

## Metaphorical Expressions of Self Awareness in English

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### Abstract

In this discussion it will be seen that the underlying conceptual commonality of linguistic instances of Self-Awareness is not simply in reference to a speaker's self-perception, but an acute meta-awareness of that perception. Although phrases such as *to know oneself* have been around for a long time, there are other verbs such as *find*, *lose*, and *catch* that, when used metaphorically within in a reflexive construction, also refer to this type of Self-Awareness. Previous syntactic and semantic descriptions of English reflexivity have failed to adequately account for this conception. It is concluded that Self-Awareness events are distinct from previous categorizations of either reflexive or middle events.

### 1 Introduction

The metaphoric construal of three verbs; *find*, *lose*, and *catch* when used within the reflexive construction does not simply construe and predicate pronoun-antecedent reference, but are instances of Self-Aware (hereafter SA) events, more specifically, acute (and often sudden) *Awareness* of one's own physical/mental perceptions and/or experiences. Although the field of Cognitive Linguistics has dominated metaphor research since 1980 (when Lakoff and Johnson's 'Metaphors we live by' was first published), the arguments presented here are not formally Cognitive Linguistic. However, the term 'metaphor' will be defined broadly here from a Cognitive Linguistic viewpoint, as *one concept used to understand another concept* (Barcelona, 2002; Bartsch, 2002; Cameron, 2008; Deignan, 2008; Dirven & Pörings, 2002; Gibbs Jr, 2008; Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Lakoff & Turner, 2009; Langacker, 2009b; Warren, 2002). While the definition of metaphor used here is derived from Cognitive Linguistics, the semantic analysis and arguments presented are of a more traditional nature<sup>1</sup>. SA events, formalized as: [SA: *find/lose/catch* + reflexive x-self]<sup>2</sup>, are shown to be a nontrivial semantic subcategory of reflexive events in English, instantiated by corpus data<sup>3</sup>, as exemplified below:

1. *In 1978, while covering California politics, I found myself on election night at the Century Plaza Hotel.* (COCA:2005.MAG.WashMonth)
2. *The memory was so strong that he lost himself in it.* (BNC:FP7.W\_fic\_prose)
3. *To my horror, I caught myself admonishing her with my mother's words.*

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of SA events as a conceptual reality from a Cognitive Linguistic viewpoint, see Grossman (Hachinohe Gakuin University Research Journal, #51. December, 2015.)

<sup>2</sup> 'x-self' refers generically to the English reflexive pronouns; *myself*, *yourself*, etc. used specifically with reflexive meaning, excluding intensifying, benefactive and logophoric meanings.

<sup>3</sup> Data from The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) as well as the British National Corpus (BNC) were implemented in this research.

(COCA:1992.FIC.Radiance)

Metaphoricity of the reflexive event is the result of an underlying conception of the gain or loss of Self-Awareness. Examples such as (1-3) above are marked with the reflexive construction and contain transitive verbs, but differ in fundamental ways from prototypical reflexive and transitive events. Furthermore, SA events differ from other ‘metaphorical’ reflexive events such as:

4. *Over and over, he asked himself how he could have been so dumb.*  
(COCA:2012.FIC.FantasySciFi)
5. *...after a while, she made herself go back to the hospital.*  
(BNC:FSP.W\_fict\_prose)
6. *...his fingers slipped and he burned himself on the hot barrel.*  
(COCA:2004.FIC.VirginiaQRev)

In (4-6), there are concretely identifiable pronoun-antecedent referents. In (4), one part of the mind asks another part of the mind a question (this may also be literally plausible, as one may actually hear a question formed in the mind), a phenomenon called the Divided-Person or Divided-Self (Gilquin, 2010; Lakoff, 1996; Langacker, 1990; Talmy, 2000b). In (5), based on this Divided Self plus force dynamic principles, one part of the mind forces or assumes control over another part (Comrie, 1989; Gilquin, 2010; König & Gast, 2002, 2008); Talmy (2000a)), and in (6) the metonymic reflexive event refers to a whole-for-part relationship, i.e., the whole person (*himself*) ‘stands for’ part of the body (fingers or other body part, but not the total).

Compared to these, the identity of the referents in SA events seem ambiguous at best. When one *finds, loses, and catches oneself*, to what, exactly, is one referring? The nominals of SA events refer to the *Awareness* of a mental or physical *perception*. It is this mental function that is being uniquely identified. *Awareness of perception* involves 3-steps: 1) A stimulus affecting the body/mind 2) recognition of (and possible reaction to) stimulus (i.e., *perception*, if the stimulus is strong enough), and 3) An *Awareness* of this recognition (or reaction) to the perception (if self-monitoring is evident).

The discussion that follows proposes lexicographic, semantic and corpus arguments supporting Self-Awareness as the motivating conception for the construal and predication of three metaphorically-extended verbs (*find/lose/catch*) when used within the reflexive construction.

## 2 Lexical Considerations

Meanings of individual lexical items vary and may function differently in different environments. “...we need only to glance at a good grammar or dictionary of a language or think about the languages we know to see that this is the way languages operate. Polysemy is a pervasive property of human language, not just in the lexical domain but also in grammar.” (Kemmer, 1993:5) Even in isolation, the three verbs that occur with SA events (*find/lose/catch*) vary greatly in their definitions. It is only when the SA event is proposed as a unifying concept that semantic anomalies (i.e., metaphoricity) can be categorically delineated.

2.1 Find oneself

Twenty-one different meanings are listed for the verb *find* in the corpus-based Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online<sup>4</sup>. ("Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English," 2014) For reasons of brevity, only cases where the reflexive construction is provided as support for the definitions are presented here. Definition four in the LDOCE is listed as: do something without meaning to - to be in a particular state or do a particular thing, or to realize that this is happening, especially when you did not expect or intend it. The example provided is:

7. *After wandering around, we found ourselves back at the hotel* (ibid.)

The sub-definition is listed: find yourself/your mind etc. doing something :

8. *When he left, Karen found herself heaving a huge sigh of relief* (ibid.)

In (7) and (8), the LDOC proposes that something that was not *intended* or *expected* had occurred, i.e., being *back at the hotel* and *sighing in relief*. Reviewed in detail below, the meaning of *intent/expectation* is not the underlying motivation for these reflexive events; it is only a consequence of each particular context/situation. Whatever the physical/mental experience (based on stimulus perception), the reflexive events containing the verb *find* construe an Awareness of each experience. *Expectation/intention*, being one type of mental perception, falls under this category as well. Therefore, there is no need to further complicate the issue by proposing individual definitions based on individual perceptions/experiences. An overall SA event semantic category neatly and economically covers most examples.

There is one definition of *find*, however, that does not 'fit' and requires further consideration. This is definition 16: find yourself, 'informal' - to discover what you are really like and what you want to do – often used humorously. The example provided is:

9. *She went to India to find herself.*

("Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English," 2014)

The sense of the reflexive event here, described in Lakoff (1996) as the '*true Self*' metaphor, differs from the SA event construal proposed in this discussion. Quoting in full:

"The "true self" names the Self that is compatible with the values of the subject... finding "one's true self" is realizing previously unrealized aspects of oneself that are compatible with judgments of one's experiencing consciousness...Examples: *He found himself in writing...He went to India to look for his true self, but all he came back with was a pair of sandals.*"

(Lakoff, 1996, p. 106)

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<sup>4</sup> A corpus-based dictionary was employed to exemplify language usage in society.

It would seem that the first example from Lakoff's quote also constitutes a case of SA, given that *writing* is an activity based on perceptual experiences. However, contrasting examples clarifies the ambiguity:

10a. *He found himself in writing.* (*true Self*)

b. *He found himself writing not in one voice, but a cacophony of voices...*

(COCA:1993.SPOK.NPR\_ATC)

The difference in construal between the SA event and the '*true-Self*' metaphor is the presence/absence of perceptual/experiential Self-Awareness. Even though *finding one's true Self* is also an experience, and this cannot be refuted, it is a very different type of experience (based on the Divided Self phenomenon) that is construed; the '*true Self*' is construed as a unique entity in and of itself, and therefore displays very different qualities from that of SA events, which only aim to focus the interlocutors attention on the Self-Awareness (or lack thereof) of some perception/experience of the Experiencer.

Corpus data reveals that SA event predications are followed immediately by the details of the perception/experience by a predicate and/or prepositional phrase. Ambiguity only occurs between SA events and '*true Self*' when *x-self* is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*, and/or when the predication is in clause-final position. All other instances show this disparity clearly. In other words, in (10a), the '*true Self*' is the focus of perception/experience, but *Awareness of this* by the Experiencer is ambiguous (even though *Awareness* is certainly available to the Narrator's 'Point of View').<sup>6</sup> In (10b), however, *writing* is the perception/experience, while *Self-Awareness by the Experiencer* occurs as an independent phenomenon. If SA events are proposed as the unifying concept for metaphorical uses of [*find + reflexive x-self*],<sup>7</sup> then the examples above can easily be delineated and categorized as instances of SA, with a sub-category for the '*true Self*' metaphor.

This focus on *Self-Awareness of perceptions* is provided for definition 5b of the Oxford English Dictionary (2008): *To perceive oneself to be in a specified place or position, or condition of body or mind*, with example:

11. *We found ourselves opposed by a parapet of congealed snow.*

(1823 F. Clissold, Narr. Ascent Mont Blanc 21) (ibid.)

In (11), it is the *Awareness* of the experience of being *opposed by a parapet of snow* that is the focal concept. If the experience itself were the focus, more pragmatically and semantically economical sentences such as (12) and (13) would best suit that conception:

12. *We were opposed by a parapet of congealed snow.*

13. *A parapet of congealed snow blocked our way.*

<sup>5</sup> COCA and BNC random sample; *n* = 500; search criteria = [pp\*] [find] [ppx\*].

<sup>6</sup> For more on Point of View, see (Cantrall, 1974; Frajzyngier, 2000; Kemmer, 1993; Langacker, 1990, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> According to corpus data, they should be. In the random samples from the COCA and the BNC (*n* = 200 total), the '*true Self*' metaphor occurred only 0.5%, while SA events accounted for 98.5%.

In sum, predication of the verb *find* within the reflexive construction indicates the Narrator's motivation to construe the Experiencer's *Awareness of some perception/experience* as the focal conception.

## 2.2 Lose oneself

The verb *lose* exhibits the same type of SA event, albeit from the conception of the *current absence of Self-Awareness*. Examining the verb *lose* in the LDOCE, the only definition directly related to reflexive use is 15: "lose yourself in something --to be paying so much attention to something that you do not notice anything else:

14. *She listened intently to the music, losing herself in its beauty.*  
("Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English," 2014)

The focus of this definition, to *not notice anything else* means to have no perception of it, i.e., to be *unaware* of it. This sense of *lose* construes the *loss of Awareness of one's perception/experience*, an SA event. As proposed above for *find*, SA events with the verb *lose* refer to the loss of an independent meta-perception, distinct from any particular physical/mental perception. SA events refer to the *Awareness* of an experience, not the physical/mental experience itself.

Definition number 10 the OEDO (2008) contains two sub-entries for [lose]: 1) *To lose one's (or its) identity; to become merged (in something else)*, and 2) *To become deeply absorbed or engrossed (in thought, etc.); to be bewildered, overwhelmed (in wonder); to be distracted, lose one's wits (from emotion or excitement)*. The reflexive example from the first sense is:

15. *I love to lose myself in other men's minds*  
(1822 C. LAMB *Detached Thoughts on Bks. in Elia* 2nd Ser.)

Four examples appear under the second sense:

16. *These strong Egyptian Fetters I must breake, Or loose my selfe in dotage* (a1616 Shakespeare *Antony & Cleopatra* (1623) I.ii.110).  
17. *I almost lose my selfe In joy to meete him* (1639 J. Shirley *Maides Revenge* IV.sig.G2<sup>v</sup>).  
18. *As I pace the darkened chamber and lose myself in melancholy musings...* (1809 'D. Knickerbocker' *Hist.N.Y.I.II.V.109*).  
19. *Her voice was low at first, but she soon lost herself, and then it rose above the other voices* (1890 T.H. Hall *Caine Bondman* III.vi).

The focal concept of SA can easily be recovered in (15-19). The *loss of Self-Awareness* drives the conceptions and subsequently the construals and predications. It is the perceptions/experiences (i.e., *other men's minds, dotage, joy, melancholy, bashfulness*) of which the Experiencers are completely and totally aware. As such, they have temporarily *lost* their *Self-Awareness*. Therefore, *lose x-self* can also be classified lexically (and semantically) as an SA event.

There is, as with *find*, a different construal for *lose x-self* that needs to be addressed, given as sub-definition (1) from definition (10) above. This, again, is the construal of the ‘true Self’ metaphor, exemplified in (20) and (21):

20. *They were afraid of losing themselves as people.* (COCA:#37:1993,ACAD,AmerEthicHis)

21. [Spock, after a fit of rage]: *I’ve lost myself. I do not know who I am.* (Star Trek, Original TV Series: Episode 3.23)

In these examples, it is not Self-Awareness that is lost, but a deeper, more substantial core identity, the ‘true Self’.

These examples, taken as a whole, counter the claim that, “Given that *lose* and *find* are opposites, why isn’t *I found myself in writing* the opposite of *I lost myself in writing*?” (Lakoff, 1996, p. 100) The proposal here is that they are opposite. There just happen to be two sets of construals: [SA event: *find/lose x-self*] and [true Self: *find/lose x-self*]. As with [SA: *find x-self*], [SA: *lose x-self*] can also be identified in the corpus by the perceptual experience (mainly) following the reflexive construction, most often in a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*. The ‘true Self’ metaphor occurs in clause-final position.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.3 Catch oneself

One other verb that construes SA events is *catch*, and conveys a similar meaning to that of [SA: *find x-self*]. Definition 24 of the LDOCE states: ‘*catch yourself doing something, to suddenly realize you are doing something* :

22. “*Standing there listening to the song, he caught himself smiling from ear to ear.*” (“Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English,” 2014)

Focus on the Awareness of some experience is consistent with that of SA *find* described above. The experience of *smiling ear to ear* is not itself the conceptual focus, but the Awareness of that large smile is.

Another definition for *catch* (related to SA events) is definition 27: *To check, interrupt in speaking.* Two examples are given:

23. *Not that I do (he presently caught himself) in the least confess, etc.* (1670, C Cotton tr. G. Girard Hist. Life Duke of Espernon III.xii.623).

24. *Saying on Day thus...he immediately catch’d himself, and fell into this Reflection* (a1726 W. Penn WKS.I.App.233). (ibid.)

<sup>8</sup> Instances of SA [*lose*] events;  $n = 171$  (86%) in the COCA and BNC (random sample  $n = 199$  total). The preposition *in* following the SA event  $n = 70$  (35%). Instances of the ‘true Self’ metaphor  $n = 28$  (14%); ‘true Self in clause final position,  $n = 28$  (100%).

Examples (23) and (24) also demonstrate SA events, [*catch + reflexive x-self*], to construe a *Self-Awareness* that emerges during some other perception/experience.

25. *Then, she caught herself smiling.* (BNC:ACB,W\_fict\_prose)

26. *'Does anyone?' she caught herself saying rashly.* (BNC:H8H,W\_fict\_prose)

27. *I caught myself scratching my arm and stopped.* (COCA:2007,FIC,Bk:FoulPlay)

In all cases, *Self-Awareness* is construed and expressed by way of the metaphorical sense of the verb *catch* used within a reflexive event. This is also an SA event and displays the same tendency in the corpus to detail the type of perception/experience following the SA event.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.4 Section Summary

Two verbs, *find* and *catch*, when occurring within the reflexive construction, construe the meaning of the emergence of *Self-Awareness* of some perception/experience. The verb *lose*, on the other hand, construes the *absence of Self-Awareness* of some perception/experience. Furthermore, [*find/lose + x-self*] may also construe the less frequent 'true Self' metaphor under conditions such as clause final position and followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*. It is proposed here that the term *Self-Awareness* be used as an overarching delineation and classification of the various occurrences discussed. The term, *SA event*, is used to describe a reflexive construction containing one of the verbs (*find/lose/catch*) the conception and construal of which convey the emergence (*find/catch*) or loss (*lose*) of *Self-Awareness of some perception/experience*.

## 3 Reflexivity and SA events

The complexities of delineating dictionary definitions in relation to SA events were considered in Part 2. Defining the reflexive construction in relation to SA events is just as complex. According to the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (1999), there are four main functions of the reflexive construction: "marking co-reference with the subject, alternating with personal pronouns, marking emphatic identity, and empty reflexives" (pp. 342-345). 'Marking coreference' is the only function considered here, being the only environment in which SA events occur.

Considered first are descriptions of the reflexive pronoun. "In their purely reflexive use, these pronouns mark identity with the referent of the preceding noun phrase within the same clause, usually in subject position. The reflexive pronoun carries a different syntactic role; it is typically an object or complement in a prepositional phrase" (ibid., p. 342). In other words, reflexive pronouns have two functions: 1) to relate and mark coreference with another noun, and 2) to hold an object (or complement) relation in the phrase. Various descriptions in which the reflexive pronoun is 'used as object' appear in the literature. "You use a reflexive pronoun to make it clear that the object of a

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<sup>9</sup> From a random sample in COCA and BNC,  $n = 200$ . Instances of [*catch + reflexive x-self*] meaning Awareness of perception/experience,  $n = 188$  (94%).

verb is the same person or thing as the subject of the verb, or to emphasize this..." (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 2011, p. 34). This explanation is similar to that by Faltz, quoted in full:

The subject and object noun phrases are coreferent if and only if the object noun phrase consists of one of the words *myself*, *ourselves*, *yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *oneself*, or *themselves*. The presence of these reflexive pronouns in object position to mark coreference with the subject constitutes the primary reflexive strategy for English. (1985:4)

In other words, there is a syntactic entity called *subject* and a syntactic entity called *object*. Reflexive pronouns signal that these are the same entity. This seems straightforward, and purely syntactic definitions traditionally tethered coreferent nominals to each other without regard for the verb. However, the semantics of the predicate often affects the nominals with which they are aligned, creating ambiguous coreferent situations and the necessity to account for the semantics of the verb together with its nominals in descriptions of reflexivization. Following this, Gast and Siemund define reflexivity as, "...the co-indexation of two argument positions of a transitive predicate..." (2006:346). This definition considers the function of the verb in relation to its nominals, the restriction on the transitivity of the verb necessary given that two nominals are needed to co-refer. König and Gast suggest the following definition:

Reflexive pronouns (anaphors) are self-forms used in order to indicate that a semantic or syntactic argument of a predicate is co-referenced with another argument of the same predicate (co-argument), typically with the subject. This co-argument is called the antecedent of the reflexive pronoun. (2002:4)

They make a detailed argument for incorporating a semantic component into the definition of reflexivity, mainly to distinguish 'true' reflexives from polysemous intensifying and logophoric *x-self* meanings. Thus, in order to distinguish the different functions and environments in which the reflexive pronoun occurs, a definition of reflexivity that covers its semantic function is necessary. Without this semantic aspect, it is very difficult to account for predications where the semantics of the verb directly affects the whole structure of a phrase. Lange helps clarify and strengthen this claim:

...by extending the definition of reflexivity to include both syntactic and semantic arguments of predicates, examples like the following are also covered: (3.16) *John considers himself to be the perfect candidate.* (3.17) *Suddenly I found myself in a large cave.* Excluded from the class of reflexive anaphors are then all intensifying uses of *x-SELF* as well as 'logophoric' or 'untriggered' *SELF*-forms... (2007:37)

Although Lange uses (3.17) to make an argument for the necessity of a semantic definition of *x-self* to differentiate the various functions of the reflexive, it is also necessary in order to distinguish SA events from other reflexive event types, especially those that display metaphoricity. A strictly



syntactic definition can not account for the metaphoricity of (3.17), exemplified below with possible paraphrases (a-c):

- (3.17). *Suddenly I found myself in a large cave.*
- a. *I suddenly realized that I was in a cave.* (SA event)
  - b. *I suddenly realized my 'deep inner essence' in a cave.* (true Self metaphor)
  - c. *I found a mannequin (or picture) of me in a cave.* ('Picture noun phrase'<sup>10</sup>)

Accurately accounting for these types of events necessitates a precise definition of reflexive argument relations and their semantic functions, as well as the conceptual realities of the overall construals. At the risk of repetitiveness, stating that (3.17) is reflexive (inasmuch as it fulfills the syntactic/semantic requirements for such) does not, in itself, address the possibility and ambiguity of morphosyntactic polysemy. In other words, ambiguity arises due to polysemous predications *representing differing meanings*. The ramification of this is to understand that boundaries (if any) between conception and predication are fuzzy; and in accordance with most Cognitive Linguistic theories (especially Langacker (1985, 1987, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2009a)), there are no hard and set boundaries between meaning and syntax. Morpho-syntax is meaningful, meaning has structure, and each responds to the other on various levels in various contexts and for a variety of purposes. Accurate lexical, syntactic and semantic analyses of SA events must take the metaphoricity of the construal into account. The argument, as it has been stated until now, will hopefully show that the delineation of metaphoricity is possible within traditional linguistic analysis tools as long as the underlying assumptions take an individual's intended conception and construal as vital to morphosyntactic formulation.

### 3.1 The Semantics of Reflexivity

The mental state of Self-Awareness is proposed as the unifying concept for [*find, lose, catch*] when used within the reflexive construction. Two semantic factors that play a crucial role in further understanding reflexivity and the construal of SA events will now be discussed. The first is the distinction between *other-directed* and *non-other-directed* events. Incorporated into the meaning of verbs is whether or not its action is prototypically directed towards a Patient/Object. This will be seen as a major determinant for choosing the reflexive strategy as well. Following this, a discussion of the *transitive middle* and its relation to SA events will show that a semantic sub-component called *participant distinguishability* accurately accounts for SA in the context of transitivity as well as reflexivity.

### 3.2 Other-directed vs. non-other-directed events

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<sup>10</sup> See Kuno (1987) for more on this type 'picture noun phrase' construal.

The notion of *other-directedness* has been proposed as the underlying semantic motivation for ‘prototypical’ transitive events. *Other-directed* is defined as an event where an Agent *expects* the action of the verb to affect a Patient that is a separate entity from itself, i.e., the inherent predicate action is directed towards another (Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kemmer, 1993; König & Gast, 2002; König & Siemund, 2000a; König & Vezzosi, 2004; Lange, 2007). The definition of ‘prototypical transitive event’ used in this discussion concurs with Rice, quoted in full:

Two entities, which are usually conceived of as being asymmetrically related, are involved in some activity; the interaction between them is unidirectional; because there is movement and effect, contact between the two entities is presumed to take place, with the second entity being directly affected by the contact instigated by the first; finally, the entities are taken to be distinct from each other, from their locale or setting, and from the speaker/observer/conceptualizer. (2011:423)

Conversely, the reflexive event is used to signal an action of a typically *other-directed* event that is directed towards the originating entity of the action, *contrary to expectation*. This concept of *unexpectedness* has been described as a key motivational factor for the use of the English reflexive pronoun (Beck, 2006; Faltz, 1985; Kemmer, 1993; König & Siemund, 2000b; König & Vezzosi, 2004; Lange, 2007, 2011; Peitsara, 1997). On the other hand, a *non-other-directed* (i.e., self-directed) predicate refers to an event that is *expected* to have only one participant, i.e., intransitive events. Only one participant is expected to be involved in the action, and the same entity that causes the action is also affected by the action.

28. *Ignoring the discomfort, she squashed her bonnet back on her head.*

(COCA:2008:FIC.BI:FrontierCourship)

29. *We swam so easily to the stone village.* (COCA:2012.SPOK.PBS\_NewsHour)

30. *?We swam ourselves to the village.*

31. *She forced herself to admit the words.* (BNC:AOL.W\_fict\_prose)

In (28), the verb *squash* is ‘prototypically’ transitive, requiring an entity that initiates the ‘squashing’ and a separate entity that receives the ‘squashing’. In (29), a prototypically intransitive event, there is only one entity involved in the action, with the origination and goal of the action being identical. As such, the reflexive predication in (30), which also signals this congruency, is unnecessary and inappropriate (There are certain contexts where it *could* be appropriate, but it would certainly be a marked instance). In (31), the prototypically affected entity of the action is expected to be a separate entity, however, it is not. The reflexive pronoun signals coreference of the initiating and affected entities. Use of the anaphoric pronoun results in an inappropriate reference to some other second entity, i.e., *She<sub>x</sub> forced her<sub>y</sub> to admit the words*. The reflexive pronoun is implemented to mark the *unexpected* coreferentiality of the participants in the event. This notion of *expectedness* is also thought to be the diachronic motivation for the morphological merger of ‘pronoun + *self*’ :

Without SELF, the more likely interpretation of the sentence would be that subject NP and pronouns are disjoint. By intensifying the pronoun, SELF indicates that the referent designated by the pronoun is central, thereby reversing the expected prototypical transitive

structure with two participants where an agent acts upon a patient...SELF signals that subject and object have the same referent. (Lange, 2007:57)

**Table 1.** (Konig & Siemund, 2000b:61)

<i>Non-other-directed</i>	<i>Other-directed</i>
Grooming Preparing, protecting Defending, liberating Be proud/ashamed of	Violent actions (killing, destroying) Emotions (love, hate) Communicating Be jealous of/angry with/pleased with

Whether verbs instantiate two separate participants of an event or one is illustrated in Table 1. The sub-categories listed under *non-other-directed* situations generally include intransitive verbs and those verbs that take the middle voice. Examples for each of these categories are; grooming, *John shaved*; preparing & protecting, *Jack was ready*; defending & liberating, *Jane was free*; and pride/shame, *Jessica was proud/ashamed*. Examples of *other-directed situations* are: violent actions, *John killed him*; emotions, *John loves Mary*; communicating, *John told him to write*; and the final category, *Mary was jealous of John, John was angry with Mary, John was pleased with Mary*. If we apply the concept of *unexpectedness of the coreferent entities* onto the sub-category of verbs listed under *other-directed* situations in Table 1, examples such as those (32-37) are predicated:

32. *John<sub>x</sub> killed him<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>x</sub>).*
33. *John<sub>x</sub> loves him<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>x</sub>).*
34. *? John<sub>x</sub> told him<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>x,y</sub>) to write.*
35. *?? Mary<sub>x</sub> is jealous of her<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>x,y</sub>).*
36. *John<sub>x</sub> is angry with him<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>x</sub>).*
37. *John<sub>x</sub> is pleased with him<sub>y</sub>(self<sub>y</sub>).*

Only two examples raise questions of well-formedness when the reflexive is applied. Example (34) is acceptable *iff* the events are construed metaphorically (via the Divided Self phenomenon), but the reflexive event in (35) is acceptable only where someone or something (e.g., an actress, wax figure, or picture) represents Mary and the real Mary is jealous of that representation.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, in all cases the reflexive signals an event that is prototypically expected to be *other-directed*, but that expectation is quashed by being construed as *non-other-directed*.

*Non-other-directed* events are those in which the verbs usually occur with only the affected semantic Subject (which is semantically indistinguishable from the Agent in English, but may be aligned with the Patient in Ergative languages (Bowers, 2002; Comrie, 1989; Dixon & Aikhenval'd, 2000)). For example, *grooming* verbs include sentences such as:

<sup>11</sup> However, even though the reflexive pronoun is employed, it can be argued that this is not a true case of coreferentiality because two separate entities are physically manifest, and therefore the direction of the action is unidirectional, i.e., a prototypical transitive event.

38. *While he shaved, he studied himself in the mirror.*  
(COCA:2012.FIC.Bk.WelcomeCommittee)
39. *She washed. The dirt and make-up came off easily...* (BNC:ALJ.W\_fict\_prose)
40. *I bathed, dressed, and broke my fast...* (BNC:GOA.W\_fict\_prose)

In these types of cases, the Agent and (unrealized) Patient are *expected* to be one and the same entity; therefore no reflexive strategy (nor overt Object/Patient) is required. Logically, if we *expect* these verbs to be *non-other-directed*, the contrary, *unexpected* situation should be that which is *other-directed*. This is seen to be the case:

41. *First, he cut his hair, then he shaved him.* (COCA:1996.FIC.Bk.FuneralNoon)
42. *He washed them, tucked the children in their beds...* (COCA:2004.NEWS.USAToday)
43. *Then she bathed her daughter's face...* (COCA:1991.SPOK.ABC\_SunNews)

Although in English these cases are not marked, they are semantically and pragmatically atypical, construing events in which the Object/Patient has very little control over his/her own actions and in which their prototypically pragmatic Agency has been essentially undermined.<sup>12</sup>

Examples (44-48) show that the *other-directed* vs. *non-other-directed* dichotomy accounts for SA events as well. In other words, use of the reflexive pronoun signals an *unexpected, non-other-directed* action of the transitive verb:

44. *...and as she watched the news again that night, she found herself crying for his children* (COCA:1990:FIC.Bk.BonfireVanities).
45. *For a time, he lost himself in the game...* (BNC:GUG.W\_fict\_prose).
46. *Worried thought I am, I catch myself dreaming of the trial*  
(COCA:1995:FIC.Bk.Rainmaker).

The semantics of prototypical reflexive events is preserved, evidenced by the need for the reflexive pronoun to mark an *unexpected, non-other-directed* construal.

Because the verbs *find*, *lose*, and *catch*, are inherently *other-directed*, interlocutors rely on the reflexive construction to reverse this *expectation*. The verb, once placed within the reflexive construction, is construed as *self-directed*, a conceptual shift of Point of View (POV) from Object-as-other to Object-as-self. This conceptual shift is likely related to the cross-domain/intra-domain shifts of metaphor/metonymy. Remembering the general definition of metaphor and metonymy: *one conception is used in place of another*, and *a concept that stands for another*, respectively, the

<sup>12</sup> A corpus query confirms the atypicality of this type of event (criteria= [pp\*] [shave/wash/bathe] [nn\*]). Query results (where [nn\*] is a human entity) in the BNC = 0. In COCA = [shave] = 2 (barber or professional shaving customers), [wash] = 1 (baby), [bathe] = 4 (babies or elderly).

similarity to the semantics of reflexivity is, I believe, no coincidence. This *shift in expected conception* is why the reflexive construction construes so many types of metaphor and metonymy. In other words, because the reflexive construction itself is based on a conceptual shift, metaphor and metonymy are easily construed for the event as a whole.

### 3.3 Prototypical Transitive Events

The research on transitivity is broad and very deep with a long history. Due to space considerations, however, a full account cannot be provided here. (see: Allerton, 2006; Comrie, 1989; Dixon, 2005; Faltz, 1985; Frajzyngier & Curl, 2000; Herbst & Götz-Votteler, 2007; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kemmer, 1993; Klaiman, 1991; König & Gast, 2008; Kulikov, Malchukov, & de Swart, 2006; Levin & Hovav, 2005; Næss, 2007; Rice, 2011). Although idiosyncrasies in theory and data often occur, formulaic theories that attempt to capture general tendencies in the data have also been postulated. Researchers have engaged in such an effort to delineate a 'prototypical transitive' notion (Bowers, 2002; Comrie, 1989; de Swart, 2006; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kalinina, Kolomatsky, & Sudobina, 2006; Kemmer, 1993; LaPolla, 1996; Næss, 2007; Rice, 2011; Rozas, 2007). One description of this *two-participant event* is Kemmer's observation that, "a prototypical two-participant event is defined as a verbal event in which a human entity (an Agent) acts volitionally, exerting physical force on an inanimate definite entity (a Patient) which is directly and completely affected by that event" (1993:50). This idea most likely originates from the description proposed by Hopper and Thompson,

...transitivity is traditionally understood as a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is 'carried-over' or 'transferred' from an agent to a patient. Transitivity in the traditional view thus necessarily involves at least two participants... and an action which is typically EFFECTIVE in some way (1980:251-253).

These two dimensions, 'transferred action' and 'affectedness of patient' seem to delineate the transitive event in general, but there are other dimensions of transitivity that have been proposed, one being the 'distinctness of participants', i.e., to what extent each individual/separate participant is construed to be. This is posited by way of 'The Maximally Distinct Arguments Hypothesis'. "A Prototypical transitive clause is one where the two participants are maximally semantically distinct in terms of their roles in the event described by the clause" (Næss, 2007:30). This notion of 'distinctness of participants', (whatever the terminology), is often cited as a crucial concept of transitivity. (Comrie, 1989; de Swart, 2006; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kemmer, 1993; Levin & Hovav, 2005; Rice, 2011)

Thus, there are certain semantic properties of a transitive event, i.e., 'distinctness of participants', 'transfer of action' and 'affectedness of patient' that are relevant to the basic notion of *prototypical transitivity*. One interesting quality of these properties is that they are thought to be gradient (Bowers, 2002; Comrie, 1989; de Swart, 2006; Dixon & Aikhenval'd, 2000; Geniusiene, 1987; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kalinina et al., 2006; Kemmer, 1993; LaPolla, 1996; Næss, 2007; Rice, 2011; Taylor, 2003).

It has been recognised for quite some time that the concept of "transitivity" behaves like a prototype category...In other words, membership of the category "transitive verb" or "transitive

clause” is gradable depending on an item’s degree of similarity to a central exemplar – a prototype structure. (Næss, 2007:12)

If the notion of gradable transitivity is taken as the modern standard for investigations into the *transitiveness* of an event, we must delineate the specific measures on which that scale is based. One of these metrics, proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), establishes ten distinct components that play a role in the prototypical transitivity of a clause, each component having a ‘high’ or ‘low’ quality, depending upon use in discourse. These components may be thought of as the semantic building blocks of a prototypical transitive event. The more building blocks a structure has, the more stable and concrete it becomes. The *prototypicality* of the transitive event is dependent upon the number and level of its semantic components. The more components relevant to the event that are high on the prototypicality scale, the more transitive the event, and vice-versa.

The first component of a transitive event (directly relevant to SA events) according to this transitivity matrix (ibid.) is an inherent ‘distinction of participants’. A prototypical transitive event involves two participants, as in (47), whereas an intransitive event involves only one participant, seen in (48). "...a transitive clause is one which describes an event which involves two distinct, independent participants, both in the sense that they are physically distinct and independent entities, and in the sense that their roles in the event are clearly distinct: there is only one instigating agent and only one affected "endpoint" (Næss, 2007:46).

47) *I asked my boss for a vacation for my birthday.*

48) *I went on vacation for my birthday.*

49) *I treated myself royally on my birthday.*

The reflexive event in (49), however, represents an interesting case. Only one actual person (entity) participates in the event, but that participant is construed and predicated as two separate entities. Thus, although structurally transitive, it is non-prototypical.

Compared to the prototypicality of *highly* distinct participants in (47) or to the intransitive event (*lowest* distinctness) in (48), the participants in (49) are ‘less’ distinct than (47) but ‘more’ distinct than (48), emphasizing and clarifying the gradient quality of transitivity mentioned above, as well as introducing the status of the reflexive event as occurring ‘midway’ between these transitivity poles.

Another component directly related to SA events in this transitivity matrix (Hopper & Thompson, 1980) is ‘Affectedness of O’, referring to “The degree to which an action is transferred to a patient<sup>13</sup> (and) is a function of how completely that patient is AFFECTED...” (pp. 252-253). Examples (50) and (51)<sup>14</sup> display this parameter, showing high and low degrees of transitivity, respectively. In these examples, *being shot* ‘affects the O’ more than *being considered* does, the first being a ‘physicality’

<sup>13</sup> Hopper and Thompson define the term ‘patient’ as “an O which is in fact the ‘receiver’ of the action in a cardinal (prototypical) transitive relationship” (1980:252) (my parenthesis).

<sup>14</sup> In order to control the environments surrounding the reflexive-transitive examples for contrastive and comparative purposes, original examples are used in (50-68).

and the second being only a 'mental' action. Other types of reflexive events, however, such as the causative in (52) and SA in (53-56) exhibit just how gradient this component can be. The Self-Aware action instantiates a low amount of 'Affectedness of O' (non-physicality) and therefore non-prototypical transitivity.

- 50) *The policeman shot himself in the foot.*
- 51) *The policeman considered himself a failure.*
- 52) *The policeman made himself apologize.*
- 53) *The policeman caught himself reaching for his gun.(SA)*
- 54) *The policeman found himself in prison.(SA)*
- 55) *The policeman found himself in prison.(true Self)*
- 56) *The policeman lost himself in thoughts of revenge.(SA)*

Even though Self-Awareness can be a dramatic and/or traumatic event, it is still a relatively non-physical, non-observable action. The quality of *Self-Awareness* is not a flow of action from Agent → Patient as much as an *emergence* (however quick) of Self-Awareness within the mind of the Experiencer (Agent-Patient). Precisely because of its intangibility (and the effects on the construal of the 'Affectedness of O'), SA events are categorized falling somewhere between prototypical transitive and intransitive events, i.e., the 'middle' ground.

Another component of the transitivity matrix immediately relevant to SA events is the 'Individuation of O', which "refers both to the distinctness of the patient from the A(gent) and to its distinctness from its own background" (ibid:253, my parenthesis). This component has been given vital importance for the notion of transitivity. "...the distinctness of participants is at the core of the notion of transitivity, and all lower-level "transitivity properties" can be understood as contributing in some way to this distinctness..." (Næss, 2007:122). Qualities of an individuated patient are that they is: proper, human/animate, concrete, singular, countable, and referential/definite, whereas non-individuated patients would have qualities such as: common, inanimate, abstract, plural, mass, and non-referential (Hopper & Thompson, 1980). According to this, (57-64) demonstrate a high-to-low gradient of transitivity, respectively:

- 57) *Bob pushed John.*
- 58) *The politician pushed the bill.*
- 59) *Congressmen pushed some bills.*
- 60) *Conservationists pushed reform.*
- 61) *Bob pushed himself.*
- 62) *The politician pushed himself.*
- 63) *Congressmen pushed themselves.*
- 64) *Some people pushed themselves.*

Complications arise when reflexive and metaphorical senses are considered. On the one hand, the Agents and Objects (i.e., Patients) are considered indistinct from one other, and therefore should rate low in individuation. On the other hand, A and O are considered structurally distinct from one another and from their own background, and therefore should rate high in 'individuation'.

The situation is even more interesting when SA events are considered. Due to the quality of the Self-Aware action (i.e., emergence of that internal mental state), there is very little 'Individuation of O'. As mentioned with regard to 'Affectedness of O', Self-Awareness as a non-physical, mental event defines the SA event, and as such, has ramifications for the 'Individuation of O' as well. Delineation of the SA event with regard to the 'Individuation of O' is twofold: 1) a non-static, gradable view of 'Individuation of O' is necessary and 2) different 'types' of reflexive events must be distinguished (i.e., literal, causative, SA, true Self, etc.), each having their own 'Individuation of O' signatures. Taking both of these parameters into account allows for typological generalizations of prototypicality to be upheld while also accommodating semantic and pragmatic idiosyncrasies within the metaphorical reflexive paradigm. Therefore, transitivity needs to be delineated along a gradient scale, from events that are highly prototypical to those that are highly non-prototypical, with a number of intermediate positions. These intermediate positions are often called the transitive 'middle', and is where SA events are located with regard to their transitivity.

Delineating a specific, cross-linguistic definition of 'middle' has proved daunting, however, due to the multiple phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic contexts with which it is related. Even within a single language, the number of meanings to which the 'middle' may be related can be numerous. For instance, in some (Tibeto-Burman) Chin languages, "there is a prefix *ki-* or *ng'*- (depending on the dialect), the semantics of which covers reflexive, reciprocal, stative, intransitivizer, indirect benefactive, reflexive and passive meanings, all meanings associated with middle marking" (LaPolla, 1996:13). The middle may be expressed by unique phonological markings (Smith, 2004) as in Romanian (Calude, 2007), by morphosyntactic marking such as Dutch (Ackema & Schoorlemmer, 1994), Greek (Lekakou, 2002), Sanskrit, Indo-European, Fula, Tamil (Klaiman, 1991), Russian (Faltz, 1985) and Spanish (Maldonado, 2000). It may also share its marking with the reflexive as in Tibeto-Burman (LaPolla, 1996) or passive as in Irish (Doyle, 2007), or have no overt marking like English and Dutch (Abraham, 1995; Kemmer, 1993). English middles, lacking a unique marking, share their marking with intransitive or reflexive events depending upon the verb. The difference between these is *the distance the participants are conceived of being from each other in relation to the event action*. Thus, a gradient can be established here as well with regard to how participants associated with an event action are construed, in other words, a gradable scale of *participant distinction*.

The notion of *participant distinction* (i.e. *distinguishability of participants* (Kemmer, 1993) has obvious associations with *gradient transitivity*.

Reflexives in many languages have properties which can be explained by appealing to their intermediate status between one-argument and two-argument clauses: compared with one-argument clauses, they may be more transitive, ...compared with two-argument causes, they typically display features associated with lower transitivity...(Hopper & Thompson, 1980:277)



Reflexive and middle events both represent intermediate positions between prototypical transitive poles and therefore must be distinguished. Lange explains, "...while the reflexive personal pronoun serves to indicate coreference with two-place predicates and therefore acts as a detransitivising device, the middle marker has no similar syntactic status...Verbs taking the middle marker are mostly intransitive in the first place." (2007:89). Lange considers 'middles' intransitive events based on their morphosyntactic (zero-) marking and valency criteria, while Hopper & Thompson (1980) consider reflexives and middles to be two functional 'intermediaries', insofar as they represent positions intermediate between the transitive and intransitive prototypes (i.e., the 'traditional' view of middle action based on action initiation and affect (Klaiman, 1991)<sup>15</sup>.

65) *Harry placed an apple on the chair.*

66) *Harry placed himself on the chair.*

67) *Harry sat on the chair.*

68) *It's raining.*

The two stances can be illustrated by examining (65-68). According to Lange, (65) would belong to the category *transitive*, (66) to the *less transitive* group due to the existence of a detransitivizing factor (the reflexive pronoun), and (67-68) are grouped together into *intransitive* events. Hopper & Thompson's view of these examples would be one gradable cline of transitivity based on semantic components, different positions along that axis representing degrees of transitivity. This transitivity matrix might be envisioned as a numerical scale ranging from 1-10<sup>16</sup>, where a rating of 1 represents highly prototypical transitive events (i.e., 65) and a 10 rating represents highly prototypically intransitive events (i.e., 68). Example (66) might be judged a 4-5 due to lack of differentiation of Agent/Patient (coreference), and (67) might fall near 6-7 due to the inherent semantic reflexivity of 'middle' verbs.

The purpose of comparison here is to emphasize the different approaches to the notion of transitivity when 'grey area' data are found. That being said, examining SA events in details will lead to a proposal more in line with Hopper and Thompson (1980), Kemmer (1993), de Swart (2006) and Næss (2007), i.e., that transitivity is subject to gradable nuances regardless of syntactic representation, the interpretation of which is dependent on semantic and pragmatic information. Kemmer calls these nuances *relative elaboration of events*:

...the degree to which the facets in a particular situation, i.e. the participants and conceivable component subevents in the situation, are distinguished...the speaker has a choice of either marking reference to events as undifferentiated wholes, or making reference to their substructures or component parts. Thus relative elaboration of events is the key property by which reflexive and middle events are distinguished (1993:208).

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<sup>15</sup> Although Klaiman rejects the view of 'middle' as a strictly detransitivizing device, he does admit typological relationships between the middle voice and affectedness, as well as transitivity and reflexivity (with respect to morphological patterning on the verbal lexicon).

<sup>16</sup> These numerical values have not been used in the literature as far as I am aware. They are used here only for descriptive purposes, but are similar in concept to de Swart's *Transitivity Continuum* (de Swart, 2006).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to recount the detailed argument Kemmer makes for reflexive, middle, and prototypical intransitive/intransitive events in relation to the *relative elaboration of events*. The argument can be summarized as consisting of two main components; *distinguishability of participants* and *initiation and affect* of the event action (i.e., the origin of the action and the affected entity of that action, respectively). These components interplay with voice (active vs. passive) and valency/transitivity in the conception, construal and predication of a transitive event (ibid).

The amount of *participant distinguishability* conceived for each event has immediate repercussions for the construal and predication of that event. The greatest level of distinction is two completely independent, sentient entities, as in (69) below. At the other end of the spectrum is a single, non-sentient (or empty) entity with no possibility of participant distinction, as in (70a, b), respectively<sup>17</sup>. And then there is everything in between. Many of these were discussed in relation to Hopper and Thompson's transitivity matrix<sup>18</sup>; therefore only those aspects directly related to SA events will be discussed.

69) *She looked over her shoulder and he kissed her.* (COCA:2012:FIC:Sailor)

70) a. *Willows and other small trees grew quickly.* (BNC:ADM.W\_non\_ac\_soc\_science)

b. *...but it snowed on Thursday.* (BNC:KE2.S\_conv)

71) *They dressed quickly...* (BNC:FRH.W\_fict\_prose)

72) *She saw herself in the hall mirror...* (COCA:2010.FIC.Bk.AnIrishCountry)

73) a. *A few years ago, she considered herself virtually homeless.*  
(COCA:2009.SPOK.NBC\_Dateline)

b. *She thinks herself a fool for marrying you?* (COCA:2005.FIC.NewYorker)

74) *Now she found herself strapped to a stretcher...* (COCA:2011.SPOK.NBC\_Dateline)

75) *She caught herself smiling ridiculously when he'd gone...* (BNC:JYF.W\_fict\_prose)

76) *...when we lost ourselves in our mutual passion.* (BNC:HGV.W\_fict\_prose)

Examples (70-76) exhibit varying degrees of participant distinguishability. In (70) and (71), the Patient need not be overtly expressed; the inherent semantics of the verb licenses the *expectation of conceptual coreference*. Discussed above for reflexivity, *expectation of coreference* is thought to be one factor that positions the middle event closer to one-participant (i.e., intransitive) events than the reflexive events (Kemmer, 1993). (72) and (73) are conceived and construed as intermediate between the prototypical transitive and intransitive poles. The non-metaphorical direct reflexive events<sup>19</sup> in (72) and (73) are construed as two participant events in which the Patient happens to be the same entity as the Agent (ibid). The difference lies in the individuation (Hopper & Thompson, 1980) or distinctness (Kemmer, 1993) of the Patient related to the Agent. In (72), the *mirror reflection* is more distinct from the *seer* than is the distinctness of the *idea of self* that is *considered/thought by the thinker* in (73a,b). The notion of distinctness of Patient or Object (from

<sup>17</sup> See Dowty (1991) for an interesting distinction for the semantic 'proto-roles' of Agent and Patient.

<sup>18</sup> See Næss (2007) and Kemmer (1993) for similar but more concise versions of this matrix.

<sup>19</sup> 'Indirect reflexive' events are described as events in which the Patient assumes a Benefactive, Instrumental or other adjunctive role (regardless of syntax), such as "I did it for myself" and 'I did it by myself' etc. Due to the differences in construal, however, they will not be discussed here. For further reading, see (Dixon & Aikhenval 'd, 2000; Geniusiene, 1987; Helke, 1979; Kemmer, 1993; Lange, 2007; Lederer, 2013; Næss, 2007).

Agent) related to transitivity has been noted within and across languages, although called by various names and described within various theoretical constructs (Comrie, 1989; de Swart, 2006; Dowty, 1991; Frajzyngier, 2000; Geniesiene, 1987; Hopper & Thompson, 1980; Kemmer, 1993; Lange, 2007; Levin & Hovav, 2005; Maldonado, 2000; Næss, 2007; Onishi, 2000; Peitsara, 1997; Safir, 2004; Stephens, 2006; Taylor, 2003).

SA events (74-76) represent interesting *distinction of participant* cases. On the one hand, the metaphoricity of the events can be analyzed as synonymous with the non-metaphorical senses and given prototypical reflexive semantics, i.e., the ‘participant distinctions’ of *find*, *catch*, and *lose* do not change; they are construed as separate entities (even though in reality they are not). On the other hand (the one developed here), the metaphoricity of SA events changes its inherent semantics, manifesting a unique *distinctness of participant* signature. *Finding/catching/losing x-self* entails minimal conceptual participant distinction, less than non-SA metaphorical events but more than other prototypical middle events (which, noted above, include participant distinction properties within the verb semantics). Furthermore, SA events are also distinguished from other mental event verbs such as *consider* or *think*, which construe an independent (albeit non-tangible) sense of Patient. In sum, then, in regard to *distinction of participants*, SA events are construed as intermediary between non-SA reflexive and middle events.

In conclusion to this section, metaphorical *find*, *catch*, and *lose* do not involve the actual physical or non-physical *finding*, *catching*, or *losing* of an object, which are transitive events and have high participant distinguishability and directional action flow. SA events construe *an emergent Awareness of one’s perception/experience*. SA events rate low on the scale of ‘distinguishability of participants’. There is only one participant, similar to intransitive and middle events. In other words, SA events express a *minimal conceptual differentiation of referential entities* due to the quality of Self-Aware mental state. Therefore, SA events are categorized as non-prototypical *middle* events, slightly more transitive than prototypical middle events but less transitive than literal reflexive events.

#### 4. Conclusions

In sum, SA events are metaphorically conceived, construed, and predicated by way of the verbs *find*, *catch*, and *lose* when used within reflexive constructions. Lexicographical and grammatical definitions fail to account for the conceptual logic of the mental state of Self-Awareness motivating ‘idiosyncratic’ data. *Self-Awareness*, used as an amalgamating category, economically accounts for the data.

A precise description of semantic components is vital for the proper categorization and delineation of SA events with regard to reflexivity and transitivity. Generalizations for the transitivity of prototypical reflexive and middle events gloss over important differences in their *relative elaboration of events*. Simply classifying SA events as reflexive or transitive fails to account for their unique *participant distinguishability* signatures. When distinct semantic components of reflexivity and transitivity are realized as gradient, then metaphorical analyses proceeds smoothly and efficiently. SA events represent instances found ‘midway’ between previously defined semantic

categorizations of reflexivity and transitivity, motivated by the metaphoricity of the SA construal. The underlying conceptual motivation for both reflexivity and general metaphoricity were both seen to be a result of conceptual shifting; for reflexivity, a point of view shift from *other-directed* to *self-directed* action, and for general metaphoricity, a shift from one categorical concept to another.

In conclusion, this study identified and categorized SA events lexically, structurally and semantically, providing an accurate account of a subtle but productive metaphor in English, namely the metaphorical construal and predication of the mental state of Self-Awareness by way of three verbs, *find*, *catch*, and *lose*, employed within the reflexive construction. The argument presented here will, I hope, benefit future linguistic and cognitive investigations into Self-Awareness and metaphor.

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