

国际认知语言学经典论丛

Cognitive Linguistics

Classic Papers Series

Series Editor: Dingfang Shu (束定芳)

Basic Works in Cognitive Semantics

认知语义学经典论文

Leonard Talmy



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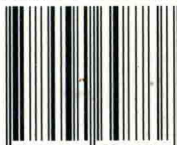
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丛书的出版，将极大方便国内教师、学生和研究者直接接触认知语言学领域原版经典论文。这些论文散见于各个时期的各种期刊或图书中，经过作者的精心搜集、整理并选定刊出，相信一定会发挥它们应有的作用，从而为促进我国语言学研究做出新的贡献。

Foreword

Most of the basic ideas and fundamental principles of Cognitive Linguistics appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s in papers by Fillmore, Langacker, Lakoff, Talmy, etc. But graduate students of linguistics in China often complain that access to these “classic papers” was very difficult if not impossible, due to the fact many of them were scattered in different journals or book chapters, and some published in some obscure journals. To provide students of Cognitive Linguistics and other interested readers with a more accessible anthology of materials that not only documented the path of development of early Cognitive Linguistics, but also presented important principles and arguments of cognitive perspectives on language, I thought of editing a series of collections of classic papers by the founders and forerunners of Cognitive Linguistics. The first person I contacted was Ronald Langacker, whose participation and support, I believe, was crucial for the success of the project, as he is widely recognized as one of the most important founders of the Cognitive Linguistics movement. Ron, though occupied with many other commitments, fully supported the idea and promised to contribute to the series. And I went on to contact all the others whose work I thought made important contributions to the emergence, development, propagation and diversification of Cognitive Linguistics, including Miriam R.L. Petruck, one of Charles Fillmore’s students, without whose help, the volume by Fillmore would be practically impossible.

I must add that Ron was the first who completed the collection and offered to write an introduction to each of the papers collected in his volume to provide the readers with some background information about

the papers and explanations about some of the modifications that might have been made later on. This has become an attractive model that other contributors more or less followed in their own volumes.

My special thanks go to Dirk Geeraerts, whom I consulted on how the series should be organized, and who supported the project by contributing a volume of his own.

I should also give my thanks to Sun Jing, Director of the Academic Department of Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, who professionally and meticulously managed the whole project and patiently corresponded with all the authors and coordinated everything throughout the process.

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Chief Editor, *Journal of Foreign Languages*
President, China Cognitive Linguistics Association (CCLA)

Preface

This volume presents a selection of five chapters basic to cognitive semantics. As an approach to the analysis of language, cognitive semantics is a part of today's broader growing field of cognitive linguistics, and has been part of that field's historical development from its beginning.

From the outset, the larger field of cognitive linguistics has distinguished itself from more formal approaches to language, which have focused mainly on linguistic patterns abstracted away from or regarded as autonomous from any associated conceptual content. On the contrary, cognitive linguistics is centrally concerned with the linguistic representation of conceptual structure, that is, the patterns in which and processes by which conceptual content is organized in language.

The broader field of cognitive linguistics thus includes within its concerns the linguistic structuring of such basic conceptual categories as space and time, scenes and events, entities and processes, motion and location, and force and causation. It further includes the basic ideational and affective categories attributed to cognitive agents, such as attention and perspective, volition and intention, and expectation and affect. It addresses the semantic structure of morphological and lexical forms, as well as of syntactic patterns. And it addresses the interrelationships of conceptual structures, such as those in metaphoric mapping, those within a semantic frame, and those between text and context.

As part of cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics embraces this full range of concerns. In addition, though, it shows that conceptual patterns

and processes like those just cited are organized by language into a smaller number of comprehensive and integrated “schematic systems”. The five main schematic systems, all of them examined in the present volume, are those of configurational structure, location of perspective, distribution of attention, force dynamics, and cognitive state.

Cognitive semantics moreover incorporates its analysis within its overall two-part aim. The first part of this aim is to account for the linguistic representation of conceptual structure in terms of psychological organization. The complementary part of the aim is to advance our knowledge of psychological organization based on the detailed knowledge within cognitive semantics of how conceptual structure is realized in language. Overall, that is, cognitive semantics aims to help in our understanding of how the mind works through an understanding of how language works.

Cognitive semantics began its development in Talmy (1972) with a dissertation titled *Semantic Structures in English and Atsugewi*, and saw its first publication in Talmy (1975a) with a paper titled “Figure and Ground in Complex Sentences”. A number of papers appeared subsequently. Sixteen of these, revised and updated, were then published as Talmy (2000), a two-volume set with MIT Press titled *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. The five chapters of the present volume have in fact been selected from volume I of that set. Since 2000, a number of additional published papers have introduced further developments in cognitive semantics. For the sake of an update on cognitive semantics, these have been added to the references section of the present volume, which otherwise lists only the references cited in the selected chapters. The dissertation, the two-volume set, and the more recent papers are all freely accessible on my website: <http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty/talmy/talmy.html>.

Cognitive semantics is a single integrated theory. The concepts and terms that it introduces across its range of publications thus all fit

together within a coherent framework. However, it is not necessary to be familiar with the whole theory in order to work with part of it. Its type of construction is, in effect, more that of an openwork lattice. Each chapter addresses a single aspect of language organization and can be read independently of the others. This feature of its organization means that cognitive semantics is comparatively more accessible to readers newer to linguistics and to readers from diverse backgrounds—for example, psychology, computer science, anthropology, and philosophy, as well as other linguistic approaches. Such readers can thus more readily bring their particular interests and areas of expertise into interaction with cognitive-semantic theory.

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The Relation of Grammar to Cognition

1. INTRODUCTION

A fundamental design feature of language is that it has two subsystems, which can be designated as the *grammatical* and the *lexical* (as these are characterized below). Why is there this universal bifurcation when, in principle, a language could be conceived having only a single system, the lexical? The explanation in this chapter is that the two subsystems have distinct semantic functions, ones that are indispensable and complementary.^[1] To develop this account further, we must first note that we take a sentence (or other portion of discourse) to evoke in the listener a particular kind of experiential complex, here termed a **cognitive representation** or CR.^[2] The grammatical and lexical subsystems in a sentence seem generally to specify different portions of a CR. Together, the grammatical elements of a sentence determine the majority of the *structure* of the CR, while the lexical elements together contribute the majority of its *content*. The grammatical specifications in a sentence, thus, provide a conceptual framework or, imagistically, a skeletal structure or scaffolding for the conceptual material that is lexically specified.

More generally, across the spectrum of languages, the grammatical

elements that are encountered, taken together, specify a crucial set of concepts. This set is highly restricted: only certain concepts appear in it, and not others, as seen later. The present chapter advances the position that this set of grammatically specified notions collectively constitutes the fundamental conceptual structuring system of language. That is, this crosslinguistically select set of grammatically specified concepts provides the basic schematic framework for conceptual organization within the cognitive system of language.

Thus, grammar, broadly conceived, is the determinant of conceptual structure within one cognitive system, language, and as such is the main object of this chapter's study. But such a study directly opens out into a wider investigation across other cognitive systems, such as those of visual perception and reasoning, and some of the broader structural parallels that then become evident are addressed in other chapters of this volume. Hence, the greater issue, toward which the present study ultimately aims, is the general character of conceptual structure in human cognition.

As to its type, the present study can be designated as the **semantics of grammar** or as **closed-class semantics**. Its scope follows in a progression from previous types of study. Such studies have largely been an in-depth semantic analysis of a selected grammatical element (or class of elements) of particular interest within a single language, for example, the Turkish evidential suffix *-miş* (Slobin and Aksu 1982); or an exposition of the meanings and functions of all the grammatical elements of a single language, say, as in a grammar of Dyrirbal (Dixon 1972); or a crosslinguistic typology of the different kinds of grammatical devices used for a single semantic function, say, to indicate the interrogative (Ulan 1978). And much previous work has also treated broader issues of grammatical meaning (Sapir 1921, Boas 1938, Whorf 1956, Jakobson 1971). But the line of research reported on in this chapter is perhaps the first to address grammatical expression in language at the superordinate level, with the aim of determining the semantic and cognitive properties and functions of this structural component of language as a whole.^[3]

The terms **lexical** and **grammatical** as employed here require elaboration. The distinction between the two is made formally—that is, without reference to meaning—in terms of the traditional linguistic distinction between “open-class” and “closed-class.” A class of morphemes is considered open if it is quite large and readily augmentable relative to other classes. A class is considered closed if it is relatively small and fixed in membership.

We next look at the particular classes belonging to these two types. The open classes of elements—that is, the lexical classes—that are most commonly encountered in languages are the roots of nouns, of verbs, and of adjectives. The extensive systems of ideophones, or “expressive forms” found, for example, in a number of Asian and African languages, might also be included as a type of open class. Also to be included, at a level above that of basic elements, are **lexical complexes**—that is, collocations—like English *spill the beans* (“unwittingly reveal a jointly held secret”) or *have it in for* (“bear a vengeful grudge against”). Not included are regular adverbs, which seem in all languages to be derived, as from nouns, verbs, or adjectives (as in English from adjectives by the addition of *-ly*), rather than to comprise in their own right an open class of intrinsically adverbial roots. Outside of the class of lexical complexes, the types of open classes identified here are not obligatorily present in every language but rather form a universally available set from which each language draws a subset. That is, while all languages apparently have lexical complexes as an open class, they can lack one or more of the other listed classes—the ones consisting of intrinsically ideophonic, adjectival, verbal, or nominal roots.

Apart from such open-class forms, all other linguistic forms are closed-class—and are considered here to be, quite generally, “grammatical.” Such grammatical forms include both an overt type and an abstract, or implicit, type. Forms of the overt type can be bound or free. Overt bound forms are inflections, derivations, and clitics. Overt free forms can include, for example, determiners, prepositions,

conjunctions, and particles (among which we would include forms like English *even* and *again*, which otherwise are often loosely termed “adverbs”). Perhaps also to be included in the overt type are such suprasegmental forms as intonation patterns, if intonation in a language is in fact found to resolve into distinct patterns that are relatively few in number and difficult to augment.

The abstract or implicit type of closed-class forms—ones without phonological substance—can include major grammatical categories (e.g., “noun,” “verb”), grammatical subcategories (e.g., “count noun,” “mass noun”), grammatical relations (e.g., “subject,” “direct object”), word order patterns, and perhaps also “zero” forms.^[4] The fact that grammatical categories, as well as the other types of abstract forms just listed, constitute closed classes is an observable design feature of language, not something to be taken for granted. In principle, a language could conceivably have, say, an open class of grammatical categories that included hundreds of distinct highly particularized members. Indeed, in one analysis, a language can have more grammatical categories than is typically reckoned, including for example, each distinct position class in a polysynthetic verb. Nevertheless, the set of grammatical categories in any language is relatively small and resistant to new additions.

Finally, perhaps also to be included among closed classes are certain categories of **grammatical complexes**, including for instance grammatical constructions, syntactic structures, and complement structures. Such complexes consist of specific combinations of simplex closed-class forms, whether these are all abstract, all overt, or a mixture of both (and sometimes in further combination with particular open-class forms). Typically, each grammatical complex resembles a simplex closed-class form in that it represents an abstract schema with a structuring function. However, the inclusion of such complexes here involves certain difficulties. First, it may not always be a determinate matter as to which collection of simplex forms are to be taken as cohering together to constitute a single distinct complex. Second, there is some doubt whether the totality of

constructional complexes in a language would in any case constitute a closed-class set—their number might rather be quite large and perhaps even relatively easy to extend (cf. the Construction Grammar approach, e.g., in Fillmore and Kay forthcoming). To avoid such problems, the present analysis does not depend on the use of grammatical complexes. A complex is cited only if its semantic function is equivalent to that of some simplex closed-class form that otherwise occurs in some language.

2. THE NATURE OF GRAMMATICALLY SPECIFIED CONCEPTS

In this section, we elaborate on two of the foundational property differences between the grammatical and the lexical subsystems mentioned earlier. These are the fact that grammatical forms are semantically constrained while lexical forms basically are not, and the fact that the basic function of grammatical forms is to structure conception while that of lexical forms is to provide conceptual content.

2.1 *Constraints on Grammatical Meaning*

We begin with a simple demonstration that the concepts specified by grammatical forms are constrained in two ways: as to their categories and as to the member notions within these categories. With respect to the first kind of constraint, many languages have closed-class forms in construction with the noun, such as nominal inflections, that specify the “number” of the object referred to by the noun, for example its ‘singularity’ or ‘plurality’, like the English \emptyset and *-s*. By contrast, no languages appear to have inflections that specify the “color” of the object referred to by a noun—for instance, its ‘redness’ or ‘blueness’. Of course, the “color” category is readily found specified by open-class forms, as in the case of English *red* and *blue*. (Here, double quotes enclose conceptual categories, while single quotes enclose member notions within those categories.)

With respect to the second kind of constraint, even within a