

**Seminar 21**

**MEANING CONSTRUCTION:  
FUNCTIONALIST, COGNITIVIST AND/OR CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACHES**

The seminar aims to promote the interaction and collaboration among researchers interested in recent functionalist, cognitivist and/or constructionist approaches with special focus on present-day English. Specifically, the seminar is intended to be a forum for the discussion of virtually any theoretical and/or descriptive/applied aspect concerning grammar, the lexicon and discourse, and in particular controversial areas such as: the relationship between syntax and all facets of meaning construction, the boundaries between grammar and the lexicon, argument structure configuration, the interaction between lexical and constructional templates, pragmatic inferencing, implicature and illocutionary meaning, as well as the potential of metonymic operations in speech act configuration.

Convenor: Annalisa Baicchi (University of Pavia)  
email: [annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it](mailto:annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it)

Co-convenor: Francisco González-García (University of Almería)  
email: [fgonza@ual.es](mailto:fgonza@ual.es)

Prof. Dr. Annalisa Baicchi  
Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics  
University of Pavia  
Corso Strada Nuova, 65  
27100 Pavia  
Italy  
email: [annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it](mailto:annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it)

Prof. Dr. Francisco González-García  
Department of English and German Philology  
University of Almería  
La Cañada de San Urbano, s/n  
04120 Almería  
Spain  
email: [fgonza@ual.es](mailto:fgonza@ual.es)

## Seminar 21

**MEANING CONSTRUCTION:  
FUNCTIONALIST, COGNITIVIST AND/OR CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACHES**

	Name	Title of paper
09.00	Lachlan MacKenzie	Evidence for the grammaticalization of 'fail to' in modern English
09.20	Silvia Cacchiani	Meaning construction in morphological blends
09.40	Casilda Garcia de la Maza	Syntax meets pragmatics in the middle
10.00	Daniele Franceschi	The construction of present perfect meanings in contemporary English
10.20	Ricardo Mairal Usón	An overview of the <i>Lexical Constructional Model</i> : levels of representation and meaning construction. Part I: The General architecture of the LCM
10.40	Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza	An overview of the <i>Lexical Constructional Model</i> : levels of representation and meaning construction. Part II: Subsumption and cueing processes within the LCM
11.00	<i>coffee break</i>	
15.00	Marta Degani	Mediating metaphors from a cognitive perspective: a case study of English and Italian political metaphors in translation
15.20	Fawaz Al-Abed Al-Haq	The cultural dimension in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL)
15.40	Vladan Pavlovic	Cognitive Linguistics and English Language Teaching at English Departments
16.00	Elisabetta Zurru	"You can't lie. Tell me where Shrek is": Meaning construction in <i>Shrek the Third</i> .
16.20	Francisco González-García	The division of labour between verbal semantics and constructional semantics reconsidered from a contrastive perspective: the case of cognition verbs in English and Spanish
16.40	Annalisa Baicchi	The change-of-state force-dynamics pattern in meaning construction
17.00 17.30	<b>Discussion</b>	<i>The multifaceted dimension of meaning construction</i>  Discussant: Prof. Lachlan Mackenzie

**LIST OF SPEAKERS AND TITLES OF PRESENTATIONS**

Fawwaz AL-ABED AL-HAQ Sultan Abu-Dulboub Dept of English Language and Literature Yarmouk University, Irbid-Jordan. fawaz_m@yu.edu.jo	<b>THE CULTURAL DIMENSION IN TEACHING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TAFL)</b>
Annalisa BAICCHI Dept of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics University of Pavia annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it	<b>THE CHANGE-OF-STATE FORCE-DYNAMICS PATTERN IN MEANING CONSTRUCTION</b>
Silvia CACCHIANI Dept of Linguistics, Text and Translation Studies University of Modena and Reggio Emilia silvia.cacchiani@unimore.it	<b>MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN MORPHOLOGICAL BLENDS</b>
Marta DEGANI Dept of English University of Verona marta.degani@univr.it	<b>MEDIATING METAPHORS FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND ITALIAN POLITICAL METAPHORS IN TRANSLATION</b>
Daniele FRANCESCHI Dept of English University of Pisa d.franceschi@angl.unipi.it	<b>THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRESENT PERFECT MEANINGS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH</b>
Casilda GARCÍA DE LA MAZA Dept of English and German Philology, Translation and Interpreting University of the Basque Country cg250@cantab.net	<b>SYNTAX MEETS PRAGMATICS IN THE MIDDLE</b>
Francisco GONZÁLVEZ-GARCÍA Dept of English and German Philology University of Almería fgonza@ual.es	<b>THE DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN VERBAL SEMANTICS AND CONSTRUCTIONAL SEMANTICS RECONSIDERED FROM A CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF COGNITION VERBS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH</b>
J. Lachlan MACKENZIE VU University Amsterdam and ILTEC, Lisbon lachlan_mackenzie@hotmail.com	<b>EVIDENCE FOR THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF ‘FAIL TO’ IN MODERN ENGLISH</b>
Ricardo MAIRAL USÓN Dept of Foreign Languages and Literatures National University of Distance Education, Madrid rmairal@flog.uned.es	<b>AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEXICAL CONSTRUCTIONAL MODEL: LEVELS OF REPRESENTATION AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION</b>  <b>PART I: THE GENERAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE LCM</b>
Vladan PAVLOVIC Dept of English University of Nis, Serbia vladanp2@gmail.com	<b>COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS</b>
Francisco RUIZ DE MENDOZA Dept of Modern Philologies University of La Rioja, Logroño francisco.ruizdemendoza@unirioja.es	<b>AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEXICAL CONSTRUCTIONAL MODEL: LEVELS OF REPRESENTATION AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION</b>  <b>PART II: SUBSUMPTION AND CUEING PROCESSES WITHIN THE LCM</b>
Elisabetta ZURRU Dept of Modern Philology and Literatures University of Cagliari elizurru@hotmail.com	<b>“YOU CAN’T LIE. TELL ME WHERE SHREK IS”: MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN <i>SHREK THE THIRD</i>.</b>

## **THE CULTURAL DIMENSION IN TEACHING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TAFL)**

Fawwaz AL-ABED AL-HAQ  
Sultan Abu-Dulbouh  
Dept of English Language and Literature  
Yarmouk Univeristy  
Irbid, Jordan  
fawaz\_m@yu.edu.jo

Since culture is a basic feature in meaning construction and language is a carrier of culture, therefore language learning cannot be done without taking this fact into consideration. Specifically, there is a strong symbiotic relationship between the Jordanian Arabic culture and the Arabic language; culture can affect the structure of its language, and the language might affect some aspects of the culture. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of some cultural aspects on the learnability of US Peace Corps Volunteers who study Arabic language as a foreign language. The cultural aspect are: the relationship between the Jordanian Arabic culture and the Arabic language, the role played by learners' host families and local communities in language and culture learning, the role of language instructor in language learning, the role of the techniques used to introduce cultural topics in language learning and learners' attitudes towards the Jordanian Arabic culture. A questionnaire of sixty-seven items was designed and developed, then distributed to 65 US Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Jordan. The findings of the study reveal that there is a strong reciprocal relationship between the Jordanian Arabic culture and the Arabic language. The sample realizes that it is very important to have host families because their continuous input and assistance to the culture and language learning and volunteers are invaluable. The sample also recognizes that having expert language and cultural facilitators makes them better prepared for dealing with people of the Jordanian culture. The people surveyed view cultural presentation techniques as equal in importance as their contents, therefore; they should be varied to deal with different learning modalities. Finally, the sample shows positive attitudes towards Arabic culture: customs, traditions and value.

## THE CHANGE-OF-STATE FORCE-DYNAMICS PATTERN IN MEANING CONSTRUCTION

Annalisa BAICCHI  
Dept of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics  
University of Pavia  
annalisa.baicchi@unipv.it

Stemming from the assumption that constructions play a central role in semantic interpretation, the present study sets out to investigate the conceptual motivation of some instances of the caused-motion construction [e.g. “I blew the ant off the plate” (Talmy 1985:229); “They laughed the poor guy out of the room” (Goldberg 1995: 152; Boas 2008)] conceived of as the representation of a ‘*Manipulative Activity Scene*’ (Slobin 1985). My research draws insights from functional theories like *Role and Reference Grammar* (Van Valin 2005) and from specific strands of *Construction Grammar* (Goldberg 1995, 2006; Boas 2002). At the same time, it builds on the theoretical framework of the *Lexical-Constructional Model* (Ruiz de Mendoza 2005; Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal 2006, 2007; Mairal & Ruiz de Mendoza 2006, 2007; Baicchi 2007a, b; Baicchi 2008; Ruiz de Mendoza & Baicchi 2007), which arises out of the need to spell out the relationship between the lexicon and grammar with a view to correlating instances of Internal and External Linguistics and to unifying features of three theoretical frameworks - functionalist, cognitivist and/or constructionist. More specifically, this study will investigate the role that Force-Dynamics categories play in licensing instances of the caused-motion construction, which is considered here to be a change-of-state force-dynamics pattern.; it will be shown that, within this pattern, different types and degrees of force can be envisaged which rule different realizations of the construction under scrutiny.

In order to better understand the factors that motivate the full gamut of instances of the caused-motion construction and allow for the performance of cognitive operations on them (Radden & Panther 2004; Radden *et al.* 2007), this study will focus on the following aspects: (1) the need for lexical and constructional templates that not only form a continuum (Langacker 2005) but also interact in a constrained way, thus allow for a powerful representational system for verbs in their constructional use without linking algorithmic rules; (2) many aspects of transitivity in grammar are conceptually grounded either in high-level metaphor or in high-level metonymy (Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal 2006b); (3) the change-of-state force-dynamics pattern licenses both concrete and metaphorical motion: exertion of force can be physical (“She knocked him into the thorny bed of roses”), psychological (“He stared me into a half-confusion”), and intrapsychological (“I duped myself into thinking I could be part of the crew team”).

## REFERENCES

- Baicchi, Annalisa (2007a), “The high-level metaphor in the caused-motion construction”. Workshop: *Bridging the gap between functionalism and cognitivism. The Lexical Constructional Model*, organised by Annalisa Baicchi and Francisco González-García. Societas Linguistica Europea. University of Joensuu. 30 August-04 September.
- Baicchi, Annalisa. (2007b) “The subsumption process of the intransitive-transitive migration”. In M.Dossena, D.Torretta, A.Sportelli (eds.), *Migrations of Forms, Forms of Migration*, Bari
- Baicchi, Annalisa. (2008) “Quantitative Valency Addition in the Lexical-Constructional Model”. *Proceedings of the 27<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Lexis and Grammar*. L’Aquila
- Boas, Hans (2002) . “On constructional polysemy and verbal polysemy in Construction Grammar,” in: Samiian, V. (ed.), *Proceedings of the 2000 Western Conference on Linguistics. Vol. 12*. 126-139.
- Boas, Hans (2008). "Resolving Form-meaning Discrepancies in Construction Grammar," in: Leino, J. (ed.), *Constructional Reorganization*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

- Butler, Christopher & Francisco González-García (2005). Situating FDG in Functional-Cognitive Space: An Initial Study. In Mackenzie L. & Gomez-Gonzalez M:L:A: (eds). *Studies in Functional Discourse Grammar* (Linguistic Insights, 26). Bern. Peter Lang: 109-158
- Goldberg, Adele (1995). *A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goldberg, Adele (2006). *Constructions at work: the nature of generalization in language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- González-García, Francisco & Christopher Butler (2006). "Mapping Functional-Cognitive Space". In *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics 4*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins: 39-96
- González-García, Francisco (2008). "The family of object-related depictives in English and Spanish: Towards a usage-based, constructionist analysis." *Language Sciences*.
- Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.
- Langacker, Ronald (2005) "Construction Grammars: cognitive, radical, and less so." In F. Ruiz de Mendoza and S. Peña (eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics. Internal Dynamics and Interdisciplinary Interaction*. Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter: 101-159.
- Mairal, Usón, Ricardo & Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza. (2006). "Internal and external constraints in meaning construction: the lexicon-grammar continuum". *Estudios de Filología Inglesa: Homenaje a la Dra. Asunción Alba Pelayo*. Madrid: UNED
- Ostman J.O & M.Fried (eds.) (2005), *Construction Grammars. Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions*. Amsterdam, Benjamins
- Radden Günter, Klaus-Michael Köpcke, Thomas Berg and Peter Siemund (eds.), (2007). *Aspects of Meaning Construction*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Radden, Günter & Klaus-Uwe Panther (2004), *Studies in Linguistic Motivation*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José & Annalisa Baicchi (2007) Illocutionary Constructions: Cognitive Motivation and Linguistic Realization. In Keeskes I & Horn L. (eds). *Explorations in Pragmatics. Linguistic, Cognitive and Intercultural Aspects*. (Pragmatics and Beyond). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José & R. Mairal Usón (2007) "High-level metaphor and metonymy in meaning construction". In Günter Radden, Klaus-Michael Köpcke, Thomas Berg & Peter Siemund. (eds.) *Aspects of Meaning Construction in Lexicon and Grammar*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins; 33-49.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José (2005). Construing Meaning through Conceptual Mappings. In *Lengua y Sociedad: Aportaciones recientes en Linguística Cognitiva, Linguística del Corpus, Lenguajes de Especialidad y Lengua en Contacto*. Fuertes P. (ed.). Universidad de Valladolid: 19-38
- Slobin, Dan (1985). "Cross-linguistic evidence for the language-making capacity". In Slobin D. (ed.). *A Crosslinguistic Study of Language Acquisition*. Vol. 2. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Talmy, Len (1985), "Lexicalization patterns. Semantic structure in lexical forms", in T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description, III*, Cambridge, C.U.P., pp. 57-149.
- Mairal Usón, Ricardo & Francisco José Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2006). "Internal and external constraints in meaning construction: the lexicon-grammar continuum". *Estudios de Filología Inglesa*. Madrid: UNED
- Van Valin, Robert .D. Jr. (2005). *The Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Interface: An Introduction to Role and Reference Grammar*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN MORPHOLOGICAL BLENDS

Silvia CACCHIANI  
Dept of Linguistics, Text and Translation Studies  
University of Modena and Reggio Emilia  
silvia.cacchiani@unimore.it

This paper investigates meaning construction in recent and novel morphological blends within a comprehensive framework of analysis which brings together insights from structural studies (e.g. Kemmer 2003; Gries 2004), psycholinguistics (Lehrer 2003), pragmatics (Cacchiani 2007a), natural morphology (Thornton 1986) and the theory of complexity (cf. Merlini Barbaresi 2003, as applied in Cacchiani, in press), and Cognitive Linguistics (specifically, Ruiz de Mendoza's 1998ff *Combined Input Hypothesis*). After a preliminary discussion of the reasons for coining new blends despite their relative degree of morphotactic and (to a much lesser extent) morphosemantic complexity, and, in particular, of the need to be relevant and search for effectiveness, the main emphasis will lie on the ability of recent and novel blends to be still analysable into their source words. This will enable us to: (a) distinguish different types of morphological blends, ranging from referential formatives (e.g. *allivator* < *alligator* + *elevator*) through relatively more rational evaluatives (*confuzzled* < *confused* + *puzzled*) to strong evaluatives (*bootilicious* < *booty* + *delicious*; *beaulicious* < *beau* + *delicious*; *craptacular* < *crap* + *spectacular*), and, as a second step, (bi) carry out a thorough investigation into the processes of meaning construction within each (sub-)category, and (bii) briefly discuss the results in terms of different degrees of complexity. Third, a first attempt will be made at assessing the complexity of individual blends within Štekauer's (e.g. 1991, 1998, 2001, 2005) Onomasiological Model of Word Formation.

### REFERENCES

- Cacchiani S., 2007. "Discourse-pragmatic features of novel evaluative blends", in L. Bottini, G. Del Lungo, and J. Douthwaite (eds), *Cityscapes: Islands of the Self*. Language Studies, Vol. 2, CUEC, Cagliari, pp. 103-114.
- Cacchiani, S. in press. "From names to nouns and the other way round: on the recognizability of identificatory and descriptive morphological blends". Proceedings of the XXVI AESLA conference. *From Applied Linguistics to the Linguistics of the Mind: Issues, practises and trends*. Almeria, 6-9 April 2008.
- Gries S.Th., 2004, "Shouldn't it be breakfunch? A quantitative analysis of blend structure in English", in M. Achard and S. Kemmer (eds), *Language, Culture and Mind*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, pp. 415-428.
- Kemmer S., 2003, "Schemas and lexical blends", in T. Berg et al. (eds), *Motivation in Language: From Case Grammar to Cognitive Linguistics. A Festschrift für Gunter Radden*, Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 69-97.
- Lehrer A., 2003, "Understanding trendy neologisms", *Rivista di Linguistica*, 15 (2), pp. 369-382.
- Merlini Barbaresi L. (ed.) 2003, *Complexity in Language and the Text*, PLUS, Pisa.
- Ruiz de Mendoza F.J., 1998, "On the nature of blending as a cognitive phenomenon", *Journal of Pragmatics* 30/3. 259-274.
- Štekauer P., 1991, "On some issues of blending in English word-formation", *Linguistica Pragmatis* 1, pp. 26-35.
- Štekauer P., 1998, *An Onomasiological Theory of English Word Formation*, Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- Štekauer P., 2001, "Fundamental principles of an onomasiological theory of English word formation", *Onomasiology Online* 2, pp. 1-42 [www.onomasiology.de]

Šteckauer P., 2005, *Meaning Predictability in Word Formation*, Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

Thornton A.M., 1993, "Italian blends", in L. Tonelli and W.U. Dressler (eds), *Natural Morphology. Perspectives for the Nineties*, Unipress, Padova, pp. 143-155.

## MEDIATING METAPHORS FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE:

### A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND ITALIAN POLITICAL METAPHORS IN TRANSLATION

MARTA DEGANI  
Dept of English  
University of Verona  
marta.degani@univr.it

Although Translation Studies have developed into an academic field of its own, this is an area that may benefit from findings in Cognitive Linguistics as well, especially with regard to conceptual metaphor theory.

In view of this, the present paper tries to shed light on the interaction between linguistic, conceptual and cultural systems when metaphors are translated from source to target language. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the translation of metaphors from English into Italian in journal articles about politics. The investigation will be based on the Italian weekly *Internazionale*, which features translations of original newspaper and magazine articles from English and other language sources. The metaphors from the original texts will be compared with the Italian renderings by showing their individual cognitive structures in line with conceptual metaphor theory (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 2004) and conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). One aspect of the analysis is based on the assumption that political metaphors convey manipulative force in a covert way. Thus, similarities and differences in the metaphoric images can be expected to reflect culturally specific views on politics in the source and target language.

In a broader perspective, the paper also attempts to demonstrate how Translation Studies can fruitfully apply many of the cognitive-linguistic concepts and theories.

#### REFERENCES

- Fauconnier, Gilles and Mark Turner. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lakoff, George. 2004. *Don't think of an elephant!* White River Junction, Vt: Chelsea Green.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: Chicago UP.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRESENT PERFECT MEANINGS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH

Daniele FRANCESCHI  
Dept of English  
University of Pisa  
d.franceschi@angl.unipi.it

This paper aims to provide an alternative analysis of the Present Perfect in contemporary English by drawing upon the concept of markedness (Merlini Barbaresi 1988b, 2003b) and following the view of language as a complex dynamical system (Bertuccelli Papi 2003a; Bertuccelli Papi & Lenci 2007). The different Present Perfect interpretations (McCawley 1971, 1981) are seen as making up an apparatus of periphrastic constructions with variable degrees of both formal and conceptual complexity, produced by the interplay of lexical-syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors.

The study is based on a sample of 1,200 Present Perfect occurrences obtained from the written component of the *British National Corpus* (imaginative and informative texts from books and periodicals published between 1985 and 1993) and from one fiction section (mystery and detective stories) of the following corpora of the ICAME collection: *London/Oslo/Bergen Corpus* (British English, early 1960s), *Freiburg-LOB Corpus* (British English, early 1990s), *Brown Corpus* (American English, early 1960s), *Freiburg-Brown Corpus* (American English, early 1990s), *Australian Corpus of English* (Australian English, 1986-), *Wellington Corpus* (New Zealand English, 1986-1990).

Despite the extremely abundant literature on the English Present Perfect (Binnick, 1998/2006), past studies appear not to have given specific attention to the frequencies of occurrence of its various interpretations in different text types and genres. This aspect, instead, plays a key role in the evaluation of the meaning components characterising the Present Perfect semantic/pragmatic “space”. I will claim that this latter is characterised by a resultative nucleus triggered by specific syntactic and lexical-aspectual conditions. The departure from this prototypical semantic core sees the Present Perfect system undergoing a gradual process of complexification brought about by an increase in the number and type of elements (Elman 1999; Collier & Hooker 1999) profiling the different constructions. The more the distance from the “centre”, the less objectively verifiable become the states and conditions resulting from the events described. The meanings associated with Present Perfect constructions will consequently be shown to range along an explicit-implicit spectrum whose extremes are characterised, on the one hand, by the expression of obvious and logical cause-effect relations, and, on the other hand, by highly subjective “representations of evidence” (Carey 1995).

It will finally be demonstrated how a more in-depth, semiotic assessment can provide an explanatory account of the varying degrees of markedness and complexity associated with the multiple instantiations of Present Perfect readings. The latter will be analysed on the basis of the principles of diagrammaticity (describing patterns of similarity between form and content), indexicality (referring to the extent to which a *signans* “points” to a certain *signatum*), transparency (regarding the level of accessibility to meaning), biuniqueness (one-form-one-meaning principle), and figure/ground (referring to the varying degrees of saliency attributed to information in context) in order to better define the concept of resultativeness typically associated to the semantics of the Present Perfect.

## REFERENCES

Bertuccelli Papi, M. (2003a), “Cognitive complexity and the lexicon”, in Merlini Barbaresi, L. (ed), *Complexity in Language and Text*. Pisa: Plus Pisa University Press, 67-115.

- Bertuccelli Papi, M. & Lenci, A. (2007), "Lexical Complexity and the texture of meaning", in M. Bertuccelli Papi, G. Cappelli and S. Masi (eds.), *Lexical Complexity: Theoretical Assessment and Translational Perspectives*. Pisa: Plus Pisa University Press, 15-33.
- Binnick, R.I. (1998/2006), Project on the Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Research on Tense, Aspect, Aktionsart, and Related Areas. <http://www.scar.utoronto.ca/~binnick/TENSE/>
- Carey, K. (1995), "Subjectification and the Development of the English Perfect", in D. Stein & S. Wright (eds.), *Subjectivity and Subjectivisation: Linguistic Perspectives*. Cambridge: CUP, 83-102.
- Collier, J.D. & Hooker, C.A. (1999), "Complexly Organised Dynamical Systems", in *Open Systems and Information Dynamics*, VI, 241-302.
- Elman, J.L. (1999), "The emergence of language: a conspiracy theory", in B. MacWhinney (ed.), *The Emergence of Language*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1-27.
- McCawley, J. D. (1971), "Tense and time reference in English" in C. J. Fillmore, T. C. Langdoen (eds.), *Studies in linguistic semantics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 96-113.
- McCawley, J. D. (1981), "Notes on the English Present Perfect", in *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 1: 81-90.
- Merlini Barbaresi, L. (1988b), *Markedness in English Discourse*. Parma: Edizioni Zara.
- Merlini Barbaresi, L. (2003b), "Towards a theory of text complexity" in L. Merlini Barbaresi (ed.), *Complexity in Language and Text*. Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 23-66.

## SYNTAX MEETS PRAGMATICS IN THE MIDDLE

Casilda GARCÍA DE LA MAZA

Dept of English and German Philology, Translation and Interpreting

University of the Basque Country

cg250@cantab.net

Whereas the literature on the English middle construction (e.g. *Love stories read easily*) does recognise that middle formation is subject to certain ‘restrictions,’ no comprehensive investigation exists of the actual scope and nature of such constraints. Some proposals have linked middle formation with aspectuality or with the affectedness constraint. Specifically, the claims have been that middles have to be formed from accomplishment and/or activity predicates (Roberts 1987, Fagan 1992) and that they are restricted to verbs with affected objects (Doron and Rappaport-Hovav 1991; Levin 1993). These accounts, however, are based on a very limited range of *ad-hoc* examples. They also tend to focus on the internal structure of middles, and ignore the possibility that syntax-external or pragmatic factors might help explain what a middle sentence can or cannot be. As a result, a wide range of data are left unaccounted for.

This paper presents the results of an investigation aimed at identifying and characterizing the restrictions on middle formation in English. The study is based on data obtained by eliciting acceptability judgments from native speakers. It is also based on the crucial assumption that linguistic data are not amenable to binary grammaticality judgments, but call instead for a theory of competence that allows for gradience and degrees of acceptability. The framework adopted for the analysis is Sorace and Keller’s (2005) model of linguistic constraints.

The experimental results showed that affectedness does not play a role in middle acceptability. Aspectuality does matter, albeit to a certain extent. The most revealing result of the study, however, concerns the interaction between pragmatics and middle acceptability. Contextual factors emerged as the main determinant of middle acceptability, taking precedence over the aspectual constraints. This provides evidence in favour of the essentially ‘pragmatic value’ (Green 2004) of the construction, in line with much current research into the grammar/pragmatics interface. Some of the formal properties of the middles which had been formerly put down to syntactic constraints are then reanalysed in the light of this characterization.

## REFERENCES

- Doron, Edith & Malka Rappaport Hovav (1991) ‘Affectedness and externalization.’ *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the North Eastern Linguistic Society* 21:81-94.
- Fagan, Sarah M. (1992) *The Syntax and Semantics of Middle Constructions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, Georgia M. (2004) ‘Some Interactions of Pragmatics and Grammar.’ In Horn, Laurence R. and Gregory Ward (eds.) *The Handbook of Pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 408-426.
- Levin, Beth (1993) *English Verb Classes and Alternations*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Roberts, Ian G. (1987) *The Representation of Implicit and Dethematized Subjects*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Sorace, Antonella & Frank Keller (2005) ‘Gradience in linguistic data.’ *Lingua* 115.11:1497- 1524.

## THE DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN VERBAL SEMANTICS AND CONSTRUCTIONAL SEMANTICS RECONSIDERED FROM A CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF COGNITION VERBS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Francisco GONZÁLVEZ-GARCÍA  
Dept of English and German Philology  
University of Almería  
fgonza@ual.es

The Goldbergian-type of construction (Goldberg 2006) has been recently argued to be insufficient on explanatory grounds to predict the fusion of a given verb with a given construction from the point of view of encoding (see Boas 2008; Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal Usón 2008). This paper is a first step towards a better understanding of the thorny issue of the division of labour of lexical semantics and constructional semantics. Drawing on data from the original edition of the British National Corpus (BNC henceforth) for English and the Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA), this paper examines the distribution and frequency of a number of core cognition verbs in English (e.g. “find”, “think”, “consider”, “believe”) and Spanish (“creer” ‘think’, “considerar” ‘consider’, etc) with secondary predication (NP PREDCOMP henceforth) (as in (1)(a) and (1)(c) below) and the Accusative-with-Infinitive (AcI henceforth) and in (1)(b) below). This paper demonstrates that the lexical semantics interact with constructional semantics in a number of non-trivial ways, in particular with the choice of the subject, the choice of a (non-)reflexive object, and the choice of active and passive voice. The overall picture arising from the examination of these parameters yields what may be termed the “subjectivity continuum” as in (1)(a)-(d) below, with (1)(a) encoding the highest degree of personal, original commitment by the subject/speaker towards the content of the clause, and (1)(d) the subject/speaker’s highest degree of detachment and tentativeness.

- (1) (a) “Erm but *I certainly found anti-depressants helpful.*” (BNC Corpus, FLF 145) (**NP PREDCOMP configuration in the active voice**)
- (b) “One hundred and twenty people are thought to be dead and more than fifty injured in *what’s thought to be China’s worst air disaster.*” (BNC Corpus, KRT 3538) (**AcI configuration in the passive voice**)
- (c) “I can answer that, because erm there’s certainly nothing in the text of the plan to suggest *why it was not considered appropriate* erm and I don’t know erm I I can’t instantly think what factors erm might have gone into that consideration.” (BNC Corpus, FMP 520) (**NP PREDCOMP configuration in the passive voice**)
- (d) “*The gunman is still believed to be at large*, police have sealed off the area and are checking all cars.” (BNC Corpus, K6D 225) (**AcI configuration in the passive voice**)

However, the contrastive analysis of the configurations under investigation here yield two important conclusions: while the above-mentioned hierarchy can be observed in English and Spanish, differences exist, for instance, regarding the encoding of the highest degree of detachment of tentativeness (cf. (1)(d)), which is not feasible with the AcI in Spanish. Second, and perhaps more crucially for our purposes here, the division of labour between verbal semantics and constructional semantics should make appeal to information structure and information processing factors (see González-García 2006; Ambridge and Goldberg 2008). Interestingly enough, in Spanish, information structure factors override semantico-pragmatic considerations in determining the acceptability of constructions like the one in (2) below:

- (2) (a) “(...) *las gentes actúan según lo que creen ser cierto.*” (CREA Corpus, Salvador Giner, 2001, Teoría Sociológica Básica, Ariel, Barcelona).

- ‘(...) people behave according to what they believe to be true.’  
(b) #“Las gentes creen eso ser cierto.”  
‘People believe that to be true.’

The overall conclusion ensuing from our corpus-based study is that the division of labour between lexical semantics and constructional semantics cannot be properly understood irrespective of information structure and processing considerations, which happen to be construction-specific and language-specific. A limiting case is the Spanish AcI in the active voice where information structure factors override semantico-pragmatic ones.

## REFERENCES

- Ambridge, B., Goldberg, A. E. (2008). “The island status of clausal complements: evidence in favour of an information structure explanation”. *Cognitive Linguistics*.
- Boas, H. C. (2008). “Resolving Form-Meaning Discrepancies in Construction Grammar”. In Leino, J. (Ed.), *Constructional Reorganization*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam / Philadelphia. 11-36.
- Goldberg, A. E. (2006). *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- González-García, F., (2006). The Fortunes of the Competition between the Accusative and Infinitive and the NP + PRED Complement Constructions after Verba Cogitandi in English: A Construction Grammar View. In: Vázquez González, J. G., Martínez Vázquez, M., Ron Vaz, P., (Eds.), *The Historical Linguistics-Cognitive Linguistics Interface*. Grupo de Gramática Contrastiva, Huelva, pp. 75-145.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, F.J., Mairal Usón, R., 2008. Levels of Description and Constraining Factors in Meaning Construction: An Introduction to the Lexical Constructional Model. *Folia Linguistica* 42.

## EVIDENCE FOR THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF 'FAIL TO' IN MODERN ENGLISH

J. Lachlan MACKENZIE

VU University Amsterdam and ILTEC, Lisbon

lachlan\_mackenzie@hotmail.com

The paper analyses the 12,690 occurrences in the 100m-word British National Corpus of *fail* and its nominalization *failure* followed by *to*. In its lexical use, *fail* is a negative-implicative verb of the type identified by Karttunen (1971a, 1971b) and Givón (1973), e.g. *Susan tried and failed to seduce her teacher*. In its grammaticalized use, however, it functions as an alternative to *not* (*It failed to rain last night* = *It didn't rain last night*; *The fur failed to fly at the meeting* = *The fur didn't fly at the meeting*).

The paper will first analyse the latter use of *fail* as involving a subject-raising verb, using criteria of the type applied by Radford (1988); this analysis remains unsatisfactory, however, since subject-raising verbs (like *seem*) are lexical. For evidence of grammaticalization we move on to an analysis of *fail*'s properties with regard to positive and negative polarity items (Szabolcsi 2004), as in *They have failed to come home yet*; the data presented here suggest that *fail* belongs semantically to the same clause as the polarity item. This leads to an analysis of *fail to* as a grammatical operator with scope over the negated clause and with periphrastic exponence of the type proposed by Ackerman & Stump (2005) in Construction Grammar.

The corpus analysis initially generalizes over the lexical and grammaticalized uses of *fail* and reveals that strongly "prefers" verbs that are dynamic and telic. The most common verbs after *fail to* are *do*, *take*, *make*, *provide*, *comply*, *meet*, *recognize*, *get*, *find* and *reach*. Then come, much less frequently, dynamic verbs without telicity like *run*, *play*, etc. And finally, otherwise highly frequent non-dynamic verbs *need*, *want* and *mean* do not occur at all after *fail*, and others like *feel*, *know* and *like* are extremely rare. In addition there is a very strong tendency for the verb in question to display positive "semantic prosody" (Louw 1993). Of the 100 commonest verbs after *fail to*, only one is "inherently negative" (Tottie 1982), namely *break* (ranked 75<sup>th</sup>); close analysis of the corpus examples reveals, however, that in most cases the complement of *break* imposes an overall positive prosody, e.g. *break the deadlock*, *break free*.

A case study is then devoted to *fail to* followed by *be*, the prototypical non-dynamic verb, with 177 corpus instances (ranked 11<sup>th</sup>). The majority of these show *be* as the (meaningless) passive auxiliary; however, there remains a substantial subset where *be* combines with its complement to give a nondynamic, atelic meaning and where *fail to* functions as a negative operator. *Fail to* never is followed by *be* as a progressive operator; rather progressivity is expressed in conjunction with the operator: *My son is failing to improve his grades/ \*... fails to be improving ...*. This follows from an analysis of grammaticalized *fail to* as a negative operator with narrower scope than *not*, as also emerges from an examination of the use of *fail* in litotes. The paper concludes with discussion of the semantic and pragmatic motivations for the grammaticalization.

## REFERENCES

- Ackerman, Farrell, Gregory Stump (2005). Paradigms and periphrasis: A study in realization-based lexicalism. Sadler, Louise, Andrew Spencer, eds, *Projecting Morphology*. Stanford CA: CSLI Publications, 111-157.
- Givón, Talmy (1973). The time-axis phenomenon. *Language* 49: 891-926.
- Karttunen, Lauri (1971a). The logic of English predicate complement constructions. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Karttunen (1971b). Implicative verbs. *Language* 47: 340-358.

- Louw, Bill (1993). Irony in the text or insincerity in the writer. Baker, Mona, Gill Francis, Elena Tognini-Bonelli, eds. *Text and Technology: In Honour of John Sinclair*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 157-174.
- Radford, Andrew (1988). *Transformational Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Szabolcsi, Anna (2004). Positive polarity -- negative polarity. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*. 22: 409-452.
- Tottie, Gunnel (1982). Where do negative sentences come from? *Studia Linguistica* 36: 88-105.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEXICAL CONSTRUCTIONAL MODEL:  
LEVELS OF REPRESENTATION AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION**

**PART I: THE GENERAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE LCM**

Ricardo MAIRAL USÓN  
Dept of Foreign Languages and Literatures  
National University of Distance Education, Madrid  
rmairal@flog.uned.es

The Lexical Constructional Model (LCM) arises from the concern to account for the relationship between syntax and all facets on meaning construction, including traditional implicature, illocution, and discourse relations (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2007; Ruiz de Mendoza & Baicchi, 2007; Otal & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2007; Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, 2008). The new framework draws insights from functional models of language (especially, Van Valin's Role and Reference Grammar or RRG; Van Valin, 2005) and Cognitive Linguistics (especially, Lakoff's cognitive model theory; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; and Goldberg's constructional approach; Goldberg, 1995, 2005) in order to investigate the way lexical and constructional representations interact. The LCM is intended to be operational at all levels of linguistic description, including pragmatics and discourse. Thus, it has a level 1 or core module consisting of elements of syntactically relevant semantic interpretation, a pragmatic or level 2 module that accounts for low-level inferential aspects of linguistic communication, a level 3 module dealing with high-level inferences (i.e. illocutionary force), and finally a level 4 module that accounts for the discourse aspects of the LCM, especially cohesion and coherence phenomena. Each level is either subsumed into a higher-level constructional configuration or acts as a cue for the activation of a relevant conceptual structure that yields an implicit meaning derivation. At the heart of the LCM we find the notions of lexical and constructional template, which are the building blocks of the model. The principled interaction between lexical and constructional templates supplies the central or core meaning layer for other more peripheral operations -involving implicated meaning- to take place (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, 2008). A lexical template is a low-level semantic representation of the syntactically relevant content of a predicate; a constructional template is a high-level or abstract semantic representation of syntactically relevant meaning elements abstracted away from multiple lower-level representations. A lexical template consists of a semantic specification plus a logical structure. The logical structure formalism is constructed on the basis of Aktionsart distinctions proposed in Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin, 2005). Aktionsart regularities are captured by the external variables of the template) and by a set of high-level elements of structure that function as semantic primitives. Lexical templates also contain internal variables that are coded in terms of lexical functions as propounded in Mel'čuk's Explanatory and Combinatorial Lexicology (cf. Mel'čuk, 1989; Mel'čuk & Wanner, 1996). These variables capture world-knowledge elements that relate in a way specific to the predicate defined by the lexical template.

## REFERENCES

- Goldberg, A. E. (2006). *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goldberg, Adele (1995). *A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.
- Mel'čuk, Igor (1989). 'Semantic primitives from the viewpoint of the Meaning-Text Linguistic Theory'. *Quaderni di Semantica* 10 (1): 65-102.

- Mel'čuk Igor & Wanner Leo (1996), «Lexical functions and lexical inheritance for emotion lexemes in German», in Leo Wanner (Ed.), *Recent trends in Meaning-Text Theory*. Amsterdam, Benjamins: 209-227.
- Otal Campo, José Luis & Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José. (2007). "Modeling thought in language use: at the crossroads between discourse, pragmatics, and cognition". *Jezikoslovlje* 8.2: 115-167.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco J. (2007). "High level cognitive models: in search of a unified framework for inferential and grammatical behavior", en Kosecki, Krzysztof (ed.) *Perspectives on Metonymy*. Frankfurt/Main. Peter Lang. (Lodz Studies in Language); 11-30.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José & Annalisa Baicchi (2007) Illocutionary Constructions: Cognitive Motivation and Linguistic Realization. In Kecskes I & Horn L. (eds). *Explorations in Pragmatics. Linguistic, Cognitive and Intercultural Aspects*. (Pragmatics and Beyond). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins: 95-128.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José & Mairal Usón, Ricardo. (2008). "Levels of description and constraining factors in meaning construction: an introduction to the Lexical Constructional Model". *Folia Linguistica*, vol. 42.
- Van Valin, Robert .D. Jr. (2005). *The Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Interface: An Introduction to Role and Reference Grammar*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEXICAL CONSTRUCTIONAL MODEL:  
LEVELS OF REPRESENTATION AND MEANING CONSTRUCTION**

**PART II: SUBSUMPTION AND CUEING PROCESSES WITHIN THE LCM**

Francisco José RUIZ DE MENDOZA IBÁÑEZ  
Dept of Modern Philologies  
University of La Rioja, Logroño  
francisco.ruizdemendoza@unirioja.es

Meaning construction in the LCM revolves around two key processes, cueing and subsumption. Subsumption is a key meaning production mechanism that consists in the principled incorporation of lexical and/or constructional templates from one representational level into higher-level constructional representations (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, 2008). At the level of core grammar constructional templates "coerce" lexical templates. We distinguish two kinds of constraints on coercion: internal and external. The former arise from the semantic properties of the lexical and constructional templates and do not affect the Aktionsart ascription of the predicates involved. The latter do involve Aktionsart changes and result from the possibility or impossibility of performing high-level metaphoric and metonymic operations on the lexical items involved in the subsumption process. Internal constraints specify the conditions under which a lexical template may modify its internal configuration. For example, the lexical class constraint explains why 'break' verbs may take part in the causative/inchoative alternation (cf. *The child broke the window* and *The window broke*), while 'destroy' verbs may not. The reason is that 'destroy' verbs belong to the lexical class of 'existence' verbs, while 'break' verbs are verbs of 'change of state'.

As an example of external constraint, consider the conversion of 'laugh (at)', an activity predicate, into a causative accomplishment predicate when taking part in the Caused-Motion construction: *They laughed him out of the room*. This reinterpretation process hinges upon the correlation between two kinds of actor and two kinds of object. In the case of causative accomplishments, the actor and object are an effector and an effectee, i.e. an actor whose action has a direct impact and subsequent effects on the object. With activities, the actor is a mere "doer" of the action that is experienced by the object. This observation suggests an analysis of the subcategorical conversion process experienced by "laugh" in terms of source and target domain correspondences (EXPERIENTIAL ACTION IS EFFECTUAL ACTION), of the kind proposed in Cognitive Linguistics (cf. Lakoff, 1993). At the pragmatic and discourse levels, subsumption takes the form of parametrization processes of the variable elements of constructions. These processes are constrained. For example, a the variable X in the requestive *Can You X?* construction must contain a predicate that expresses the addressee's control of the state if affairs (cf. *Can you close the window?* vs. *Can you see the window?*). Finally, cueing or cued inferencing is a form of constraining non-explicit meaning on the basis of lexical and constructional clues. It takes place at all levels of meaning derivation as an alternative to subsumption. Thus, at the level of core grammar, it accounts for inferences obtained by making contextual adjustments on the meaning of some predicates (e.g. *He drinks [alcohol]; She's ready [for the party]*). At other levels it accounts for meaning implications based on potential conceptual connections between propositions (the case of discourse), or on metonymic activations or high-level (for illocution), and low-level (for implicature) situational models or scenarios. For example, the discourse connection between *It can't sound good; it's not digital*, which is one of conclusion-evidence, differs from the connection between *It doesn't sound good; it's not digital*, which is simply of cause-effect. The difference lies in the use of "can't" indicating (i.e. cueing) a deduced impossibility in the case of the conclusion-evidence pattern.

## REFERENCES

- Ruiz de Mendoza, Francisco, and Annalisa Baicchi. (2007). Illocutionary Constructions: Cognitive motivation and linguistic realization. In Kecskes, Istvan, & Laurence Horn (eds.) 2007. *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, Cognitive, and Intercultural Aspects*; Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 95-128.
- Otal Campo, José Luis, and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José. (2007). "Modeling thought in language use: at the crossroads between discourse, pragmatics, and cognition". *Jezikoslovlje* 8.2: 115-167.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco José & Mairal Usón, Ricardo. (2008). "Levels of description and constraining factors in meaning construction: an introduction to the Lexical Constructional Model". *Folia Linguistica*, vol. 42, forthcoming.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco J. (2007). "High level cognitive models: in search of a unified framework for inferential and grammatical behavior", en Kosecki, Krzysztof (ed.) *Perspectives on Metonymy*. Frankfurt/Main. Peter Lang. (Lodz Studies in Language); 11-30.
- Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Francisco J. and Mairal Usón, Ricardo. (2007). High-level metaphor and metonymy in meaning construction. En Günter Radden, Klaus-Michael Köpcke, Thomas Berg y Peter Siemund. (eds.) *Aspects of Meaning Construction in Lexicon and Grammar*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins; 33-49.

## COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS

Vladan PAVLOVIC  
Dept of English  
University of Nis  
Serbia  
vladanp2@gmail.com

The paper first shortly presents the basic postulates of cognitive linguistics, including A. Goldberg's Construction Grammar, as an important theory developing within the cognitive linguistic approach to the grammatical level of language structure.

The major part of the paper focuses on the examination of the ways the various theoretical insights of cognitive linguistics can practically be applied to language teaching at English departments, with the focus being primarily on the grammatical and the lexical levels. In that sense, the paper explores how the cognitive linguistic views on metaphoric/metonymic extension of meaning, idiomaticity in language, the role of one's physical experience in language production, the motivation underlying the use of various language structures (polysemous words, syntactic constructions, etc.), grammatical constructions and their argument structure, as well as the views on the organization of various linguistic categories, can be applied to pedagogical purposes within the designated context.

Apart from theoretical literature on the topic, the paper also builds on the works of various authors who have explored the actual relation between cognitive linguistics and foreign language teaching, and lists and evaluates various (but still relatively scarce) ELT books in which cognitive linguistic insights have been put to practice.

On the basis of a number of examples the paper presents, it is argued that the given theory, though its application to pedagogical purposes is not completely unproblematic, can:

- increase the students' motivation for studying various language materials through organization of those materials into wholes structured on the basis of the insights of the cognitive linguistic theory, with the added benefit that such organization of teaching materials can also be beneficial to retention;
- provide a meaningful context for students' acquisition of particular construction types through the discussion focusing on various syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the use of those constructions, as well as on the various metaphoric and other relations that exist between/among those constructions, and the various communicative functions different types of constructions are used for;
- provide the students with possible theoretically grounded explanations of the extension of meaning in (the English) language;
- provide the students with a theoretical basis for comparing and contrasting the metonymic and metaphoric extensions of meaning, and the organization of various lexical, grammatical (and other linguistic) categories of the English language, on the one hand, with the same phenomena in the students' mother tongue(s) and other languages they might speak, on the other;
- help focus the students' attention on the manipulative potential of the metaphor;
- help ELT professionals develop a critical and creative attitude towards the already existing teaching materials and towards the possible ways of the in-class presentation and use of those materials.

## REFERENCES

Achard, M./S. Niemeier (eds.) (2004): *Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Croft, W. /A.D. Cruse (2004): *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Deignan A. et al. (1997): “Teaching English Metaphors Using Cross-linguistic Awareness-raising Activities”, *ELT Journal*, vol. 51:4, 352- 360.
- Goldberg, A. (1995): *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goldberg, A. (2004): “Argument Realization: The Role of Constructions, Lexical Semantics and Discourse Factors” in: Östman, J./ M. Fried (eds.). *Construction Grammars: Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. p. 17-43.
- Goldberg, A. (2006): *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Goldberg, A./R. Jackendoff (2004): “The Resultatives as a Family of Constructions”. *Language* 80(3).
- Jackendoff, R. (1997): “Twistin' the Night Away”, *Language* (13), 534-549.
- Kristiansen, G. et al. (eds.) (2006): *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter
- Lakoff, G./M. Johnson (1980): *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987): *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1993): ‘The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor’. *Metaphor and Thought* (Ortony, A., ed.). p. 202-251.
- Langacker, R. (1987): *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, Vol. I: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. (1991): *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, Vol. II: Descriptive Application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. (2008): *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. New York: OUP.
- Lazar, G. (1996): “Using figurative language to expand students’ vocabulary”, *ELT Journal*, vol. 50:1, 43-51.
- Lazar, G. (2003): *Meanings and Metaphors: Activities to Practise Figurative Language*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Mac Lennan, C. (1994): “Metaphors and prototypes in the learning and teaching of grammar and vocabulary”, *International review of Applied Linguistics*, XXXII/1:97-110.
- Östman, J./ M. Fried (eds.) (2004). *Construction Grammars: Cognitive Grounding and Theoretical Extensions*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ponterotto, D. (1994): “Metaphors we can learn by”. *ET Forum*, vol. 32:3, 2-8.
- Radden, G./R. Dirven (1980): *Cognitive English Grammar (Cognitive Linguistics in Practice)*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (2003): *Word Power: Phrasal Verbs and Compunds. A Cognitive Approach*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Stefanowitsch, A./S. T. Gries (2003). “Collostructions. Investigating the interaction of words and constructions”. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 8(2), 209-243.
- Taylor, J.R. (1989): *Linguistic Categorization - Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Taylor, J.R. (2002): *Cognitive Grammar*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Ungerer, F./H. Schmid (1996): *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*, London: Longman.
- Widdowson, H. (1979) *Explorations in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: OUP.
- Wright, J. (1999): *Idioms Organizer: Organized by Metaphor, Topic and Key Word*. Hove: Language Teaching Publications.

## **“YOU CAN’T LIE. TELL ME WHERE SHREK IS”: MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN *SHREK THE THIRD*.**

Elisabetta ZURRU  
Dept of Modern Philology and Literatures  
University of Cagliari  
elizurru@hotmail.com

In recent years, starting from the 90s in particular, animated cartoons have clearly ceased to be thought of as a genre appealing only to young people and have consequently started to be constructed as a more complex product. This has implied, among other things, the construction of well developed plots which turn out to be entertaining for adults as well as for children and the representation of “round” characters whose psychology and actions are not predictably simple. Furthermore, features such as moral-bearing songs, which were typically associated with children’s films until quite recently, have now almost completely been eliminated, while, at the same time, features which were not usually deployed in animated films, such as audio or third dimensional visual special effects, have become paramount in the field. At the same time, the language employed has also become less simple and direct, starting to deploy the most subtle strategies of indirect conversation, ranging from word play to deliberate violations of conversational implicatures.

The extraordinary success of *Shrek the Third*, the animated film released by Dreamworks Pictures at the end of 2006 which, together with its two antecedents, has earned more than 500 million dollars, was in great part determined by factors of this kind. Among others, the humorous intertextual citations of famous fairy tales, (Merlin and King Arthur, the main characters of Walt Disney’s 1963 *The Sword in the Stone*, become in this film a confused wizard who does not remember his charms any more and a teenage boy lacking self confidence and the will to rule over his kingdom, respectively), or gender oriented representations of the most popular female characters of fairy tales, (with Snow White and friends learning that they do not need to wait for a prince to save them in the end), clearly connote it as a product which does not appeal to children only.

In addition to these factors, the language employed in the film is a very complex one. All the linguistic levels are explored in same way: the phonological level is exposed through the non native accents of some of the main characters, such as Puss in Boots’ Spanish inflection, which conveys to the character some traits which are stereotypically connected with Spanish culture (Puss in Boots’ qualities as a “Latin lover” in the first place); sociolinguistic issues such as the switching from the standard language to the speech of youths with a specific purpose (namely inducing the young to listen to the grownups) are explored in the conversations between the ogre, the adult (?) hero of the story, and the young not-yet-king Arthur; the meaning in conversation is constructed through well defined pragmatic strategies, such as Pinocchio’s intentional flouting of Gricean maxims in order to avoid lying while replying to Prince Charming’s direct questions, which indeed exploit the presupposition that the puppet cannot lie, and so on.

The main focus of this paper is to analyse the latter point in particular, considering in what ways and for which purposes illocutionary meaning, inferences, and conversational implicatures are constructed and exploited in the film.

### REFERENCES

- Aarts F. and Aarts J., 1982, *English Syntactic Structures: Functions and Categories in Sentence Analysis*, Pergamon Press, Oxford
- Brown P. and Levinson S. C., 1987, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Clines P., 2007, *Shrek the Third*, *Creative Screenwriting (CrSc)*, 14:3, 36-37.
- Culpeper J., Short M., Verdonk P. (eds.), 1998, *Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context*, Routledge, London.

- Douthwaite J., 2000, *Towards a Linguistic Theory of Foregrounding*, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria.
- Grundy P., 2000, *Doing Pragmatics*, Arnold, London.
- Huang Y., 2007, *Pragmatics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Leech G., 1983, *Principles of Pragmatics*, Longman, London.
- Levinson S., 1983, *Pragmatics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Robertson B., *Mercy Tales*, Computer Graphics World, April 2007, 12-17.
- Short M., 1996, *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*, Longman, London.
- Shrek the Third*, 2007, DVD, Dreamworks Pictures.