Anna Drogosz¹

POLYSEMOUS NATURE OF THE POLISH MARKER *SIĘ*

Introduction

The Polish marker² *się* is typically associated with reflexivity, but in fact it covers a vast range of constructions, reflexivity being just a small manifestation of its potential. That is why the paper describes the following senses or constructions with się: reflexive, inchoative, facilitative, passive, impersonal, and reciprocal. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the polysemous nature of the marker się, reveal motivating semantic links between various senses, and show the continuum extending from reflexive to impersonal senses of się.

1. Constructions with *się*: an overview

As we can see in (1) through (6), there is a great multitude of constructions with *się* in the Polish language³.

---

¹ Dr Anna Drogosz specialises in English linguistics. Department of English Studies, University of Warmia and Mazury, ul. Kurta Obitza 1, 10-900, Olsztyn; e-mail: drogosz000@poczta.onet.pl.

² Throughout the paper I use the term „markers", because of the uncertain status of *się* in the Polish literature. *Się* has been treated as a syllable (Bogusławski 1986), as a personal pronoun (Grzegorczykowa et al. 1984), as an independent lexeme (Saloni 1975), or as a derivational morpheme (Wilczewska 1966, Szymańska 2000).

³ On some occasions, *się* is interchangeable with *siebie*, e.g. the sentences in (1) and

(1) (a) Jan *się* goli.
       John is shaving (himself).
   (b) Jan zabił *się* wyskakując z okna.
       John killed himself by jumping through the window.

(2) (a) Jan zabił *się* w wypadku.
       John got killed in an accident.
   (b) Oblałam *się* zupą.
       I spilt soup all over myself.
   (c) Jan interesuje *się* biologią.
       John is interested in biology.
   (d) To okno czasem samo *się* otwiera.
       This window sometimes opens by itself.

(3) (a) Zeschnięte błoto łatwo *się* zeskrobało.
       The dry mud scraped off easily.
   (b) Ten materiał łatwo *się* gniecie.
       This fabric creases easily.
   (c) Ten namiot ciężko *się* rozkłada.
       This tent puts up with difficulty.

(4) (a) Zawiązało *się* nowe towarzystwo charytatywne.
       A new charity has been founded.
   (b) On urodził *się* w Gdańsku.
       He was born in Gdańsk.

(5) (a) Mówi *się* o nim, że jest złodziejem.
       He is said to be a thief.
   (b) Tu *się* mówi po angielsku.
       English is spoken here.
   (c) Siedzi *się* tam godzinami.
       One sits here for hours on end.
   (d) Słyszało *się* to i owo.
       One has heard this and that.

(6) (a) Oni spotkali *się* w Londynie.
       They met in London.
   (b) Mamo, a Tomek *się* pluje!
       Mommy, Tom keeps spitting!

(2a) and (2b) could easily be rephrased into *Jan goli siebie, Jan zabił siebie (wyskakując z okna), Jan zabił w wypadku siebie, Oblałam siebie zupą*. However, without some stylistic alterations, these paraphrases sound unnatural. This is so because the markers *siebie* and *się* differ in construal, *siebie* being a nominal reflexive marker and *się* a processual reflexive marker (cf. Langacker 1991, Drogosz 2005).

Although diverse, these constructions are not random but well motivated: both semantically and syntactically, and display systematic links.

2. The reflexive sense of *się*

Our analysis of *się* will be carried out with reference to Langacker's account of the canonical event model and Kemmer's analysis of reflexive situation types. The canonical event model as presented by Langacker (1991: 282-286) assumes two participants of an event: the Initiator (i.e. the source of the action who consciously initiates an event) and the Endpoint (an inanimate entity affected by the event). The event involves some kind of energy transfer. As demonstrated by Talmy (1972) and Kemmer (1993), modifications of this canonical event give rise to various situation types (i.e. sets of situational or semantic/pragmatic contexts that are systematically associated with a particular form or expression). In her analysis of middle constructions, Kemmer distinguishes three situation types. First, the prototypical two-participant event (a realisation of the canonical event and the prototype for transitive sentences) is defined as a verbal event in which a human entity (an agent) acts volitionally, exerting physical force on an inanimate definite entity (a patient) which is directly and completely affected by that event. Thus, there are two participants, and the relation between them involves some kind of transmission of force from the animate participant to the second, affected participant. Next, the prototypical one-participant event type (manifested linguistically by intransitive sentences) modifies the canonical event as it involves one participant of an event. Third, the direct reflexive situation type departs from the prototypical two-participant event in its construal of the participants of the event. The two participants (Agent or Experiencer on the one hand and Patient on the other) are co-referential, which means that technically the number of participants of the event is between two and one.

Drawing from these findings, we believe that the following parameters should be considered in an analysis of *się*:

   (i)   the number of participants of an event;
  (ii)   the sentience of the agent participant;
 (iii)   distinctness of participants;
 (iv)   intentionality of the action;
  (v)   the co-reference of the agent (the source of action) and the affected entity.

Let us first consider the examples in (1). Sentences of this type show the closest affinity to the canonical event model of all constructions with *się*: they profile one event involving two participants (the source of the action and the affected entity); and the source of the action (i.e. the agent) is a human being consciously initiating the action and syntactically represented by the sentence subject. However, unlike the canonical event, the roles of the agent and the affected entity are conflated in one real-life participant. Such modification of the canonical event is typical of the reflexive situation type and is linguistically coded in Polish by the use of the marker *się* (as well as *siebie*).

Concluding, *się* in (1) is used in its reflexive sense. This sense should be treated as prototypical because it modifies the canonical event in the least degree, but also because other senses are related to it, which we are going to present in the remaining part of the paper.

3. Non-reflexive uses of the marker *się*

The first minimal modification of the prototype is exemplified in (2) by the use of *się* called "the inchoative" in the literature of the subject (cf. Szymańska 2000)[4]. Similarly to (1), all the sentences in (2) involve two non-distinct participants, with the agent participant being the specified source of action and, simultaneously, the affected entity. However, although the subject referent initiates the action, the action itself is not intentional[5]. What is more, it appears that the sentience or even animacy of the subject referent is irrelevant, which is clear from (2d). The difference between the prototype in (1) and ichoative in (2) becomes

---

[4] Inchoatives, as well as facilitatives and passive uses of *się* which are discussed below are often claimed to encode the middle situation type. Such a claim was made by Wilczewska (1966) and Kański (1986). Wilczewska observed that the solely reflexive function of *się* is being lost, and that the marker *się* acquires the more general middle function. Kański, adopting an entirely different theoretical stance, proposed to characterise *się* as a marker of middleness, i.e. an asymmetrical relation with no necessary variable entity. More recently, Cognitive Grammar studies by Tabakowska (2003) and Drogosz (2008) confirm this view.

[5] The relevance of intentionality in the analysis of the middle can be found in Gonda (1960a, 1960b) quoted by Manney (1993). In his study of Classical Greek Gonda suggested that the original use of the middle was to depict events which indirectly involved non-agentive subjects. In his view the middle encodes a situation in which an event is not necessarily brought about by a volitional human subject, but rather as unfolding in the vicinity of a neutral participant (in Manney 1993: 49-50).

particularly salient if we compare (1b) and (2a): while (1b) highlights intentionality and, consequently, an act of suicide, (2a) refers to an unintentional act and thus an accident.

The sentences in (3), known as "facilitatives", depart from the prototype even more. What connects this sense with the senses in (1) and (2) is co-reference of the agent referent and the affected entity coded by *się*. But this is all that can be said about similarities. The referent coded by the sentence subject is a non-sentient inanimate entity, which in a real-life situation is unable to initiate any action. Thus, the subject referent is not, technically, the source of the action, the agent. This role must have been performed by a human (or at least animate) agent, who nevertheless remains unspecified. However, the subject referent, though inanimate, displays some quality which influences the execution of the action by the real-life agent (e.g. making it easier or more difficult for the human participant). The inanimate subject referent becomes metaphorically the source of the action and the agent of the relation.

The use exemplified in (4) is often called the "passive *się*" (cf. Wilczewska 1966, Szlifersztejnowa 1968). As this construction is rare in contemporary Polish, more examples are given in (7)[6]:

(7) (a) Nim typografie polskie potrafiły wystarczyć potrzebom krajowego piśmiennictwa, książki w Polsce pisane <u>drukowały się</u> za granicą.
         By the time Polish printing offices could meet the demand of the country's writers, books written in Poland were printed abroad.

     (b) ..zasiadał w mediolańskim senacie i <u>liczył się</u> do najbliższych doradców księcia.
         ...he sat in the senate of Milan and was counted as one of the closest advisors of the prince.

     (c) Nasze polskie ogrody, podobnie jak wszystkie inne w Europie, na włoskich <u>kształciły się</u> wzorach.
         Our Polish gardens, like all gardens in Europe, were based on Italian models.

If we compare the passive use of *się* with the facilitative and inchoative use, we can see that it departs from the reflexive use even more. Firstly, the referent of the sentence subject is not the source of action; it is not the agent. Because it is an inanimate entity and not an agent, there is little point in discussing its sentience or intentionality of the action. The subject referent is, however, co-referential with the affected entity. Secondly, the agent is not co-referential with the affected entity. Logically, all the sentences in (4) and (7) must involve some source of action, most probably a human, but it is unex-

---

6 The examples in (8) are given after Szlifersztejnowa (1968:135).

pressed because it is unknown or unimportant for the speaker. Thirdly, unlike in facilitatives, the referent of the subject of passive-*się* sentences cannot be treated as the source of action even metaphorically. Recall that in facilitatives the subject participant contributed somehow in the performance of the action. This is not the case with the passives: while the subject is conceptually co-referential with the affected entity it clearly does not influence the execution of the action in any way.

While the unexpressed source of action and lack of involvement of the subject participant in the execution of the action were not to be observed in the previously discussed senses of *się*, such construal of the situation is similar to the one offered by periphrastic passive constructions. Indeed, all the examples are translated into English with the use of passive and all of them could be easily paraphrased into periphrastic passive in Polish (some of possibilities are given below):

(8)

książki drukowały *się*	...książki były drukowane..
	(....books were printed...)
zaliczał *się*	...był zaliczany...
	(....was counted...)
ogrody kształtowały *się*	...ogrody były kształtowane...
	(gardens were modelled)
teatr budował *się*	...teatr był budowany...
	(the theatre was constructed)
odkrywają *się* freski	...freski są odkrywane...
	(frescoes are being restored)

This affinity of the passive-*się* constructions to periphrastic passive is by no means accidental. Szlifersztejnowa (1968) traced back in historical sources the appearance of the verb+*się* cluster with a passive meaning. Her main claim is that Polish verb+*się* constructions adopted the role of passive constructions due to the absence of a periphrastic passive, and encoded situations where the sentence subject was affected by actions coming from a person or persons not directly mentioned in the sentence. Szlifersztejnowa further observed that the appearance of the periphrastic passive took over the function of the passive *się* rendering it almost extinct. While the passive use of *się* as illustrated by (7) may be infrequent in mainstream Polish spoken in Poland, we noticed a consistent use of this construction in the Polish language spoken in Lithuania. Examples in (9) come from a conversation with three speakers, aged 30, 45, and 70, who lived all their lives in Vilnius.

(9) (a) Teatr budował *się* tak długo jak piramidy egipskie.
  Construction of the theatre took as long as that of the Egyptian pyramids.

  (b) W sklepach tylko lity *się* uznają.
  In shops only Lits are recognised.

  (c) W wyniku prac konserwatorskich odkrywają *się* freski.
  As a result of redecoration frescoes are being restored.

These examples indicate that the passive sense of *się* has not disappeared completely, as Szlifersztejnowa claimed, but was preserved in some dialects of Polish[7]. What is more, mainstream Polish has also an expression with the indisputably passive sense of *się*, namely *urodzić się* 'to be born', as in (4). This sentence, just like the other examples of the passive use discussed above, focuses on the affected entity and de-emphasizes the source of action (the agent). It also naturally translates into passive. Interestingly, this sentence is not perceived as passive by users of Polish and its periphrastic passive equivalent (zostałem urodzony 'I was born') sounds awkward. Instead, it functions as a well-entrenched, partially lexicalized phrase, a fossil of the sense that lost its productivity and became obsolete (cf. Wilczewska 1966:50).

Now we would like to turn to impersonal constructions with *się*, a little sample of which is given in (5). The Polish language has a variety of impersonal constructions in which a verb is accompanied by *się*. The first type of impersonal constructions is given in (5a), (5b) and (10):

(10) (a) Będzie *się* o tym dużo mówić.
  It will be much spoken about.

  (b) Oczekuje *się*, że Tomek przyjedzie jutro.
  Tom is expected to come tomorrow.

  (c) Podejrzewa *się*, że prezes maczał w tym palce.
  The president is suspected to be involved.

  (d) W domu powieszonego nie mówi *się* o sznurku.
  Lit. In the house of the hanged one does not talk about a rope.

This construction has a relatively restricted usage in Polish. It is employed to encode a situation in which some unspecified person expresses some belief, expectation, or simply speaks about some other person or entity.

---

7 To what degree Polish spoken in Lithuania preserves this sense and how this sense interacts with periphrastic passive is an interesting question exceeding the scope of this study.

What this use of *się* shares with passive constructions is the removal of the real-life source of action from the sentence structure. Just like in passives, the human agent initiating the event is unexpressed because it is unimportant or unknown. In impersonal constructions, however, the process of withdrawing the agent from the construal of the event is even more advanced: there is no overt subject at all. Consequently, there cannot be any co-reference between the subject referent and the affected entity, as it is even not clear what this affected entity is. In the light of this observation it becomes clear that the motivation for the use of *się* in this construction cannot come from its reflexive sense, in which coreference is the key feature. However, interpreting the impersonal construction as an extension of the passive sense seems a viable assumption. In this way the passive use, though marginal in Polish, provides a missing link between impersonal uses of *się* and its other uses.

Another difference between impersonal constructions and passives concerns the linear order of elements in a sentence. The impersonal sentences typically begin with finite forms of a verb whose trajector is unelaborated, as the agent participant that corresponds to the processual trajector is unspecified. The affected entity follows the marker *się*, and often occurs only in the subordinate clause. The passive construction, on the other hand, follows the general pattern set by reflexive constructions: it begins with the affected entity located in the position of the sentence subject.

We believe that this ordering of clausal elements reflects the particular construal imposed by the impersonal construction. The effect of this construction is such that the author of the words, expectations, suspicions or thoughts is removed and the reaction of the listener to such a sentence might be a question concerning the agent's identity, as in (11):

(11) A: Mówi *się*, że to ty jesteś odpowiedzialny za złe finanse firmy.
   B: Kto tak mówi?
   A: *You are said to be responsible for the company's bad financial situation.*
   B: *Who says so?*

In contrast to impersonal sentences, it is very unlikely for passive sentences to elicit such a response.

Interestingly, personal equivalents of the impersonal sentences do not involve the use of the marker *się*. Consider:

(12) (a) Ludzie mówią, że on jest złodziejem.
     People say that he is a thief.

(b) Sąsiedzi będą o tym wiele mówić.
   The neighbours will talk a lot about it.

(c) Ewa oczekuje, że Tomek przyjedzie jutro.
   Eve expects Tom to arrive tomorrow.

(d) Pracownicy podejrzewają, że prezes maczał w tym palce.
   The employees suspect the president to be involved.

(e) W domu powieszonego goście nie mówią o sznurku.
   In the house of the hanged guests do not talk about a rope.

(f) W tym kraju ludzie mówią po angielsku.
   In this country people speak in English.

This seems to confirm the claim that the use of *się* reflects the speaker's choice to remove the agent participant.

The sentence type in (13) is mentioned by Koneczna (1955) and Kardela (1985).

(13) (a) Nie pojęło *się* wtedy grozy sytuacji.
   I/we didn't see then how dangerous the situation was.

(b) Nie dało *się* tego zrobić inaczej.
   It couldn't be done in any other way.

(c) Nie odrobiło *się* pracy domowej, co?
   You didn't do your homework, did you?

(d) Czasem zagląda *się* trochę do butelki, nie?
   You have a drink from time to time, don't you?

(e) Ma *się* tego nosa do interesów.
   One is good at doing business.

(f) Słyszało *się* to i owo.
   One has heard this and that.

(g) Siedzi *się* tutaj godzinami.
   One sits here for hours.

(h) To jest wygodne, jeżeli *się* opisuje wyniki uzyskane przez innych.
   It is convenient if you want to describe the results obtained by others.

Kardela refers to such sentences as the "speaker-addressee oriented construction", and characterises them in the following way:

(14) (a) a Speaker-Addressee oriented construction has the understood subject *I* or *you* although the verb appearing in it is marked for the 3rd ps. sg. neut.;

(b) the verb in a Speaker-Addressee oriented construction assumes a Preterite or a Present Tense form only;

(c) a clitic *się* is obligatory;

(d) if a Tag such as, for example, *co, eh, nieprawda* 'isn't it' is used, then the construction is Addressee oriented, i.e. its understood subject is *you* (1985: 69-70).

According to Kardela, who gives such sentences an analysis following the Government and Binding theory, "*się* binds the PRO appearing in the subject position and is related to it via con-superscripting" (1985: 71). This type of analysis cannot be accepted in the Cognitive Grammar approach if only because Cognitive Grammar postulates the absence of any empty categories.

Let me begin with the speaker-oriented variant of the construction exemplified in (13a). Although this construction is referred to as speaker oriented, informants expressed doubts concerning the identity of the agent participant. They pointed out that the agent is understood to be some unspecified group of people to which the speaker may or may not belong. This interpretation gives this construction an element of objectivism and detachment. This property of the speaker-oriented impersonal construction is well visible when the sentences in (13) are contrasted with the sentences in (15) and (16):

(15) (a) Mam tego nosa do interesów.
  I'm good at doing business.
 (b) Słyszałem to i owo.
  I've heard this and that.
 (c) Siedzę tutaj godzinami.
  I sit here for hours.
 (d) To jest wygodne, jeżeli opisuję wyniki uzyskane przez innych.
  It is convenient if I want to describe the results obtained by others.

(16) (a) Mamy tego nosa do interesów.
  We're good at doing business.
 (b) Słyszeliśmy to i owo.
  We've heard this and that.
 (c) Siedzimy tutaj godzinami.
  We sit here for hours.
 (d) To jest wygodne, jeżeli opisujemy wyniki uzyskane przez innych.
  It is convenient if we want to describe the results obtained by others.

In these sentences the agent participant is specified: it is the speaker in (15) and the speaker+someone else in (16). However, the agent implied in the sentences in (13) seems to be between I and someone else.

111

The speaker-oriented impersonal construction has a surprisingly widespread occurrence in colloquial Polish, especially in situations in which the speaker portrays himself as only sometimes participating in the event described, or where he focuses on the process and not on its participants. The use of the construction with *się* in this impersonal meaning comes from the fact that Polish does not have a pronoun which would be unmarked for person, such as English one. The use of *się* in this meaning is well motivated. As demonstrated before, the constructions with *się* (such as inchoatives and facilitatives) allow the speaker to construe a situation in such a way that the real source of the action is unspecified and his initiation of the action is unintentional. In addition, the use of the relational reflexive marker *się* allows the event to be highlighted and leaves the participants in the background, thus focusing on the action and drawing the attention away from the participants involved in it.

The configuration referred to by Koneczna and Kardela as the addressee-oriented impersonal construction is related to the speaker-oriented impersonal construction. This variant is often a reaction of the speaker to what the addressee does or says. Interestingly, the use of this construction marks the speaker's superiority. For example, a teacher can say the following to a pupil while examining his exercise-book:

(17) To co, nie odrobiło *się* pracy domowej?
Well, you didn't do your homework, did you?

A dentist can say to his patient:
(18) Nie dbało *się* o zęby, prawda?
You haven't taken care of your teeth, have you?

A policeman can say to a driver:
(19) To co, jechało *się* trochę za szybko?
Well, well, so you were driving a little bit too fast, weren't you?

It would be highly inappropriate for a pupil to use this construction to address his teacher:
(20) Nie sprawdziło *się* naszych klasówek, prawda?
You haven't checked our tests, have you?

Unlike in the speaker-oriented impersonal construction, the identity of the agent participant of the addressee-oriented impersonal construction is known: it is always the addressee. Still, he is not linguistically expressed in the configura-

tion but recovered from the extra-linguistic context. In addition, this construction is typically used in a situation when the speaker suspects that the addressee feels guilty about his actions and the speaker makes reference to this "offence". The speaker's choice of the impersonal construction with *się* is intentional. Both the sentences in (17)-(20) and their potential answers (which would include the speaker-oriented impersonal construction) portray the implied participant of the event as if the actions were happening partially out of his control and he was not fully responsible for them. Thus, the sentences in (17)-(20) make his admittance to his "offence" easier for him, for example:

(21)   A: Nie dbało *się* o zęby, prawda?
        B: Prawda, panie doktorze, nie dbało *się*.
        A: *You haven't taken care of your teeth, have you?*
        B: *That's true, doctor, I haven't.*

Finally we turn to the reciprocal use of the marker *się* illustrated by (6a). More examples of this sense are given in (22):

(22)   (a) Poznaliśmy *się* w Paryżu.
             We met for the first time in Paris.
        (b) Jaś i Grześ ganiają *się* po podwórku.
             Johnny and Greg are chasing each other in the yard.
        (c) W tropikalnej dżungli rośliny dławią *się* wzajemnie.
             In the tropical jungle plants strangle each other.
        (d) Ewa i Ala zamieniły *się* sukienkami.
             Eve and Ala exchanged their dresses.
        (e) Dwie drogi krzyżują *się* za wsią.
             Two roads cross near the village.

My main objective will be to determine what motivates the use of *się* in the reciprocal meaning and to relate this meaning to the senses discussed so far.

Following the distinction made by Kemmer (1993: 97-117), it can be assumed that constructions with *się* code the natural reciprocal event. The natural reciprocal involves an inverse relation between two participants but pertains to events which are either necessarily (e.g. "meet') or frequently (e.g. "fight", "kiss') semantically reciprocal. Further, according to Kemmer, the natural reciprocal situation is characterised by a relatively low degree of distinguishability, because the actions of two participants involved are viewed as performed simultaneously as a single event.

Search for the motivation of the reciprocal sense of *się* takes us back to reflexive constructions. In reciprocal constructions we can immediately distinguish the

113

source of the action (encoded by the sentence subject) and the affected entity. Further, the subject referent is affected by the action profiled by the verb. However, as we can see from the examples, the reciprocal construction is neutral as to the sentience of the subject referent and intentionality of the action. Yet the greatest difference between the reciprocal and reflexive constructions resides in the construal of the subject participant: it is either plural or co-ordinated in order to accommodate for situations in which one participant is affected by the action initiated by the other participant. As a result, the real-life source of action is distinct from the real-life recipient of the action. What sanctions the use of the marker *się* in this context is the fact that one action is conceptualised as a mirror image of the other action and the two real-life participants become fused into one.

Even a brief overview of the reciprocal constructions allows us to observe that they are more context-dependent than other uses of the marker *się*. The same sentences can be given reflexive or reciprocal interpretation depending on context and information outside the sentence itself. Only the sentences in (22b), (22d), (22e) exclude the possibility of reflexive interpretation (at least they favour the reciprocal reading), while in the remaining cases the reflexive interpretation is equally viable. In order to limit the range of interpretations and secure the reciprocal interpretation, an expression nawzajem/wzajemnie "each other" is sometimes added to a sentence (cf. Szymańska 2000: 194).

Concluding, we would like to turn to the last construction type exemplified in (5b), which is called by Szymańska the "full involvement" reflexive. All the examples given by Szymańska pertain to situations in which two participants are involved: the doer of the action and the "victim" of the action who are distinct. They are distinct not only in the speaker's conceptualisation but also in the real-world context. In the examples (23) and (24) (a) sentences could trigger the reaction in (b):

(23) (a) Mamo, Tomek *się* kopie!
Mummy, Tom's kicking!
(b) Przestańcie *się* kopać!
Stop kicking each other!
(24) (a) Mamo, a on *się* rzuca papierkami!
Mummy, he's throwing scraps of paper at me!
(b) Przestańcie *się* rzucać!
S*top throwing things!*

The interesting thing about this construction observed by Szymańska is the "removal" of one of the participants. However, while this "removal" would be difficult to explain if we interpreted the full involvement construction as a re-

flexive, it makes perfect sense if we interpret it as a reciprocal. By removing himself from the reciprocal relation, the speaker makes himself a "victim" of the situation, not its active part. This is why such sentences are typically used by children to accuse their playmates of some wrongdoing, or to shift the caretaker's attention from themselves. The resulting sentence has in effect a pseudo-reflexive colouring often ridiculed by adults, as in (25):

(25) (a) Mamo, a Tomek *się* bije!
        Mummy, Tom's beating (me)!
    (b) Jak on *się* bije to ciebie nie boli.
        If Tom's beating himself, it doesn't hurt you.

The marker *się* in (25b) clearly has the reflexive meaning. The full involvement construction demonstrates that reciprocals are by no means a homogenous category.

Conclusion

In this paper we have investigated the following constructions with the marker *się*: reflexive, inchoative, facilitative, passive, impersonal, and reciprocal. We have established that the reflexive sense of *się* stands out as the prototype which explains why this sense is usually associated with the use of *się* in general. Next, taking into account such criteria as: distinctness of participants of an event, sentience of the subject participant, and intentionality of the action we have established the continuum of senses: from reflexive constructions to impersonal constructions each sense of *się* motivates the next one, either suspending or modifying some of the characteristics. The passive sense of *się*, though no longer productive in Polish, proved to be a connecting link between the facilitative and impersonal sense. The reciprocal use is not part of the continuum but is instead a close modification of the reflexive use.

REFERENCES

Bogusławski, A. 1977. Polskie *się* – słowo nie do końca poznane. *International Review of Slavic Lingustics* 2/1, 99-124.

Drogosz, A. 2005. The conceptual distinction between Polish markers of reflexivity: *siebie* and *się*. *Acta Neophilologica* VII, 107-118.

Drogosz, A. 2008. *Reflexivization in English and Polish. A Cognitive Grammar Perspective*. Olsztyn: Instytut Neofilologii, Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski

Grzegorczykowa, R., R. Laskowski and H. Wrobel (eds.) 1984. *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego. Morfologia*. Warszawa: PWN.

Kański, Z. 1986. *Arbitrary Reference and Reflexivity: a generative study of the Polish pronoun* się *and its English equivalents*. Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski.

Kardela, H. 1985. *A Grammar of English and Polish Reflexives*. Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.

Kemmer, S. 1993. *The Middle Voice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Koneczna, H. 1955. Od zdań podmiotowych do bezpodmiotowych. *Poradnik językowy* 8, 281-293.

Lakoff, G. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: what categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Langacker, R. 1991. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*. Vol. 2: *Descriptive Application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Saloni, Z. 1975. W sprawie języka, *Język Polski* LXV, 9-23.

Manney, L. 1993. *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*. Unpublished Ph. D. diss. San Diego: University of California.

Szlifersztejnowa, S. 1968. *Bierne czasowniki zaimkowe (reflexiva) w języku polskim*. Wrocław: Ossolineum.

Szymańska, I. 2000. *A Construction Grammar Account of the Reflexive* się *in Polish*. Ph. D. diss. Uniwersytet Warszawski.

Tabakowska, E. 2003. Those notorious Polish reflexive pronouns: a plea for middle voice. *Glossos*. Issue 4.

Talmy, L. 1972. *Semantic Structures in English and Atsugewi*. Ph.D. diss. Berkeley: University of California.

Wilczewska, K. 1966. *Czasowniki zwrotne we współczesnej polszczyźnie*. Toruń: Towarzystwo Nauk w Toruniu.

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on an analysis of the following Polish constructions with *się*: reflexive, inchoative, facilitative, passive, impersonal, and reciprocal. The Cognitive Grammar account adopted in the paper allows for a unified account of these senses of *się*. The analysis reveals the polysemous nature of the marker *się*, with the reflexive sense functioning as the prototype. By using such parameters as: the distinctness of participants, intentionality of the action, the sentience of the agent participant, and the co-reference of the agent and the affected entity, establishing the connecting semantic links between all the senses became possible. Including the passive use of *się* in the analysis proved to be particularly revealing, as this sense, though marginal in contemporary Polish, provides a connection between impersonal constructions with *się* and the remaining uses of this marker.