BOOK REVIEW

Book review

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> Dąbrowska, Eva, & Dagmar Divjak (Eds.). (2019). *Cognitive Linguistics: Foundations of Language*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH. ISBN 978-3-11-062297-3, 315pp.

This volume, edited by *Ewa Dąbrowska* from University of Birmingham and FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg and *Dagmar Divjak* from University of Birmingham, is the part of a three-volume set on Cognitive Linguistics published by Walter de Gruyter in 2019. As the first volume of this set, it discusses the cognitive processes and abilities of human beings which underlie language production, particularly concerning such concepts as embodiment, attention, and categorization, providing a state-of-the-art overview of the subfields in linguistics. Authors in this collection specially emphasize the direction of cognitive linguistic studies towards a more empirical, interdisciplinary, and social-oriented basis, and provide readers with insightful ideas and suggestions for future research in Cognitive Linguistics.

To begin with, in the Introduction, the editors briefly introduce the assumptions, history, and current situation of Cognitive Linguistics, and give an outline of the topics in the three-volume set. In chapter 1, *Benjamin Bergen* expounds the historical conceptions of embodiment in Cognitive Science, describes some of the ways that embodiment has been used in Cognitive Linguistics, and discusses the directions that linguistic embodiment research is currently moving towards. According to the author, there have been three distinct phases in the application of the idea of embodiment to empirical work on language and cognition, containing the analytical phase, the process phase and the function phase.

For the next chapter, *Russell S. Tomlin* and *Andriy Myachykov* review the evidence for a regular link between visual attention and syntactic organization. They propose that the grammatical role assignment mechanism and the positional assignment mechanism form a hierarchical dual-path system, which allows a grammatical representation of the perceptually salient referent in a sentence.

In chapter 3, *Dagmar Divjak* and *Catherine L. Caldwell-Harris* present interpretations of frequency and entrenchment, and integrate perspectives from both Experimental Psychology and

Cognitive Linguistics. They illustrate the origins of the interest in frequency and its applications, and also the review of the cognitive and neural mechanisms supporting language structures that vary in entrenchment.

Categorization is discussed by *Michael Ramscar* and *Robert Port* in chapter 4. They suggest that human conceptual capabilities are systematic in that they are the products of a rich capacity to discriminate and learn systems of alternate responses (behaviors, affordances, words, etc.) and to use the systems in context, with a conclusion that conceptual knowledge is closely related to context of language use.

As for chapter 5, *R. Harald Baayen* and *Michael Ramscar* explain three approaches that attempt to answer the question about the mechanism of structuring language, placing more emphasis on the process of abstraction, analogical reasoning, and basic principles of discrimination learning.

In chapter 6, *Ronald W. Langacker* characterizes construal with reasonable precision and investigates their representations in language. Five broad dimensions of construal are scrutinized, namely perspective, selection, prominence, dynamicity, and imagination.

Moreover, four major themes concerning metonymy are specified by *Antonio Barcelona* in chapter 7. They are the notions of metonymy, the typology, the ubiquity, and research methods in the study of metonymy. *Barcelona* especially discusses the role of metonymy in grammar and discourse, and highlights the tasks for future research such as the compilation of a generally accepted detailed typology of metonymy.

For chapter 8, *Raymond W. Gibbs* describes some of the empirical findings on metaphor and analyzes several of the ongoing debates regarding the cognitive theory of metaphor. The research offers a strong support for the claim that metaphoric thoughts have a primary role in using and understanding verbal metaphor. Besides, *Gibbs* further suggests linguists should articulate criteria for identifying metaphoric patterns and inferring specific conceptual metaphors.

Two current approaches to understanding word meaning are illustrated in chapter 9 by *Laura J. Speed*, *David P. Vinson*, and *Gabriella Vigliocco*. On the one hand, embodiment-based cognitive theories propose that understanding words' meanings requires the mental simulation of entities being referred to. On the other hand, distributional theories describe meaning in terms of language use. The authors conclude by proposing an integrated model of meaning where both embodied and linguistic information are considered significant.

In chapter 10, *Mark Turner* introduces BLENDING as the basic and indispensable mental operation that interacts with other basic mental operations such as conceptual mapping, and that plays a pervasive role in language and communication. Additionally, he explains some basic terms of the blending theory, including mental space, mental web, and projection. Grounded in classic examples, he also reveals several challenges to the blending theory.

The last chapter written by *Arie Verhagen* explores the connection between the overall structure of human cooperative communication and its cognitive "infrastructure", and various types of linguistic meaning. In his view, a number of basic conceptual domains that are commonly encoded in the grammars of human language, including deixis ("grounding"), "descriptive" categorization ("frames"), and "logical" operations like negation, pertain to particular features of human

cooperative communication.

Overall, a relatively comprehensive review is provided in the volume, including the origins, early work, emerged strands, books and journals, organizations and courses of Cognitive Linguistics. The subfields, historical conceptions, research methods, examples, and trends of the topics are specifically illustrated. Generally, the views are discussed from such fields of Philosophy, Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Anthropology, Psycholinguistics, and Experimental Psychology. Besides broad domains, a long timeline of researches is also reviewed, from the historical development of 50 years ago to the latest progresses in recent years. In this sense, the book is quite informative and highly readable since it provides abundant sources for readers to review certain topics in cognitive linguistic research. Compared with other guide books, including *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (Ungerer & Schmid, 1996), *Cognitive Linguistics* (Croft & Cruse, 2004), *Cognitive Linguistics* (Wang, 2007), and *Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (Li, 2008), this volume especially provides more detailed suggestions in studies on Cognitive Linguistics and related disciplines, as is shown by the fact that *Friedrich Ungerer* and *Hans-Jorg Schmid* pay less attention to *Fauconnier*'s "Mental Space" of the blending theory in their monograph while *Mark Turner* in this volume explains terms of blending in detail.

Fundamentally, as a collection contributed by leading experts, this volume not only provides overviews about the general topics in cognitive linguistic studies, but also offers some comments on the future research. As the chapters reveal, driven by the emphasis on the real usage of language, cognitive linguists have undergone a significant shift towards a more empirical approach. Authors jointly claim that a direction of interdisciplinary research is another essential property for future concerns in Cognitive Linguistics. According to the basic assumptions of the chapters, languages are the way they are because humans are the way they are, so social factors should be taken into account. It is a relatively new trend that researchers begin to integrate the cognitive perspective and the social one into a single theoretical framework.

Another merit of this volume is that, authors proposed valuable implications and synthesized models and approaches, with an attempt to settle disputes in current studies in Cognitive Linguistics. To take chapter 7 as an example, *Barcelona* highlights a detailed list of tasks for future studies on metonymy, pointing out that more studies should be on the attitudinal uses of metonymy in discourse, the main types of metonymy in pragmatic inference, and the psychological reality of metonymy. Another case is offered in chapter 9, where the writers review two current approaches (embodied and distributional theories) to understanding word meaning that focus on different aspects. Although these two approaches are typically used as opposite ones with respective advantages and disadvantages, the authors try to integrate them into a model that emphasizes both bodily experience and linguistic information.

Nevertheless, due to the limited space, this volume skates over some basic information in the field of Cognitive Linguistics, and might not provide its readers with exhaustive details for topics concerned in this book. Thus, it seems that it is a challenge for beginners to read some of the chapters because some experiments and terms used in the discussion, especially the experiments in Neuroscience, are not easy to follow without relative knowledge. In addition, this volume fails to cover the dialogic view on language in Cognitive Linguistics, which is a significant field for future research. Based on *Du Bois* (2014), dialogic syntax has consequences for meaning and introduces

new evidence for the psychological reality of the production of language structure. What is more important, in line with Zeng (2018), the dialogic approach to meaning indicates the dialogic turn in Cognitive Linguistics whose focus should not be on single sentence but utterance pairs.

However, as a guide book in Cognitive Linguistics, this volume is of great value to readers of any level who are interested in the cognitive approaches to language studies. In terms of its comprehensive content, prospective comments and insightful ideas, this volume is worthy of being recommended for readers with interest in linguistics, particularly in cognitive linguistic studies.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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