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Editors' Foreword

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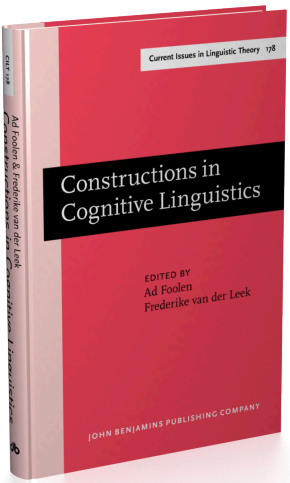

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Constructions in Cognitive Linguistics: Selected papers from the Fifth International Cognitive Linguistics Conference, Amsterdam, 1997
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This volume contains a selection from the proceedings of the 5th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference, which was held at the Free University in Amsterdam, from July 14-19, 1997. The volume is a companion of two others that also contain selected papers of the same conference: *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics*, edited by Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. and Gerard J. Steen (CILT 175) and *Discourse Studies in Cognitive Linguistics*, edited by Karen van Hoek, Andrej A. Kibrik and Leo Noordman (CILT 176).

The title of the present volume may be assumed to speak, to a certain extent, for itself. As Goldberg (1995:1) observes, "[t]he notion *construction* has a time-honored place in linguistics", but was temporarily renounced in the Chomskyan Government and Binding framework. In Cognitive Linguistics, it is given pride of place again, though the notion is, on the whole, subject to different interpretations as far as scope and organizational level are concerned. Langacker (1987:409) sees grammatical constructions as the form-meaning "integration of two or more component structures to form a composite expression". The Construction Grammar framework (cf. Fillmore & Kay to appear) employs the much more rigorous notion that a particular form-meaning combination is a construction only if it has some (form and/or meaning) property that "is not strictly predictable from [its] component parts, or from other previously established constructions" (Goldberg 1995:4). Beyond the consensus, then, that constructions constitute recognizable form-meaning patterns, opinions differ.

This is also evident from the papers making up the present volume. They seem to vary significantly in their vision on what constructions are. The research areas they are concerned with, also cover a wide range of different topics. For this reason we have decided to make no attempt to organize the papers thematically; we simply present them in alphabetical order.

In order to give the reader some preliminary idea of what this volume has to offer, we will, however, first outline its contents from various angles. Except for Griffiths' paper, which deals with child language, all the papers are directly concerned with particular constructions as used by mature speakers. A variety of languages is covered; in alphabetical order: English, Fijian, French, German, (Modern) Greek, (Modern) Hebrew, Japanese, Polish and Thai. Two of the papers, by Griffiths and Ihara & Fujita, are experimentally based and approach the constructions dealt with from psychological angles, i.e.

that of acquisition and agrammatism respectively, a widening of the field that is very welcome.

Thematically, we can recognize, very roughly, the following constructional fields of interest: (verbal) Aspect, (Kochańska), Case (Dancygier; Dewell; Griffiths; Ihara & Fujita), Causation (Mandelblit & Fauconnier; Thepkanjana; Van der Leek), Conditionals (Athanasiadou & Dirven; Nikiforidou & Katis), Gerundive Nominals (Heyvaert), Modality (Mortelmans), Particles (Hampe), and Passives (Takahashi; Tsuboi). Various authors furthermore both argue and illustrate the importance of corpus-based data (Athanasiadou & Dirven; Hampe; Mortelmans; Nikiforidou & Katis). As for what we might call 'cognitive mechanisms', we find the notion Construal to be pervasive throughout all the papers, while the following types of mechanisms play a central role in more specific analyses: Blending and Underspecificity (Mandelblit & Fauconnier), Compositionality (and beyond) (Dancygier; Kochańska; Van der Leek), Grounding (Heyvaert; Mortelmans); Cognitive Models/Frames (Takahashi; Tsuboi; Van der Leek); Lexical Alternation (Thepkanjana; Van der Leek), Subjectivity (Mortelmans; Nikiforidou & Katis), and, lastly, Sequence of Attention (Dewell). Obviously, the above classification is a rough cross-specification, not intended as exhaustive; too many specifically cognitive issues crop up in individual papers to be all mentioned here.

Assuming that the above has nevertheless provided the reader with enough of a first impression of what to expect from this volume, we will now turn to a brief characterization of each individual paper.

Athanasiadou & Dirven discuss English pragmatic, non-prototypical conditionals, a class which, in their conception, also comprises epistemic/logical conditionals. Their paper, which is corpus-based, argues that the four subtypes they distinguish, 'identifying' and 'inferencing' (both logical) and 'discourse' and 'metacommunicative' (both conversational) all share certain basic pragmatic characteristics that are extended in different ways and the paper aims to show that these differences can account for the variety of forms each type can manifest.

Dancygier analyzes the conceptualization of space in Polish, arguing that the way this language construes space is dependent on three subsystems, i.e. direction nouns, prepositions and case. Her overall conclusion is that the spatial expressions in question are constructed compositionally, with each of the three structural subsystems making a consistent meaning contribution of its own.

Dewell discusses the schematic meanings of accusative and dative cases, arguing that these do not simply reflect different roles in the action chain, but,

instead, impose a certain way of construing an event. In particular, he points out a central difference between the above two cases that concerns the notion 'sequence of attention'. The accusative, he argues, typically makes one change focus from the subject to the direct object referent, while atypical variants (with the accusative NP itself evoking a pathway) effect a construal that makes one stay attentive to both at the same time. The dative, on the other hand, has the effect that the NP referent never gains central attention, but is construed as staying, in a sense, outside the direct action chain. In his comparison of English and German, Dewell shows that the structure of the languages involved (absence of a difference between dative and accusative case in English) is a factor that plays its own role in the type of construals that the two languages make available for an event.

Griffiths analyzes children's acquisition data on Fijian possessive constructions. Fijian differentiates between alienable and inalienable possession and has, besides an unmarked possessive marker, special markers for possession of 'food' and 'drink'. The data suggest that acquisition of this type of markers is cognitively driven in that, firstly, possessive meanings get linguistically expressed before the relevant constructions are mastered, secondly, conceptually simpler categories, e.g. the singular marker and the default possessive marker, are learnt prior to the 'food' and 'drink' ones, and, thirdly, the latter type of markers are applied first to prototypical food and drink categories, and only later to more abstract members of the category.

Hampe shows that the existence in English of the phrasal verb 'to face up to' side by side with the simple verb 'to face' is not to be seen as 'wordy speech', but as a multiply motivated construction, showing that the particle combination conveys that the challenge induced by some problem/obstacle is actually met, whereas the simple verb merely expresses that the problem/obstacle does not go, so to speak, unnoticed. Conceptually speaking, the meaning of the phrasal verb is 'motivated' by the meaning of its parts, though motivation, as Hampe is careful to point out, is not the same as strict compositionality. From a pragmatic perspective, the phrasal verb is motivated by expressivity, and a corpus analysis method is used to argue this latter point.

Heyvaert presents a proposal for refining Langacker's analysis of English gerundive nominals. She argues that the *-ing* marker in gerundive nominals indicates, differently from the same marker in action nominals, that the complex predication made up of the verb and its object (which she analyzes, pace Langacker (1991), as a clausal type rather than a clausal instance) has the status of nonfinite clausal head of the gerundive construction, a construction which requires a (periphrastic) subject for its instantiation. This analysis enables her to distinguish intrinsically between action nominals, gerundive

nominals and *that*-clause nominals, and thereby account for the semantic differences these three types of nominals exhibit, as well as for the way they differ in their external behaviour.

Ihara & Fujita discover, from an experimental study with three Japanese subjects suffering from agrammatism, that these patients wrongly use the source marker *-kara* instead of the goal marker *-ni* in a significant number of cases, and not the other way around. This behaviour, they argue, is in line with certain linguistic phenomena relating to source and goal markers: source markers are marked in comparison to goal markers and source constructions can, diachronically, develop into goal constructions. Both the linguistic phenomena and the agrammatic data can be explained by the cognitive action chain model, in which the goal is in line with the energy flow that originates in an actor, whereas a source conceptualizes a point that is opposite to the direction of the action chain.

Kochańska, dealing with verbal aspect in Polish, restricts herself to accounting for the acceptability and possible interpretations of coordinated VP constructions involving perfective/imperfective VPs, seen from a temporally extended or a temporally momentary Viewing Frame. On the basis of her findings, she argues, with Langacker (1991, inter alia), that the notions of temporal boundedness/unboundedness and internal heterogeneity/homogeneity should be kept distinct; both, she argues, pace Verkuyl (1993), are relevant for verbal aspect. Her general conclusions are that Polish perfective and imperfective VPs are both polysemous, that the meaning of coordinated VPs is constructional rather than purely compositional, and that notions like boundedness are a matter of construal rather than constituting 'objective' facets of the world: an event is, for instance, bounded if we (can) think of it as such, not because it *is* bounded regardless of how one looks at the situation. An important consequence of this latter viewpoint is that only a truly subjectivist analysis of aspectual phenomena can, according to Kochańska, deal with the facts in a revealing manner.

Mandelblit & Fauconnier argue that a generic conceptual causative schema underlies not only grammatical causative constructions, but passive, middle and reflexive constructions as well. They analyze, to concentrate on the first type, causative syntactic constructions in English, Modern Hebrew (*hif'il*) and French. In their view, a sentence is the result of blending a conceived event with a schematically meaningful syntactic construction. Because not every element of the conceived event is projected on the construction, possible ambiguities may arise, for example between middle and passive constructions in Modern Hebrew. Because, furthermore, mappings from the conceived event onto the meaningful syntax may differ in systematic ways, the blending

mechanism can also account for the difference in mapping responsible for the meanings of *Rachel sneezed the napkin off the table* on the one hand (here the construction's subject referent is understood to do the sneezing), and of *She trotted the horse into the stable* on the other (here the trotting is understood as done by the object referent). Language being to a large extent underspecified, grammatical blending can thus account for various kinds of constructional ambiguity.

Mortelmans shows, on the basis of original data, that the Konjunktiv II mood in German on its own signals negative epistemic stance (irrealis), that epistemic modals in the Konjunktiv II form, e.g. *könnte* (cf. Indicative *kann*), still signal positive epistemic stance (potentiality), be it in a weakened form. However, in conditionals with Konjunktiv II functioning as grounding predication in the protasis, the effect on e.g. *könnte* is that it now can only express negative epistemic stance (irrealis). Interestingly, the form *dürfte* has grammaticalized in a different direction, expressing a highly subjective epistemic evaluation; it is therefore on the whole considered unacceptable if Konjunktiv II has a dominant grounding function. Her conclusion is, therefore, that mood and modals exhibit what she aptly calls 'division of labour'.

Nikiforidou & Katis show, on the basis of authentic material, that the traditional claim that the conditional markers *ama*, *ean* and *na* are free variants of the basic conditional marker *an* is wrong, and that the three markers under discussion code extra semantic dimensions, in that each involves, in its own way, a "subjective construal ... of the situation depicted in the protasis" (section 5; 'subjective' in Langacker's (1987) sense of 'egocentric construal'). The authors show that the three markers display semantic extensions as well, extensions which seem to point more in the direction of Traugott's (1995) notion of subjectivity by marking highly personal facets like empathy or involvement, thus providing motivated links from the basic egocentric semantics of the markers in question.

As Takahashi points out, imperatives do not, normally speaking, occur in the passive voice in English, cf. **Be helped by Jill*; however, there are felicitous examples of passive imperatives as well, cf. *Be flattered by what he says, it'll make his day*. Takahashi shows that it is conceptual incompatibility that leads to the typical unacceptability of passive imperatives. The (second person) subject of an imperative is, given a prototypical Imperative Event Model, an agent, whereas the subject of a passive, given a prototypical Passive Model, is a patient. Only when used in non-prototypical ways, can the two constructions become compatible. It is this cognitive viewpoint that enables Takahashi, moreover, to explain why in Japanese passive imperatives are hardly (if at all) acceptable: unlike English, the meaning of the Japanese

imperative is restricted to the prototypical Imperative Event Model, hence passive and imperative constructions are bound to clash in Japanese.

Thepkanjana, analysing the semantics of lexical causative verbs in Thai, makes a major distinction between alternating and non-alternating lexical causatives, and a further subdivision into (a) different types of causatives, (b) agent-oriented causatives and (c) patient-oriented causatives. On the basis of these distinctions, and with the help of Talmy's notion of 'windowing of attention', she neatly accounts for the kind of constructions the verbs in question can, or cannot, occur in, while also making it clear that the notion 'accidental lexical gap' is a misnomer as far as suppletive lexical causatives in Thai are concerned: their distribution is by no means random.

Tsuboi deals with the adversative passive construction in Japanese, a construction which involves the quite fascinating phenomenon of valence increase: particular verb types, which are intransitive when used actively, can passivize provided an extra argument, marked by ablative *-ni*, is added to the passive construction. Earlier analyses essentially account for this valence increase in random terms: the construction requires an extra-thematic NP. Tsuboi, on the other hand, argues that the adversative passive is motivated by a particular Japanese cultural cognitive model that involves a person's 'sense of responsibility'. This models a person A responsible for something bad happening to a person B, provided A could have prevented this from happening; A is thus seen as having affected B adversatively (regardless whether this was intentional or not). The meaning of the passive adversative can only be understood against this ICM, with the *-ni*-marked actor mapping onto person A, provided, moreover, that the passive subject referent (the focus of attention in the passive) is actually annoyed at the actor in question. This model of responsibility ascription shows itself not only in the passive construction, but also in some active contexts that also involve valence increase. The adversative passive is, thus, not an isolated phenomenon in Japanese, as previous analyses suggested.

Van der Leek, lastly, argues against the analysis of the English caused-motion construction as proposed by Goldberg (1995), who claims, essentially, that this is a construction in the Construction Grammar sense (cf. Fillmore & Kay to appear), in that its syntax prototypically pairs up with a caused-motion sense, and with extended senses in nonprototypical uses of the construction; thanks to this claim, she can argue that verbs have basically only one meaning, and that a verb is licensed in the construction provided its basic meaning is compatible with one of the construction's conventional senses. Van der Leek argues instead that, where mature speakers are concerned, the pure syntax of the construction makes no semantic contribution of its own, and that the

caused-motion pattern (or any of its extensions) gets extracted by the language user as a superordinate conceptual category, a category that, indeed, licenses particular usages without, however, lending them their meaning. She further argues that pure syntactic configurations have no semantic value prior to conceptualization, even though children begin by assuming that there is a direct mapping between their prelinguistic conceptualizations of caused-motion and the meaning of the syntactic configuration in question.

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