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A Cognitive-Linguistic Perspective on the Relationship of Activity to Occupation

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Introduction
One approach of cognitive science has been to analyze the conceptual logic of language. Language treats these basic concepts; entities, events, states, and actions and the relationships between them in time and space in ways that are universally recognizable across language boundaries. Language is thus seen as a window into cognitive processes. It has been difficult to arrive at a consensus about the relationships between certain basic concepts of occupational therapy. Some of these will be discussed in light of the proposed cognitive processes described below.

Objectives
• Review the relevant cognitive processes
• Investigate their role in formulating concepts
• Analyse how these contribute to the difficulties encountered with the conceptual components of ICF: activity/participation; occupation and activity as defined by the Framework: Domain & Process in the USA and the Taxonomic Code of Occupational Performance in Canada; and activity theory: activity/action/operation

Description
Constructs that have proven to be of value in dealing with the environment in the course of human evolution and which will be presented are nouns: entities, states and events, and verbs: acting, being, moving, possessing and a family of causal effectors. Entities are conceived of as substances, countable units or aggregates. The particular type of entity the concept takes determines whether the boundary characteristics or other characteristics are used in describing relationships. In relationships, one of the entities is often collapsed to a point, losing its characteristics. Changes of state are conceptually treated as movement in space from one state to the other. Time can be instantaneous, bounded or indefinite intervals.

Discussion
These constructs, particularly the durative, which describes whether or not the event has an intrinsic endpoint, determine our understanding of the concepts we use to describe the world. It is then difficult to satisfy the one-dimensionality required of a hierarchy or independent categories that are expected in theoretical models.

Contribution to the practice of occupational therapy
An appreciation of the cognitive processes that are used to experience the everyday world in practice should inform theory within occupational therapy as a scientific discipline.