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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Brdar, Mario, Stefan Th. Gries and Milena Žic Fuchs (eds.)** *Cognitive Linguistics: Convergence and expansion*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2011, vii + 362 pp. (ISBN 978 90 272 2386 9)

Reviewed by **Thomas Egan (Hedmark University College)**

Most of the chapters in this book originated as papers read at the international cognitive linguistics conference *Converging and Diverging Tendencies in Cognitive Linguistics* held in Dubrovnik in 2005. The substitution of 'Diverging' in the title of the conference with 'Expansion' in that of the book reflects the recognition on the part of the authors of a lack of expected centrifugal effects in the various papers at the conference. While some of the contributors ventured into fields such as psycholinguistics or discourse analysis, not originally central to the cognitive linguistics enterprise, their contributions remained firmly rooted in the basic tenets of the paradigm.

The book consists of three parts. The first of these contains two chapters describing the state of the art and the history to date (i.e. to 2005) of the field of cognitive linguistics. Part 2 is entitled 'Consolidating the paradigm' and contains two theoretical chapters, one by Jan Nuyts on the relationship between cognitive and functional approaches to grammar and one by Gerard Steen on metaphor in language and thought, and four chapters containing case studies of particular constructions in German (Panther and Thornburg), Croatian (Belaj), English and Spanish (Barcelona) and English (Langacker). Part 3, 'Expanding the paradigm', contains chapters in which a cognitive viewpoint is brought to bear on questions from the realm of discourse analysis (Harder) and biblical exegesis (Kövecses) as well as chapters in which insights gleaned from other disciplines, such as psycholinguistics (Gibbs and Ferreira) and the theory of affect (Tissari) are applied to questions central to cognitive linguistics. Part 3 also contains two chapters, one by Stefan Gries and the other by Anatol Stefanowitsch, advocating the employment of corpus linguistic methods in cognitive investigations.

The nouns 'convergence' and 'expansion' in the title of the book denote ongoing processes, as did the participial adjectives 'converging' and 'diverging' in the title of the 2005 conference. It is impossible to stipulate exactly how long these processes had been in progress in 2005 since it is not possible to fix the emergence of the cognitive linguistics paradigm to a particular point in time. The reason for this is that cognitive approaches were developed independently by various scholars in the final quarter of the twentieth century. Indeed, it is the fact of its emergence in

various quarters, investigating different but related questions, using various methodologies and employing different terminologies, which renders the question of convergence meaningful. However, if we take 1987, the year which saw the publication of the first volume of Langacker's *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* and Lakoff's *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things* as a seminal date for the development of cognitive linguistics (see Barcelona and Valenzuela, p. 17), we will see that the cognitive linguistics enterprise has been around for some twenty-five years. The conference which gave rise to the chapters in the volume under review was held less than twenty years after the paradigm began to reach a wider audience. There has obviously been a lot of scope for both further convergence and expansion in the six years between the conference and the publication of the book and there is therefore a risk that some of the chapters may be somewhat dated. This is less likely to be the case for those chapters which contain case studies and it is these chapters that will receive the bulk of attention in the remainder of this review. This should not be taken to imply that the more general chapters are without interest. Indeed, by describing clearly the situation of cognitive linguistics as recently as eight years ago, they enable us to see just how far the paradigm has progressed in the intervening years.

Part 1 of the book opens with a short chapter (pp.9–12) in which Ronald Langacker, perhaps the most prominent cognitive grammarian, looks back on the evolution of the paradigm, also referring to the contribution of what we may term the 'pre-cognitivist', represented here by Chafe (1970) and in Langacker's chapter on impersonal constructions by Bolinger (1977). Also mentioned are cognitively-minded functionalists such as Givón (1979) and Wierzbicka (1996). Langacker states his conviction that "we can note a series of conceptual unifications involving central areas of cognitive linguistic inquiry originally treated separately" (p. 10), and instances the integration of theories of metaphor and metonymy with mental space and blending theory. He also notes the expansion of cognitive linguistics into disciplines such as language acquisition and language pedagogy, as well as its spread from an initial emphasis on semantics and grammar into phonology, morphology, diachrony, sociolinguistics and typology. In a much longer chapter Barcelona and Valenzuela (pp. 17–44), after stating what they see as the two central tenets of cognitive linguistics, a non-modularist view of cognition and a non-objectivist view of meaning, give a detailed overview of the development of the paradigm and the main areas of research within it. They refer in passing to a peer-reviewed open access online electronic journal on Construction Grammar, but the web-address in their footnote is out of date. The correct current address is "<http://elanguage.net/journals/constructions/index>".

In his chapter "Pattern versus process concepts of grammar and mind" (pp. 47–66) Jan Nuyts raises the question of whether there are at present two or three

major paradigms in linguistics. On the one hand there is the formalist paradigm, represented principally by Generative Grammar, but also by Lexical Functional Grammar and Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar. But what of the other hand(s), on the fingers of which may be found the various sub-schools of cognitive and functional linguistics? Does it make sense to speak of cognitive-functional or functional-cognitive linguistics, as some scholars do (for instance Tomasello 2007: 1093), or is it more correct to speak of a threefold division of the field, with cognitive linguistics and functional linguistics each occupying a corner of a triangle facing down the formalists in the third corner? The very fact that, as Nuyts himself has pointed out (2007: 546), it is actually impossible to define functional linguistics in such a way as to exclude cognitive approaches, would serve to imply that there is not such a gulf between the two as to warrant their being considered completely separate paradigms. However, a gulf of some sort between them there undoubtedly is, and it is the nature and depth of this gulf that Nuyts sets out to explore.

Nuyts begins his comparison by pointing out that “communication and cognition are two sides of the same linguistic coin, and one is indispensable for understanding the other in a scientific account of language” (p. 51). Moreover both cognitive linguistics and functional linguistics are usage-based approaches, at least in theory, with several types of functional approaches being more so in practice than cognitive linguistics, at least up to quite recently, as discussed below with reference to the chapter by Anatol Stefanowitsch. The main difference between the two approaches, as Nuyts sees it, is an emphasis on the study of constructions in cognitive linguistics and on procedural rules in functional linguistics. The major objection to a functionalist process model on the part of cognitivists such as Croft (see p. 56) is the supposed inability of such a model to accommodate idioms and other fixed expressions. Nuyts argues that such constructions are not incompatible with a process model, particularly if the latter replaces a narrow conception of the lexicon with something resembling Langacker’s notion of a structured inventory of symbolic units of various shapes and sizes. Nuyts employs the metaphor “freezer” for this sort of inventory. He goes on to argue that constructional and process models are in many respects no more than notational variants, concluding that:

In some versions of the two model types, they are probably basically compatible, and the difference between them is entirely a matter of the perspective they adopt, or the dimension of linguistic cognition which they highlight or on which they focus: the construction approach predominantly focuses on what the ‘output’ of cognitive operations looks like, the process approach focuses more on what a speaker(s) mental grammar) does in order to produce this output. (p. 65)

To sum up, according to Nuyts it is better to think of two broad schools of linguistic thought, a formalist one and a cognitive-functional one, rather than three.

The book contains five chapters dealing with various aspects of metaphor and metonymy, the former of which, in particular, has been central in cognitive linguistic investigations since the 1980s. Despite, or possibly because of, the wealth of attention paid to metaphor in the cognitive literature, there is increasing recognition of the need for greater methodological stringency in metaphor studies. As pointed out by Gibbs and Ferreira (p. 227) researchers relying solely on their intuition are likely to pull a new metaphor out of their hat at the drop of same, so to speak. Nor is there any consensus among researchers as to the apposite level of generality. Thus Gibbs and Ferreira ask whether the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor were not better expressed in terms of a more general source domain such as FIGHT rather than WAR (p. 224). One scholar who has laboured tirelessly in the cause of lending some methodological rigour to metaphor research is Gerard Steen, the primus motor behind the development of the metaphor identification procedure (see Steen et al. 2010). In his chapter “Metaphor in language and thought: how do we map the field?” (pp. 67–86) he suggests that the metaphor researcher should make binary distinctions along three axes: we must distinguish between metaphor in grammar and metaphor in usage, between metaphor in language and metaphor in thought and between metaphor as part of a semiotic system and as exhibited in behaviour. This chapter may be read as a succinct introduction to topics explored at much greater length in Steen’s monograph *Finding Metaphor in Grammar and Usage* (2007).

One scholar who has carried out extensive intuition-based studies of metaphor and metonymy, especially in relation to emotions, is Zoltán Kövecses. His chapter in the present volume (pp. 324–354) examines what he sees as the central story in the bible, as expressed in *the Apostles’ Creed*, in terms of the major metaphors and metonymies which he detects in the narrative, such as CAUSATION IS PROGENERATION, IDEAS ARE FOOD, MORALITY IS ACCOUNTING (metaphors) and A MEMBER OF A CATEGORY FOR THE WHOLE CATEGORY and CAUSE FOR EFFECT (metonymies). Kövecses’ basic claim is that “a large part of the dominant features of Christianity can be understood on the basis of the everyday conceptual system and that the understanding of these features does not require an entirely independently existing conceptual apparatus that is somehow unique to the interpretation of the sacred” (p. 327). This claim is by no means surprising in view of the fact that a non-modularist view of cognition is taken by Barcelona and Valenzuela (p. 19) to be one of the central tenets of cognitive linguistics. What is more surprising, perhaps, is that a cognitive linguist should even entertain the notion of the possible existence of such an independent cognitive apparatus. Certainly Kövecses offers no explanation for doing so. Be that as it may, towards the end of his chapter Kövecses suggests that it might be worthwhile investigating the historical evolution of some of the metaphors he detects in the biblical narrative, with a particular

eye to their codification in the early Christian era and disputes about this codification during the reformation. Kövecses does not mention which version of the bible he cites from, merely stating that his quotations are taken from the “Bible Gateway”, a website that contains dozens of versions. Needless to say, an historical study should be based on the language of the bible in use at the time under investigation.

Like Kövecses, Heli Tissari has published extensively on emotion metaphors. In her chapter in the present volume (pp. 291–304) she relates conceptual metaphors of shame to Silvan Tomkins’ explanations of emotions as affect (see Tomkins 1995). According to Tomkins, physiological responses of the human body to various stimuli are what actually constitute an emotion. In other words emotions are literally, and not just metaphorically, embodied. Tissari’s chapter is exploratory in nature rather than a case study but she does suggest some practical ways in which metaphors of shame could be investigated, among them corpus studies of the context of predicates such as *look away*, *turn away* and *shrink from*, as well as investigations of expressions such as *oops!* and (*deep*) *blush* on internet blogs.

Antonio Barcelona has long championed the role of metonymy, which has often appeared to be the poor relation of metaphor in cognitive linguistic research. In his chapter on bahuvrihi compounds (pp. 151–178) he examines a representative sample of these in both English and Spanish. He finds that they fall into three main categories, depending on the presence or absence of metaphor or metonymy in the conceptualisation of the characteristic property coded by the compound. Thus in ‘humpback’ the property of curvature is coded literally, in ‘acidhead’ the propensity to consume LSD is coded metonymically and in ‘fathead’ the coding of stupidity involves both metaphor and metonymy. He concludes that all three types can be accounted for in terms of the overriding metonymy CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY. It may however be objected that this conclusion actually follows from the definition of what constitutes a bahuvrihi compound. Barcelona writes that they “denote an entity by explicitly mentioning a *reified* characteristic property (either physical or abstract) that the entity possesses (in a broad sense of “possession”)” (p. 153). If such a reified property is to function efficiently to enable an addressee to identify the intended referent of a compound expression, it must be a salient possession. And from being salient, it is but a short step to ‘characteristic’. This cavil aside, the discussion of the various constructions examined is both detailed and insightful and, given that the research project in question was still in its infancy at the time of writing, it may be expected to give rise to further insights into bahuvrihi compounds.

Gibbs and Ferreira, whose reservations about the proliferation of putative conceptual metaphors postulated on the basis of introspection was mentioned above, attempt in their own chapter (pp. 221–236) to determine to what extent language

users activate the entailments and implications of conceptual metaphors to which they are exposed. To this end they presented participants in an experiment with a series of statements and asked them to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 7 whether a second statement was implied by each of these. This second statement was constructed so as either to employ the same conceptual metaphor as the first one or another metaphor, and, in cases where the same metaphor was employed, a similar or different entailment was coded in the two sentences. Statistical examination of the results showed consistently higher scores for sentences which paired the same metaphor with the same entailment than those with a different entailment, with pairs containing two different conceptual metaphors scoring lowest of all. They conclude that “it appears that ordinary readers are sensitive to the possible meaning entailments that arise from verbal metaphors with some of these being predicted on the basis of whether they are motivated by a consistent underlying conceptual metaphor for that linguistic statement” (p. 231). They do, however, add a caveat that this does not necessarily mean that language users display the same degree of sensitivity in real-time on-line processing and that further studies are required to determine whether this is in fact the case, adding the proviso that such studies may be difficult to carry out at the present time.

There are three chapters in the book that discuss in detail families of grammatical constructions. Panther and Thornburg (pp. 87–114) describe various types of expressive and directive utterances containing clauses that are syntactically subordinate but that function as complete speech acts, Belaj (pp. 115–149) argues that constructions in Croatian containing verbs with the prefix *-iz* may be related semantically on the schematic level, and Langacker (pp. 179–217) explores various avenues of investigation in search of the meaning of impersonal *it*.

To begin with Panther and Thornburg’s study, they ask how we can account for the fact that syntactically dependent clauses, such as *That it should have come to this*, may function as fully-fledged speech acts and, in particular, how we can account for their meaning when they do so. They point out that such speech acts are of two main types: expressives and exclamations on the one hand and directives and optatives on the other. Both types may be realised in German by *dass* (‘that’) clauses. The interpretation of expressive *dass* clauses is influenced by the choice of modal verb in the construction, as in example (1), where the construction with *dürfen* codes great satisfaction on the part of the speaker, and that with *müssen* equally great dismay.

- (1) a. *Dass ich den Abriss der Berliner Mauer noch erleben durfte!*  
That I could live to see the dismantling of the Berlin Wall (in my lifetime!)
- b. *Dass ich den Abriss der Berliner Mauer noch erleben musste!*

That I should live to see the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. (pp. 95 & 98)

We may note in passing that Panther and Thornburg's English translation of (1b) would serve equally well as a translation of (1a), since in English the corresponding construction only encodes extremes of emotion without stipulating the nature of the emotion in question. In English it is up to the addressee to deduce the emotional polarity from the speaker's intonation or the context of utterance. Panther and Thornburg argue convincingly that while the meaning of *dass* expressives cannot be computed by means of compositional rules, they are nevertheless motivated by metaphorical and metonymical mappings.

In their discussion of *dass* clauses as directives the authors point out that the illocutionary force of what they term canonical *dass* directives is closer to that of a command than a request. They devote considerable attention to an appraisal of the function of the optional first person dative pronoun *mir* in such clauses. Having distinguished it from verbal *mir*, which is subcategorized by the verb as in the case of an intransitive object in a ditransitive construction, and from constructional *mir*, by which they mean an optional participant such as a beneficiary, they ask just what is the contribution to the directive speech act of the particle they refer to as 'directive *mir*' and which has been traditionally called the 'ethical dative' or 'free dative'. They conclude that the meaning of directive *mir* is motivated by the beneficiary sense of constructional *mir* and that "Qua its beneficiary role, *mir* is a vehicle for metonymically accessing the speaker's attitude, namely his/her *desire* that the propositional content expressed in the construction become true" (p. 108).

In his chapter "Schematic meaning of the Croatian verbal prefix *-iz*" Branimir Belaj argues that the verbs containing this prefix and its various allomorphs all share the schematic meaning of transition from an intralocative to an extralocative position. In the case of prototypical verbs the process coded is one in which a trajector either moves (self-motion) or is moved (caused motion) from one location to another. At the other end of a cline comprising nineteen groups of verbs we find constructions where the trajector, which in these cases is said to be identical to the landmark, undergoes a change of state (for instance *izdubiti*, 'hollow out') as well as perfective constructions, containing verbs such as *istučí* 'beat up'. Belaj maintains that these nineteen groups of verbs comprise five main classes "whereby the meaning of each class down the hierarchy (which becomes progressively more peripheral in terms of exhibiting the schematic meaning, viz. transition from an intralocative to an extralocative state) more or less derives from, or better yet, is motivated by the meaning of the immediately preceding class" (p. 138). Interestingly, some of the constructions examined by Belaj resemble some of those investigated by Panther and Thornburg in containing a troublesome dative, exemplified here by *mi* in (2).

- (2) *Ispale su mi stvari.*  
 out-fall-PAST AUX me-DAT thing (PL-NOM) (p. 142)

Datives such as *mi* in (2) have generally been labeled ‘possessive datives’, which Belaj finds unsatisfactory since no possession is involved. Nor is it possible to conceive of the dative participant as an indirect object. Indeed he argues that semantically it fulfills a role closer to that of a subject than an object. His provisional conclusion is that “for lack of a better solution, we propose for the time being that the dative functions as in internal syntactic argument which is an undisputed bearer of the role of nonprototypical agent” (p. 144).

One of the basic suppositions of cognitive linguistics is that all linguistic forms carry meaning. Some meanings are, of course, more readily apparent than others. The less concrete and the less specific the sense of an item, the more difficult it is to ascertain. In his chapter “On the subject of impersonals” Ronald Langacker explores the meaning of a very abstract and general item indeed, the pronoun *it* as it is employed in impersonal constructions. He explores three main avenues of approach in his quest to pin down the elusive meaning of *it*. In the first place, he considers constructions with non-canonical subjects and situates *it* in relation to these. In the second place he considers various generic uses of pronouns and situates *it* in relation to these and, thirdly, he examines a cognitive model which he terms the ‘control cycle’ and situates impersonal *it* in relation to this model.

In his discussion of non-canonical subject types, Langacker points out that, although in default cases we are likely to code an agent as subject of a clause, language users are free to adopt a different profiling perspective should they so wish. For instance agents are defocused in passive and middle constructions. We are also free to choose a non-participant, such as a location or setting, as in *Florida experiences a lot of hurricanes*. Langacker points out that this sort of sentence does not passivize and that the same is true of impersonal *it* constructions. He suggests therefore that impersonal *it* may be understood as coding a maximally abstract setting.

In his discussion of the various uses of pronouns Langacker mentions the fact that plural personal pronouns have various uses best described as impersonal, as in *They have a lot of tornadoes in Kansas*. He points out that the referent of *they* in such predications is extremely vague with respect to delimitation. We would be hard put to stipulate just who *they* are. Equally vague are certain uses of demonstratives as in *What’s this about you getting married?* As for impersonal *it*, Langacker suggests that it represents “the extreme case of vagueness and non-delimitation” (p. 197).

Langacker’s third avenue of approach involves an examination of various forms of epistemic predicates, such as *it is plausible that...*, *it appears that...* and *it*

*is obvious that...* There is no space here to relate his arguments in detail. Suffice to say that he argues that predications such as these invoke what he calls a ‘generalized conceptualizer’. Thus in a sentence beginning *it is obvious that* the implication is that the complement would be obvious to any and all conceptualizers. Langacker rounds off his chapter by comparing the results of his three avenues of approach and concludes (not surprisingly) that impersonal *it* is always referential and “as a definite nominal, it singles out a unique instance of that type whose identity is supposedly evident in the discourse context” (p. 203). However, its referent is subject to very little in the way of delimitation and is thus maximally vague.

Both Anatol Stefanowitsch and Stefan Gries address the role of corpus data in cognitive linguistics. In his chapter “Cognitive Linguistics meets the corpus” Stefanowitsch argues that it is surprising, given the centrality in cognitive linguistics of the usage-based theory of meaning, that not more cognitive linguists have employed quantitative corpus-based methods (p. 259). I think it is fair to say that this point of Stefanowitsch’s would be less valid today. Indeed, in a paper for the 2009 annual meeting of SHESL (Société d’Histoire et d’Epistémologie des Sciences du Langage) I collated the abstracts from four cognitive linguistic conferences in 2007 and 2008 and showed that the percentage of presenters utilising corpus data, if not the full panoply of quantitative statistical tests, varied from over 70% in the case of presenters from the Nordic and Low Countries to under 20% in the case of presenters from Japan and Spain, with presenters from Germany and the US hovering around the 50% mark. In his chapter Stefanowitsch illustrates how corpus methods may be employed to throw light on various questions, mostly to do with the semantics of ditransitive constructions. Most interesting, perhaps is his assertion that negative evidence can constitute the input for meaningful statistical calculations (p. 281).

In his chapter “Corpus data in usage-based linguistics” Stefan Gries raises two questions that will be of interest to all linguists, regardless of their theoretical orientation. The first question has to do with the degree of granularity one should employ in investigating a construction or family of constructions. Should one investigate all forms of a lemma separately, or should one distinguish between the various forms? For instance should we keep apart the various inflectional forms of verbs, or can we lump them all together? The answer is likely to vary according to one’s research question but the question itself is certainly worth asking. In a case study of ditransitive constructions in English Gries shows that very little if anything is gained by analysing the various inflectional forms separately. The second question addressed by Gries is whether data from various registers should be analysed separately and, if so, how one should go about determining the requisite register groupings. Gries’ discussion of both questions is stimulating throughout, although one might have hoped that in a volume designed for the non-specialist,

one of his co-editors would have pointed out the desirability of explaining the expression “adjusted  $R^2$ ” (p. 243).

In his chapter entitled “Conceptual construal and social construction” Peter Harder applies the evolutionary perspective on linguistic diachrony advocated by Croft (2000) to the propagation, not of a linguistic item, but of a political attitude. He maintains that “institutions, beliefs, ways of life, and political parties change, thrive and decline depending on (1) the kind of innovations that arise within them and (2) who and what gets promoted by the processes of selection-cum-reproduction that are at work in the population as a whole” (p. 311). In particular he looks at the spread in Denmark at the time of the cartoon crisis of the consensus that the mere recognition of Muslim sensitivities was not compatible with the principle of free speech. He demonstrates that the spread of this socially constructed consensus influenced in turn the conceptual content of the linguistic item ‘freedom of speech’ as construed by participants in the political discourse.

As pointed out at the beginning of the review, this volume contains both theoretical chapters and a variety of case studies, dealing with issues central to the pursuit of cognitive linguistics. Although a couple of the overview chapters are somewhat out-of-date given the distance travelled by the paradigm in the years since the conference that gave rise to the various papers, this progression has been largely along the lines envisaged by the various authors, as cognitive linguistics has continued to converge and expand along the same lines and in similar directions, with the result that it has gained a much stronger foothold in the linguistic world than it had as recently as 2005. As none of the chapters presume a previous acquaintance with cognitive linguistics, the book could also serve as an excellent introduction for those who are unfamiliar with the paradigm, but are interested in discovering just why it has expanded so rapidly in the last twenty years or so.

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