

Jan 23 2007  
Ling 554 – Assignment 1  
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The physical meaning of the verb *open* is that we act upon an entity or a part of an entity so that we make the inside and the outside of the container accessible to each other. As a result of the opening process, a certain object can go inside from outside or go outside from inside. The transitive verb *open* can express two different concepts. In other words, the object of the verb is an entity that is a part of the whole or the whole itself as in the following sentences:

- (1) I opened the lid of the jar.
- (2) I opened the jar.

In (1), I remove the lid of the jar so that the inside and the outside are accessible to each other. In this case, the removed part is expressed as an object of the verb. Likewise, in (2), I remove a *part* of the jar (i.e. the lid) so that I can take out something from inside (or put something in the jar). The difference of (2) from (1) is that the part is not linguistically expressed, and the whole is the object of the verb.

The diagram of (1) is expressed as in Figure 1.

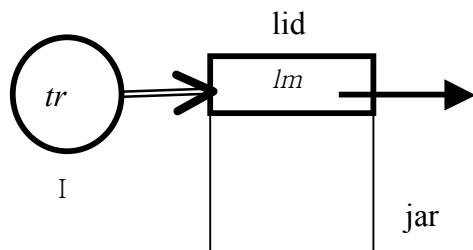


Figure1. *I open the lid of the jar.*

In Figure 1, the actor of the motion *open* is *I*, and it is the most prominent participant (i.e. the trajector). The entity that gets the secondary focus is the lid, which is the landmark. Though the *jar* is linguistically expressed, it is not as prominent as the *lid* itself, being the background of the lid. Actually, at the noun phrase level (*the lid of the jar*), the lid is the trajectory while the jar is the landmark. When this noun phrase functions as the object of the sentence *I opened the lid of the jar*, the less prominent entity, the jar, becomes the base of the lid.

On the other hand, the diagram of (2) is expressed in Figure 2.

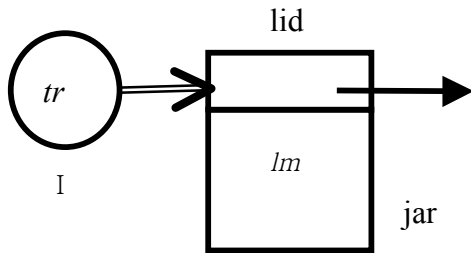


Figure 2. *I opened the jar.*

In Figure 2, the profiled entity is the whole jar including the lid assuming that the lid is also a part of the jar. However, we know that we are opening only a part of the jar (i.e. the lid), not the whole jar itself. This conceptualization is possible because the active zone phenomena. Active zone is the facet of an entity that most directly interacts with a given domain or participates in a given relationship (p.544, Langacker 1991). Only the lid is the active zone that participates in the opening process directly even though the profiled entity as the landmark is the whole jar. Though there is a discrepancy between the active zone and actually profiled entity, when the linguistically expressed and profiled entity is the whole jar, we still conceive the process of opening is acted upon the lid part due to the active zone phenomena.

#### <Additional Analysis>

The case of “jar” in (1) and (2) and the case of “door” in (3) and (4) are slightly different.

- (3) I opened the door of the room.
- (4) I opened the door.

(1) and (3) are similar in that the door can be considered as a part of the whole room just as the lid is considered as a part of the jar. However, (2) and (4) are conceptualized differently as the following: when we open the jar, we act upon only a part of the jar, not the jar itself, but when we open the door, we are likely to think that the whole door is involved in the opening process.

I think the difference of the case of the jar and that of the door rises from the different application of an immediate scope. The immediate scope is the innermost layer, the one immediately relevant at a given level of organization when scopes are nested one within another. A predication’s profile is a kind of focal point within its immediate scope (p.549, Langacker 1991).

In the case of (1) and (3), the immediate scope covers the whole entity that

includes the part in it as in Figure 3.

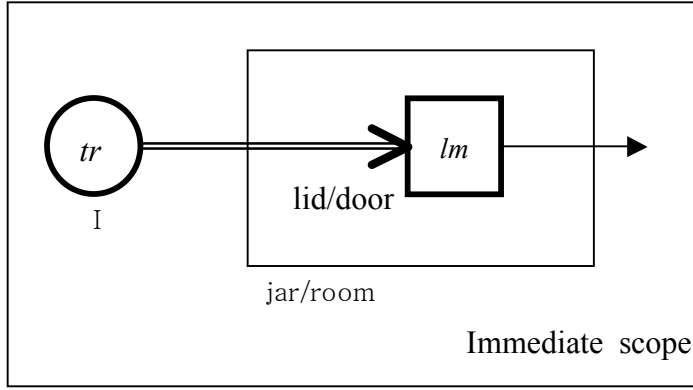


Figure 3. *I opened the jar lid of the jar / I opened the door of the room.*

In order to generalize the case of the jar and that of the door, I present more generalized diagram in Figure 3. In Figure 3, the immediate scope encompasses both the par (lid / door) and the whole (jar / room). In this way, we can handle the jar / room as the base and the lid / door as the profiled entity within the base. In this diagram, the lid or the door is conceived as a part of the whole, and I (trajectory) act on this part (landmark) of the jar or the room.

Even in the case of (2), the immediate scope still includes the whole jar as in Figure 4.

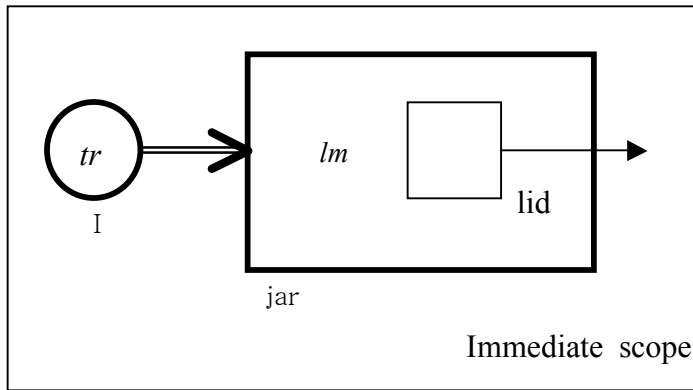


Figure 4. *I opened the jar.*

Figure 4 is a generalized diagram of (2). Note that the landmark is the jar itself while the removed entity is a part of the jar. Due to the active zone phenomena, we know that we are still acting on the part of the whole though the whole is profiled as a landmark.

However, when we say like (4), we usually think that the whole entity is moving,

not a part of a whole room or a building. This is because the immediate scope does not reach enough to encompass the whole room as in Figure 5.

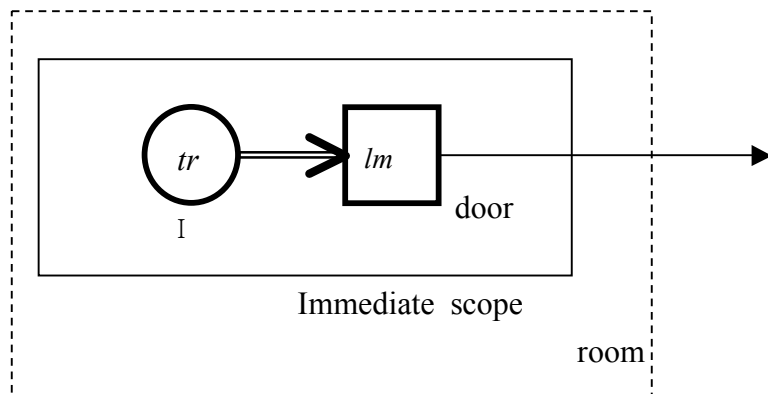


Figure 5. *I opened the door.*

Note in Figure 5 that the immediate scope includes only the door not the room. Therefore, the door is a landmark that is profiled, and at the same time, it is conceived as a whole, not a part of a room. The room is expressed with a dashed line because it is not even expressed linguistically. However, in practice, a door should be a part of a building, a room, or a wall, etc. I think the difference of the application of the immediate scope comes from the size: the size of a jar is manageable while the room is beyond our manageable size.

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