of the whole cognitive system of an individual. So, perceiving the world in a language presupposes that the speaker's conceptualization depends on cognitive dominants that help to structure and format conceptual content and find ways to verbalize it (Boldyrev, 2017). These dominants include cognitive models, schemas, cognitive mechanisms, conceptual and thematic domains, names of categories, conceptual characteristics, etc.

In the framework of related events conceptualization, particular events, their properties and relations can be conceptually foregrounded or backgrounded for an individual, and information about them can be viewed as given or new. To convey the given and the new (Chafe, 1987; Lambrecht, 1994; Prince, 1981) concerning a hyper-event as a fragment of reality, the speaker resorts to the data of the composite sentence format on information distribution or status-of-knowledge determination and transfer. This kind of determination and transfer based on the principles of apperception (Miller, 1979; Potebnya, 1993) and iconicity (Haiman, 1985; Jakobson, 1966) is obligatory in successful communication. So, in communication course, the speaker primarily targets activating or configuring the format data on information distribution and constructing composite sentences with regard to certain schemas as cognitive dominants in conceptualization of related events and their interpretation as given or new.

The given and the new are conceptually regulated by the status-of-knowledge-determining function (Vinogradova, 2015) which, along with expressiveness, negation, evaluation, approximation, evidentiality, etc., is a particular manifestation of interpretation, a cognitive and linguistic activity of an individual. This function underlies information distribution schemas being conceptual foundations for composite sentences categories that shape the general status-of-knowledge category represented by various linguistic means, from articles to discourse peculiarities.

3. Research Questions

Taking into account the above-mentioned considerations, the following questions arise: **which schemas are activated in the mind of an individual** to transfer the given and the new information about related events through composite sentences **being cognitive dominants in conceptualization of related events**, and **which composite sentences as syntactic units represent them**.

4. Purpose of the Study

To find the answers, it is necessary to identify and describe such schemas having in mind that they are of metacognitive character as information distribution depends on the ability of an individual to make previously construed representations concerning the ontology of the related events the subject of the status-of-knowledge determination analysis.

5. Research Methods

For this purpose, a metacognitive modeling method has been developed that involves selection and description of the dominant schemas used by an individual to transfer the diversity of the given and the

new through composite sentences construction. The method presupposes assessing a number of information distribution factors. These factors include:

- direction of information flow
- thematic and operational concepts representation
- hierarchy of conceptual components (conceptual hierarchy)
- basic cognitive operations and linguistic mechanisms involved

Direction of information flow marks whether principles of apperception and iconicity are followed or violated. Therefore, the direction can be prospective and, on the other hand, retrospective, nonlinear, or point-wise. Representation of thematic and operational concepts, i.e. collective and situational meanings (Boldyrev, 2011), depends on the degree of active, semi-active and inactive concepts concentration (Chafe, 1987). Conceptual hierarchy presupposes that the conceptual components of composite sentences parts find themselves in strong or weak semantic relations due to certain interconceptual links (close, semi-distant, distant) of the events and their participants. Cognitive operations and linguistic mechanisms involved in the speaker's metacognitive activity, i.e. activity aimed at status-of-knowledge determination and transfer, either reflect collective knowledge of the composite sentence format, or give the idea of its interpretive potential. Basic cognitive operations (conceptual elaboration, conceptual shrinking, focusing and defocusing) underlie direction of information flow, reflect thematic and operational concepts representation and conceptual hierarchy, and correlate with particular linguistic mechanisms which presuppose various types of composite sentence.

To formally present the dominant schemas, certain descriptors have been introduced. State-of-affairs descriptors, such as Cognitive Situation (CS) and Binding Concept (BS), stand for the elements of a propositional complex that structures a hyper-event in the mind of an individual. Cognitive situations and binding concepts can be considered either as the given or the new and, thus, formally marked by status-of-knowledge descriptors such as Thematic and Operational Concepts (THC / OC).

The analysis has been carried out with evidence from contemporary English, particularly two-event composite sentences as prototypically exhibiting features of the composite sentence paradigm (Haiman & Thompson, 1984; Lehmann, 1988; Contexts of Subordination: Cognitive, Typological and Discourse Perspectives, 2014). Illustrations are taken from the British National Corpus.

6. Findings

The analysis of English two-event composite sentences shows that the systemic aspect of their construction to convey the informative status of the related events as given or new is associated with an individual's updating of the collective knowledge within the composite sentence format. This aspect is represented by the metacognitive schema CS 1 [THC (the given)] – BC (transition) – CS 2 [OC (the new)] based on irreversibility of the given and the new. Irreversibility of the given and the new is realized through the cognitive operation of conceptual elaboration implying accumulation of the sentence meaning from the given to the new. The direction of information flow is prospective. Thematic concepts concentrate in the left part of the composite sentence. The schema is objectified by compound and complex sentences with irreversible parts which depict close interconceptual links within the fixed fragment of reality. The speaker is more attracted by the nature and properties of the related events. The

opening part of the composite sentence introduces the profiled state of affairs, and its closing part is used to show how this state is specified or generalized, assessed or emotionally perceived, etc.

Irreversibility of composite sentences parts is predominantly associated with iconicity manifestation presupposing all sorts of logically objective constraints. These constraints are expressed in this or that order of events and their participants' relations. Due to irreversibility relations, the conceptual components of composite sentences parts find themselves in strong hierarchical dependence, which is linguistically accompanied by anaphoric elements, certain connectors and ungrammatical structures of composite sentences parts taken separately.

Irreversibility of the given and the new is a conceptual basis for the same-name category within the general status-of-knowledge category. It manifests itself in a variety of conceptual characteristics and respective means of their linguistic representation through composite sentences (Table 01).

Table 01. Irreversibility of the given and the new: conceptual characteristics and linguistic representation

Conceptual characteristics		Composite sentence examples
Order of	Events sequence	<i>First you have to think of it <u>and secondly</u> you have to say it.</i>
	Events or participants compatibility	<i>This is not usually important to a computer; <u>moreover</u>, a computer has little use for mnemonics.</i>
	An alternative event choice	<i>There can <u>either</u> be an individual winner <u>or</u> there can be teams.</i>
	Events or participants comparison	<i>Doing long division is a mental process <u>and so is</u> making a joke.</i>
	Events or participants opposing	<i>He <u>is not worried</u> about the money, <u>but he is worried</u> by the implications.</i>
	Events or participants compensation	<i>The carriage shall convey you <u>where you will</u> tomorrow morning.</i>
	Events or participants description	<i>So he went to the other hotel <u>where he found the vice president sitting with some friends in the parlor.</u></i>
	Events or participants evaluation	<i><u>It is important</u> therefore <u>that</u> any reorganization should better facilitate this task.</i>
	Reflection of events effectiveness	<i><u>If a has power over b</u>, <u>then</u> a can get b to do something.</i>
	The cause-and-effect sequence of events	<i>This kind of data is not relevant to his objectives <u>and thus</u> it is not recorded in his model.</i>

The above examples comprise compound sentences with copulative, adversative, disjunctive and causative-consecutive connectors and compound sentences with a fixed right position of the subordinate clause, with a defining clause in the right part, evaluative structures like *It is important*, the *If ... then ...* framing.

The dynamic aspect of composite sentences construction to convey the information status of related events as given or new is associated with an individual's configuration of the collective knowledge within the composite sentence format. This aspect is represented by the metacognitive schemas based on the grounding of the new, reinforcement of the new, suppression of the given and disconnection of the given and the new.

In the dynamic aspect, the speaker's metacognitive activity involves violating the principles of apperception and iconicity. As a result, in the process of communication, the direction of information flow can be retrospective, i.e. when presenting information, the speaker can construct composite sentences on the basis of the transition from the new to the given. The final parts of such sentences show which knowledge serves as semantic justification of the profiled state of affairs; the opening parts are meant to draw the recipient's attention to the new.

In this regard, the speaker's metacognitive activity is carried out following the schema CS 1 [OC (the new)] – BC (transition) – CS 2 [THC (the given)], which involves realization of conceptual shrinking as a cognitive operation that presupposes the transition of the meanings from the new to the given. This schema implies various ways of conceptualizing events and their semi-distant and distant interconceptual links in the format of a composite sentence. By virtue of such links, the conceptual components of the parts of composite sentences find themselves in weak semantic hierarchical dependence.

Grounding of the new construed as a cluster of conceptual characteristics is basis for the same-name category within the general status-of-knowledge category. Such category includes compound sentences with asyndeton, clefts, complex sentences with reversible parts with *since*, *once* in the right position, appended, parenthetic clauses, clauses of comparison, etc. Below, you can find Table 02 giving more detail on the schema.

Table 02. Grounding of the new: conceptual characteristics and linguistic representation

Conceptual characteristics	Composite sentence examples
Cause identification	<i>I couldn't stay – the area was violent.</i>
Correcting	<i>His heart began to make a terrible noise, <u>or so it seemed to him.</u></i>
Specifying	<i>He never told me anything, <u>did your brother.</u></i>
Cause and condition identification	<i>We can all go home <u>since there's no more business.</u></i>
Condition identification	<i>She has been instructed to draw up a report, <u>once the debates are over.</u></i>
Comparison	<i>Divorced couples often end up feeling more bitter about their lawyers <u>than they do about each other.</u></i>
Emphasizing	<i><u>These were</u> peter horbury and his wife <u>who had been in the little car immediately next to lord woodleigh's.</u></i>
Courtesy showing	<i>I'll put them in my handbag <u>if you like.</u></i>
Contact establishing	<i>She was selected most carefully, <u>you know.</u></i>
Evidentiality	<i>The price per pound was the same, <u>i think.</u></i>
Situation identification	<i>No, no, the quality has been fine, <u>if you take last year as an exception.</u></i>
Confirming	<i>Californians have a reputation for latching on to fads, <u>and it's true.</u></i>

In the dynamic aspect, human metacognitive activity can also be regulated by such schemas as CS 1 [THC (the given)] – BC [OC (the new)] – CS 2 [THC (the given)] and CS 1 [OC (the new)] – BC [THC (the given)] – CS 2 [OC (the new)] taking into account nonlinear direction of information flow and revealing the processes of reinforcement of the new and suppression of the given respectively. In particular, the speaker can be more interested in events relations, the presence or absence of close interconceptual links between them. Focusing and defocusing act as the main cognitive operations. The

basic linguistic mechanisms are composite sentences with high or low accessibility of referent events, participants and their relationships. In the context of reinforcement of the new operational concepts concentrate in the middle of the composite sentence. The suppression of the given schema allows operational concepts distribution in the right and left parts of the composite sentence.

Manifestations of reinforcement of the new are reduced to the multifocal representation of the binding concept, and those of the suppression of the given - to the conceptual diversification of cognitive situations. Tables 03 and 04 give more information on the reinforcement of the new and suppression of the given schemas.

Table 03. Reinforcement of the new: conceptual characteristics and linguistic representation

Conceptual Characteristics	Composite Sentence Examples
Showing manner, time, place, condition, concession, etc.	<i>I know <u>how</u> you feel.</i>
	<i>Hold on <u>before</u> you fall off.</i>
	<i>I wonder <u>where</u> I got it.</i>
	<i>I should go <u>in case</u> I'm seen.</i>
	<i>I'll be there <u>although</u> I may be late.</i>

Table 04. Suppression of the given: conceptual characteristics and linguistic representation

Conceptual Characteristics	Composite Sentence Examples
Marking defocused cause-reason effect, addition, simultaneity, contrast, etc.	<i><u>The museum at Wardown Park (north of the town centre) has tools and products of straw-plaiters and hat-makers, for the local expertise in straw plaiting made Luton the chief centre of the straw-hat industry.</u></i>
	<i><u>A new Federal Reserve would be responsible for the supervision of all banks chartered by individual states and their holding companies and a new Federal Banking Agency under the Treasury would supervise all national banks and their holding companies.</u></i>
	<i><u>There have not been any comprehensive studies of the rise and fall of various economic groups in more recent times, nor has there been an attempt to provide, on a broad scale, an economic interpretation of political events in the twentieth century.</u></i>
	<i><u>A starkish, slightly wooden acoustic at times battled with a well-managed sound system, yet the sound for the 18 blazing brass en masse was magnificent.</u></i>

The disconnection of the given and the new schema ... BC (transition) – CS [OC (the new)] is based on focusing one cognitive situation which is the new knowledge. The direction of information flow can be called point-wise. Due to the discourse isolation of the new (the above-mentioned cognitive situation is verbalized separately), its hierarchical relationship with the given is distant. The main linguistic mechanism for its realization is the use of elliptic composite sentences or parts of composite sentences with the function of thought completing which open with conjunctions or conjunctive words (Table 05).

Table 05. Disconnection of the given and the new: conceptual characteristic and linguistic representation

Conceptual characteristic	Composite sentence examples
Thought completing	“that’s a dog,” he grinned. “ <u>in case you didn’t know.</u> ” “thank you, patsy,” ellie whispered back.
	But now, seven years after gideon’s death, the business was becoming everything gideon dreamed of when the brothers established it nearly a decade ago, and it was a way to keep gideon’s dreams alive. <u>If only his brother were alive to see it now...</u>
	He paints stripes. He started screwing around with sticks and stones. He threw his collages into the water. He threw his paintings, his colors, his brushes, into the water. That stopped him; that was an option that was not open to him. The river flooded. <u>And his identity was submerged in the rising tide.</u>

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the evidence from contemporary English shows that in this language constructing two-event composite sentences in information distribution perspective is predominantly conventional, i.e. based on the irreversibility of the given and the new schema. Further variability of the described status-of-knowledge schematization in the English language through composite sentences can be examined with regard to secondary factors within metacognitive modeling analysis, such as interpretive function(s) simultaneously realized together with the status-of-knowledge-determining function, number and role of thematic domains as cognitive contexts referred to related events, additional cognitive operations and linguistic mechanisms involved. The results of the study allow to expand the idea of the composite sentence format as a mode of interpretation of the world in language and to structure this format according to the static and dynamic aspects of composite sentences construction aimed at conveying the informative status of related events in contemporary English based on certain schemas as cognitive dominants.

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