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Contrastive Studies in Construction Grammar

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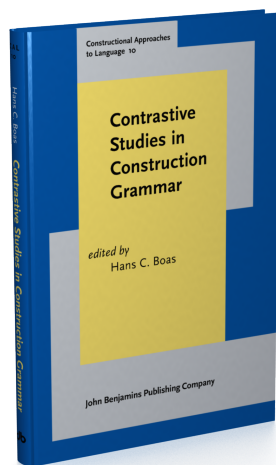
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Acknowledgments

My interest in contrastive studies in Construction Grammar was initially sparked in 1999, when I wrote my dissertation on resultative constructions in English and German. One of the findings of my dissertation and its revised version (*A Constructional Approach to Resultatives*, CSLI Publications, 2003) was that verbs often exhibit quite different distributions in resultative constructions, even if the verbs are etymologically related. Subsequently, in 2001, I heard Emily Bender and Andreas Kathol present a constructional account of the “Just because ... doesn’t mean” construction in English, which successfully accounted for a wide range of its syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties, at the annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society. After the talk I discussed the “Just because ... doesn’t mean” construction over a drink with Josef Ruppenhofer, with whom I was sharing an office at FrameNet. During this conversation it dawned on me that German has a very similar construction (“Nur weil ... heisst noch (lange) nicht”) that almost mirrors the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of its English counterpart. Here was a pair of grammatical constructions in two languages that almost had the same properties –unlike resultative constructions. I was fascinated.

Over the next few years I began to collect pairs of constructions in English and German in order to document their similarities and differences. In 2006, I presented a paper with Hunter Weilbacher (then a graduate student at the University of Texas) at the Fourth International Conference on Construction Grammar in Tokyo, entitled “Just because two constructions look alike in two languages doesn’t mean that they share the same properties: Towards contrastive Construction Grammars.” This talk met with a warm reception, so I decided to compile an edited volume on contrastive studies in Construction Grammar.

I am very grateful to the series editors of the *Constructional Approaches to Language* series, Mirjam Fried and Jan-Ola Östman, who encouraged me with this project. I’d also like to express my gratitude to the people who helped with the review process necessary for the production of this volume: John Beavers, Hans U. Boas, Francisco González-García, Martin Hilpert, Seizi Iwata, Jaakko Leino, Marc Pierce, Paul Sambre, and two anonymous reviewers. Thanks are also due to the wonderful staff at John Benjamins who helped with the smooth production process of this volume: Anke de Looper and Patricia Leplae.

Finally, I thank my wife Claire and our daughter Lena, who always cheer me up and constantly remind me of all the fun things in life!

Austin, Texas; October 2010

H.C.B.

