Establishing constructionhood(s): The role of multimodal context in identifying constructions

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Cognitive Linguistics views grammar as monolithic in nature (Langacker 1987). Specifically, no categorical distinctions between modules within grammatical structure are postulated (e.g. syntactic vs. lexical), nor any rigid boundaries between language and other semiotic systems. A consequence of these widely held assumptions is that constructions are often multimodal. Nevertheless, it is not obvious how to adequately address the multimodal or situational cues in construction grammar (cf., e.g. Ziem 2017). This study aims to quantitatively explore the role of the multimodal context for selected grammatical constructions. To achieve that, I follow a profile-based approach (cf. Geeraerts et al. 1994; Divjak & Gries 2006; Glynn 2009) to build a qualitative and quantitative model of micro-constructional variation within a set of Polish passive participles as used in social media discourse.

The study looks at a group of 'benefactive' uses of *-ne/-te* passive participles, found in spoken and informal registers of Polish – e.g. *pojedzone* 'eaten (a bit)', *pobiegane* 'run (a bit)', *będzie grane* 'will be gamed'. They are often used in humorous expressions of 'satisfaction of time well (productively, pleasantly etc.) spent' and often display a high degree of syntactic independence:

(1) ~Twitter, id 1561274617267904***

Pobiegane	*i*	*fajnie*	*jest*	*😊Endorfinki*	*buzują😊*
run_a_bit.PASS.N.NOM=ACC.SG	CONJ	nice	be.PRES.3SG	endorphin(DIM).NOM.PL	buzz(IPFV).NPST.3PL

'There was some running ['it was run'] and it feels nice :) Endorphins are buzzing :)'

[Image: a photo of a runner on a forest path; the runner's reflection is visible in a puddle on the path]

These uses consist of a single, invariant form of the verb, and often suppress the arguments. However, when analysed in a multimodal discursive environment, the semantic scenarios conveyed by them can be similarly complex as the scenarios expressed with finite forms. I argue that such multimodal patterns of use can be considered in terms of constructions.

Social media discourse provides users with more modalities than traditional, non-interactive written registers, while offering researchers a higher degree of control in comparison to spontaneous in-person conversations. For this reason, this study employs a dedicated corpus of Twitter data comprised of over 600 000 tweets including target passive participle forms. From that corpus, I will draw 3 samples of 700 tweets, each sample comprising uses of a different target form – *pobiegane* 'run', *pojedzone* 'eaten', *pogadane* 'chatted' (all three representing *po*-prefixed, delimitative verbs, expressing duration for 'some time', 'a bit'). Each sample will be subject to multifactorial coding, including collocational properties on the one hand (focusing on discourse particles, prepositional phrase types, optional auxiliaries, emoji and presence/type of references) and, on the other, semantic annotation of the visual material tweeted (focusing on the presence of elements of RUNNING, EATING and COMMUNICATION scripts in the visual content – esp. Agents, Locations, Results). The obtained profiles will be analysed using exploratory quantitative techniques aimed at delineating types of use, in particular, Hierarchical Cluster Analysis performed on the output of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (cf., e.g. Glynn & Robinson 2014). The results will make it possible to assess the role of the visual content-related variables and review the potential of the delineated types to be recognised as multimodal low-level constructional patterns.

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