

德古意特认知语言学研究丛书

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

BASIC READINGS

认知语言学： 基础读本

Dirk Geeraerts 编

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出版说明

认知语言学是语言学的一门重要分支学科，自20世纪80年代诞生以来，受到了国际和国内学界的广泛关注。近年来，外教社陆续推出了一系列相关丛书，集中体现了国际、国内的优质研究成果。其中“国际认知语言学经典论丛”收入了Ronald Langacker、Leonard Talmy、Dirk Geeraerts等国际认知语言学领域顶尖学者的经典作品；“外教社认知语言学丛书·普及系列”、“外教社认知语言学丛书·应用系列”则体现了国内学界的最新研究成果。这些丛书因内容权威、见解独到受到了外语界的广泛好评。

在过去几十年中，中国认知语言学研究从最初萌芽到蓬勃发展，逐步走向成熟，形成了系统化、多元化的研究格局，跨学科领域的理论及应用研究都取得了长足进步。为进一步拓宽国内认知语言学研究的视野，方便国内读者查阅和借鉴相关研究成果，我们特地从德古意特出版社近年推出的相关学术图书中精选了7种，组成“德古意特认知语言学研究丛书”，引进出版。丛书汇集了Ronald Langacker、Dirk Geeraerts、René Dirven、Martin Pütz等多位国际认知语言学权威编著的力作，其中既有关于认知语言学基本理论的必读经典，也有认知语言学与语言习得、语言教学、社会语言学等领域的融合研究，视野广泛，观点新颖，方法多元，文献丰富。

相信本套丛书可帮助广大认知语言学的研习者深入了解认知语言学的理论，把握认知语言学的研究热点和发展趋势，开拓多元化的研究方法思路，进一步推动我国认知语言学研究的长远发展。

Cognitive Linguistics Basic Readings

Edited by
Dirk Geeraerts

Publication sources

Chapter 1. Cognitive Grammar

Ronald W. Langacker

- 1990 Chapter 1. Introduction in *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*, Ronald W. Langacker, 1–32. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. (Reprint of An introduction to cognitive grammar. *Cognitive Science* 10(1): 1–40. 1986.)

Chapter 2. Grammatical construal

Leonard Talmy

- 1988 The relation of grammar to cognition. In *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics*, Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn (ed.), 165–205. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Chapter 3. Radial network

Claudia Brugman and George Lakoff

- 1988 Cognitive topology and lexical networks. In *Lexical Ambiguity Resolution: Perspectives from Psycholinguistics, Neuropsychology, and Artificial Intelligence*, Steven L. Small, Garrison W. Cottrell, and Michael K. Tanenhaus (eds.), 477–508. San Mateo, CA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Chapter 4. Prototype theory

Dirk Geeraerts

- 1989 Prospects and problems of prototype theory. *Linguistics* 27(4): 587–612.

Chapter 5. Schematic network

David Tuggy

- 1993 Ambiguity, polysemy, and vagueness. *Cognitive Linguistics* 4(3): 273–290.

Chapter 6. Conceptual metaphor

George Lakoff

- 1993 The contemporary theory of metaphor. In *Metaphor and Thought*, Andrew Ortony (ed.), 202–251. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 7. Image schema

Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. and Herbert L. Colston

- 1995 The cognitive psychological reality of image schemas and their transformations. *Cognitive Linguistics* 6(4): 347–378.

Chapter 8. Metonymy

William Croft

- 1993 The role of domains in the interpretation of metaphors and metonymies. *Cognitive Linguistics* 4(4): 335–370.

Chapter 9. Mental spaces

Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner

- 1998 Conceptual integration networks. *Cognitive Science* 22(2): 133–187.

Chapter 10. Frame semantics

Charles J. Fillmore

- 1982 Frame semantics. In *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*, Linguistic Society of Korea (ed.), 111–137. Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Company.

Chapter 11. Construction Grammar

Adele E. Goldberg

- 1992 The inherent semantics of argument structure: The case of the English ditransitive construction. *Cognitive Linguistics* 3(1): 37–74.

Chapter 12. Usage-based linguistics

Michael Tomasello

- 2000 First steps toward a usage-based theory of language acquisition. *Cognitive Linguistics* 11(1/2): 61–82.

The papers are reprinted with permission. They appear in their original form, except for the following changes: bibliographical entries, section numberings and other typographical elements have been added adjusted to the Mouton style, temporary and incomplete references have been updated, and cross-references to the original volumes have been deleted.

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Introduction

A rough guide to Cognitive Linguistics

Dirk Geeraerts

So this is the first time you visit the field of Cognitive Linguistics, no? You may need a guide then. Sure, when you move through the following chapters of this volume, you get to see a top twelve of sights that you should not miss: a delightful dozen of articles written by authorities in the field that each introduce one of the conceptual cornerstones of the theoretical framework of Cognitive Linguistics. Still, to give you a firm reference point for your tour, you may need some initiation to what Cognitive Linguistics is about. That's what the present chapter is for: it provides you with a roadmap and a travel book to Cognitive Linguistics. It's only a rough guide, to be sure: it gives you the minimal amount of background that you need to figure out the steps to be taken and to make sure that you are not recognized as a total foreigner or a naïve apprentice, but it does not pretend to supply more than that.

To understand what you may expect to find in this brief travel guide, we need to introduce one of the characteristic ideas of Cognitive Linguistics first – the idea, that is, that we should not just describe concepts and categories by means of an abstract definition, but that we should also take into account the things that the definition is about, if we are to achieve an adequate level of knowledge. Take birds: you can define birds as a certain type of animal with certain characteristics (like having wings, being able to fly, and being born from eggs), but if you want to get a good cognitive grip on what birds are, you will want to have a look at some typical birds like robins and sparrows and doves, and then maybe also at some less typical ones, like chickens and ostriches.

It's no different when you are dealing with linguistic theories. You have to know about the scientific content of the theory, that is to say, the abstract definition of the approach: the topics it deals with, the specific perspective it takes, and the observations it makes. But you also have to know about the sociology of the theory: the people it involves, the conferences where they meet, the channels in which they publish. Introductions to linguistics tend to focus on the first perspective only, but the present guide will take the second into account just as much as the first.

1. What is so special about this place?

Theories in linguistics tend to be fairly insular affairs: each theoretical framework tends to constitute a conceptual and sociological entity in its own right, with only a limited number of bridges, market places or even battlegrounds shared with other approaches. Cognitive Linguistics, when considered in the light of this metaphor, takes the form of an archipelago rather than an island. It is not one clearly delimited large territory, but rather a conglomerate of more or less extensive, more or less active centers of linguistic research that are closely knit together by a shared perspective, but that are not (yet) brought together under the common rule of a well-defined theory. The present volume contains an introduction to twelve fundamental parts of that theoretical conglomerate – a tour of twelve central islands, if you wish: Cognitive Grammar, grammatical construal, radial network, prototype theory, schematic network, conceptual metaphor, image schema, metonymy, mental spaces, frame semantics, construction grammar, and usage-based linguistics.

We will define in a moment what links hold these concepts together and why each of them separately is important, but at this point, the chief thing is to realize that there is no single, uniform theoretical doctrine according to which these research topics belong together: Cognitive Linguistics is a flexible framework rather than a single theory of language. From the point of view of category structure (one of the standard topics for analysis in Cognitive Linguistics), this recognition is again one way in which Cognitive Linguistics illustrates its own concepts. As we mentioned a moment ago, Cognitive Linguistics emphasizes the fact that defining a category may involve describing some of its principal members rather than just giving an abstract definition. But it also stresses that the abstract definition need not consist of a single set of defining characteristics that belong uniquely and distinctively to that category. Think of birds again: when we describe the features of birds, we soon notice that the features we would like to think of as definitional for birds are not shared by all members of the species: we may even find birds like the penguin or the kiwi, that have no wings to speak of, cannot fly, and don't have feathers but that are rather covered with some kind of fluff. In such cases, we say that a category has a family resemblance structure: different types of birds resemble each other like the members of a family would, but there is no single set of attributes that necessarily shows up in all the members of the family. Again, it is no different with a linguistic framework like Cognitive Linguistics: it constitutes a cluster of many partially overlapping approaches rather than a single well-defined theory that identifies in an all-or-none fashion whether something belongs to Cognitive Linguistics or not.

Then again, the recognition that Cognitive Linguistics has not yet stabilized into a single uniform theory should not prevent us from looking for fundamental

common features and shared perspectives among the many forms of research that come together under the label of Cognitive Linguistics. An obvious question to start from relates to the ‘cognitive’ aspect of Cognitive Linguistics: in what sense exactly is Cognitive Linguistics a cognitive approach to the study of language?

Terminologically speaking, we now need to make a distinction between Cognitive Linguistics (the approach represented in this reader), and uncapitalized cognitive linguistics – referring to all approaches in which natural language is studied as a mental phenomenon. Cognitive Linguistics is but one form of cognitive linguistics, to be distinguished from, for instance, generative grammar and many other forms of linguistic research within the field of cognitive science. What, then, determines the specificity of Cognitive Linguistics within cognitive linguistics?

There are a number of characteristics that need to be mentioned: one basic principle that is really, really foundational, and four tenets that spell out this fundamental notion. The foundational point is simply that language is all about meaning. As it says in the Editorial Statement of the very first issue of the journal *Cognitive Linguistics*, published in 1990, this approach sees language ‘as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information’ – as something primarily semantic, in other words. Now, it may seem self-evident to you that a ‘cognitive’ approach to language focuses on meaning, but if you are familiar with generative grammar (i.e. Chomskyan linguistics), you will know that this is a theory that thinks of language primarily in formal terms: as a collection of formal, syntactic structures and rules (or constraints on such structures and rules). And generative grammar is definitely also a ‘cognitive’ conception of language, one that attributes a mental status to the language. So we have to be careful with the term *cognitive* in *Cognitive Linguistics*. It does not only signal that language is a psychologically real phenomenon (and that linguistics is part of the cognitive sciences), but also that the processing and storage of information is a crucial design feature of language. Linguistics is not just about knowledge of the language (that’s the focus of generative grammar), but language itself is a form of knowledge – and has to be analyzed accordingly, with a focus on meaning.

Conversely, Cognitive Linguistics is not the only linguistic approach focusing on meaning: there are diverse forms of functional approaches to language that go in the same direction. And further, formal semantics is clearly a semantically oriented approach as well. It lies beyond the scope of this introduction to provide a systematic comparison with these other semantic approaches, but you will certainly be interested in what is particular about the way in which Cognitive Linguistics deals with meaning. So that brings us to the four specific characteristics that we announced earlier: each of them says something specific about the way Cognitive Linguistics thinks about meaning. (By the way, the captions we use to introduce the features may sound formidable, but don’t worry: an explanation follows.)

LINGUISTIC MEANING IS PERSPECTIVAL

Meaning is not just an objective reflection of the outside world, it is a way of shaping that world. You might say that it construes the world in a particular way, that it embodies a perspective onto the world. The easiest way to understand the point is to think of spatial perspectives showing up in linguistic expressions, and the way in which the same objective situation can be construed linguistically in different ways. Think of a situation in which you are standing in your back garden and you want to express where you left your bicycle. You could then both say *It's behind the house* and *It's in front of the house*. These would seem to be contradictory statements, except that they embody different perspectives.

In the first expression, the perspective is determined by the way you look: the object that is situated in the direction of your gaze is in front of you, but if there is an obstacle along that direction, the thing is behind that obstacle. In this case, you're looking in the direction of your bicycle from the back garden, but the house blocks the view, and so the bike is behind the house.

In the second expression, however, the point of view is that of the house: a house has a canonical direction, with a front that is similar to the face of a person. The way a house is facing, then, is determined by its front, and the second expression takes the point of view of the house rather than the speaker, as if the house were a person looking in a certain direction. Such multiple perspectivizations (and not just spatial ones!) are everywhere in the language, and Cognitive Linguistics attempts to analyze them.

LINGUISTIC MEANING IS DYNAMIC AND FLEXIBLE

Meanings change, and there is a good reason for that: meaning has to do with shaping our world, but we have to deal with a changing world. New experiences and changes in our environment require that we adapt our semantic categories to transformations of the circumstances, and that we leave room for nuances and slightly deviant cases. For a theory of language, this means that we cannot just think of language as a more or less rigid and stable structure – a tendency that is quite outspoken in twentieth century linguistics. If meaning is the hallmark of linguistic structure, then we should think of those structures as flexible. Again, we don't have to look far for an example. Think back to what we said about birds: there is no single, rigid set of defining features that applies to all and only birds, but we have a flexible family resemblance structure that is able to deal with marginal cases.

LINGUISTIC MEANING IS ENCYCLOPEDIC AND NON-AUTONOMOUS

If meaning has to do with the way in which we interact with the world, it is natural to assume that our whole person is involved. The meaning we construct in

and through the language is not a separate and independent module of the mind, but it reflects our overall experience as human beings. Linguistic meaning is not separate from other forms of knowledge of the world that we have, and in that sense it is encyclopedic and non-autonomous: it involves knowledge of the world that is integrated with our other cognitive capacities. There are at least two main aspects to this broader experiential grounding of linguistic meaning.

First, we are embodied beings, not pure minds. Our organic nature influences our experience of the world, and this experience is reflected in the language we use. The *behind/in front of* example again provides a clear and simple illustration: the perspectives we use to conceptualize the scene derive from the fact that our bodies and our gaze have a natural orientation, an orientation that defines what is in front of us and that we can project onto other entities, like houses.

Second, however, we are not just biological entities: we also have a cultural and social identity, and our language may reveal that identity, i.e. languages may embody the historical and cultural experience of groups of speakers (and individuals). Again, think of birds. The encyclopedic nature of language implies that we have to take into account the actual familiarity that people have with birds: it is not just the general definition of *bird* that counts, but also what we know about sparrows and penguins and ostriches etc. But these experiences will differ from culture to culture: the typical, most familiar birds in one culture will be different from those in another, and that will affect the knowledge people associate with a category like 'bird'.

LINGUISTIC MEANING IS BASED ON USAGE AND EXPERIENCE

The idea that linguistic meaning is non-autonomously integrated with the rest of experience is sometimes formulated by saying that meaning is experientially grounded – rooted in experience. The experiential nature of linguistic knowledge can be specified in yet another way, by pointing to the importance of language use for our knowledge of a language.

Note that there is a lot of abstract structure in a language: think for instance of the pattern Subject – Verb – Direct Object – Indirect Object that you find in a sentence like *Mary sent Peter a message*. In many languages, such structures are not directly observable: what we do observe, i.e. what constitutes the experiential basis for our knowledge of the language, is merely a succession of words (and even that is not entirely without problems, but let's pass over those). So the question arises: how does this more concrete level of words relate to the abstract level where you find functional categories like Subject and Direct Object? In more traditional terms, the question reads: how does the lexicon relate to the syntax?

But if we think of grammatical patterns as having an experiential basis in concrete, observable strings of words, there is yet another step we have to take: the 'observable strings of words' do not exist in the abstract; they are always part

of actual utterances and actual conversations. The experience of language is an experience of actual language use, not of words like you would find them in a dictionary or sentence patterns like you would find them in a grammar. That is why we say that Cognitive Linguistics is a usage-based model of grammar: if we take the experiential nature of grammar seriously, we will have to take the actual experience of language seriously, and that is experience of actual language use. Again, from the point of view of mainstream twentieth century linguistics, that is a fairly revolutionary approach. An existing tradition tended to impose a distinction between the level of language structure and the level of language use – in the terms of Ferdinand de Saussure (generally known as the founder of modern linguistics), between *langue* and *parole*. Generally (and specifically in the tradition of generative grammar), *parole* would be relatively unimportant: the structural level would be essential, the usage level epiphenomenal. In a usage-based model that considers the knowledge of language to be experientially based in actual speech, that hierarchy of values is obviously rejected.

2. What does the tour include?

You are right, of course: the first exploration of Cognitive Linguistics in the previous section remains somewhat superficial and abstract. You now have a general idea of what type of scenery to expect in the Cognitive Linguistics archipelago, but you would like to get acquainted with the specific islands, i.e. you now know what the overall perspective of Cognitive Linguistics entails, but you hardly know how it is put into practice. In this section, we will have a look at the twelve basic concepts that are introduced by the dozen articles in this collection, and we will show how these concepts relate to the overall picture that was drawn in the previous pages.

As a preliminary step, let us observe that each of the characteristics that we discussed earlier defines a number of specific questions for Cognitive Linguistics. The *perspectival* nature of meaning raises questions about the specific mechanisms of construal present in a language: what kinds of semantic construal, imagery, conceptual perspectivization do languages implement? The *dynamic* nature of meaning raises questions about the process of meaning extension: what are the mechanisms of semantic flexibility, and how do the various readings of a linguistic expression relate to each other? The *encyclopedic* nature of meaning raises questions about the interdisciplinary links of language to the other cognitive capacities: to what extent are the cognitive mechanisms at work in natural language shared by other cognitive systems? And the *usage-based* nature of meaning raises questions about the relationship between syntax and lexicon, and the acquisition of language: what kind of experience do children need to learn a language?

These questions are illustrated in various ways by the articles in the collection, but before we can make that explicit, we need to introduce the articles separately, and say something about the way in which they are grouped together. Roughly, there are four groups of concepts and articles, corresponding to the four features that we identified before. The following pages pay specific attention to the logic behind the basic concepts that we introduce: why is it that these concepts are so important to Cognitive Linguistics? What you should see, in particular, is how they turn the fundamental features that we discussed in the previous section, into a concrete practice of linguistic description. Reading through the following pages will give you an initial idea of what you can expect in the volume, but of course, until you get there yourself, you will never really know what it is about.

2.1. The perspectival nature of grammar

The first two concepts, COGNITIVE GRAMMAR and GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUAL, illustrate the overall organization of a grammar that focuses on meaning. If conceptual perspectivization is the central function of a grammar, the typical formal categories of grammatical description (like word classes or inflection) will have to be reinterpreted from a semantic point of view. In the context of Cognitive Linguistics, two authorities in particular are systematically exploring these phenomena: Ronald W. Langacker, and Len Talmy. The two initial papers in the volume will introduce you to the thought of these two major thinkers – towering figures in the context of Cognitive Linguistics, who have both provided the approach with some of its basic vocabulary.

COGNITIVE GRAMMAR

Cognitive Grammar is the specific name that Langacker uses for his theory of language. The paper included in the present volume originates from 1986, but is here reprinted in the form in which it was published in 1990. It specifies a number of basic features of Cognitive Grammar that are still valid, and that form an interesting backdrop for the rest of the articles in the present collection. Langacker starts off with the very idea of a perspectival grammar – although he uses a slightly different terminology: he talks about grammar as conceptualization and imagery. He introduces a number of high level general features of grammatical ‘imagery’ (profiling, specificity, scope, salience) and then tackles the key question how to build a descriptive framework for a grammar that starts from the assumption, simplistically, that language is meaning and that meaning is conceptualization.

Central to his answer is the idea that a grammar is not built up out of grammatical rules on the one hand and a lexicon on the other (the idea that you traditionally find in generative grammar). Rather, a grammar consists of ‘symbolic

units', where a symbolical unit is a conventional pairing of a form and a meaning. You can obviously think of lexical items here, but symbolic units can be more abstract than that, like when nouns are claimed to instantiate the abstract notion 'thing', and verbs the abstract notion 'process'. Given that you take the notion of symbolic unit as the basis for a grammar, there are two questions that immediately crop up, and Langacker does not fail to address them.

First, what could be the notional, conceptual characterization of abstract entities like word classes? What do we mean when we say that the meaning of nouns is 'thing' and that of verb is 'process'? On conceptual grounds, Langacker distinguishes between a number of basic classes of predications: entities and things versus relations, and within the relational predicates, stative relations, complex atemporal relations, and processes. The formal word classes of a language will typically express a basic type of predication. For instance, while nouns express the notion of 'thing' (a bounded entity in some domain), adjectives will typically be stative relational predicates.

Second, if you have a grammar with no rules but only symbolic units, how do you achieve compositionality, i.e. how do you ensure that different symbolic units may be combined to build larger units, like phrases or sentences? Here, the trick is to recognize that many predicates have open slots. If, for instance, the meaning of *above* is defined in terms of a stative relationship between what Langacker calls a 'trajector' and a 'landmark', the trajector and the landmark are only included schematically, as an open slot, in the meaning of *above*. Filling out the slots with other predicates then compositionally yields phrases like *the lamp above the table*.

In the course of Langacker's paper, you will come across a number of concepts that will play a central role in some of the other chapters included in the present collection: the schematic network idea (which will come to the fore in Chapter 5), the notion of domain matrix (which will play an essential role in Chapter 8), and the concept of a construction and a continuum between lexicon and grammar (which will constitute the focus of Chapter 11 and Chapter 12).

GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUAL

Talmy never suggested a specific label for his approach to grammatical description, but the label *grammatical construal* captures very well what he is doing: what are the forms and patterns of construal (in the sense of conceptual perspectivization through language) that are realized by the grammatical structure of a language? This adjective *grammatical* is quite important here: Talmy focuses on the specific types of conceptual construal that are expressed by those aspects of natural language that have to do with syntax and morphology, rather than the lexicon. In Langacker's article, we noticed a specific interest in the relationship between the