Attila Imre (2013) A cognitive approach to the Hungarian preverb végig, in Benő Attila–Fazakas Emese – Kádár Edit (ed.) „... hogy legyen a víznek lefolyása ...” Köszöntő kötet Szilágyi N. Sándor tiszteletére. Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 187–198. ISBN 978-606-8178-72-1.

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A cognitive approach to the Hungarian preverb *végig*

In honour of Sándor N. Szilágyi

1. Introduction

One of the most complicated things is to study human experience. The development of cognitive linguistics offered new and interesting approaches, among which human experience deriving from the surrounding space must be mentioned.

The human experience – according to scientists – comes from the observation of the environment, an environment which is rather subjective, as “we are first and foremost spatial and visual creatures” (Langacker 1999a: 203). An observer’s experience is enabled, shaped, and ineluctably constrained by its biological endowment. Before arguing that physical experience is but one of the many possibilities of experience, let us focus on Lakoff and Johnson’s view: “We are not claiming that physical experience is in any way more basic than other kinds of experience, whether emotional, mental, cultural or whatever. All of these experiences may be just as basic as physical experiences. Rather, what we are claiming about grounding is that we typically conceptualize the non-physical in terms of the physical … that is, we conceptualize the less clearly delineated in terms of more clearly delineated” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 59).

We may conclude that the notion of (physical) perception is vital for human beings, but perception “is not a problem” (Frith 2007: 111). However, there is a problem, as Frith correctly observes that the perception of the brain is in fact “an illusion created by our brains” (Frith 2007: 111). Our brain gathers information from our senses, leading to the concept of the ideal Bayesian observer, thus “weak evidence is ignored; strong evidence is emphasized” (Frith 2007: 124). Infants understand spatial relationships and concepts of motion before they are able to use words to describe them, leading us to the recognition that “human beings naturally use space, motion, and the senses as domains for conceptually structuring less concrete, even entirely abstract aspects of our experience” (Frith 2007: 124).

As perception and motion are interrelated, it is worth discussing the concept of an object moving through space. Langacker mentions that in this case mental scanning through the spatial domain is involved (Langacker 1999a: 172); Ribout concludes that all relationships expressed by prepositions can be reduced to stability and movement in space and time (Ribout 2002: 85). Our physical body in the surrounding space is the

primal source of information, a body, which "necessarily has physical viewpoint" and "human bodies share structure which ensures that they can see forwards but not backwards, can access objects in front of them better than ones in back of them, can move forwards better than backwards, and of course are experiencing a gravitic environment in which we are normally able to stand on our feet rather than our heads" (Sweetser 2007: 216).

Lakoff and Johnson state that "[t]he structure of our spatial concepts emerges from our constant spatial experience, that is, our interaction with the physical environment". Edelman (2007: 429) supports the idea that space should serve as a natural scaffolding for supporting structured representations, whose roots go back to the ancient mnemonic method of loci. Langacker mentions another aspect of conception: people are more concerned with what they are conceiving than in the particular way they are doing that (Langacker 1999b: 46).

The conceived space, together with its components, forms a whole system with landmark (LM), trajectory (TR), source, path and goal, originally deriving from Langacker, then taken over by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and many others. Our effort to follow the Lakoffian findings in describing a part of language in terms of spatial concepts is merely one of the possibilities to have a view upon language. A spatial account of abstract conceptual categories helps us in understanding, and the combination of objective space and human (subjective mind) in fact (re)creates the world. But in this case, we have to take into account SPACE, which (more or less similarly to number and time) is first perceived before it is conceptualized (we operate with terms like *long, short, high, low, deep, close, distant, left,* and *right*). Relatively, it was not long ago (the foundation of geometry) that this rather long and fuzzy set of characteristics were simplified and rationalized by terms like *height, width, profundity, distance* and *position* (Ribout 2002: 145).

Vision – although not exclusively – constitutes a central means of apprehending space (Langacker 1999a: 204–7) and a spatial vantage point is offered by the speaker's location, "more abstractly, the time of speaking is a temporal vantage point".

Another evergreen topic connected to the aforementioned ones is the dichotomy of body and mind, a problem discussed by Chomsky (1988), stating that "the mind-body problem can be posed sensibly only insofar as we have a definite conception of body", but "there is no clear and definite concept of body".

Under normal circumstances body comes first, but occasionally it may happen that MIND precedes BODY. To illustrate this, we would like to mention the fragment from *Avatar,* when the protagonist is given a new body. The film presents successfully this feeling, and we have to accept that hardly can language describe the feeling when after the wheelchairs toes delve in the earth for the first time.

2. SPACE and prepositions

Brugman's seminal work on prepositions (1988) started a revolution within cognitive linguistics, which came to complete (and not necessarily compete with) generative linguistics (Imre 2010). The study of *over* offered the possibility to analyse all the 'marginal' morphological categories starting from perception, world-knowledge, image

schema and prototype theory. As we analysed the rather intricate system of prepositions, we can conclude that space serves as the scaffolding in their understanding, and the more cases within a category come up, the more our brain/knowledge tries to "fit them into" the previous schema.

We suppose that the linguistic modelling of prepositions in various languages must be similar, though not identical; if the cognitive approach to the English *over* brings into picture *through, above, across* or *beyond,* then the cognitive approach to the Hungarian *át* will involve the discussion of *keresztül, felett/fölött/felül* and *túl.* The moment we mention any of these items, either starting with a verb (verbal preposition, verbal prefix) or without (preposition), our brain tries to create an acceptable space for that: *jump over* (English), *átugrik* (Hungarian), probably starting from the ICM/image schema, as our brain contains many maps and models to make predictions and simulate actions. As Frith explains: "A system that constructs models of the outside world in this way will use any information it can get to help it make better models. No preference is given to vision or sound or touch as long as they are informative. And the system will make predictions about how the signals coming from all the senses will change when I act on the world" (Frith 2007: 127). For instance, if the TR touches the LM while in motion, we can say that there is an *on* relationship between the two, but if there is some space between the two, the relationship changes into *over/above.* The latter can be further differentiated: if distance is viewed as relatively small, than we likely choose *above*, but if it is huge, *over* is highly preferred in a canonical view (Imre 2010). However, TR and LM are usually included schematically, as an open slot (Langacker 1986: 8).

On the other hand, the most important function of a preposition is to establish connection (Guțu Romalo 2005: 607) and as such, it is part of a structure with three elements, being placed between two autonomous lexical terms. For instance, with the help of the prototypical spatial case, the very complex Hungarian *át* initially was split into six major categories, but further subdivision was also needed (Imre 2010a). After having discussed the major senses of *át* – through boundary/obstacle, through aperture, over/above/across, change, from–to, (partial) cover –, we were able to identify 78 less central senses. Furthermore, a more complete picture includes *keresztül* 'through, across', *felett/fölött/felül* 'above', *túl* 'across, beyond' and *végig* 'throughout, along' as well.

The Hungarian *keresztül* seems to be a partial synonym to *át* 'through', but at a closer look we were able to identify eight distinct categories, such as *keresztül* 'through, through aperture, over/above, through/across horizontal, again, block, time and instrumental'. For instance:

Keresztüljárta a hideg.
'The cold went through him over and over again.' (*keresztül* 'again')

Tüskék keresztülfekszik útját.
'Thorns thwart his advancement.' (*keresztül* 'block')

A sajtón keresztül értesült a történtekről.
'He gathered from the papers what happened.' (*keresztül* instrumental)

Much fewer cases were found regarding *fölött/felett* (above level/amount, time, cover), whereas in case of *felül* it is worth considering its different grammatical functions: adverb, postposition and preverb (verbal prefix). A partial conclusion may be that a large number of "everyday objects and experiences are categorised as specific instances of the schematic concept CONTAINER", including less obvious (metaphorical) containers (Evans and Green 2006), and the CONTAINER schema consists of the structural elements *interior, boundary* and *exterior,* which are the minimum requirements for a CONTAINER, according to Lakoff (cf. Imre 2010: 43).

3. The Hungarian preverb *végig*

According to Sebestyén (cf. Korponay 1986: 15), the Hungarian postpositions *át* 'through', 'across', *keresztül* 'through', *túl* 'beyond' and *végig* 'along' belong to the same group, and they "could be referred to as adverbial postpositions, the primary function of these lexical items being adverbial". We could add that *felül, felett* and *fölött* also belong to this group (Imre 2010). Furthermore, Palmer explains that "it might be plausible to argue that English does not, in fact, have two word classes, adverb and preposition, but a single class 'particle' or, perhaps, 'prepositional adverb' (Palmer 1988: 218). However, it is worth noticing that due to a specific language typology (Klaudy 2003) Hungarian prepositional adverbs may easily turn into either postpositions or preverbs (verbal prefixes).

As our primary concern is the analysis of *végig* 'throughout', 'along' as a preverb, in the following we will investigate nearly three hundred verbs prefixed by *végig* (more exactly 293), arguing that the results will – to a large extent – be valid for *végig* as postposition or prepositional adverb as well. The data was extracted from the Dictionary of the Hungarian Language, volume VII (Bárczi 1992).

3.1. The central sense (S along a linear C)

The central sense of *végig* may be associated with an object (S) moving along a typically linear path (C), which is extended and S is supposed to move from one end of it to the other:

A játékos ***végig****fut a pályán.* 'The player runs along the pitch.'
Végig*húzta a kocsit az utcán.* 'He dragged the cart along the street.'

Naturally, there are many possibilities to advance along the path: slowly, vigorously, rolling, with effort involved. In the prototypical scenario S is most typically a person, but it may also be a body part (hand), whereas C is most typically a street, road, corridor, hall, room, bridge, path, floor, or a body part (face, forehead). The occurrence of this case is the highest of all, nearly 20% of all the recorded cases (58 of 293). The central sense of *végig* also warns us that the motion of S is 'from one end to the other', thus the 'running time' should be considered.

Although rare, complex case scenarios may be formed as well; a typical case is when the motion is only conveyed by the preverb *végig* combined with a verb referring to something else than motion:

A gyerek ***végig****bőgte az utcát.* 'The kid was blubbing all the way (while he was advancing down the street).'

In our view it is important to highlight that after the event is consumed, 'no trace is left behind', as in the following parts we will present variants of the central category when 'leaving a trace' is encoded in the meaning of the verb.

3.2. *Végig* along/through, trace left, (no) split

In this case S heavily interacts with C, leaving a trace (hurting C), usually by cutting it:

A szilánk ***végig****hasította az arcát.* 'The splinter cut open his face.'

However, in the majority of cases S does not split C in two, although in particular cases we can observe that C may be divided into C_a and C_b. In case the impact between S and C is greater while S moves along, it may result in splitting C to C_1 and C_2:

Végig*vágta a szövetet.* 'She slit the cloth (into two).'

Furthermore, there are even 'reflexive' cases, when C produces this split/slit in two all by itself due to overuse:

Kabátja ***végig****repedt.* 'His coat has torn all along.'

As one could observe, in the examples above we have tried to select clearly non-metaphorical cases only. However, as we already described (Imre 2010), if any component of an ICM (S, C, action represented by the verb) turns metaphorical, the entire image is metaphorized; within this category we found two examples: the road cutting through the forest and the pang shooting through the back.

3.3. *Végig* partially along, hit

In this case S is 'equipped' with a 'tool' (hand, bat, club, cudgel, bludgeon, cane, etc.), which enables S to hurt C, usually by striking. Even if – technically speaking – the contact is not fully along C (the only case), it is expressed in Hungarian by *végig*:

Végig*húzott a kutyán a bottal.* 'He struck the dog with a cane.'

At this stage, we can observe how easy it is to turn this scene metaphorical; for instance, we can hurt people or their feelings with words or even with our eyes, which appears as S in many cases, to be discussed later.

3.4. *Végig* along/through, metaphorical

The second largest category of instances belongs to metaphorical extensions, deriving from the central sense (50 out 293, almost 17%). This means that either S or C is understood metaphorically, or even the verb meaning is metaphorical:

A hazán végigsöpört a háború. 'The war swept through the country.'

In this example C is the *country*, which is viewed as a longitudinally extended (abstract) space, 'suffering' from the war (S), which is 'ruthless' and 'fast'. Less metaphorical cases typically involve at least one concrete S or C, for instance a windy smile, which may dart across the lips (like a shooting star):

*Egy kurta mosoly **végig**suhant az ajkán.*

It is worth mentioning that in case of metaphorical extensions 'anything can happen', which means that the direction of S is only suspected that it is linear, the motion may be anything from very slow to superfast, the impact may be from minimal to serious damages (as seen above, splitting C in two). Thus we agree with Lakoff and Johnson that metaphors pervade our lives, and feed on all concrete cases. This also explains that in particular cases the *from–to* aspect is important, sometimes C is viewed as a potential impediment/obstacle in the way of S, and even the scope/range of action of S over C is questionable: it may extend across the border(line) of C or not, or the motion may be linear, non-linear (staggering, windy), in or without contact with C as in the example below:

*A hűs áram **végig**suhant az erdőn.* 'The whiff of breeze flitted over the forest.'

3.5. *Végig* along taking up time, begin–end, through hardship(s)

This is one of the most difficult categories to delimit from the others, signalling that hardly ever are there clear-cut boundaries. The samples may refer to cases when S 'suffers' during an event, which tends to be metaphorical (e.g. the passing of time or a problem), combined with an abstract verb meaning:

***Végig**ülte az előadást.* 'He has watched/outsat the whole show.'
***Végig**szenvedte a betegséget.* 'He went through/got over the illness.'

Whereas the first case only gives us an inkling of a possible problem (too lengthy show), focusing on the event from its beginning to its end, the second example highlights the hardship twice: both the meaning of the verb and the direct object (C) express suffering. However, there are degrees of advancing through hardships, as hearing a concert through, listening to all the complaints or fulminations of a thegn:

***Végig**hallgatta a koncertet/panaszt/főúri szidalmazást.*

This category is also important from another point of view: it signals, reminds us the notion of 'hard times', directing our attention towards time expressions.

3.6. *Végig* temporal

Korponay mentions temporal "path" as early as 1986, stating that "the spatialization of time is so obvious and so persuasive a phenomenon that it has been noted by a lot of

grammarians. Notions such as beginning and end apply both to time and space", even if time is unidimensional (Kornonay 1986: 78).

According to cognitive linguists, SPACE and TIME can be regarded as the two most fundamental domains of human experience; in this respect see, for instance, Evans & Green (2006: 68). They propose a basic difference between TIME and SPACE: "while TIME has the property of progression, SPACE is static" (Evans & Green 2006: 515). Thus the concept of TIME is described in terms of motion, from which results that expressions including time are all metaphoric in nature. Dominte (1970: 270) mentions main and secondary prepositions in space and time, stating that in space we have position (state) and movement, whereas in time we have moment and period (length), adding that constructions with time follow the model of spatial ones, never vice versa, quoting Pottier (1962); thus time can be described in terms of space, that is the 'spatialization of time', to which Gibbs (1994: 75) adds that certain concepts are impossible to describe non-metaphorically (e.g. TIME with recourse to SPACE and MOTION).

Actually, at a given point, Langacker (1987) considers time more important than space, as the former is needed to perceive changes in the latter (motion); Ribout (2002: 165–6) highlights the diachronic aspect of time: it was often personified and even worshipped in many religions, an honour never shared by space. Langacker replenishes the fire: "The fact that we often conceive and speak of time in spatial terms only shows the utility of such metaphor for higher-level conceptualization. It does not imply that the experience of time is reducible to a purely spatial one; if anything, the opposite would seem more plausible" (Langacker 1987: 148–9).

Langacker even accepts Givón's (1979) perspective, according to which "time is in some sense more fundamental than space: the conception of spatial relationships involves scanning, which requires processing time, and our notions of spatial extension are intimately bound up with time-extended physical actions". However, "some kind of inborn field of spatial representation" is also left, as human sensory capacities are 'responsible' for a variety of basic domains (visual system, taste, smell, touch), concluding that: "we cannot reasonably hope, for example, to explicate a taste sensation in terms of space, time in terms of color, smells in terms of pitch, kinaesthetic sensations in terms of temperature, or pressure in terms of emotion".

Korponay (1986) is right when he states that "the life of an individual is rather uniplanar as compared to life in a general sense"; our temporal examples with *végig* suggest that the individual puts in various efforts in the activity to move along the path of time (hour, day, afternoon, evening, night, semester, years, past or future):

Végig*játszotta a napot.* 'He was playing all day long.'
Végig*bőgte az estét.* 'She was crying all the evening.'
Végig*küzdötte a nehéz éveket.* 'He took trouble over the harsh years.'

As the examples show, temporal cases tend to be metaphorical, and a further step towards metaphorized cases is when *life(time)* stands for C:

Végig*gondolta egész életét.* '(S)he thought over his/her entire life.'

In this case two categories intersect each other: TIME and LIFE, resulting in the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS TIME. When we would like to remember our own life, we can do it with our mind's eye, lingering over events, which offer our next case.

3.7. *Végig* along sight, metaphorical

The occurrences of sight-related cases are rather high, as seeing seems to be very suitable to (quickly) move along/throughout something (run, rush, glimpse, ogle and muster):

Végig*nézett a gyereken.* '(S)he swept through the child with a glance.'
Végig*simogatta a gyereket a szemével.* 'She caressed the child with her eyes.'

However, as visual contact is extremely fast, sometimes with a glimpse of an eye (S) a multitude of things can be checked, notably *collective nouns* (C_c), exemplified below.

3.8. *Végig* along sight, collective C

We can all accept that a text may stand for a collection of letters/characters, a death-roll is a collection of names, the crowd is a collection of individuals, etc.:

Szeme ***végig****siklott a tömegen.* 'His eyes ranged over the crowd.'

It goes without saying that this case is another fuzzy category, easily establishing the link between individual C and a multitude of C-s. Furthermore, this is a rather complex category, as the motion of S may be either linear or non-linear among the similar members making up C_c.

3.9. *Végig* along/throughout C_n, enfilade

One of the most interesting non-metaphorical cases of *végig* involves the movement of a single S along/through/to many similar things (C_n). This means that S may advance from one C to another C either in a linear or non-linear way, as if 'doing the round'. This may result in either a strict linear motion or a circular one, depending on the arrangement of C_n; we tend to believe that the direction of the motion is less important than S reaching all the items of C_n:

Végig*járta a kórtermeket.* 'The doctor visited all the wards.'
Végig*kóstolta a borokat.* 'He tasted all the wines.'

The opposite case is a rather interesting one: S becomes S_n and instead of C_n we can only resort to a single C:

Mind ***végig****kóstolták a tortát.* 'They all tasted the cake.'

3.10. *Végig* along/throughout C_n, metaphorical enfilade

The previous case has metaphorical extensions as well. This is either due to the meaning of the verb ('go through') or the nature of C_n:

Végig*kóstolta az éjszakai élet élvezeteit.* 'He has tasted the cakes and ale of night-life.'

Evidently, the motion may be linear or non-linear, depending on the arrangement of C_n.

3.11. *Végig* along/throughout, collective C, metaphorical enfilade
The next logical step is to check if there are cases when a single S can advance along a collective C (C_c), which resulted in weakly metaphorized cases (either the meaning of the verb or C is metaphorical):

A puskatűz ***végig****pásztázta az ellenséget.* 'The gunfire enfiladed the enemy.'
Végig*ette az étlapot.* 'He has tasted the entire menu.'

Possibly the fastest way to succeed the 'feat' specified in the sentence above is with our mind's eye. And indeed, there are cases when sight is involved, presented below.

3.12. *Végig* along/through C_n, sight
Seven instances have been detected falling into this category, all of them constructed with verb expressing very quick motion: *proceed*, *glimpse*, *range over* and *run*. Our eyes can instantly check possibilities, facts, figures, faces or even landscapes:

Szeme ***végig****siklott a tájakon.* 'His eyes ranged over landscapes.'

In the following we will switch to a different type of *végig*, when it may be associated with an 'inside' situation, as S is within a certain type of container (C).

3.13. *Végig* within, non-linear
As the central meaning of *végig* primarily refers to situations in which S moves along/throughout C, no wonder that cases in which S moves within a 'container' are few, there are more metaphorical instances (17) than basic ones (13). The form/nature of C (square- or oval-shaped in essence) makes impossible a linear movement of S within, as during motion S has to (at least partially) *cover* C:

Végig*vitte a vendéget a telepen.* 'He showed the guest around the premises.'
Végig*lejtett a bámészkodók között.* 'She swept up the street among the bystanders.'

Although both cases are non-metaphorical, we can easily find highly metaphorical cases as well, presented below.

3.14. *Végig* within, non-linear, metaphorical
Out of seventeen cases (almost 6% of all occurrences) we selected a highly metaphorical one:

A nóta ***végig****robogott a nádasban.* 'The tune swept down the sedge-marsh.'

In the above example it is a good question whether there is contact between S and C,

whether the spread of the melody is uniform, linear or not. Within this category we have further *sound-related* cases, as well as *feelings* and *illnesses* functioning as S.

3.15. *Végig* over/across, *végig* below, *végig* along + in front of

In the following we would like to present less central cases of *végig*, which nevertheless further prove that *végig* is part of the Hungarian *át, keresztül, túl, felett/fölött* "family".

There were two cases of *végig* 'over', in which S moved clearly over C (the most central/prototypical sense of Brugman of Lakoff and Johnson):

A gólya ***végig****siklott a rét* ***fölött****.* 'The stork ranged over the meadow.'
Sötét felhők ***végig****húzódnak a tó* ***fölött****.* 'Black clouds are banking over the lake.'

The second example already foreshadows that natural phenomena related to weather conditions (wind, storm) or sounds may form metaphorical clusters:

A szél ***végig****szalad a mezőn.* 'The wind runs through the field.'

Interestingly, we have bumped into a case which signals the relativity (cf. vantage point) of all the categories/cases; this a *végig* 'below' case:

A gáz ***végig****megy a híd alatt.* 'The gas (pipes) go under the bridge.'

A further case may be the shift from a vertical projection (resulting in over/across) to a horizontal one, leading to *végig* 'in front of':

A vonat ***végig****robogott a ház* ***előtt****.* 'The train dashed along in front of the house.'
A vonat ***el****robogott a ház* ***előtt****.* 'The train dashed away in front of the house.'

The two sentences already establish the link between the preverbs/prepositional adverbs *végig* 'along' (focusing on full length) and *el* 'away' (focusing on passing by), proving again that prepositions, postpositions, adverbs, preverbs cannot really be discussed in isolation as the form of a highly intertwined network of partial synonymy.

3.16. *Végig* change from V to H 'in full length'

We believe the most 'mysterious' case is our last one. The fact that we could find ten cases is the evidence that it is not a 'mistake' and adds a special flavour to the possible meanings of *végig*. In this prototypical scenario an initially vertical S changes into a horizontal S. In this case C is typically a horizontally extended thing (bed, couch, bench, floor, lawn, etc.) 'trying' to absorb the 'fall' of S:

Végig*nyúlt a lócán.* 'He extended on the bench.'
Eszméletét vesztve ***végig****nyúlt a földön.* 'Having fainted he fell flat on the ground.'

As the above examples suggest, the impact between S and C may be more or less acute.

4. Conclusions

It would have been interesting to investigate *végig* not only as a preverb. However, we think that the presentation of the above preverbial cases may serve as a basis for possible meanings as adverb, adverbial preposition or postposition.

During our categorization we were often confronted with the remorse that a case was not listed properly. Although it is seemingly a cheap excuse, we tried to signal here and there that categories are fuzzy, often arbitrary (even subjective), and for various speakers various aspects of the same case are activated. In our case this meant that we were focusing on linear and non-linear motion along a path, investigating the nature of S, C and the meaning of the verb. We also tried to bring metaphorical and non-metaphorical cases as close as possible, presenting sub-cases deriving from one another.

We hope that we have highlighted links between *végig* and other Hungarian preverbs (*át, keresztül, felett/fölött, túl*), supporting the idea of a network of preverbs.

Finally, it is our firm belief that results of cognitive linguistics may be used in clarifying language typologies as well, contributing directly to both translation studies and language teaching/learning. We cannot but marvel how preverbs are preserved, changed, or completely 'lost' in the act of translation. After all, similarly to Frith's (2007: 130) observation "[w]e do things to the world with our bodies and see what happens", we can say that we analysed various cases with *végig*, and 'this is what happened'.

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Rezümé

A végig *igekötő kognitív nyelvészeti elemzése*

A kognitív nyelvészeti kutatások újfajta megközelítést ajánlanak a metaforák tárgyalásakor, hiszen térbeli fizikai tapasztalataink kiindulópontként szolgálnak a metaforikus kifejezések többségének értelmezésekor. Jelen tanulmány a *végig* igekötő jelentésvilágát taglalja, amely szervesen kötődik a már korábban tárgyalt *át, keresztül, felett/fölött* és *túl* igekötőkhöz. A *végig* igekötő elemzése több mint 15 féle egybeszövődő konkrét és metaforikus esetet eredményezett.