

Cognitive constraints on syntactic alternation

Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez
University of La Rioja

This presentation will discuss lexical-constructional integration within the Lexical-Constructional Model (LCM) (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, 2008; Mairal & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2009). The LCM supplies the theoretical machinery to account for this phenomenon through its recognition of the role of high-level metaphor and high-level metonymy as constraining factors on such process. These factors are to be added to the principles of conceptual consistency that have been identified in the Goldbergian formulation of Construction Grammar. We will discuss different ways in which simple and complex cases of high-level metaphor and metonymy apply in the explanation of alternations involving the related inchoative and middle constructions, on the one hand, and the likewise related caused-motion and resultative constructions, on the other hand. This account will allow us to refine previous explanations of lexical-constructional interaction by fleshing out the still not sufficiently constrained notion of constructional coercion, which is now seen in terms of the ability of lexical structure to be construed from different perspectives that will license its integration into constructional structure.