Different degrees of agentivity in sentience verbs?
On the decomposition of proto-agent features in Polish
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In my talk I want to address the question whether agent prominence and flexible feature priorisation can provide a better explanation for agentivity effects than the prototype approach and feature accumulation in Dowty's (1991) sense. I provide new empirical evidence from two rating experiments on active, passive and impersonal constructions in Polish.

Polish has a wide range of impersonal constructions that have no overt subject. One of them is the so called *-no/-to construction* as exemplified in (1):

(1) *Wypi-to*   *cał-ą*   *butelk-ę.*
     drink-PST.IMPRS   whole-F.ACC.SG   bottle.F-ACC.SG.
     'People drank up the whole bottle.'

Following Malamud (2013), we refer to such constructions as *arbs*, which is short for "constructions with arbitrary interpretations". (The term encompasses several distinct readings, cf. Cabredo-Hofherr 2003). In contrast to canonical passives as in (2), arbs can be formed from all kinds of verbs, including unergative and unaccusative intransitive verbs (Kibort 2008: 265, 271; Krzek 2011: 68-69), and they have the ability of binding a direct object in the accusative case. The implicit subject is obligatorily interpreted as [+human] (e.g. Kibort 2008: 267; Padučeva 2012: 29; Sansò 2006: 255).

(2) *Cał-a*   *butelk-a*   *został-a*   *wypi-ta.*
     whole-F.NOM.SG   bottle.F.NOM.SG   COP.PST-F.SG drink-PTCP.PASS-F.NOM.SG
     'People drank up the whole bottle.'

Recent acceptability judgement studies for Polish (Bunčić to appear) show that in arbs, some verbs perform better than others and some are rather unacceptable, even if the implicit subject is human. This finding leads to the assumption that the availability and acceptability of arb constructions is constrained by an agentivity cline.

Dowty (1991: 572) defines two superordinate proto-roles, the *proto-agent* and the *proto-patient*, only by bundles of entailments generated by the verb's meaning. In Dowty's framework, the proto-agent is defined by five entailments or features: *volition*, *sentience*, *causation*, *movement* and *independent existence*. A 'maximum proto-agent' would exhibit *volition, sentience* and *movement* (Primus 2012: 27). The prototype is considered as the privileged candidate for agent demotion in impersonal constructions and passives. However, Dowty's proposal about feature accumulation being the key indicator for the agent prototype does not hold across linguistic constructions. Evidence from rating experiments for sentience verbs in German (Kretzschmar et. al. to appear) supports this. Kretzschmar et al. propose that the proto-agent features entailed by the verb may be ranked depending on various factors, including the language, the construction itself and its discourse function which meets the criteria of the notion of prominence as elaborated in Himmelmann & Primus (2015). Even for sentience verbs with equal number and identical proto-agent features, there are differences in acceptability in the tested linguistic constructions, both for German and Polish. This, again, leads to the assumption that *sentience* is not an atomic feature und thus has to be decomposed further by differentiating *perception*, *emotion* and *cognition* verbs from each other (e.g. Van Valin, 1999; Viberg, 2001).

In two rating experiments focusing on the same transitive sentience verbs as in the study for German (mainly (i) perception verbs like *widzieć* 'see', (ii) emotion verbs like *nienawidzić*

'hate' and (iii) cognition verbs like *znać* 'know'), I want to prove the prototype approach and the prominence hypothesis on the example of the *-no/-to construction*, passive and active. The test items for the study are distributed over five different verb groups, consisting of the three above mentioned (i-iii) and two more verb groups that exhibit either three features (iv) (*volition, sentience* and *movement*), e.g. *obserwować* 'watch', or lack any of the agentive features under discussion (v), e.g. *sprawować* 'exhibit'. The active is compared with the passive and *-no/-to impersonal*, respectively. For each of the five verb classes, 4 verbs with uniform semantic and syntactic behavior have been identified. The patient argument in the test items is always inanimate and in the accusative case. For each individual verb, ten different sentences have been constructed, resulting in 40 different sentences per verb class condition. Additionally, 12 ungrammatical control items have been constructed by using dative object-experiencer verbs in the passive voice. A 6-point Likert scale ranging from "very unacceptable" to "very acceptable" is the basis for evaluating the sentences.

The prototype approach predicts that verbs with volitional agents such as selected by the verb group (iv) 'watch' will be rated better than non-volitional experiencers (i-iii), regardless of the linguistic construction. I will discuss the test results and compare to what extent they are in line with the prominence approach and how they differ from the data on German verbs.

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