

‘TAM’ in English constructions vs. Polish renditions – Selected transference pitfalls

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Abstract

This paper argues that a cognitive, constructional, view of the English categories of tense, aspect, and mood (‘TAM’) influences comprehension resulting in a more accurate grammatical performance by Polish users of English. Five English constructions considered to be transference pitfalls for Polish users are highlighted through juxtaposing original examples from *The Hobbit* by Tolkien (1937/1978) with three Polish renditions. The pitfalls addressed in this paper concern absence of equivalent Polish constructions to English expressions in the perfect aspect, the progressive aspect and to English constructions which ‘lexicalize’, i.e. convey with words, a compilation of the perfect and the progressive aspects. The Polish versions of the examples analysed and discussed in the present paper demonstrate a variety of means in which Polish grammar is used to handle the disparities between the English and Polish versions. The objective of the paper is to apply a cognitive interpretation to the aforementioned English constructions.

Keywords: tense, aspect, modality, English, Polish

Introduction

The present discourse has a descriptive character concentrating on the importance of considering semantic construals of language users in depicting different situations by means of grammatical constructions of increasing degrees of specificity and complexity. The following focuses on selected features of verbal categories of TAM in English clauses and draws attention to those constructions which are presented as topical ‘pitfalls’ for Polish learners of English grammar. Drawing attention to a cognitive instruction of English grammar to Polish learners, especially with regard to TAM constructions (Givón, 2001, p. 285; Croft, 2013, p. 228), could diminish topical transference mistakes in English argument structures. Croft (2013) argues that such constructions combine in an utterance, since “argument structure constructions structure the propositionalized subchunk, while TAM constructions particularize the event” (p. 229). Moreover, in Croft’s study, subchunks are “«clause-sized» experiences” (p. 229). Croft accounts for subchunking stating that it is about breaking up the speaker’s experience “into smaller units

of the same type” (p. 229), which pertain to encoding information in clauses. The subchunks analyzed and discussed in the present discourse are illustrated by English TAM constructions juxtaposed with three Polish translations drawn from examples cited in *The Hobbit* by Tolkien (1937/1978). The signalled constructions could be said to be transference ‘pitfalls’ for Polish users of English. The final Part illustrates the signalled transference pitfalls through examples of translations of English clauses into Polish, analyses of the disparities observed, and synthetic comments. According to this author, it is essential that grammar, in this case, the predicator and its argument structure, be studied as grammatical constructions (e.g. Langacker, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Goldberg, 1995), ‘bits’ and ‘chunks’ of language of increasing degrees of complexity, in view of the proponents of Cognitive Linguistics (capitalized CL, see Geeraerts, 2006). Moreover, it is argued here that instruction of English TAM constructions should trigger underlying ‘construals’ of the speakers’ utterances (Jackendoff, 1983; Langacker, 1991; Talmy, 2000a, b). The TAM constructions addressed as transference pitfalls in this discourse delve into:

1. sequentiality and ‘prior’ situations
2. situations conveyed by the *to have done* construction
3. the perfect of selected central modal verbs
4. imperfective present situations: progressive vs. non-progressive
5. perfective and imperfective past situations

Speakers’ Construals and Grammatical Constructions

In Langacker’s *Cognitive Grammar* (1987), grammatical constructions are “based on conventional imagery, which reflects our ability to construe a conceived situation in alternate ways” (p. 138). Jackendoff (1983) addresses another constraint, apart from the *grammatical constraint*, which he considers “not sufficient for constructing an argument from grammatical generalization to the nature of thought” (p. 16). He calls the other constraint the *Cognitive Constraint*. Jackendoff (1983) acknowledges that there “must be levels of mental representation at which information conveyed by language is compatible with information from other peripheral systems such as vision, nonverbal audition, smell, kinesthesia, and so forth” (p. 16). Consequently, cognitive scholars argue that the conceptual structure is embodied and semantic structure is conceptual structure (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Lakoff, 1987; Johnson, 1987; Talmy, 2000a). Thus, semantic structure reflects the speaker’s alternate construals, which are linked to specific ways of viewing and conceiving the same situation (Langacker, 1987, p. 38; see also the schematic systems of structuring the semantic content in Talmy, 2000a).

Langacker (2008) argues that “Expressions can have the same content, and profile the same relationship, but differ in meaning because they make different choices of trajector and landmark” (p. 72). The two entities are defined in terms of primary and secondary focal prominence, for example, in *The lamp is above the table*, the lamp fills the trajector, but in *The table is below the lamp*, the lamp has landmark status (c.f. Langacker, 2008, p. 73). The two utterances display different perspectives of viewing the same situation. Perspective, therefore, according to Langacker (2008), “is the **viewing arrangement**, the most obvious aspect of which is the vantage point assumed” (p. 73), which is observed on the basis of how we perceive the

lamp in the first clause and the table in the second one. Cognitive linguists' studies found that semantics "is based on speakers' «construals» of situations, not on objective truth conditions" (Goldberg, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, grammatical constructions, ranging from single words to whole sentences, reflect the speaker's construals of the described situations (Talmy, 1978; Jackendoff, 1983; Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1987; Goldberg, 1995, 2006; Birner & Ward, 1998). Grammatical constructions are inseparable from construals of situations, which incorporate combinations of form and meaning at various levels of complexity, where semantics and pragmatics are interrelated. Cognitive semantics and selected ideas that pertain to functional views on language combine in the analysis and discussion of TAM constructions presented in the following sections.

Selected Features of Verbal Categories of TAM in English

Tense

Givón (2001) perceives tense as a pragmatic phenomenon, stating that "*tense* involves the systematic coding of the relation between two points along the ordered linear dimension of *time*: ● reference-time; ● event-time" (pp. 285–286). Givón (2001) also argues that "The unmarked («default») temporal reference point vis-a-vis which event/state¹ clauses are anchored is the *time of speech*. Temporal anchoring to this default reference point is called *absolute tense*" (p. 285). Givón distinguished three major tense divisions in English, *past*, *future*, and *present*, adding a fourth division, referred to as 'murky'. The fourth distinction relates to *habitual* events or states, and habitual expressions. In Givón's opinion, they "are not about any particular event, thus not about any particular event-time" (p. 286). According to Givón, the habitual can be treated as "a sub-category of the *imperfective* aspect, whereby, like other imperfectives, it can intersect with various tenses ..." (p. 286). Unlike syntax grammar, which distinguishes two tenses of the English verb, 'present' and 'past' (c.f. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartik, 1985/2007, p. 175), Givón's functional approach to syntax proposes four tenses altogether, illustrated by the following examples (c.f. p. 286):

1. *He watched the boat.* **Past**, describing an event or state prior to the time of speech;
2. *He will watch the boat.* **Future**, about an event or state coming after the time of speech;
3. *He is watching the boat.* **Present**, referring to an event or state at the time of speech;
4. *He always watches boats.* **Habitual**, concerning a state or a repeated event with unspecified 'event-time', therefore treated as 'murky'.

The four pragmatic tense divisions rely on 'speech-time', 'event-time', and a specific tense temporal anchoring of the 'proposition', such as in 1, through 4 above. Absolute tense applies

¹ For the two terms *event* and *state*, I adapt the terms *action* and *process*, respectively. Talmy (2000b) applies the term *action* to "a static condition – the continuation of a location or state – as well as to motion or change" (p. 67). Langacker (1987) claims that "Any verb (...) designates a **process**, defined as a sequence of configurations (or states) conceived as being distributed over a continuous series of points in time" (pp. 143–144).

to the reference time which is the present time and, simultaneously, the speech time. While the past time precedes the speech-time in the present time, the future time follows it.

Moreover, Givón (2001) argued that, apart from absolute tense divisions, a language can take ‘present’, ‘past’, and ‘future’, “and anchor them to a temporal reference-point preceding (past) or following (future) the time of speech. This is called *relative tense*, a phenomenon more conspicuous in English aspects...” (pp. 286–287). Givón’s statement complies with Comrie’s (1976/1991) approach, who described tense as ‘deictic’, since, it “locates the time of a situation relative to the situation of the utterance” (p. 2). While tense is external to the verb phrase, aspect is internal (c.f. Comrie, 1976/1991, p. 6).

Aspect

Croft (2012) argued that “Aspect is manifested both grammatically and lexically” (p. 31). Talmy (2000b) characterized aspect “as the «pattern of distribution of action through time»” (p. 67). Comrie (1976/1991) proposed a definition of aspect, based on the observation formulated in the middle of the twentieth century by Holt (1943): “Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation; one could state the difference as one between situation-internal time (aspect) and situation-external time (tense)” (p. 6). Said definition, which refers not only to grammaticalized viewpoints, but also to the structure of the depicted situation, pertains to grammatical and semantic/pragmatic analyses of aspect alike (Vendler, 1957/1967; Comrie, 1976; Dowty, 1977, 1979; Verkuyl, 1993; Smith, 1997; Trask, 1999; Croft, 2012, 2013). Vendler (1957) showed that the verb and its arguments grammaticalize a specific situation type in a particular language, assuming that the verb and its ‘constellation’ represent a stable and exceptional set of linguistic properties. Hence the given situation types expressed by clauses are conveyed by verbs and their arguments, which form its constellation. It evokes a specific temporal schema, which is connected with the particular verb (p. 143). Vendler acknowledged that the said temporal schemata are manifested as crucial components of notions, consistently expressed via language. He divided the temporal schemata in agreement with four types of verbs:

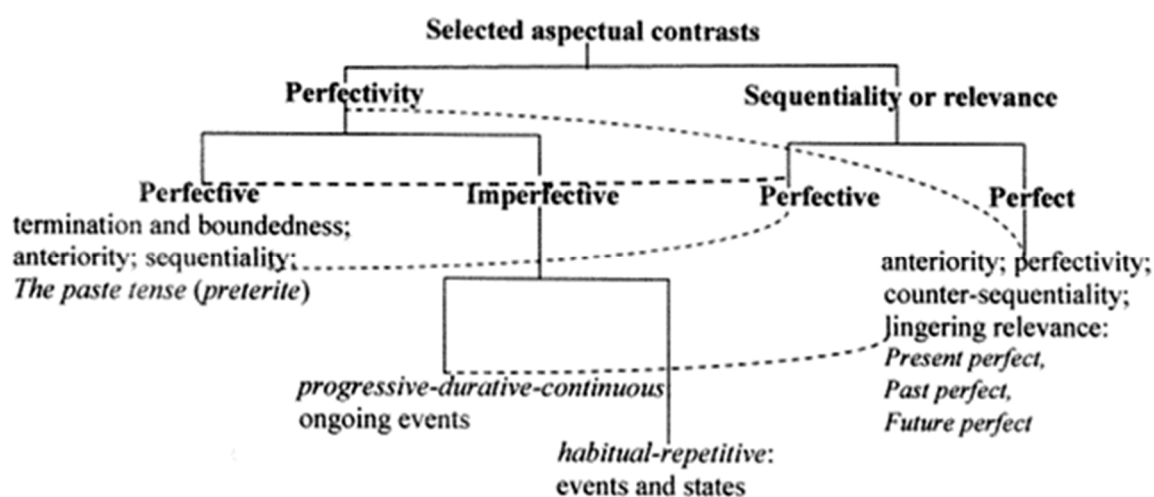
1. the *running* type or *pushing a cart*, comprises **activity** terms;
2. the *running a mile* type, or *drawing a circle*, includes **accomplishment** terms;
3. the *reaching the top* type correlates with **achievement** terms;
4. the *loving* type includes **state** terms.

Aspect was thus presented as ‘**aktionsart**’, i.e. lexical or interior aspect (e.g. Vendler, 1957; Dowty 1979). Smith (1997, p. 3) developed Vendler’s (1957) semantic aspectual situation types by adding ‘**semelfactives**’ to the four types of verbs listed above. The label ‘semelfactive’ situation types applies to momentary events, such as conveyed by *to tap* or *to knock*. Croft (2012, pp. 36–39) pointed out momentary states, named ‘point states’, for example, lexicalized by the clauses *It is six o’clock* and *The sun is at its zenith* (Mittwoch, 1988, p. 234). The model of situation types has been developed further into increasingly more detailed interpretations, for

example, by Dowty, (1977, 1979) Trask, (1999) and Croft, (2012, 2013). As a result, lexical aspect, called ‘aspectuality’, was associated with the whole clause (Verkuyl, 1993), to facilitate understanding situational and temporal relations in the entire discourse.

Hence apart from aspectual situation types, Smith (1997) proposed aspectual viewpoint types, which correspond to familiar grammatical aspects. Givón (2001, pp. 287–300) demonstrated three main grammatical aspectual contrasts from a pragmatic perspective: *perfectivity*, comprising **perfective** vs. **imperfective**, *sequentiality* or *relevance*, involving **perfective** vs. **perfect**, and *immediacy*, concerning **remote** vs. **vivid** aspects. The last contrast listed is not a subject of analysis in this discourse. Attention falls on the contrasts displayed in Table 1 (c.f. Chłopek, in print).

Table 1: Classification of Givón’s aspectual contrasts concerning perfectivity and sequentiality or relevance (inspired by Comrie’s diagram, 1991, p. 25)



Givón (2001) admitted that the perfect is a “functionally most subtle grammatical aspect” (p. 293). Polish sentences do not convey the perfect aspect exposed in Givón’s approach to the distinction between perfective and perfect. Nor do they contrast between habitual-repetitive and progressive-durative-continuous situations, having a ‘general imperfective form’ for both in Polish (Smith, 1997, p. 74, in relation to Russian). Table 2 adapts the summary of “similarities and differences between the perfective (past) and perfect” from Givón’s study (2001, p. 277, point 33). The past tense has ‘preterit’ verbs, the perfect aspect makes use of the auxiliary *have*.

Table 2: *Perfective (past) vs Perfect (based on Givón, 2001, p. 297, point 33)*

Feature	Past	Perfect
anteriority	YES	YES
absolute reference	YES	NO
perfectivity	YES	YES
termination	YES	YES / NO
lingering relevance	NO	YES
sequentiality	YES	NO

Mood – epistemic modal verbs in English

This point addresses perfectivity with reference to selected English central modal verbs, with epistemic senses, without parallel perfective constructions in Polish renditions. Langacker analyzed English central modals as **root** (or **deontic**) modals and **epistemic** modals from the perspective of Cognitive Grammar (1991, pp. 269–275). Root modals, according to Langacker (2008, p. 306), exert their ‘potency’ to effect a specific process. Langacker argued that “the epistemic senses of the modals pertain to knowledge (...) the modal force reflects the speaker’s efforts in assessing its likelihood” (p. 306). Moreover, the speaker has a conception of reality (R_c), which absorbs the potency of the modal force. Finally, Langacker claimed that the ‘envisaged process’ portrays “the speaker’s force-dynamic experience in mentally extrapolating the current reality conception – in such a way that R_c comes to include it” (p. 306). Comparing the control held by root modals, on the one hand, and epistemic modals, on the other, the former are associated with “**effective control** of occurrences” and the latter with “**epistemic control**” (p. 306). Langacker (2008, pp. 307–308) distinguished ‘immediate’ (*may, can, will, shall, must*) and ‘non-immediate’ (*might, could, would, should*) epistemic modals, out of which only *may, can, and might* are used in the examples studied in the analytical Part.

TAM – Examples of the Signalled Transference Pitfalls

English TAM constructions exhibit contrasts with their Polish versions, which could pose ‘pitfalls’ for Polish users of English. The present part concentrates on selected features related to the verbal categories of TAM in English utterances. The examples used in the present part are cited from *The Hobbit*, presented as (version a). They are juxtaposed with Polish equivalents, from renditions by Skibniewska (1997, version b), Braiter (2012, version c), and Polkowski (2012, version d). Version ‘a’ is shown in points ‘a’, version ‘b’ in points ‘b’, and so on. The elements which are significant for the analysis are highlighted in bold print, which is not used in the source books. In the five following sub-parts, the functions of TAM conveyed by the English versions are highlighted that way and contrasted with corresponding elements in the three renditions into Polish.

Sequentiality vs. Lingering Relevance

The versions of (1a), and (2a), relate to **sequentiality**, which entails the other four features of the preterit: anteriority, absolute reference, perfectivity, and termination. The event-time precedes the speech-time, which is the present situation, termed absolute reference. The following four examples display the feature of **lingering relevance**, that is ‘default’ relevance, anteriority, perfectivity, and termination in relation to events, in situations prior to the reference time. Quotations (3a), (4a), and (5a) contain constructions in the perfect aspect, which communicate actions whose event time is prior to the reference time. Quotation (6a) expresses an ongoing event with the feature of lingering relevance, which determines the occurrence of the progressive aspect (see also Table 1).

Example (1a) contains a sequence of three different preterit verbs. The root verb *shot* has its landmark that is realized by *into the air*, which completes the action expressed by *shot*. The phrasal verbs *turned over* and *crashed down* convey termination of the depicted actions with the verbal particles *over* and *down*, respectively. The sequence of three motion verbs delineates trajectories of movement with end points and, consequently, conveys termination and perfectivity.

- (1) a. “Smaug **shot** spouting **into** the air, **turned over** and **crashed down** from on high in ruin.” (p. 212)
 b. “Smaug **poderwał się**, **przewrócił** brzuchem do góry i **runął** z wysokości **w dół**.” (p. 259)
 c. “Smaug **poderwał się** do góry, **odwrócił** i z wysokości **runął w dół**.” (p. 288)
 d. “Smaug **wzbił się** w powietrze, **przewrócił** brzuchem do góry i **runął** z wysokości **w dół**.” (p. 350)

All of the Polish quotations (1b), through (1d), have a sequence of perfective verbs with prefixes: *poderwał się*, ‘raised’, *wzbił się*, ‘rose’, *przewrócił* (brzuchem do góry), ‘literally (lit.) turned over with his stomach up’, *odwrócił* (się), ‘turned away’, one shared perfective root verb *runął*, ‘tumbled down’, and *w dół*, ‘down’, which is inherently directional, and marks termination of the depicted semantic path. All of Polish quotations (1b), through (1d), comply with the English version in terms of the perfective aspect, the feature of sequentiality, and the remaining features characteristic for the English preterit.

Quotation (2a) consists of three sentences, which respectively contain the preterit deictic verb *came*, grounding the expressed action that is construed as an accomplishment due to the verbal particle *up*. Each first clause of the three successive sentences is a non-canonical construction that exhibits inversion by preposing the verbal particle *up* and the root verb *came*. The said clauses convey sequentiality. Consequently, none of the utterances in (2a) codes the feature of lingering relevance. The other preterit verbs, *was* and *creaked*, respectively, trigger co-occurrence of the communicated situations with the actions lexicalized by *Up came*. All of verbs in (2a) convey the perfective aspect.

- (2) a. “**Up came** Bofur, and still all **was** safe. **Up came** Bombur, ... while the ropes **creaked**, and still **was** safe. **Up came** some tools ..., and then the danger **was** upon them.” (p. 187)
 b. “**Już wydostał się** na półkę Bofur, a katastrofa **się nie zdarzyła**. **Już się ukazał** ... Bombur — ... lina **trzeszczała** groźnie — a katastrofa wciąż jeszcze **się nie zdarzyła**. **Na ostatku wywindowali** narzędzia ... i wtedy dopiero sytuacja **stała się** naprawdę straszna.” (p. 226)

- c. “Bofur **znalazł się już na górze** — i nadal byli bezpieczni. Bombur **zaczął wjeżdżać** na skalną półkę, ... gdy sznury **skrzypiały** ... i **wciąż nic się nie działo**. Dopiero gdy **wciągnęli** narzędzia ..., **zrobiło się** naprawdę groźnie.” (p. 252)
- d. “**Już wjechał** na górę Bofur, a jeszcze nic się **nie wydarzyło**. **Już ukazał się** nad krawędzią Bombur ... a **wciąż nic się nie działo**. **Już wciągnęli** część narzędzi ... i wtedy **zrobiło się** groźnie.” (p. 313)

The translated examples in (2b) through (2d) display a series of contrasts with (2a). The Polish versions trigger lingering relevance semantically by the adverb *już*, ‘already’, which is used at the beginning of the first two sentences in (2b), within the first clause in (2c), and at the beginning of all the sentences in (2d). Its English equivalent, which is *already* or *yet*, has perfect uses. Since Polish does not have morphological distinction between perfective and perfect verb phrases, it can be assumed that the Polish *już* contributes the perfect aspect to the said clauses. What is more, the prepositional phrases which are used in the Polish versions mark the destination points on the lexicalized semantic paths. Consequently, they contribute perfectivity to the depicted situations: *na półkę Bofur*, ‘lit. onto the Bofur shelf’, in (2b); *na górze*, ‘up’, in (2c); *na górę Bofur*, ‘lit. onto Bofur hill’, and *nad krawędzią Bombur*, ‘on the edge of Bombur’, in (2d). The prefixal verbs convey anteriority, namely *wy dostał się*, ‘lit. he escaped’, *ukazał się*, ‘lit. he appeared’, in (2b); *znalazł się*, ‘lit. he occurred’, in (2c); *wjechał*, ‘lit. he went up’, *ukazał się*, and *wciągnęli*, ‘lit. they drew up’, in (2d). Moreover, the three Polish versions express the imperfective aspect, which entails the features ‘progressive-durative-continuous’: with the verb *trzeszczała*, ‘was creaking’, in (2b), with the verb *skrzypiały*, ‘were creaking’, and with the clause *wciąż nic się nie działo*, ‘lit. still nothing was happening’, in (2c), the clause also occurs in (2d). Furthermore, the version of (2c) lexically codes the imperfective aspect, by the adverb *nadal*, ‘still’, in the clause *nadal byli bezpieczni*, ‘lit. still they were safe’. Apart from the said differences from quotation (2a), the Polish versions of examples (2b), (2c), and (2d), maintain the perfective aspect conveyed by the original version in the following constructions: in *się nie zdarzyła*, ‘did not happen’, in *Na ostatku wywindowali...*, ‘lit. In the end they hauled up ...’, and in *stała się*, ‘it became’, in (2b); in *zaczął wyjeżdżać*, ‘lit. he started coming up’, in *wciągnęli*, ‘lit. they drew up’, and in *zrobiło się naprawdę groźnie*, ‘lit. it got really threatening’, in (2c); in *nic się nie wydarzyło*, ‘nothing happened’, and in *zrobiło się groźnie*, ‘lit. it got threatening’, in (2d).

The renditions into Polish of quotations (1a), and (2a), demonstrate that while the canonical order of English clause elements, in (1a), which express the sequencing of past events, maintain the sequentiality of perfective actions in Polish, the non-canonical word order of elements, in (2a), result in alterations of aspect in their Polish versions, which is considered a transference pitfall. All of the quotations from (2b) through (2d), demonstrate the complexity of maintaining even the perfective aspect in the Polish versions, despite the fact that Polish has verbs marked for expressing the past.

Example (3a) conveys the perfect aspect in the verb phrase *have missed*, which lexicalizes a situation whose event time is prior to the time of speech and the temporal reference time is the actual time of speech and, simultaneously, it is the present time. The feature of lingering relevance, which applies to the present time, is crucial in (3a).

- (3) a. “«... we **have missed** ... ?»” (p. 206)
 b. “... **ominęło nas** ...” (p. 251)

- c. "... **przepuściliśmy** ..." (p. 280)
- d. "... **opuściliśmy** ..." (p. 341)

The Polish versions in (3b), (3c), and (3d), respectively, express the perfective aspect with the following prefixal verbs: *ominęło nas*, 'we missed', in (3b); *przepuściliśmy*, 'we missed', in (3c); *opuściliśmy*, 'we missed', in (3d). They occur in the past tense. Lingering relevance is not lexicalized, it is inferred from the discourse. The transference pitfall pertains to the potential of using English verbs which code the perfective aspect instead of the perfect aspect by Polish learners.

Quotation (4a) lexicalizes the perfect aspect in the verb phrase *had left* of the final clause in the whole sentence. The verb phrase *had left* conveys a situation whose event time is prior to the temporal reference point designated by the preterit verb *was*.

- (4) a. "... – it **was** still where he **had left** it." (p. 230)
- b. "... którą **zastał** tak, jak ją **zostawił**." (p. 282)
- c. "... – która nadal **wisiała** tam, gdzie ją **zostawił**" (p. 313)
- d. "... – wciąż **wisiała** tam, gdzie ją **zostawił**." (p. 376)

The Polish versions of (4b), (4c), and (4d), do not lexicalize distinctions between perfect and perfective aspects since all verbs which occur in those quotations refer to past actions: *zastał*, 'found', in (4b), and *zostawił*, 'left', in (4b), through (4d); *wisiała*, 'was hanging', in (4c), and (4d), respectively. Apart from the perfective aspect conveyed by the verbs *zastał* and *zostawił*, which respectively position the action in the event time, the imperfective aspect is communicated by the verb *wisiała*. Hence the Polish examples of (4b), (4c), and (4d), express the process in the event time with the perfective verb *zostawił*. Moreover, the first clauses of quotations (4c), and (4d), inform about the reference situation with the verb *wisiała*, therefore, there is no factor of lingering relevance observed. The transference pitfall for Polish learners indicated here is the potential for omitting the feature of lingering relevance in English utterances.

Example (5a) resembles quotation (4a) in terms of the event's initiation point, which is invoked by the pluperfect construction *had already gone*.

- (5) a. "Some **had already gone**" (p. 157)
- b. "Kilku z nich **już podbiegło**" (p. 190)
- c. "Niektóre z nich **zaczęły już**" (p. 214)
- d. "Kilku **podbiegło już** korytarzem" (p. 269)

The three Polish versions of (5a) mark lingering relevance semantically with the adverb *już*, 'already'. Nonetheless, only the versions of (5b), and (5d), use *już* in relation to the actual event, conveyed by the perfective verb *podbiegło*, 'ran up to', rendering the perfect construction *had gone*. The version of (5c) omits the accomplishment expressed by *had gone* in (5a), and applies the adverb *już* to the verb *zaczęły*, 'lit. they began already'. Hence the whole action lexicalized by *had already gone* in (5a) is omitted in (5c). A transference pitfall in relation to translating into English Polish constructions that consist of *już* and a perfective verb is that the rendition

could include the adverb *already* and an English verb in the preterit instead of its perfect form. An event noting the features of the perfect aspect may also be progressive, durative, and continuous (see Table 1).

Example (6a) demonstrates a compilation of the semantic features for ongoing and, simultaneously, perfect situations. The verbal group *had been speaking*, used in the clause *Even as Gandalf had been speaking*, constitutes the reference for the completed event, which is lexicalized by *the darkness grew*.

- (6) a. “**Even as Gandalf had been speaking** the darkness **grew**.” (p. 237)
 b. “**Nim Gandalf skończył przemówienie**, ciemności **zgęstniały** wokół nich.” (p. 289)
 Before Gandalf finished the speech, darkness thickened around them.
 c. “Ciemność **pogłębiała się** coraz bardziej.” (p. 321)
 Darkness was deepening more and more.
 d. “**Jeszcze Gandalf nie skończył wołać**, **gdy** ciemność **zgęstniała**.” (p. 383)
 Yet Gandalf did not finish to call, when/as darkness thickened.

The Polish versions of (6b), and (6d), lexicalize anteriority with the prefixal verb *skończył*, without indicating continuation and duration of the depicted event. The verb *skończył* is marked for termination of the activity which is expressed by the argument of the verb *skończył*. Apart from that, examples (6b), and (6d), include the prefixal verb *zgęstnieć*, ‘thicken’, which occurs in *ciemności zgęstniały*, ‘darkness (plural) thickened’, in (6b), and *ciemność zgęstniała*, ‘darkness (singular) thickened’, in (6d). In addition, example (6b) has the conjunction *nim*, ‘before’, which introduces a subordinate clause. The conjunction *nim* informs that the situation described by the main clause occurred prior to the event conveyed by the dependent clause (c.f. Dubisz, Ed. 2006, p. 1002, Vol. K-Ó). Hence the Polish conjunction *nim* semantically introduces lingering relevance and anteriority to the situation depicted by the dependent clause. While the version of (6c) omits the subordinate clause, the version of (6d) contains the adverb *jeszcze*, ‘lit. yet’, and the conjunction *gdy*, ‘lit. when; as’, which semantically evoke lingering relevance of the reference situation. All of Polish versions (6b), through (6d), have English glosses.

To conclude, the transference pitfalls which are addressed in the present part relate to expressing Polish utterances which do not exhibit the feature of lingering relevance, conveyed by the English versions. A similar problem also concerns other English constructions displaying the feature of lingering relevance, such as the partially filled construction *to have done*, and the perfect aspect of central modal verbs.

‘Prior’ Situations Conveyed by the Perfect Infinitive Construction to have done

Example (7a) contains the ‘cantenative’ verb *seem*, which has an “intermediate function” (Quirk et al., 2007, p. 137) because it requires another verbal construction, which is the perfect infinitive construction *to have done*, realized as *to have used*. Example (7a) also codes modality by *seemed*, which is used in the preterit. What is more, the perfect aspect is conveyed by the phrase *to have used*. The verb *seemed* invokes the temporal reference point placed in the past time. The

reference point indicates that the process designated by the main verb *used* is prior to it (c.f. Langacker, 1991, p. 211).

- (7) a. "... deserted; **not** even wild animals **seemed to have used** it in all days of Smaug's dominion." (p. 208)
 b. "... opuszczone, **widocznie** nawet dzikie zwierzęta **nie zapędziły się tutaj przez wszystkie lata panowania Smauga.**" (p. 253)
 c. "... puste — **odkąd** Smaug **objął panowanie nad Górą, nie osiadły tu** nawet dzikie zwierzęta." (p. 282)
 d. "... ani śladu życia: **odkąd pod Górą zamieszkał Smaug,** żadne zwierzę **nie ośmieliło się tu zamieszkać.**" (p. 343)

The three Polish versions of (7a) contain constructions which consist of negated perfective main verbs with the pronoun *tutaj/tu*, 'here', realized as: *nie zapędziły się tutaj*, 'didn't venture over here', in (7b); *nie osiadły tu*, 'didn't settle over here', in (7c); and *nie ośmieliło się tu zamieszkać*, 'didn't dare to settle over here', in (7d). The situations depicted by the said utterances are placed in the past time without lexicalizing lingering relevance, which is conveyed by the English version (7a). The reader of the Polish versions construes lingering relevance by means of the constructions which are underlined in the three Polish versions in this discourse. Hence lingering relevance pertains to circumlocutions: *przez wszystkie lata panowania Smauga*, 'lit. for all the years of Smaug's reign', in (7b); *odkąd Smaug objął panowanie nad Górą*, 'lit. ever since Smaug assumed reigning over the Mountain', in (7c); and *odkąd pod Górą zamieszkał Smaug*, 'lit. since Smaug settled under the Mountain', in (7c). The construals involve lingering relevance, which is triggered by: the preposition *przez*, 'for', related to duration in time, in (7b), the pronoun *odkąd*, 'since (when)', in (7c), and (7d). Consequently, several clauses together evoke lingering relevance in the Polish versions semantically, while a single verb phrase does it in English clauses, like in (7a), which is considered a pitfall for Polish learners of English.

The Perfect Aspect of Selected Central Modal Verbs

The present point deals with the perfect aspect of selected central modal verbs in fragments of discourse, juxtaposed with Polish renditions. The modals in question are two of the epistemic immediate modal verbs: *may* in (8a), and *can* in (9a), also one of the non-immediate modals: *might* in (10a). The English examples from (8a), to (10a), follow the same pattern of use of the given modal verb. Each of them has the auxiliary of the perfect aspect *have* and the perfect participle of the main verb, which is used with the modal in question: *may have been*, in (8a); the negative construction *can't have used*, in (9a); *might have guessed*, in (10a).

- (8) a. "«It **may have been** secret once,» ..." (p. 26)
 b. "Przejdźcie **było może** ongi ukryte..." (p. 25)
 c. "**Może** kiedyś istotnie te drzwi **pozostawały** ukryte" (pp. 32–33)
 d. "**Może** to wejście kiedyś **było** tajemne ..." (p. 71)

The Polish versions of (8b), through (8d), have past forms of the main verbs which occur together with the particle *może*, 'perhaps, maybe', in the following expressions: *było może*, 'lit. was perhaps', in (8b); *Może ... pozostawały*, 'lit. Perhaps ... remained', in (8c); *Może ... było*, 'lit.

Perhaps ... was', in (8d). The plausible pitfall which is noted here concerns expressing such Polish clauses in English, with omitting the perfect aspect of the described situations.

- (9) a. "«... he **can't have used** it for years and years.»" (p. 26)
 b. "... od wielu lat **nie może** go **używać**." (p. 25)
 c. "... od bardzo dawna **nie byłby w stanie** z nich **korzystać**." (p. 33)
 d. "... od wielu, wielu lat **nie może** z tego wejścia **skorzystać**." (p. 71)

The Polish versions of quotation (9a) contain the imperfective verb *móc* (*coś zrobić*), 'can (do something)', which is used as *może* (*coś zrobić*), 'lit. s/he can (do something), s/he is able (to do something)', in (9b) and (9d). Its synonymous expression is *być w stanie* (*coś zrobić*), 'to be able (to do something)', which occurs in (9c). The version of (9c), has the conditional verb *byłby*, 'lit. he would be', which is used in the construction *byłby w stanie* (*coś zrobić*), 'lit. he would be able (to do something)' (c.f. Dubisz, Ed. 2006, p. 1371, Vol. P-Ś). At a higher level of complexity, the constructions *może* (*coś zrobić*) and *byłby w stanie* (*coś zrobić*), respectively, are interrupted by complementing objects: *nie może go używać*, 'lit. s/he cannot use it', in (9b); *nie byłby w stanie z nich korzystać*, 'lit. he wouldn't be able to use them', in (9c); *nie może z tego wyjścia skorzystać*, 'lit. s/he cannot use this exit', in (9d). While *może* correlates with the central modal verb *can*, the expression *byłby w stanie*, 'he would be able to', invokes the common semi-auxiliary *be able*. Moreover, the phrase *can't have used* conveys the perfect aspect in (9a), but the Polish versions of (9b), and (9c), code the imperfective aspect by the imperfective main verbs: *używać*, 'use', and *korzystać*, 'use', respectively. The prefixal verb *skorzystać*, 'use', in (9d), is perfective, but the action expressed by it does not exhibit lingering relevance, nor anteriority. Hence the perfect aspect of *can't have used* is not maintained by the Polish versions, which is considered a pitfall for Polish users of English for expressing Polish construals in English.

- (10) a. "«I **might have guessed** it.»" (p. 193)
 b. "**Mogłem** się tego spodziewać" (p. 234)
 c. "**Mogłem** się tego spodziewać" (p. 261)
 d. "**Mogłem** się tego domyślić" (p. 323)

The Polish examples of (10b), through (10d), have the verb *móc*, 'can; to be able to', used as *Mogłem*, 'I (masculine gender) could'. The presumed pitfall is in translating *mogłem* into English, which could result in *I could*.

Knowledge of perfect constructions of English central modals is essential in relation to quotations (8a), (9a), and (10a). The Polish renditions of the three English versions show that there are different grammatical means for expressing such constructions in Polish, which does not communicate the perfect aspect. Polish has perfective verbs, nevertheless, conveying the perfect aspect of English central modals into Polish may result in transference pitfalls. For example, *może było*, in (8b), and (8d), can be rendered as 'perhaps it was'; *nie może z tego wejścia skorzystać*, in (9d), may be translated as 's/he cannot use this exit'; and *mogłem*, in (10b–d), is likely to be expressed as 'I could'. Consequently, it is not only lingering relevance within perfectivity that is drawn attention to as a pitfall for Polish learners of English, but also

distinguishing between ongoing events and habitual-repetitive events and states because of the ‘general imperfective form’ for both (Smith, 1997, p. 74).

Imperfective Present Situations: Progressive vs. Non-progressive

Example (11a) conveys a progressive process. The interrogative sentence *What are you doing?* places the designated temporary activity in the time of speech. The recipient of the said question construes a durative situation, an ongoing activity.

- (11) a. “... What **are** you **doing?**” (p. 228)
 b. “... Co **tu robisz?**” (p. 278)
 c. “... Co **tu robisz?**” (p. 309)
 d. “... Co **tutaj robisz?**” (p. 372)

The three Polish versions have the imperfective verb *robisz*, ‘you do, you are doing’, inflected for the present tense. The verb itself does not encode a progressive activity, as one may reformulate the question as *Co zwykle robisz*, ‘What do you usually do’, which implies a habitual, also a repetitive process. It is the pronoun *tu/tutaj*, ‘lit. here/in here’, which could trigger a continuing situation. The construal of an ongoing process, however, depends on the preceding discourse, *Ktoś tu jest*, ‘lit. Someone is in here’, in (11b); *Ktoś ty*, ‘Who are you’, in (11c); *Kim jesteś*, ‘Who are you’, (in 11d). The pitfall drawn attention to in relation to (11a) is that a Polish user of English may express the construction in focus as *What do you do?*, which is grammatically correct, but pragmatically, it is not accepted in an ongoing situation in the present time.

The English version of (12a) codes a state in the present time by the verb *know*, used in two clauses, affirmative and negative, respectively.

- (12) a. “I **know** your king well by sight, though perhaps **he doesn’t know** me to look at.” (p. 228)
 b. “Dobrze **znam** z widzenia waszego króla, chociaż **on pewnie nigdy mnie nie widział.**” (pp. 278–279)
 c. “– **Znam** dobrze z widzenia waszego króla, choć **zapewne byłoby to dla niego niespodzianką.**” (p. 309)
 d. “**Znam** dobrze z widzenia waszego króla, choć **on pewnie nie wie, jak wyglądam.**” (pp. 372–373)

The three Polish initial clauses of (12b), through (12d), contain the imperfective verb *znam*, ‘I know’. The second clauses of (12b), through (12d), however, realize different linguistic solutions: *on nigdy mnie nie widział*, ‘lit. he never saw me’, in (12b), marked for the perfective aspect; *zapewne byłoby to dla niego niespodzianką*, ‘lit. it probably would be a surprise for him’, in (12c), which is a circumlocution; and *on pewnie nie wie, jak wyglądam*, ‘lit. he probably does not know what I look like’, in (12d), which is another example of circumlocution. Consequently, the real pitfalls for Polish students of English could be the negative clauses and the circumlocution. It is likely that the second clauses of the three Polish versions will be rendered into English literally. Polish discourse has verbs which are not distinct in terms of the *progressive-durative-continuous* lexical aspect on the one hand, and the *habitual-repetitive* aspect on the other hand, neither in the present time nor in the past time, which could be a

pitfall for Polish learners of English who have to distinguish between ongoing and habitual-repetitive situations while communicating in English.

Perfective and Imperfective Past Situations

Quotation (13a) includes predicators *came about*, and *sat*, which trigger perfective situations with imperfective background, expressed by the clause *Bilbo was sitting*.

- (13) a. “That is how it **came about** ..., Bilbo **was sitting** ..., and there **sat** too, ... both the Elvenking and Bard.” (p. 228)
 b. “Tak się **stało** ... Bilbo **siedział**, ... a naprzeciw niego, ... **zasiedli** król elfów i Bard.” (p. 279)
 c. “**W ten** oto sposób ... Bilbo **zasiadł** ... a naprzeciw, ... **zajęli miejsca** Bard oraz król elfów.” (p. 309)
 d. “I **w ten sposób** ... Bilbo **siedział** ... a król elfów i Bard przypatrywali mu się ciekawie.” (p. 373)

The Polish version of (13b) maintains the said construal with the perfective reflexive verb *stało się*, ‘lit. it happened’; the imperfective verb *siedział*, ‘he was sitting’; and the perfective prefixal verb *zasiedli*, ‘lit. they sat down’. Nonetheless, the versions of (13c), and (13d), introduce alterations to the construal which is evoked by the English version of (13a). Both of which include the prepositional phrase *w ten sposób*, ‘in this/that way’, which is a circumlocution substituting different verbal expressions. Moreover, they alter the aspect of one of the other two situations: (13c) has *Bilbo zasiadł*, ‘Bilbo sat down’, which denotes the perfective aspect, and (13d) omits the situation expressed by *sat* in (13a). The Polish alterations of the original construal demonstrate a potential pitfall for Polish learners of English. Perfective and imperfective actions communicated in English appear to be problematic for Polish learners of English, unless they construe the lexicalized processes by delving into semantics of the depicted situations.

Summary

The present discourse focuses on English verbs deeming selected aspects of the related categories of TAM. It delineates mainly Givón’s approach to aspect with regard to a cognitive interpretation of grammar (Langacker, 1987, 1991, 2008) resting upon conventional imagery. Langacker (1991) stated that English auxiliary verbs “carry information about polarity as well as tense and aspect” (p. 200). Moreover, according to Langacker (1991), auxiliary verbs are “schematic members” (p. 193) of verb groups. Polish has only one auxiliary verb, which is *być*, ‘to be’, coding the categories of tense, aspect, mode and gender, used exclusively in verbal groups carrying the imperfective future tense (Grzegorzczkowska et al., 1984, p. 172). As a result, English TAM constructions pose pitfalls for Polish learners of English. The present paper addresses the necessity of construing the situations depicted by English TAM constructions, which seem ‘abstract’ to many Polish students. It demonstrates selected grammatical areas of potential errors in English clauses in relation to the features of TAM, susceptible to transference from Polish. The excerpts featured as topical pitfalls are mainly expressions of counter-sequentiality vs. lingering relevance, generally, and applied to the *to have done* construction;

furthermore, progressive-durative-continuous, and habitual-repetitive situations conveyed in English. As to modality, attention falls on three modal verbs coding epistemic modality with the feature of default relevance: *may*, *can*, and *might*. The paper attempts to highlight the potential areas of errors for Polish users of English regarding perfectivity and imperfectivity of the English verbs and other clause elements, referring to Givón's (2001) view of aspect and Verkuyl's (1993) perception of clause aspectuality. The author of the present discourse recommends envisioning the semantic situation types, as per Smith (1997), which combine with the grammatical perfective and imperfective view-points. Although Polish contains the perfective and imperfective aspects, it does not code grammatically the feature of lingering relevance in the perfect aspect and it does not expose the progressive aspect in verbs, which have 'general' present tense imperfective forms. The English perfect aspect and the progressive aspect respectively are conveyed formally, by main verbs preceded by auxiliary verbs, which also code tense and modality. As a result, English TAM constructions pose pitfalls for Polish learners of English, several of which are demonstrated through thirteen examples of extracts from *The Hobbit* by Tolkien contrasted against three Polish versions of translation each.

Conclusions

Classroom observations may reveal a tendency for literal translation from Polish into English of expressions posing the said pitfalls. Students are likely to translate the Polish words which trigger semantic aspect, such as the adverb *już* 'already', literally into English, with a preterit verb, instead of using a verb with the perfect aspect. Moreover, utterances with English epistemic modal verbs which exhibit the perfect aspect, such as the *might have done* construction, can be expressed in English without lexicalizing the feature of lingering relevance, which is shown by the demonstrated examples of Polish translations of *The Hobbit*. Consequently, without sufficient exposure to discourse lexicalizing patterns of central modal verbs occurring in the perfect aspect, the past tense of a deontic modal verb, such as *could* for past ability, may be used instead of *might have done* for past possibility. Students may also confuse the simple present verb form with the progressive form not having the contrast marked in Polish verbs. Finally, combining the perfect aspect with a progressive situation, such as expressed by the *have/has been doing* construction may appear problematic on two counts, due to the perfect aspect and the ongoing situation. Adding an epistemic modal, as in *might have been doing*, will increase the translational challenge, not from English to Polish, but from Polish to English. The recommendation of the present discourse is that Polish learners of English ought to read English passages of text with focus on TAM utterances, in order to interpret and construe the interplay of the depicted situations, instead of just learning the given constructions. English L2 users can also obtain the posed objective via 'pattern discourse', such as extracts of text accessible through manifold corpora of the English language on the Internet. Nonetheless, web contacts with English speaking peers, via social media, can motivate and encourage Polish students to avoid various 'pitfalls' of use of English grammatical constructions through discussions. Even more recommended are face to face conversations in English, which can motivate learning through "immersion" (e.g. Anderson & Rhodes, 1983). With English as the

lingua franca, adult learners should take advantage of opportunities to use English as the language of business communication in real time or for example, social gatherings while travelling or on holiday. All in all, exposure to extensive discourse, written or spoken, displays a potential for sensitizing learners of English not only to the temporal relations in English clauses, but also to the aspectual situational viewpoint contrasts, and variable modality.

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