

SEEING THINGS: MASS AND COUNT NOUNS IN FOCUS

PIOTR TWARDZISZ

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin

1. Schemas

According to Langacker (1987, 1991), cognitive grammar is a very natural framework in the sense that its notions reflect man's basic cognitive abilities such as *viewing, distancing, scanning, mental movement*, etc., and which further offers such an apparatus for the characterization of meaning that harmonizes with those abilities. Those basic cognitive abilities which facilitate construing a conceived situation in alternate ways are termed by Langacker **imagery**. Being able to see reality or imagine non-reality, the speaker can also "see" language constructs, for example, he can single out their particular portions, place himself at various viewing points, and travel mentally through space. It becomes evident therefore that the meaning of an expression bends towards "subjectivist" in nature rather than "objectivist"¹.

In probably no other linguistic categories does the conventionalized conceptual structure show more conspicuously than in nominals. With the mass/count distinction being among the basic parameters according to which nominals are traditionally classified, this category serves as an unfailing source of various cognitive effects reflected at language level. Within the purview of cognitive grammar the mass/count dimension is believed to directly reflect the way speakers conceptualize things² which surround them. The cognitive term **thing**, defined as a region in a given spatial domain, corresponds in the most straightforward way with the image of an object or an abstract notion it designates. Needless to say, concrete objects, owing to their being palpable, measurable, etc. constitute the so-called prototypical instantiations among all things, pushing aside abstract notions and granting them the

¹ Commenting on the subjectivity of an expression's meaning Langacker notes that the semantic value of a given expression very much depends on the way the conceptualizer chooses to think about this entity or situation.

² The word *thing* is used in its common sense in this case.

status of marginal instances within the abstract category [[THING]/[...]]³.

Having postulated a dual semantico-phonological nature for every language construct, Langacker has defined the schematic semantic characterization of a mass noun as an “unbounded region in a domain” and that of a count noun as a “bounded region in a domain”. In other words, a count noun in its abstract semantic characterization constitutes [BOUNDED THING], whereas a mass noun [UNBOUNDED THING]. Consequently, at the highest level of abstraction, the category *noun* is conveniently described as being sanctioned by the so-called top-most schema [[THING]/[...]], the capitals typically designating the semantic pole and the dotted portion standing for the unfilled phonological one. The slash between the two poles conventionally marks the symbolic relationship between a semantic and phonological unit, which make up an inseparable symbolic unit. Then, the top-most schema is elaborated by two less abstract, though still far from concrete, subschemas, namely [[BOUNDED THING]/[...]] and [[UNBOUNDED THING]/[...]], which, in turn, sanction nominal instantiations (e.g. *table, book, elevator* and *water, procrastination, madness*, respectively).

Being concerned with designing a pedagogical cognitive grammar of English, Taylor (1993: 211) maintains that these characterizations, that is the schemas, do not provide a basis for predicting membership in the two categories. According to him, Langacker’s templates for a count noun and mass noun would sanction most probably, with little or no modification, a grammatical distinction between count and mass nouns in the large number of languages of the world. However, membership in these two categories varies considerably from language to language. As an example, Taylor mentions that the translation equivalent of the noun *information* in many languages is a count noun, causing that even quite proficient learners of English and speakers of those languages at the same time make mistakes such as **an information*.

2. Prototypes

To account for the idiosyncratic specifics of category membership, Taylor (1993) suggests that we appeal to categorization by prototype. However, one ought to remember that the cognitive model, proposed by Langacker (1987, 1991), has already accommodated without any complications the two modes of categorization, that is categorization by schema and categorization by prototype. So alongside the relationship of schematicity, also Langacker underlines the role of prototypes in the structuring of the symbolic units of a given language. A schema is defined as an abstract characterization which is compatible with all its instances in every detail, while a prototype constitutes a typical instance, and other members of a given category get assimilated to that category owing to some kind of similarity they show to its proto-

type. Needless to say, the two types of categorization are not necessarily incompatible as they are accommodated in a complex network of categorization relations.

In Taylor’s prototype model, one can propose, as the central category members of [COUNT NOUN] and [MASS NOUN], a three-dimensional, concrete “thing” and an internally homogeneous, divisible “substance”, respectively. However, there is no mention of the top-most, highly abstract, superordinate schema, present in Langacker’s model and labelled simply as [THING]. Taylor’s schema of a concrete “thing” then gets projected onto entities in other domains, such as units of time (*minute, year*), products of mental and creative activity (*idea, poem, symphony*), events (*earthquake, football match*), etc. His schema for a completely homogeneous “substance” gets projected in a similar fashion onto more abstract domains, such as emotional states (*anger, love*) and activities (*dancing, research*).

As further postulated by Taylor, this account of mass/count noun distinction needs to be extended by the addition of sub-schemas for mass nouns. In the first place, according to Taylor, there are a number of mass nouns, such as, for example *furniture, fruit, traffic, luggage*, etc. which do not in fact refer to homogeneous “substances”, but which rather constitute superordinate terms that highlight some common property of different kinds of things. Additionally, one finds the group of what are called “plural mass nouns” with the following examples: *groceries, left-overs, clothes, dishes, contents*, etc. As suggested by Taylor, these nouns, similarly to the preceding group, constitute superordinate terms for things of different kinds. One distinguishing factor that makes them different from the preceding class is the fact that they designate different kinds of things that can be found together in a single place, or that have been brought together for a specific purpose.

Quite surprisingly, the prototypicality model, proposed by Taylor, does not appear to be too divergent from what one has been accustomed to expect of a pedagogical grammar, be it cognitive or not. Indeed, the division into two prototypes, namely a three-dimensional concrete “thing” and a homogeneous “substance”, further broken down to two additional sub-schemas of the “substance” schema, does not depart drastically from any “non-cognitive” treatment of nouns. The only novelty is that Taylor admits the importance of drawing the learner’s attention to the possibility of “breaking” rules or semantic explanations for those rules, once established by a pedagogical grammar, in cases where a special or unusual conceptualization is evoked. Just take an example from Taylor (1993: 218): *After the accident, there was cat all over the road*, in which the otherwise count noun *cat* does not exclude its use as a mass noun. Or, to reverse things, an instance in which the countability of a noun is not exclusively reserved for nominals occurring with an overt article, as in sentence (1b) below taken from Langacker (1987: 204):

- (1) a. Fiona likes ice cream.
- b. Joyce ate ice cream yesterday.

Ice cream in (1a) designates a mass noun, substance in general; note that the present simple of the verb adds to the unboundedness of the substance as well as the

³ The notation used here follows that of Langacker. [THING] stands for the semantic pole and [...] for the phonological pole of this abstract symbolic unit.

process in question. In apparent contrast, (1b) seems to designate the count variety of the nominal *ice cream*, despite lack of the article *an*. Here the mass is limited to a portion which can be consumed by one person within one day. Although Taylor admits the necessity of pointing out such grammatical “inconsistencies”, he treats them as such, that is, grants cases like these the status of deviant instantiations, deserving nothing beyond a due note in a pedagogical grammar.

3. Imagery

Being more consistent with the principles of cognitive grammar, one does not have to overstate the degree of oddness a given construct may show, neither does one have to feel obliged to devote too much time and energy to focusing on what is typical and non-typical in language, with particular attention to the border-line between the two. By stating this, I do not want to say that everything in grammar is so obvious and normal. If this were so, then there would be no need for grammatical explorations at all. Instead, I postulate sticking to the view of grammar as a continuum of symbolic units, as elaborated by Langacker. By doing so, one certainly explores language, describes it and draws conclusions and generalizations using the tools offered by the framework, but at the same time, one does not re-underline the traditional dividing-lines in a new fashion. Those conclusions and generalizations are indeed postulated by Taylor as the so-called schemas and sub-schemas. However, such constructs cannot be treated rigorously as they constitute only certain generalizations easily “neglected” by speakers owing to the presence of other generalizations established in grammar and the cognitive abilities of those speakers to create their own conceptualizations. Those basic cognitive abilities, mentioned at the beginning, covered by the useful term *imagery*, could also be taken into account in any pedagogically oriented grammar. Regrettably, there is no ideal means of explicating notions such as singling out particular portions of conceived situations, placing oneself at various viewing points, travelling mentally through space, contrasting, comparing, etc. Thus far, Langacker’s pictorial representations have succeeded in grasping necessary generalizations and regularities, even those deemed “abnormal”. However, one ought to be aware of over-stressing the border-line between what is considered to be “normal” and “abnormal” in language as it may soon turn out that the “abnormal” far outnumber the “normal” and hence become part of the unmarked phenomena.

Being aware that pedagogical grammars offer the learner “rules” for correct usage, Taylor assures the reader that in a cognitively-based pedagogical grammar such rules do not take the shape of the categorial devices of formal linguistics, defining all and only the grammatical sentences of a language. For Taylor, a rule of grammar, or properly, a schema merely states a conventionalized pairing of semantic content with a formal structure. Any ill-formedness that a given construct shows is to be accounted for by the oddness and incongruity of the meaning of that construct, and not in terms of the violation of some arbitrary rule of syntax. That postulate sounds very much in line with the upstream rush, fashionable these days, toward highlighting the underestimated “abnormal” cases, and putting them in the limelight of the linguist’s

attention. By doing so, one dodges the still underestimated and neglected role of imagery in the building of language constructs.

4. Semantic extensions

It is a common phenomenon that certain nominals appear in their countable variants in special circumstances as well as in non-countable occurrences, should appropriate conditions for such conceptualization be met. Typically, the two variants, that is, count and mass noun, are listed in dictionaries. The following sentences illustrate such “lexicalized” mass and count nominal variants:

- (2) a. I’m fed up with this irritating *sound*.
 b. Light travels faster than *sound*.
 c. She was a *beauty*.
 d. *Beauty* is to be admired.
 e. We had a pleasant *experience* last night.
 f. She’s had a great deal of *experience*.

where (2a), (2c) and (2e) are instances of count variants of the italicized nouns, while (2b), (2d) and (2f) are their mass counterparts. As observed earlier, the semantic pole of the [NOUN] schema is profiled by a thing, which, in turn, is defined as a **region in some domain**. It should come as no surprise that the instantiations (a), (c) and (e) are viewed as bounded regions in their own domains, while the nominals in (b), (d) and (f) are perceived as unbounded, non-replicate masses. Although the two groups of instantiations seem to form categories of their own, transition between them can legitimately be accounted for by means of a **shift in the profiling of essentially the same domain**. The figure below is representative of the schematic ternary semantic pole of the thing-extensions in question. The frequent bi-directional semantic extension observed in (2), marked with arrows in Figure 1 and a double-headed arrow below, obtains between two of the three components of this triangle, namely between (A) and (C), and can be represented as [[[BOUNDED REGION]/[...]] ↔ [[NON-REPLICATE MASS]/[...]]], neither being prototypical. The third profile, marked as (B), is activated in the case of pluralized senses of the categories in (2), that is sounds, beauties and experiences.

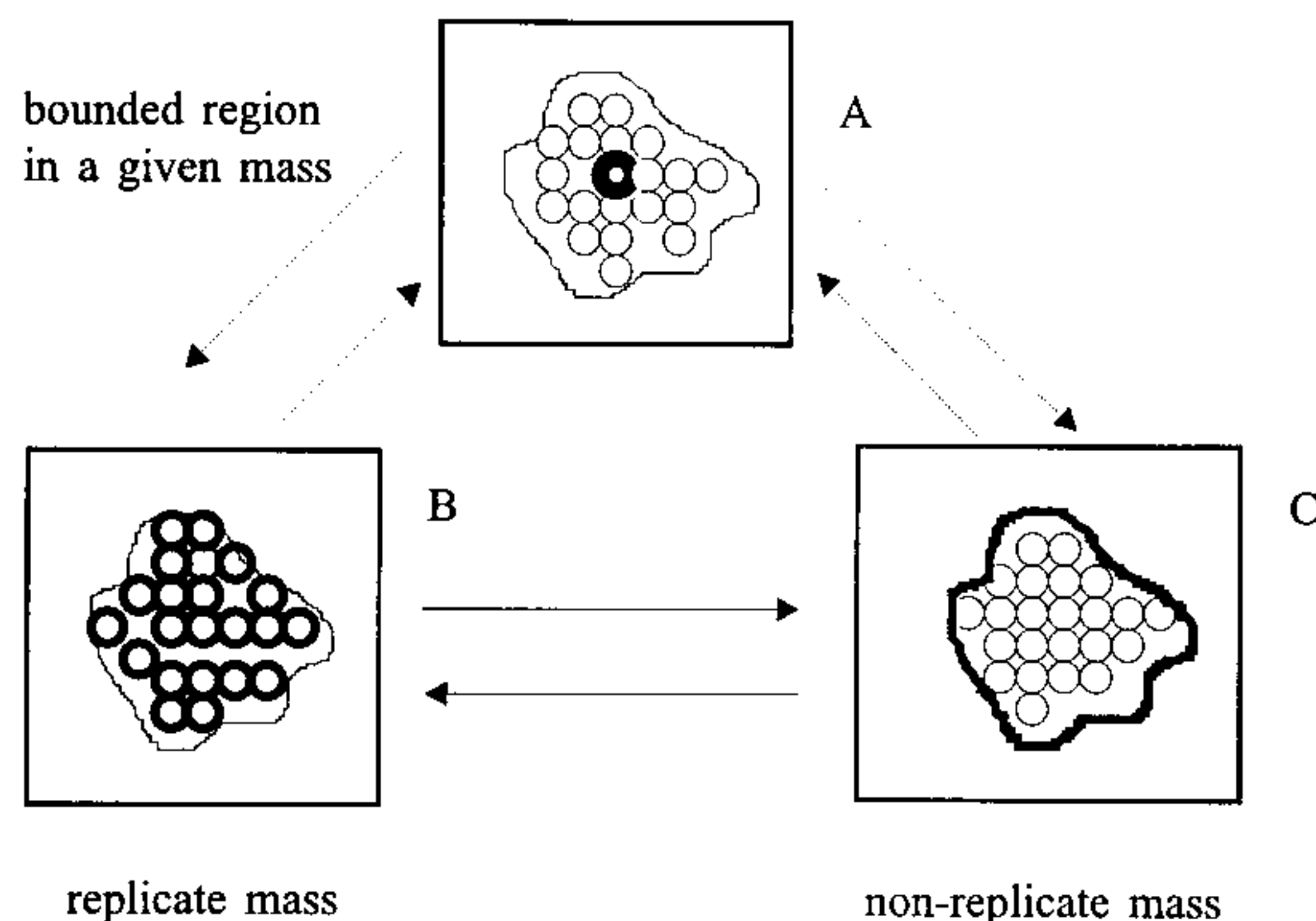


Fig. 1. Schematic ternary semantic pole of the thing-extension in Question.

It is crucial to note that all the three profiles are “visual” variants of essentially the same base which serves as a spatial domain for highlighting particular portions thereof. In none of the three variants does every single detail of the base become profiled at the same time. There is always some part of the base that is left unprofiled, which reflects the normal way of perceiving a given scene. One cannot focus his/her attention simultaneously on every tiny detail of that scene as well as its outer shape with the surroundings. Concentrating on one element of that scene leaves the other parts “out of focus” though such selective highlighting does not wipe out the remaining portion completely. It merely blurs the unfocused and leaves it fuzzy until another shift in focus is undertaken and the viewer’s attention fixed on a different portion of the watched scene.

For Langacker (1988: 94), semantic representations are to be equated with “conventionalized conceptualizations”, of varying degrees of schematicity rather than be understood in terms of truth conditions on the possibility of successful reference. To this one should add that those “conventional conceptualizations” do not constitute individual stages of a given conceptualization but rather embrace complex networks of interrelated shifts in the profiling of a common conceptual base. Viewed as such, a “conventionalized conceptualization” does not exist in grammar on its own but functions only owing to its links with the base and other profiled variants of this base. If so, a cognitive grammar of count/mass nouns should reflect, possibly in the most natural way, the complex network of interrelated highlighted portions of the

scene against a backdrop of a common base. Figure 1 then can be understood as a pictorial representation of a highly abstract area of the grammar of mass/count noun interrelations.

However, the semantic characterization of mass/count nouns, presented in Figure 1, stands in some opposition to Langacker’s claim about the treatment of plurals as a subclass of mass nouns. The diagram does not predict this sub-classification in any clear way, treating the three profiles as equal possibilities in every case. Neither does the diagram spell out the unacceptability of “singularized” nominals such as: **oat*, **gut*, **bowel*, **binocular*, **pant*, **scissor*, **plier*, **bleacher*, **catacomb*, **Pyrenees*, **Alp*, etc., although speakers must be aware of the lack of such clearly discrete components. In view of the above, one may get the impression that the model postulated here allows the policy of “anything goes”.

In a sense it does. However, the diagram represents the top-most level of abstraction, and at this level the model allows for virtually all possible instantiations that can be conceived of by speakers. Apart from the top-most schema, the grammar of mass/count nominals, as well as grammar in general, is sanctioned by certain local sub-schemas, more or less salient, owing to the degree of entrenchment of particular instantiations. Members of the *oats* sub-category, for example, do not lend themselves to any easy extension along the arrows of the diagram in Figure 1. So one does not normally speak of an *oat*, a *binocular*, a *pant*, etc.⁴ Instantiations in some other sub-categories do not undergo extensions in a different direction. People typically do not buy *noodle*, *rices*, *flours*, *bean*, *pea*, etc., rendering these nominals somewhat deficient with regard to the super-schema in Figure 1. However, it is not certain whether individual extensions within those local sub-schemas cannot be conceived of when appropriate circumstances are met. In the purview of a cognitive model, appropriate circumstances for an “altered” viewing can almost always be found. When the profiled region happens to be unbounded it cannot be replicated, e.g. **golds*, **waters*, **stones* (in the sense of unrestricted substances). Yet there are cases such as, for instance, *water* and *stone* which can be conceived of as count nouns upon profiling their bases as bounded regions, that is, viewing them as entities with visible limits or boundaries (hence the plural forms *the waters of America* and *precious stones*). The linguistic literature abounds in examples of nominals that can be used as either countables or non-countables, depending on the meaning intended. Consider, for instance, the following sentences:

- (3) a. There’s not enough *table* for everyone to sit at.
 b. Emmy finds squashed *spider* more nauseating than the thing alive. (Allan 1980: 547)
 c. Johnny is very choosy about his food. He will eat *book*, but he won’t touch *shelf*.
 [a mother termite concerned about her child] (Pelletier 1979: 7) [emphasis mine]

⁴ For a highly revealing analysis of such sub-categories, see Wierzbicka (1988).

The mass nominal *table* in (3a) is accounted for by profile (C) in Figure 1 upon highlighting the base in such a way that the edge of the typically countable thing *table* becomes obliterated and the remaining mass is treated as some kind of substance to be shared. The mass realization in (3b) resembles the mass *cat* quoted earlier after Taylor. In (3c) the perspective for viewing the nominals *book* and *shelf* is altered owing to the size of the observer and its/his vantage point, which the reader assumes as well. This type of semantic extension can be represented by means of the following template: [[[BOUNDED REGION]/[...]] → [[NON-REPLICATE MASS]/[...]], with [BOUNDED REGION] serving as a prototype, hence a single-headed arrow pointed toward an extension.

5. Sub-schemas and their instantiations

As Langacker (1991: 78) points out, it is important to realize that a singular noun and its corresponding plural constitute distinct categories (e.g. *wine* – *wines*, *tea* – *teas*, *beer* – *beers*, where the plural form can be paraphrased as ‘brand or type of N’). The mere shifting of profiles from the singular entity *pebble* to the mass entity *pebbles* is not a sufficient operation in the overall conceptualization process. At first glance, also this observation seems to run counter to what one can predict from the diagram in Figure 1. In fact, it does not. The top-most schema does not have to be, and is not, fully responsible for the semantics of all concrete instantiations carrying specific meaning as that is sanctioned by local sub-schemas such as [BRAND/TYPE OF N], for instance. Although the nominals *teas* or *a tea* constitute distinct categories from the mass *tea*, their semantics being more complex than that of ‘the plural of tea’ and ‘one instance of tea’, they are nevertheless sanctioned partially by the super-schema in Figure 1 at the most abstract level of conceptualization.

Certainly the top-most super-schema cannot fully satisfy the needs of language users, neither can it meet a cognitive grammarian’s expectations toward accounting for the semantics of concrete instantiations. In order to establish such intermediate sanctioning constructs one needs to start with analysing particular occurrences of nominals. Their multitude and diversity as well as the space restrictions imposed here do not allow us to pursue an exhaustive survey of the semantics of nominals limiting us to a very selective presentation.

The above-mentioned local schema with the semantic pole: [BRAND/TYPE OF N] is probably among the better entrenched ones. Below are some examples which constitute its compatible instantiations:

- (4) a. We join the other guests who gorge on *meats*, *pâtés*, sausages, eggs, and Moldavian specialties I am unable to identify. (NG⁵, March 1991) [emphasis mine]
- b. The wagon beds, their bottoms slightly upcurved at each end to curb cargo shifting, each creaked and groaned with as much as three tons of trade goods

from across the United States and Europe: *woolens*, *cottons*, *silks*, *linens*, handkerchiefs, gloves, suspenders, ribbons, earrings, brooches, combs, needles, shears, files, forks, spoons, penknives, pocketknives, velveteens, whiskey... (NG, March 1991)

- c. Dugongs graze on sea *grasses* and thrive here, because in this shallow area grow some of the largest sea grass beds known. (NG, January 1991)
- d. “Most modern *beers* are very thin, but ancient beer was *a food*,” says Katz. (NG, February 92)

On the basis of the above instantiations the following extensional pattern can be established:

[[[NON-REPLICATE MASS]/[...]] → [[BRAND/TYPE]/[...]],

with a schematic prototype on the left-hand side of the arrow and a bounded thing extension on the right.

Owing to a great number of formations clustered around geographical names some tendency toward individuating the otherwise proper names can be observed and grasped by means of a local sub-schema such as [IMAGINED/KIND OF PLACE]. Further two sub-types branch out of this sub-schema, namely [IMAGINED PLACE], which sanctions instances of place names not yet in existence, and [KIND OF PLACE], which is schematic for some “portion” of the place in terms of its belonging to a given period of time, its geographical location, or its association with some event. The following examples of instantiations substantiate the two sub-types of the [IMAGINED/KIND OF PLACE] sub-schema:

- (5) a. Yet the only certainty is that Hong Kong is changing and - once again - *a* “new” *Hong Kong* will edge out the familiar one. (NG, February 1991)
- b. By 1989 the changes of the post-Maoist era had put the young in a different mental and material position. *A China* that offered more to its young people found that as a result it was losing their spiritual adherence. (NG, July 1991)
- c. I looked across the gray expanse of Tiananmen Square and thought about *the China* of today – a communist nation, half open to the world, led by old men – and I wondered about *the China* of tomorrow. (NG, July 1991)
- d. Germany’s western sector, the Federal Republic, absorbed it all, adding more than 16 million people to its 63 million and increasing its territory by 40 percent. At the same time, the boundary of Western Europe advanced some 200 miles, to the Polish border. But as usually happens with a night of bliss, there is also a troublesome morning after, and so it is now with *a Germany* beset with doubts and even some regrets. (NG, September 1991)
- e. He served with the German Army in World War II, was captured by the Russians, and spent time in five detention camps. Thus he reacts with sensitivity to the question of whether, with *a Germany* made whole, there is a danger of

⁵ NG stands for *National Geographic*.

- the country once more becoming militaristic and aggressive. (NG, September 1991)
- f. "A strong *Germany* will pose no military danger, because the strength of the country will be embedded in European unity," Wöllner said. (NG, September 1991)
 - g. Everybody who wanted to succeed in Albania had belonged to the party, at least formally. But communism was dead now, the secret police gone. So was *the old Albania*. *The new Albania* could be – had to be – different. (NG, July 92)
 - h. Lenin embraced Marxism in 1889, convinced that it would lead *a backward Russia* into the modern world. (NG, October 1992)
 - i. Peering through sheets of rain, I searched for hints of *the Italy* I knew as a boy - a baroque church front, or a palazzo the color of ocher, or a piazza with a Bernini fountain at its center. (NG, December 1992)
 - j. Many Milanese believe this affinity for Europe may further strengthen Italy's political and economic ties with the European Community, the 12 nations now working toward *a unified Europe*. (NG, December 1992)
 - k. East of the Tower of London, *another London* begins. Seen from the air, it appears to be more water than land, a Thames-side archipelago formed by a series of huge man-made lakes: the docks. (NG, July 1991)
 - l. Farmers came next, and seigneurs - big landowners. But the dream of *a French Canada* faded in 1759 when on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City British forces defeated the French. (NG, March 91)
 - m. "If they ask me, I will not refuse," said Jano Bagrationi when asked if he aspired to office in *a free Georgia*. (NG, May 92)

So the prototypicality relationships conceived of above are the following:

[[[NAME OF PLACE]/[...]] → [[IMAGINED PLACE]/[...]]]

and

[[[NAME OF PLACE]/[...]] → [[KIND OF PLACE]/[...]]],

both left-sided elements functioning as prototypes and the right-sided ones as their extensions. Prototypes of these relationships are elaborated by proper names, which typically, with some exceptions, do not take any articles in English, whereas their extensions are instantiated by common nouns, normally preceded by some grounding predication. Owing to their nature, proper names such as names of places contain inherent grounding as they designate unique entities non-replicate in this world. However, this model of the uniqueness of place names can be supplanted by another model in which places show non-uniqueness in that they can be distinguished from other places with the same name though with a different semantics. It so happens when another or other places with the same name appear in the act of conceptualiza-

tion as the need arises for a somewhat "different" place from the one we normally think of when using the prototypical proper name.

It is interesting to note that the sub-schema in question does not sanction nominals designating place names which are conceived of as selected parts of the entire land denoted by a given name. So for cases like those below, a sub-schema such as [PART OF LAND] has the strongest sanctioning force:

- (6) a. The subtropical hills of Atchara are a delight to the eye, while Borjomi and other mineral spas of *central Georgia* and the vineyards of Kakheti could vie with the best in the world. (NG, May 1992)
- b. In *rural Georgia*, time is measured not by clocks but by sunrises and solstices, history not by revolutions and perestroikas but by the birth of sons and the burial of fathers, seasons not by calendars but by the planting and harvesting of the vine. (NG, May 1992)
- c. Hopes are modest in *rural China*, where 75 percent of this country lives. (NG, July 1992)

Yet another sub-schema is needed for sanctioning nominals designating proper names seen as ordinary count nouns, either in the singular or in the plural. It is common practice to conceive of multiple representatives of a nominal designated by a proper name when a double, so to speak, or a number of doubles, or simply other individuals with the same name, are imagined or found in reality. Alternatively, a count realization can be applied to designate the same person on condition that the individual referred to changes his/her typical characteristics and in some way departs from what is usually expected of him/her. The following examples illustrate possible instantiations of the [IMAGINED/KIND OF PERSON] sub-schema:

- (7) a. There's nothing fair about Marlene Dietrich's having been born with beautiful legs that we all want to look at; or about Muhammad Ali's having been born with the skill that made him a great fighter. But on the other side, millions of people who have enjoyed looking at Marlene Dietrich's legs or watching one of Muhammad Ali's fights have benefited from nature's unfairness in producing *a Marlene Dietrich* and *a Muhammad Ali*. What kind of a world would it be if everyone were a duplicate of everyone else? (Freedman and Freedman 1980: 128)
- b. The system under which people make their own choices – and bear most of the consequences of their decisions – is the system that has prevailed for most of our history. It is the system that gave *the Henry Fords, the Thomas Alva Edisons, the George Eastmans, the John D. Rockefellers, the James Cash Penneys* the incentive to transform our society over the past two centuries. (Freedman & Freedman 1980: 129)
- c. In St. Petersburg's Summer Garden, where the poet often strolled, a young woman asked me, "Do you have *a Pushkin* in America?" No, I said. "Then I am sorry for you." (NG, September 1992)

- d. How many American writers would it take to make *one Pushkin*? Several. (NG, September 1992)
- e. The old warrior spent his last days signing autographs and gardening with his family at Fort Sill. Yet one prison visitor saw *a* different *Geronimo*, when he peeled off his shirt to reveal some 50 scars. (NG, October 1992)
- f. Then Gamsakhurdia beckoned me to sit beside him, and for most of the next half hour he conversed with me in English. "Surely all your opponents cannot be working for Moscow," I said. "Yes, they are," said the president. "You know, people call me *a Mussolini*, *a Saddam Hussein*! Have you ever heard of a dictator who allows his opponents to speak?" (NG, May 1992)
- g. Eventually, God had spoken to Job, and Job submitted to his superior wisdom and power. The words that convinced him would not, perhaps, convince *a* modern *Job*. (Lodge 1980: 108)
- h. But if there was life out there, there must also be death. Had those creatures, like us, myths of creation, fall and redemption? Had *other Christs* died on *other Calvaries* in other galaxies at different times in the last twenty billion years? (Lodge 1980: 171)

Similarly to the sanctioning relationships of geographical names, one can postulate the following schemas for the above extensions:

[[[NAME OF PERSON]/[...]] → [[IMAGINED PERSON]/[...]]]

and

[[[NAME OF PERSON]/[...]] → [[KIND OF PERSON]/[...]].

In his discussion of proper names, Langacker (1991: 60) postulates that the nominal "Stan Smith becomes a common noun when the idealized model is supplanted in its matrix by the conception of a world in which multiple individuals are so named". In view of the above, the types of extensions postulated here contribute to the fundamental assumptions made by Langacker about proper names and their common-noun equivalents.

It is not certain whether the sanctioning process for the above instantiations and their sub-schemas proceeds in the bottom-to-top manner, as is normally postulated when establishing networks of generalizing templates for selected portions of grammar. Most, if not all, formations in the above examples count as novel coinages and as such do not exert much sanctioning force upon the already-existing sub-schemas, or else, upon the formation of new nominals. One can then postulate sanctioning by the network of abstract schemas as envisaged in Figure 1 as the primary source. However, the other direction of sanctioning, or both directions for that matter, cannot be excluded altogether once more formations of the types presented above crop up in speech. So with more extensions toward count nominals with the above specifications, local sub-schemas become better entrenched in speakers' grammars and start to play as important a role in the sanctioning process as do the very

instantiations. Nevertheless, primary importance, in these cases, needs to be granted to the abstract super-schema in Figure 1, which allows such numerous and freely formed count variants.

The super-schema in Figure 1 receives feedback from a plethora of count-mass extensions, not necessarily limited to proper names. In fact, a very strong sanctioning force comes from another local sub-schema for which the prototypical member is normally conceived of as a mass abstract thing, such as *love*, *silence*, *peace*, *future*, *tomorrow*, *darkness*, *greyness*, etc. Such prototypes undergo extensions toward count nominals which feature as [KIND OF NON-REPLICATE MASS] in their semantic specification.

- (8) a. Immediate grievances also fueled the democracy movement, including anger at corrupt officials, poor conditions on campuses where students ate frugally and lived as many as eight to a room, and the devaluation of education in a repressive *society* obsessed with money-making. (NG, July 1991)
- b. For the moment hope was gone, at least inside China. No one could foresee a better *tomorrow*, so people gave up trying, even caring. (NG, July 1991)
- c. It was one of those days in autumn when much of Germany seems to be cast in pewter, when the margin between day and night is narrowed to *a* damp *darkness* that presses against the windows of the buildings. (NG, September 1991)
- d. Antinuclear groups, nevertheless, say there are good reasons to watch Sweden as it prepares for *a future* without nuclear power. (NG, August 1991)
- e. A second generation got formal *educations*, expanded family businesses, and reached senior posts in bigger companies. (NG, March 1991)
- f. *A* loosened *economy*, *a* willy-nilly *decentralization*, and a richer flow of information – all have allowed youth *a mobility* unheard of before the 1980s. (NG, July 91)
- g. "It's there," said one of the team members, pointing toward *a* foggy *grayness*, "only it's hidden by clouds." (NG, December 1992)
- h. I soon learned that most Madrileños take a secret pride in the awfulness of their city's traffic, as a kind of proof of their arrival in the modern age. (NG, April 1992)
- i. There is scarcely a hamlet in Spain that does not have a similar annual event, albeit on a smaller scale, combining *an* almost hedonistic *abandon* with the gravest respect for tradition. (NG, April 1992)
- j. Individuals communicate constantly with body language and vocalizations. At least 20 gestures and calls indicate *a willingness* to copulate. (NG, March 1992)

The schematic representation for the above instantiations can be grasped by means of the following template:

[[[NON-REPLICATE MASS]/[...]] →
[[KIND OF NON-REPLICATE MASS]/[...]],

where the extension is toward a count thing, that is a bounded region.

The lack of the indefinite article does not necessarily indicate that the nominal in question designates a mass thing. The examples below each individuate or divide the mass prototypically designated by the italicized nouns as the speaker focuses upon a specific sub-type of *patience*, *brutality* and *insensitivity*, respectively. Each of these nominals receives an extra semantic import from the preceding adjective which renders the nominal more thing-like in the sense that its domain develops some perceivable limits beyond which the extra specification coming from the adjective does not apply.

- (9) a. Versace, a smallish man in a pair of old and unfashionable jeans, turned to me and smiled with admirable *patience*. (NG, December 1992)
b. Several times I heard similar stories of police *brutality*, or at least profound *insensitivity*. (NG, April 1992)

The semantic import present above once wiped out causes that the nominals, apart from rendering them as typically mass-like, lose their previous relationship with specific domains:

- (10) a. Versace, a smallish man in a pair of old and unfashionable jeans, turned to me and smiled with *patience*.
b. Several times I heard similar stories of *brutality*, or at least *insensitivity*.

On the other hand, the grounding in the thing-like domain of *admirable patience*, etc. does not necessarily and automatically trigger plural instantiations of the count variants of these nominals, as evidenced below:

- (11) a. ?Several smallish men, wearing old and unfashionable jeans, turned to us and smiled with admirable *patiences*.
b. Several times I heard similar stories of police *brutalities*, or at least profound *?insensitivities*.

Being able to perceive a number of instances of brutality (or police brutality for that matter) as events or happenings, one does not in fact encounter much difficulty over pluralizing the nominal *brutality* itself. The other two nominals, that is *patience* and *insensitivity*, might as well be thought of as certain acts or deeds, which in turn can undergo pluralization.

- (12) When looking after their neighbour's son, the Fosters showed astounding acts of *patience/insensitivity* on a number of occasions.

Although it is the replicate mass *acts* that lends its bounded profile to the profile of the entire nominal phrase, the contributing nominals *patience* and *insensitivity*

also become countable and pluralized as there are a number of instantiations thereof directly linked with numerous instances of the nominal *acts*.

6. Perspective

The parameter of **perspective** plays an unquestionable role in the conceptualization of nominals. In both English and Polish there can be found instances of nominals, frequently designating names of animal species, used without an external exponent of plurality and which can be analysed as either singular or plural upon assuming different viewing perspectives. Let us consider the following exemplars of such 'animal names' in English:

- (13) a. These lakes are full of *trout*, *salmon* and *pike*...
b. My father caught a huge *trout* here last summer.

where in (13 a) the names of fish traditionally fall under the mass noun category (they themselves are conceived of as mass nouns), while the one in (13 b) clearly instantiates a singular bounded region. It is questionable whether the mass addressed in (13 a) is viewed as replicate or non-replicate, that is, whether one is referring to an indivisible mass, or else, to a cluster of individual specimens. Compare some examples from Polish, where reference is being made to plural nominals in both cases:

- (14) a. W tych jeziorach jest pełno *pstrąga*, *łososia* i *szczupaka*.
'in these lakes (there) is full of trout-sg, salmon-sg and pike-sg'
b. W tych jeziorach jest pełno *pstrągów*, *łososi* i *szczupaków*.
'in these lakes (there) is full of trout-pl, salmon-pl and pike-pl'

It is interesting to observe that the nominals in (14a) are morphologically marked for the singular whereas those in (14b) carry plural markers. Despite the singular markers in (14a), the nominals are interpreted as plural because a distancing perspective is being laid upon the scene. Needless to say, the nominals in (14b), with plural markers, are instantly perceived as plural. Returning to the above question concerning the two mass senses in (13a), one can interpret the mass *trout* as comprising an infinite number of instances thereof, still perceived as blurred individuals, or else, as individual instances being packed tightly to the point of suspending boundaries between them, no longer seen as singular entities. I suggest that the second interpretation treating *trout* of (13a) as an indivisible mass is also applied to the Polish senses in (14a), despite their clear singular marking. What matters for those who come up with a sentence such as (14a) is that a mass of fish, almost one big imaginary fish built of numerous instances sticking tightly together, comes into existence with no particular need for underlining the status of individual representatives functioning as parts of the entire mass. Such conceptualizations are not uncommon, and are characteristic of speakers who either professionally or otherwise deal with the animals in question. So sentences such as the ones in (13a) and (14a) convey typical conceptualizations that fishermen or anglers have about the object of their

work or hobby. Speakers of Polish who do not show any particular interest in fish, and have a morphological choice between the marked and unmarked plural, will preferably go for the unmarked (14b) when having in mind plural instantiations of fish, etc.

7. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the above explorations have an important impact on a foreign language pedagogy. As has been shown, on the basis of numerous examples, the rigid pigeonholing of nouns as either count or mass, and alternatively as both, does not exhaustively satisfy the requirements of language users. This does not mean that the count/mass noun division is an unwanted category and as such should be done away with as quickly as possible. This rather means the opposite, namely that count/mass nouns deserve a much closer look owing to their "capricious" nature. Being capricious does not necessarily entail being totally unpredictable, and this is what has been shown above by means of a set of schemas which sanction the grammaticality of respective instantiations. What is more, countability/ non-countability appears highly sensitive to certain conceptualization factors, grasped under the all-embracing name of **imagery**. Owing to those imagistic effects, things undergo semantic extensions within the bonds of the same domain, as envisaged in Figure 1 and in the other sub-schemas postulated in this paper. It is then profile shifting within the same base that stands in opposition to changes of labels of mutually exclusive grammatical categories. In the present model the former seems more likely as it heavily relies on man's other cognitive abilities whose effects can be traced at language level.

REFERENCES

- Allan, K. 1980. "Nouns and countability". *Language* 56/3. 541-567.
- Friedman, M. and Friedman, R. 1980. *Free to choose*. New York: Avon Books.
- Geiger, R.A. and Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (eds.). 1993. *Conceptualizations and mental processing in language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Langacker, R.W. 1987. *Foundations of cognitive grammar. Volume I. Theoretical prerequisites*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R.W. 1988. "The nature of grammatical valence". In Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (ed.). 91-125.
- Langacker, R.W. 1991. *Foundations of cognitive grammar. Volume II: Descriptive application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lodge, D. 1980. *How far can you go?* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Pelletier, F.J. 1979. "Non-singular reference: some preliminaries". In Pelletier, F.J. (ed.). 1-14.
- Pelletier, F.J. (ed.). 1979. *Mass terms: Some philosophical problems*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (ed.). 1988. *Topics in cognitive linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Taylor, J.R. 1993. "Some pedagogical implications of cognitive linguistics". In Geiger, R. A. and Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (eds.). 201-223.
- Twardzisz, P. 1997. *Zero derivation in English. A cognitive grammar approach*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej.
- Wierzbicka, A. 1988. *The semantics of grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.