

Egle Mocciaro, William Michael Short (Eds.)

**Toward a Cognitive Classical Linguistics**

**The Embodied Basis of Constructions in Greek and Latin**



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Managing Editor: Katarzyna Grzegorek

Series Editor: Cinzia Russi

Language Editor: Deirdre Adrienne Dunlevy

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Egle Mocciaro, William Michael Short\*

## Introduction

### Toward a cognitive classical linguistics

#### On embodiment and constructions: preliminary remarks

As its title indicates, this volume gathers a series of papers that brings together the study of grammatical and syntactic constructions in Greek and Latin under the perspective of theories of embodied meaning developed in cognitive linguistics. Several chapters result directly from presentations given as part of the panel session organized by the editors, under the same title, for the 13th International Cognitive Linguistics Conference (ICLC-13) in Newcastle, UK in July 2015. Additional contributions were subsequently invited from scholars working in this area of research, especially to widen the book's theoretical horizon, to include a greater variety of disciplinary perspectives, and to highlight different levels of analysis. In their chapters, authors address the role of human cognitive embodiment in determining the meanings of linguistic phenomena as diverse as verbal affixes, discourse particles, prepositional phrases, lexical items, and tense semantics. Needless to say, "embodiment" has been a pivotal notion in cognitive linguistics since its inception. This theory claims, in the words of perhaps its most influential advocate, that "the structure used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly ground in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social nature" (Lakoff, 1987: xiv).

As one component of the overall human cognitive system, language plays a part in elaborating and structuring world knowledge: that is, it contributes to dividing and organizing the pre-conceptually experienced world into cognized entities. Moreover, language "translates" this knowledge into a formal apparatus that makes it conveyable to other human beings. In some way, everything that receives linguistic expression thus "means" the experienced world, although of course at various levels of abstraction. In fact, it should be emphasized that in the embodied language hypothesis "meaning" is not conceived of as a merely iconic reproduction of the world. Rather, meaning is always an interpretation of the experienced (physical or not) world (as in the tradition of generative semantics: "meanings are mental representations"). Language, in this

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<sup>1</sup> This introductory article results from the joint work by the editors. However, for academic purposes, Egle Mocciaro is responsible for the first and the third sections (On embodiment and constructions: preliminary remarks; Constructions in cognitive linguistics); William Michael Short for the second and the fourth sections (Embodiment and classical studies; The contributions to this volume).

sense, is not only a repository of meanings, but a form or a model of categorization and organization of knowledge. This is well explained by Geeraerts & Cuyckens (2007: 5) in terms of the perspectival nature of linguistic meaning, when they argue that “the world is not objectively reflected in the language: the categorization function of the language imposes a structure on the world rather than just mirroring objective reality. Specifically, language is a way of organizing knowledge that reflects the needs, interests, and experiences of individuals and cultures”.

One of the main mechanisms of abstraction from perception to conception is metaphor, which creates a mapping between one more concrete experiential domain (e.g., space) and one more abstract domain (e.g., time), by projecting skeletal cognitive patterns – image schemas – that capture recurrent features of bodily experience to the understanding of concepts not directly grounded in our sensorimotor interface with the world. As a matter of fact, embodiment imposes (or actually corresponds to) a constraint on directionality of metaphorical mappings: “First, we have suggested that there is directionality in metaphor, that is, we understand one concept in terms of another. Specifically, we tend to structure the less concrete and inherently vaguer concepts (like those for emotions) in terms of more concrete concepts, which are more clearly delineated in our experience” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 112). As observed by Rohrer (2007: 32), for some time conceptual metaphor and embodiment were in fact inextricable concepts.

The main trends of cognitive linguistic research have developed around the notion of “schema” as the result of cognitive abstraction from embodied experience. Almost all the conceptual apparatus of cognitive linguistics in fact depends on this idea, from early “experiential gestalts” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to “idealized cognitive models” (Lakoff, 1987), to “image schemas” – that is, “dynamic patterns that function somewhat like the abstract structure of an image, and thereby connect up a vast range of different experiences that manifest the same recurrent structure” (Johnson, 1987: 2) – as well as “cognitive archetypes” (Langacker, 1991), which may refer to any complex holistic schema constituting the basis of a grammatical construction. As Langacker (1993: 485) puts it, “Relevant to clause structure are numerous conceptual archetypes, some of which are incorporated as components of others. One set of archetypes related in this fashion includes the conception of physical object, the conception of a physical object occupying a location in a space, and that of an object moving through space (i.e., changing location through time)”.

From this short description, it appears that the semantic approach to language applies to every level of linguistic analysis, from lexical semantics to grammatical categories, which have been traditionally conceived of as meaningless (i.e., merely as formal “containers” for the meanings of their constituent lexical elements). Rejecting the hypothesis that grammar is an empty structure, cognitive linguistics instead argues that the structure itself is determined by meaning. “This was seen as a type of embodiment, since the goals, intentions, knowledge, and beliefs of the individual can’t help but be shaped by individual experience, and to the extent that they in

turn affect grammar, that would mean that grammar depends on individual world experiences” (Berger, 2015: 14). In this view, the various levels of linguistics analysis (morphology, lexicon, syntax) are made of the same substance, so to speak: there is no sharp separation among levels, which are instead conceived of as different areas along a lexicon-to-grammar continuum. Consequently, they can be approached by means of a unified theoretical and methodological perspective.

The kind of perspective necessary for studying language should therefore be “constructional” in nature. A constructional approach to linguistic structure explains language use as conventionalized pairings of form and (semantic or discourse) function, whose overall meaning cannot be predicted from their component parts, but is instead recognized, learned, and stored as an autonomous unit (cf. Goldberg, 2006: 4–6).<sup>2</sup> This idea of “construction” embraces all the levels of grammatical analysis: not only syntactic units, but also morphemes, words, phrasal patterns, and so forth. In this sense, it is more in line with the Saussurian idea of “linguistic sign” than other current approaches to grammar, especially the various strands of generativism. More relevant to our purposes, this encompassing view is a defining aspect of cognitive approaches to linguistic analysis, tightly bound up with other theoretical commitments, such as the so-called “lexicon/syntax continuity hypothesis” (see below), the co-dependence of semantics and pragmatics, and the idea that linguistic structure is deeply rooted in and constrained by usage, as well as speakers’ physical embodiment.

## Embodiment and classical studies

Grounded in these theoretical assumptions, the contributions collected here build on the momentum currently enjoyed by cognitive linguistic approaches within the field of Classics both in adopting a semantic theory whose explanatory potential remains to be fully exploited, and in extending the scope of this burgeoning field of study to cover a fuller spectrum of linguistic phenomena. The title of this volume suggests why we think it is important for classical scholars to include constructions, broadly conceived, in their analyses of Greek and Latin. We see this aspect of language study as probably the most immediate arena for bringing classical linguistics and cognitive linguistics definitively together into a “cognitive classical linguistics”.

In the last decade, an increasing number of classical linguists have in fact started to introduce concepts from cognitive linguistics into analyses of the Greek and Latin, illustrating the potential of such an approach to contribute to our understanding of the classical languages. In this arena, pioneering work has been done by Silvia Luraghi (2003; 2010) on case systems, prepositions and semantics roles, both in

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<sup>2</sup> In other words, this approach considers constructions to be at least partially arbitrary, rather than fully compositionally analyzable: cf. Croft, 2001: 18.

Greek and in Latin, conducted in terms of certain motion and force schemas and their metaphorical interpretations. Francisco García Jurado's (2000) studies of Plautus in a squarely Lakovian framework can also be mentioned in this respect, since these have shown that the sorts of orientational metaphors cognitive linguists have identified in English and many other modern languages ('GOOD IS UP', 'BAD IS DOWN', and so forth) are also present in archaic Latin. Chiara Fedriani, meanwhile, has produced a series of shorter articles (2016) and now a major monograph (2014) examining the ontological and orientational metaphors underpinning the encoding of feelings and emotions in Latin; and Kiki Nikiforidou (1991; 2009) has studied the role of conceptual metaphor in motivating semantic change diachronically in Greek. Not to mention the abundance of other research dealing with the "structured polysemy" of prepositions and preverbs.<sup>3</sup>

Though largely focusing on the characterization of the meanings of individual lexical items or on circumscribed grammatical categories, these studies have also sometimes considered the implications of the hypothesis, fundamental in cognitive linguistics, that it is impossible to establish fixed limits between lexicon and grammar.<sup>4</sup> Building on the program delineated in *Embodiment in Latin Semantics* (Short, 2016), this volume emphasizes precisely this dimension of language study: it encompasses other aspects of Greek and Latin's linguistic structure within the embodiment paradigm, shifting attention especially to the interface of lexical and morpho-syntactic structure, in order to demonstrate the viability of cognitive linguistics as an overall framework for explaining the highly complex grammatical structures that characterize these languages.

Now, constructions – even if in a more traditional, merely syntactic sense – have always been part and parcel of the description and analysis of the linguistic structure of Greek and Latin and indeed central to ancient language pedagogy. Any student of the classical languages will be familiar with the sorts of syntactic and grammatical configurations around which the presentation and teaching of Greek and Latin grammar is typically organized: temporal, circumstantial, and causal clauses; result and final clauses; conditional sentences; proviso clauses; gerunds, gerundives, and supines; and so on. Reference grammars also recognize more idiosyncratic or specialized constructions like the so-called *constructio praegnans* in Greek, where a locative prepositional phrase with the dative case expresses the endpoint of some verbal motion that might have been construed more naturally with a directional accusative, e.g., Xen. *Ages.* 1.32, *en tōi potamōi épeson*, literally, 'They fell in the river',

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<sup>3</sup> Including our own studies, among which Mocciaro & Brucale, 2015; Short, 2013 on the Latin preposition *de* and Brucale & Mocciaro, 2011; 2017 on Latin *per* and *per-*.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Short's comments, 2013: 400 on the interconnectedness of language, in the sense that the same conceptual metaphors work their effects across, and at different levels of, linguistic encoding.

where we might have expected *eis tòn potamón*, ‘into the river’ (see, most recently, Nikitina & Maslov, 2013). Or Latin’s “relative-correlative construction” (see Probert & Dickey, 2016), where a relative clause precedes a syntactically complete main clause which contains a kind of epenthetic demonstrative pronoun that referentially “picks up” the relative (e.g., Cic. *Cat.* 1.9, *quos ferro trucidari oportebat, eos nondum voce vulnero*, literally, ‘Whom it was right to put to death by the sword, them I am not yet even wounding with my voice’). Or, at a higher level of grammatical abstraction, the *constructio ad sensum*, in which Greek or Latin’s normal requirements of grammatical concord may be violated in the name of “conceptual” agreement (as in, e.g., Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.55, *hē dē boulē . . . ouk agnoōntes hōti egkheiridia ékhontes parêsan*, “The senate (they were) not unmindful that cutthroats were present” or Liv. *AUC.* 24.3.15, *omnis multitudo abeunt*, “the entire throng (they) depart”).<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Greek and Latin are particularly rich in this respect because of the elaborate and very often multiple, seemingly functionally equivalent syntactic constructions that constitute their grammatical systems. For instance, in Greek, the purpose of some verbal action can be expressed by a subordinate clause equally introduced by the conjunction *hína* or *hōs* (*mē*), with subjunctive or optative depending on the tense of the main verb. But purpose can also be expressed by *hopōs* (*mē*) with the future indicative; a motion verb with the future participle, as in the exhortation given to Nausikaa by her handmaiden: *all’ iōmen plunéothsai hám’ ēoî phainoménēphi*, “Come, let us go to wash them at break of day” (Hom. *Od.* 6.31); by the genitive case (with or without *húper* or *héneka*); by the articular or simple infinitive; or, in some cases, by an indefinite relative clause (*hostis* . . .). In Latin, the possibilities for expressing purpose are, if anything, more numerous and ramified (cf. Cabrilla, 2011 and, for a cognitive grammar account, Brucalé & Mociaro, 2016). The following constructions are available to Latin speakers for expressing this notion: *ut* + subjunctive; a relative clause with subjunctive; *ad* + accusative of the gerund or gerundive; the gerund or gerundive in the genitive before *causa*, *gratia* or *ergo*; the gerund or gerundive in the dative case; *in* or *ad* + nominal accusative (as in Plaut. *As.* 257, *ad eri fraudationem callidum ingenium gerunt*, “they use their cunning wit to rip off the master”); the supine in the accusative; and (especially in archaic and colloquial or poetic registers) the bald infinitive.

Traditionally, however, grammatical handbooks and language textbooks have treated such alternative constructions as basically synonymous and differing only stylistically. So, on this view, Caesar, in place of *legatos mittunt qui doceant* (BG. 6.96), could have written *legatos mittunt ut doceant* or *legatos mittunt ad docendum* or even

<sup>5</sup> Ov. *Her.* 1.88, *turba ruunt in me luxuriosa proci*, often cited in the literature and indeed emblematic of *constructio ad sensum* in medieval grammatical treatises, is probably not an example, since it can actually be analyzed with *proci* as regular subject of the verb: see Colombat, 1993: 59. More generally, see Birkenes & Sommer, 2015.

*legatos mittunt doctum* (cf. 7.5.2; Hirt. *BG.* 8.4.2) without serious consequences for interpretation. In all cases, the meaning would be "they send legates to announce", even if the first version was preferable in this context to avoid clash with the gerundive in the prior clause or repetition of *ut* in the following sentence (cf. Elerick, 1985: 297–298). Emblematic of this attitude is how scholars have viewed the relation between gerund and gerundive. In contexts where the rules of Latin grammar call for a gerund with a nominal or pronominal direct object, authors instead frequently employ a construction in which the noun or pronoun takes the case of the putative underlying gerund and is then modified by a participial form in *-ndus* agreeing with it. Gerundival expressions like *ad liberandam rem publicam* (Cic. *Fam.* 10.12.4) and *Urbis capiendae fiducia* (Ann. *Ep.* 1.38) can thus be found where gerundial *ad liberandum rem publicam* ("for liberating the republic") and *urbem capiendi fiducia* ("confidence of capturing the city") might be more strictly grammatical. The two forms have always been considered semantically equivalent and wholly interchangeable: Benjamin Mitchell's (1912: 144) declaration that "There is no difference in meaning between the gerund and gerundive" represents the orthodox view (cf. now Vester, 1990; Joffe, 2002). Selection of one or the other construction in context is seen as coming down to largely aesthetic considerations, the gerundive tending to be favored except where a double genitive plural in *-orum* or *-arum* would cause an unpleasant rhyming sequence.

A cognitive perspective suggests, by contrast, that we need to take very seriously Dwight Bolinger's (1968: 127) admonition that "A difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning". (Cognitive) constructional approaches in fact take this principle as foundational in order to treat constructions as meaningful *in and of themselves*, that is, as having meanings that emerge separately from the meanings of the particular words of which they are composed. In a constructional grammar, in other words, constructions, like lexemes, may be paired independently with semantic structures (cf. Langacker, 1987 and 1991; Wierzbicka, 1988; Goldberg, 2003). What this means is that seemingly alternative ways of expressing the same semantic content will be treated as entailing some variation in meaning. Consider, for example, the classic example of the so-called "ditransitive construction" in English, where a verb expressing literal or figurative transfer can be construed with two direct objects rather than a direct object and an indirect object. Thus, we can say either: *I taught Harry Greek* or *I taught Greek to Harry*. On the traditional account, these sentences express the same semantic content. However, Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 126–30) have argued that selection between the two constructions actually involves subtle considerations of meaning that depend on our metaphorical understanding of STRENGTH OF EFFECT in concrete terms of CLOSENESS. Thus, in *I taught Greek to Harry*, where direct object *Greek* is separated from *Harry* by the preposition *to*, we may still wonder if Harry has in fact learned Greek; on the basis of the metaphor – which applies directly to form of the sentence – the spatial distance between *Harry* and the verb imposed by the preposition is interpreted as a weakening of effect. On the other hand, in *I taught*

*Harry Greek* the absence of any element spatially intervening between *Harry* and *Greek* implies, again metaphorically, a stronger effect – so we understand that Harry did indeed learn the language. Part of our interpretation of these sentences, then, seems to depend on a non-arbitrary (in fact strongly motivated) linkage between form and meaning in our linguistic and conceptual system.

## Constructions in cognitive linguistics

Our use of the term “construction” may seem to imply that there exists a single theory, and a single definition of this term, which the papers collected in this volume universally adopt. This is not the case. It would be more appropriate to speak of “constructional” approaches, since this field is actually constituted by a constellation of more or less related approaches, developed at somewhat different times and with somewhat different interests (cf. Östman & Fried, 2005).

George Lakoff’s “Linguistic Gestalts” (1977) represents one early version of the constructional approach. It argued against a strictly compositional view of meaning and proposed that constructions themselves could have meanings independent of and not reducible to those of their component parts. Lakoff (1987) later gave this approach robust empirical support through his study of English *there*-constructions, when he showed that the different kinds of meanings that can be expressed by the fixed formula *There’s . . .* or *There goes . . .* – for example, perceptual reference (“There’s the signal”), existential or stative declarations (“There goes the plane”), or paradigmatic demonstrations (“There’s a real beauty”) – can be derived systematically from a central spatial deictic meaning (as in “There’s what I was looking for”) through conventionalized metaphorical and metonymic associations. In Latin, clause-initial *esse* constitutes a construction with a similarly prototypical semantic structure: alongside simple deictic usages like Vergil’s *est locus Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt*. “There is a place the Greeks call Hesperia by name” (*Aen.* 1.530–31), we also find extended “existential” or “characteristic” or “causal” meanings in examples such as *fuit olim . . . senex* ‘There once was an old man’ (Plaut. *St.* 539), *sunt qui quod sentiunt non audent dicere* ‘There are those who dare not say what they feel’ (Cic. *Off.* 1.84), and *est quod suscenset tibi* ‘There is something that makes him angry with you’ (Ter. *Andr.* 448).

Charles Fillmore’s “Frame Semantics” represents another. As in the previous case, in Frame Semantics specific attention is paid to idiomatic constructions – constructions, that is, whose morpho-syntactic behavior as well as the overall semantics cannot be compositionally deduced from those of the sub-parts or from other constructions of the language – such as the English structure “The *x*-er . . . the *y*-er”, where *x* and *y* are comparative adjectives or adverbs (e.g., *The more carefully you do your work, the easier it will get*), or the “let alone” construction (e.g., *I doubt you could get Fred to eat shrimp, let alone Louise squid*). For the latter, Fillmore, Kay & O’Connor



(1988) showed that *let alone* shares certain properties with other constructions (coordinating conjunctions, the paired focus construction, sentence fragments), but also has its own autonomous properties, especially at the (prâgma-)semantic level: the fundamental meaning of the construction is a relation of entailment, where the second reduced clause (*let alone Louise squid*) necessarily follows from the first, full and more informative claim (*I doubt you could get Fred to eat shrimp*); the two parts belong to the same polarity (typically, a negation) and are placed at different points of the same presupposed semantic scale. A Latin correlate of the *let alone* construction involves the coordinator *nēdum*, which connects two entities ordered on the same scale, such as the intensity of the assault expressed by *impetum* and *clamorem* in *vix clamorem eorum, nedum impetum, Suessetani tulere* "The Suessetani barely withstood their war-cry, let alone (their) charge". (Liv. AUC. 34.20.7). As in the case of the English construction, *nēdum* exhibits autonomous characteristics, e.g., in contrast with the conjunction *et*, it only admits binominal coordination and, moreover, it involves non-reversible coordinands, as the *nēdum*-clause can only occur as the second coordinand. Later, and more peripheral, examples of *nēdum* as the first coordinand evidence a shift towards the expression of a positive polarity, as in *nedum hominum humilium (ut nos sumus), sed etiam amplissimorum virorum consilia ex eventu, non ex voluntate a plerisque probari solent* "The advice of not just humble people, as we are, but even of the greatest men, tends to be judged by most people by the result, not by the intention" (Cic. Att. 9.7a.1) (cf. Goldstein, 2013).

Both in Lakovian and Fillmorean constructional analysis, the decoding of a construction's semantics embraces non-literal aspects of meaning, the pragmatic context of the utterances, and world knowledge. In other words, it requires the speakers' active interpretative role (a notion that Langacker, 1987 calls "construal"). This line of theorizing has reached its fullest elaboration in contemporary versions of the constructional approach, above all the "Cognitive Construction Grammar" represented by the work of Adele Goldberg (1995; 2006), the "Cognitive Grammar" of Ronald Langacker (1987; 1991), and the "Radical Construction Grammar" of William Croft (2001).<sup>6</sup> Although proposing models of linguistic meaning that differ in many respects, these approaches can be said to share certain theoretical commitments. Apart from their definitive treatment of the construction – defined as "any linguistic pattern . . . [whose] form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist" (Goldberg, 2006: 5) – as the fundamental unit of linguistic analysis, what these approaches have in common is

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<sup>6</sup> For a good summary from the perspective of classical linguistics, see Barðdal & Danesi, 2014, who describe various possible applications of the constructional approach to Greek grammar, such as dative of agent, infinitive with accusative subject construction, and complement patterns. The last have been studied especially by Cristofaro, 2008, who focuses on declarative indicatives, participial complements and infinitives.



a general enlargement of the perspective from peripheral phenomena, such as those described above, to more regular aspects of grammar (e.g., argument structure, passive constructions, and so on) (cf. Barðdal & Danesi, 2014).

Any construction grammar should explain the full range of phenomena found in natural languages by means of the same analytical tools. All types of linguistic units (i.e., morphemes, words, idioms) are taken to be constructions, that is, pairings of form with semantic and/or discourse function. Phrasal constructions, in fact, differ from lexical items only in terms of their internal complexity. This is the so-called “lexicon/syntax continuity” hypothesis, according to which the grammar of a language can be arranged along a continuum stretching from lexical to more schematic constructions, from simple to more complex structures (cf. Barðdal & Danesi, 2014; Croft & Cruse, 2004: 255). Other tenets widely shared by cognitive constructional models are: the hypothesis also of a semantic/pragmatic continuity, and the “what you see is what you get” approach to syntax (in other words, the idea that no underlying levels of syntax must be postulated, as with Chomskyan “deep structures”, which yield manifold surface structures through transformations and derivations). Thus, a construction grammar associates differences in semantic and pragmatic meanings directly with differences in surface form. Constructions are claimed to be learned based on the input pattern and general cognitive mechanisms (i.e., “constructed”), and they vary at the cross-linguistic level. At the same time, cross-linguistic generalization is the effect of general cognitive constraints and the set depends on the functions conveyed by the constructions involved (Goldberg, 2003: 219).

## The contributions to this volume

Fittingly with the varied character of constructional approaches in contemporary cognitive linguistics, the papers in this volume stake out a range of views and interpretations of what constitutes a “construction” and place there attention on a wide range of linguistic material in Greek and Latin. In doing so, they help highlight new ways in which Greek or Latin syntax can be seen as meaningful and contribute new perspectives and new theoretical resources to the research agenda of a cognitive classical linguistics. Just as there is no single “construction grammar” but rather a multiplicity of construction grammars loosely associated by their commitment to the construction (however defined) as the basic unit of analysis and by their belief that language should be described in terms of cognitive structures and processes known from psychology and neuroscience, the chapters collected here are not all cut from the same cognitive linguistic cloth, but instead sometimes differ in the details of the theoretical apparatus and terminology they adopt (or simply declare this adoption more or less explicitly). In a discipline where the norm has been collections organized narrowly on the basis of author, genre, or chronology, someone might look for more of a common thread. But we view the diversity of methods and approaches adopted

by our authors as a clear strength of the volume, intending it to represent a cross-section of how the theories and methods of cognitive construction grammar(s) have inspired *different kinds* of analyses in classical studies – literary and social-historical as well as linguistic – all under the general rubric of embodiment. Our authors adopt the theoretical and methodological insights of embodiment in different ways and to different degrees. Yet they all take the basic premises of embodied cognition and language to heart and, in true interdisciplinary fashion, integrate these premises with their own traditions of scholarship. We believe they represent some of the most ambitious attempts to integrate the embodiment paradigm into classical studies and will thus help set the contours for this burgeoning subdiscipline.

**Rutger Allan** challenges mainline views that the present and imperfect tense of the Greek verb inherently express notions of iterativity, habituality, and genericity. He takes the position that these meanings instead arise either through contextual factors or through inference from experiential knowledge, on the basis of conventionalized semantic values relating to temporal boundedness of the denoted event which interacts with other embodied construal phenomena (especially our tendency to perceive multiple similar entities as constituting a single entity, our ability to impose a temporal “viewing frame” on experiences and memories, and our ability to imagine the same scene from multiple different vantage points).

**Annemieke Drummen** then takes a constructional approach to one of the most studied but still perhaps least understood aspects of the ancient languages: the Greek particles. In her study of *kaí*, *te*, and *δέ*, Drummen demonstrates that this kind of approach can show that the semantic “multifunctionality” of the particles falls together in a systematic way. As Drummen argues, the meanings of the particles follow from the combination of conventionalized form-meaning pairs with specific contextual features; in this sense, the semantic structure of each particle is organized as a prototype category, with one construction representing the “basic” meaning and the other “daughter” constructions inheriting the features of the parent construction while also adding certain additional dimensions of form and meaning.

**Chiara Fedriani** analyzes usage of several fixed-form imperatives in Greek and Latin – *íthi*, *áge*, *age*, *phére*, and *em* – whose grammaticalization or pragmaticization develops largely on the basis of conventionalized metaphorical patterns in these languages. Specifically, Fedriani argues that the different development of these words as pragmatic or discourse markers depends above all on the interaction between their literal spatial and physical meanings and the kinds of metaphorical interpretation these meanings are conventionally subject to in Greek and Latin – namely ‘ACTION IS MOTION’ and ‘IDEAS ARE OBJECTS’ – which determines their acquisition of either action-oriented or discourse-related functions. As Fedriani suggests, this analysis reveals that the same embodied metaphors that operate in the determination of lexical semantic structure can and do also motivate processes of functional enrichment.

A morphological phenomenon par excellence, that is, verbal prefixation, is dealt with in **Luisa Brucale**’s paper, who investigates the development of a reversive

sense in the usage of the Latin preverbs *re-* and, to a lesser extent, *dis-*. Based on the insights of Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, Brucale traces the reversive value to the basic spatial concepts (image schemas) expressed by the two preverbs. Then, using evidence from Plautus and Cato, she reconstructs the semantic network of *re-* and *dis-* based on certain pervasive metaphorical and (context-induced) metonymical associations in Latin.

**Anna Bonifazi** focuses on the word *autós*, whose polysemy, she suggests, can be explained in image-schematic terms. Starting from Ekkehard König's claim that intensifiers evoke a center and a periphery, Bonifazi argues that the different meanings of *autós* – as intensifier, anaphor, reflexive, and exclusive – can in fact be seen as following from a series of metaphorical and metonymic extensions of a CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema, with (the referent of) *autós*, in the basic form of the schema, corresponding to the conceptual center or focal point. According to different metaphorical construals, *autós* may thus be interpreted in terms of a visual location, an attentional focus, a “hidden nucleus”, or even a certain unit of information assumed in ongoing discourse.

Tapping into certain themes of contemporary research in cognitive linguistics and philosophy of language – first, the idea that words relating to sensory perception typically develop figurative meanings in the domain of knowledge and thought (reflecting a perhaps universal ‘MIND-AS-BODY’ metaphor), and second, that vision, while important, is not necessarily the exclusive source for metaphorization of this domain (i.e., ‘SEEING IS KNOWING’) – **Silvia Luraghi & Eleonora Sausa** analyze the constructions in which the Greek verbs *akoúō* ‘hear’ and *klúō* ‘listen to’ participate. They argue that the differences in usage of the verbs that characterize Homeric Greek in particular can be explained by reference to notions of animacy (of the stimulus) and that the different “actionalities” of the verbs in these terms – in other words, whether they denote a controlled activity or merely a(n uncontrolled) state – can account for why *akoúō* but not *klúō* develops a figurative evidential or intellectual meaning (i.e., ‘learn’).

**Maria Papadopoulou** examines the Greek lexicon of garments and clothes-wearing, and especially its usage of locative prepositions, to show that this semantic field is structured by a certain image-schematic understanding of the body. As Papadopoulou shows, Greek's vestimentary vocabulary is organized around the spatial prepositions *amphi-*, *ana-*, *apo-*, *en-*, *ek-*, *epi-*, *peri-*, and *hupo-*, an organization that reveals that the Greeks conceptualized the spatiality of the clothed body in terms of specific “regions”, as well as in terms of the conceptual metaphor ‘DRESSING IS A LOCATION’.

Aiming to restore the reputation of Aristotle as a theorist of metaphor among cognitive linguists by using the apparatus of cognitive linguistic itself, **Gregory Membrez** shows that Aristotle's own ideas of metaphoricity in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* are couched in explicitly metaphorical terms, specifically in terms of a metaphor drawing on concepts from the domain of ‘DWELLING IN AN OIKOS’. By analyzing the conceptual mappings of

this metaphor – according to which literal usage of a “governing” term (*kúrion ónoma*) is understood as a ‘household’ (*oikeîon*) sense and its figurative usage as ‘belonging to another’ (*allótrion*) domain – Membrez argues that Aristotle’s theory of metaphor actually comes close to the Lakovian theory, especially in its view of metaphor as an aspect of everyday language, and of the basis of metaphor not as a “likeness” of literal properties but as a kind of conceptual transfer.

**Chris Collins** explores the metaphorical construal of memory in terms of writing in Greek and Latin. Tracing the narrowly “autobiographical” or “historical” definition of memory to the metaphor, pervasive in Roman thought already by late Republican times, in which the memory is likened to a written text (a wax tablet or, later, a papyrus scroll), Collins argues that while images of writing certainly have permitted some degree of understanding of the workings of memory (by casting it in terms of something more immediately comprehensible), this metaphor has also tended to engender a view of the mind as characterized *only* by those features of writing and thus to hide to classical (and indeed much of modern) culture the real diversity of memory’s functions now recognized by cognitive neuroscience and cognitive psychology.

**Luca D’Anselmi** tackles the issue of “word pictures” in Latin literature from the perspective of Lakovian conceptual metaphor theory, arguing that the form and meaning of pictorial lines are determined by image schemas of the kind underpinning conventional metaphorical expression in Latin: for instance, PATH, CONTACT and SEPARATION, BALANCE, CONTAINMENT. As D’Anselmi argues, these schemas provide an experience-based set of images for verbal expression through metaphorical extension from the spatial domain; thus, they constitute directly meaningful (instead of merely iconic) constructions. And in positing that such patterns of metaphorical word order are based on conventionalized and pervasive conceptual (rather than purely imaginative) associations, D’Anselmi also suggests that these constructions may occur more frequently outside of highly stylized poetry than previously recognized.

Interlineal glosses of Greek and Latin texts, standard in works of linguistic orientation but normally not provided in other areas of classical studies, have been added as an aid in cases where the precise morphosyntactic details of a given citation are taken up as material for further discussion. In cases where the morphosyntax of only a single lexeme is at stake, glosses have been given in-line. This practice is meant to highlight grammatical issues where relevant, while keeping the text otherwise as clean and as user-friendly as possible for the largest audience. In the glosses, the following abbreviations have been used:<sup>7</sup>

ABL = ablative

ACC = accusative

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<sup>7</sup> The abbreviations are based on the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with minor adaptations (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>).

ADV = adverb(ial)  
 AOR = aorist  
 COMP = comparative  
 DAT = dative  
 DEM = demonstrative  
 DEP = deponent  
 DU = dual  
 EMP = emphatic  
 F = feminine  
 FUT = future  
 GEN = genitive  
 IMP = imperative  
 IMPRF = imperfect  
 IMPS = impersonal  
 IND = indicative  
 INDF = indefinite  
 INF = infinitive  
 INTERJ = interjection  
 IPFV = imperfective  
 LOC = locative  
 M = masculine  
 MID = middle voice  
 M/P = medio-passive  
 N = neuter  
 NEG = negation, negative  
 OPT = optative  
 PASS = passive  
 PL = plural  
 POSS = possessive  
 PRF = perfect  
 PRS = present  
 PTC = particle  
 PTCP = participle  
 Q = question particle/ marker  
 REFL = reflexive  
 REL = relative  
 SBJV = subjunctive  
 SG = singular  
 VOC = vocative

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Rutger J. Allan

## 1 Aspect and construal

### A cognitive linguistic approach to iterativity, habituality and genericity in Greek

**Abstract:** This chapter analyzes the use of tense and aspect in iterative, habitual and generic expressions in terms of the cognitive linguistic notion of construal, i.e., the cognitive ability to conceive and portray a situation in alternative ways. It will be argued that tense and aspect use in iterative, habitual and generic clauses in Ancient Greek hinges on a number of specific construal operations: the capacity to construe a series of individual events as a holistic higher-order event, the capacity to construe an event as bounded or unbounded, and the capacity to view a situation from alternative vantage points.

**Keywords:** tense, aspect, iterativity, habituality, genericity, construal, cognitive linguistics, embodiment

#### 1.1 Introduction

In discussing the uses of the present and imperfect tense, many of our standard Greek grammars distinguish a separate iterative, habitual or generic use. For example, Goodwin (1889) states that “[T]he present may express a *customary* or *repeated* action or a *general truth*” (9), whereas the imperfect “may denote a customary or repeated action, or a series of actions” (11). According to Stahl (1907) the present “refers to present time or the general extent of time [bezeichnet Gegenwart oder allgemeinen Zeitumfang]”<sup>1</sup> (87), and he mentions “the imperfect of interrupted duration or repetition [[d]as Imperfektum der unterbrochenen Dauer oder der Wiederholung]” (96). In Schwyzler & Debrunner (1950: 270–271), we read that the present indicative can be “timeless” when it is used in gnomic and proverbial expressions and it can also be “habitual [[g]ewohnheitsmäßig)”. Smyth (1956: 421, 424) discusses the “Present of Customary Action”, “Present of General Truth” and the “Imperfect of Customary Action”. Similar remarks are found in some more recent reference grammars. Duhoux (2000: 361), for example, refers to the “‘frequentative’ use of the imperfect, conveying the repetition of an action or the habit of engaging in it [[e]mploi ‘frequentative’ de

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1 The present “expresses present time or general time”. The translations from German in this paper are mine.



l'imparfait, rendant la répétition d'une action ou l'habitude de s'y livrer]”,<sup>2</sup> while Rijksbaron (2006: 10, 14; cf. also 4–5, n. 1) speaks of “the generic use of the present indicative” and points out that the imperfect “may express iterative (habitual) states of affairs”. Napoli (2006: 32) notes that, if iterativity is not expressed by means of reduplication or affixation in Homer, “the iterative reading of an event can also be included in the function of the imperfective aspect”.<sup>3</sup>

What these handbooks seem to suggest is that genericity, habituality and iterativity are distinct conventional uses or meanings of the present and imperfect indicative. Perhaps the only dissenting voice is that of Kühner & Gerth (1898: 132), who state in their treatment of the meaning of present indicative:

Doch ist zu betonen, dass das Präsens an sich weder den Begriff der Dauer, noch den der Wiederholung enthält, sondern die Handlung in ihrer Entwicklung vor Augen führt.

“However, it should be stressed that the present in itself neither contains the notion of duration nor that of repetition but that it presents the action in its development”.

And similarly, regarding the imperfect (1898: 142):

Ebenso wenig kann es an sich eine wiederholte Handlung in der Vergangenheit, ein Pflegen ausdrücken . . . Das Imperfekt erscheint in diesem Falle nur deshalb öfter als der Aorist, weil eine wiederholte Handlung gleichsam eine zusammenhängende Reihe von Handlungen darstellt, bei der der Beschauer weit öfter den Verlauf als den Abschluss ins Auge fasst.

“Nor can it in itself express a repeated action in the past, a habit . . . The imperfect occurs in this case more frequently than the aorist only because a repeated action in a sense constitutes a coherent series of actions, of which the observer envisages the progress much more often than the completion”.

Thus, Kühner & Gerth stress that the present and imperfect do not *in and of themselves* express iterativity and habituality. The tendency for iterative or habitual events to appear in these tenses has to do, rather, with the fact that iterative/habitual events constitute a coherent series which are typically viewed in their progress rather than in their completion.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The “frequentative” use of the imperfect expresses the repetition of an action or the habit of indulging in it.

<sup>3</sup> Similar remarks can be found on pp. 49, 130, 143.

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, a similar debate about the connection between iterativity-habituality-genericity, on the one hand, and imperfective aspect (cf. the present stem in Ancient Greek), on the other, is occurring in general linguistics. For example, Comrie, 1976: 25 classifies habitual as a subdivision of imperfective. Bertinetto & Lenci, 2012 argue that habituals and generics belong to the class of “gnomic imperfectives”. Dik, 1997: 223–224, however, distinguishes imperfective aspect (a predicate operator) from habitual and iterative aspect (predication operators), although he mentions that the imperfective in some languages can get a habitual or iterative *interpretation*. Carlson, 2012 suggests that habituality should not be considered an aspect.

An indication that iterativity, habituality and genericity are not inherent meanings of the present and imperfect is the occurrence also of the aorist in such contexts, a fact recognized by the aforementioned reference grammars – although they do not seem to acknowledge that this use of the aorist is fundamentally at odds with the idea that iterativity, habituality and genericity are expressed by the present and imperfect. Examples of the aorist in such contexts are the so-called “gnomic” aorist, “empiric” aorist and “iterative” aorist:<sup>5</sup>

- (1) a. *pathòn dé te nēpios égnō<sub>AOR</sub>*. (Hes. *Op.* 218)  
 ‘A fool learns only when he has suffered’. (gnomic)  
 b. *polloì pollákis meizónōn epithūmoûntes tà parónt’ apólesan<sub>AOR</sub>*. (Dem. 23.113)  
 ‘Many men often lost what they had in the desire for greater possessions’.  
 (empiric)  
 c. *hopóte prosblépsei<sub>AOR.OPT</sub> tinas tôn en taîs táxesi, tóte mèn eîpen<sub>AOR</sub> án*. (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.1.10)  
 ‘Every time he looked at some of the men in the lines, he would say . . .’. (iterative + *án*)

These examples show that the aorist is not incompatible with iterative, habitual and generic meanings. So, what sense does it make to explicitly state the existence of an iterative, habitual or generic meaning of the present and imperfect, if there also appears to be iterative, habitual and generic aorists?<sup>6</sup>

In this chapter, I argue that Kuhner and Gerth are right in adhering to a dissenting opinion: iterativity, habituality and genericity are *not* inherently expressed by the present indicative and imperfect. The iterative, habitual or generic interpretation of a clause is not dependent on the aspectual form of the verb, but it is always prompted either by other linguistic indications (e.g., the presence of a generic subject noun, special adverbial expressions or the particles *án* or ‘epic’ *te*) or by contextual information and general world knowledge. The flip side of this approach is that the

<sup>5</sup> These aorist types are discussed by Goodwin, 1875: 54–56; Rijksbaron, 2006: 14–15, 31–33; Schwyzler & Debrunner, 1950: 278; Smyth, 1956: 408, 431, 529. The examples cited are taken from Smyth.

<sup>6</sup> Other examples of the occurrence of the aorist in iterative expressions are the general (distributive-iterative) subjunctive + *án* and the iterative-distributive optative in conditional, temporal en relative subordinate clauses. In these syntactic constellations, the aorist aspect signals that the state of affairs referred to by subordinate clause is *anterior* to state of affairs of the main clause (e.g., Her. *Hist.* 1.194.4–5: *epeàn dè . . . apikōntai opīsō es toûs Armeníous, álla trópōi tōi autōi poieûntai ploía* ‘When they have arrived in Armenia, they make other boats in the same way’), whereas present subjunctives and optatives signal that the state of affairs in the subordinate clause is *simultaneous* with the state of affairs of the main clause (e.g., *tóte gār pleísta kerdáinousin, hótan kakoû tinos apaggelthéntos tēi pólei tímion tôn sítōn pōlósōin* ‘For they make most profit when at the announcement to the city of some disaster they sell corn at a high price’); see Rijksbaron, 2006: 70, 72–73, 82–83, 88–89.

present (i.e., imperfective aspect) and the aorist (i.e., perfective aspect) in iterative, habitual and generic expressions are not in any way “special” uses of their respective aspect forms. As I shall argue, the semantic contribution of the present and aorist aspect marking in these expressions is no different from their general meaning: the present aspect in iterative, habitual, or generic expressions is used to construe the event as unbounded within the temporal scope, while the aorist imposes a bounded construal on the event.

This general characterization of the semantics of the present and aorist aspects brings us to the cognitive linguistic notion of construal. A central tenet of the cognitive linguistic approach to semantics is that meaning is not something “objective”, involving a “God’s eye view”. In cognitive linguistics, meaning cannot be abstracted away from a concrete conceptualizer who is perceiving, evaluating and physically and emotionally interacting with the world and its inhabitants surrounding him or her. Semantic content implicitly or explicitly always involves a conceptualizing consciousness, an embodied subject of conception who “construes” the content in a certain way. Construal thus refers to “the relationship between a speaker (or hearer) and a situation that he conceptualizes and portrays” (Langacker, 1987: 487–488).

Humans are able to conceive and portray a situation in alternate ways: “People have the capacity to construe a scene by means of alternative images, so that the semantic value is not simply received from the objective situation at hand but instead is in large measure imposed on it” (Langacker, 1991: 35). The conventional meaning of an expression does not only evoke a certain “objective” conceptual content, it is also associated with the particular way in which a speaker *construes* the conceptual content. In the view of semantics taken by cognitive grammar, not only lexical elements but also grammatical elements are meaningful; that is, both lexical and grammatical elements represent a particular way of construing the conceptual content. Construal is never neutral: linguistic expressions always impose a way of construing the conceptual content.

Langacker (2008: 3) illustrates the notion of construal by a visual metaphor: “In viewing a scene, what we actually see depends on how closely we examine it, what we choose to look at, which elements we pay most attention to, and where we view it from”. These various aspects involved in observing a scene correspond to four broad types of construal phenomena: specificity, focusing, prominence and perspective. In section 3, I will go into the specific construal types and their relevance to aspectual semantics in more detail.

Construal is an embodied cognitive phenomenon. As Evans & Green (2006: 45) put it: “Our construal of reality is likely to be mediated in large measure by the nature of our bodies”. An embodied understanding of mind and language holds that conceptual structure is grounded in everyday bodily experiences, such as motion, perception, emotion and social interaction:

Thought is embodied, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems are directly grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character. (Lakoff, 1987: xiv)

The way in which humans bodily engage the world and interact with its inhabitants fundamentally shapes their minds, their knowledge, beliefs and understandings (both personal and culture-dependent) of the reality surrounding them. A speaker's construal of reality cannot be separated from his or her embodied viewpoint and that of his or her interlocutor.

The notion of construal also features in embodied simulation approaches to language comprehension. The central idea behind the embodied simulation view is that understanding language is based on a mental simulation that is grounded in the actual bodily experience of motion and perception. One of the prominent advocates of the embodied simulation view is the cognitive psychologist Rolf Zwaan. In his model of language comprehension – which shows some similarities to Langacker's cognitive grammar – construal is defined as “the mental simulation of an experience conveyed by an attentional frame” (Zwaan & Madden, 2005: 230). According to Zwaan, linguistic constructions (words, grammatical items) in an intonation unit (which he, following Langacker, equates with an attentional frame) activate experiential resources in the mind of the language comprehender that are used to construct a mental simulation of the situation.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Iterativity, habituality and genericity in cognitive linguistics

Before we return to the role of construal operations, it is important to go somewhat further into the specifics of iterativity, habituality and genericity. In section 1, I have treated the semantic domain of iterativity, habituality and genericity more or less as a unitary category. Even though these notions share features, and precise boundaries between them may at times be difficult to draw, it is helpful to identify some of their

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<sup>7</sup> See also Zwaan, 2004. There is a growing body of empirical evidence supporting the presence of embodiment effects in language comprehension, e.g., motor simulation: Bergen & Wheeler, 2010; Glenberg & Kaschak 2002; Taylor & Zwaan, 2008; perceptual simulation: Yao, Belin & Scheepers, 2011; Zwaan et al., 2004; emotional simulation: Havas, Glenberg & Rinck, 2007. Helpful overviews of the research on embodiment and language comprehension are given by: Barsalou, 2010; Gibbs, 2005; Kaschak et al., 2014; Sanford & Emmott, 2013: 132–160. In Allan, *forthc. a* and *forthc. b*, I use Zwaan's embodied simulation model in an analysis of the linguistic and narratological aspects of immersive narrative.

distinctive semantic properties.<sup>8</sup> Typical examples of iterative, habitual and generic expressions are the following sentences (from Langacker, 2000: 251):

- (2) a. Iterative: *My cat repeatedly stalked that bird.*
- b. Habitual: *My cat stalks that bird every morning.*
- c. Generic: *Cats stalk birds. Cats have four legs.*

Iteratives refer to events that are repeated on the same occasion (within one “scene”), each occurrence of which is anchored to a specific point in time, and they refer to events that are conceived of as actually occurring (or having occurred). Iteratives are therefore located, in the terminology of cognitive grammar, on the *actual plane*. Habituals instead involve repeated events on different occasions. They do not directly refer to actual event occurrences that are anchored to a specific point in time. Habituals express that the multiple occurrences of a certain event type are characteristic of the world’s structure during some period of time. Since they do not directly provide information about actually occurring events but about the structural dimension of the world, they designate events located on the *structural plane*. The structural plane “comprises event instances with no status in actuality. These instances are conceived merely for purposes of characterizing “how the world is made”. They have no existence outside the structural plane, which can be thought of metaphorically as “blueprints’ for the world’s structure” (Langacker, 2000: 251).

Like habituals, generic expressions do not designate actual occurrences of events anchored to specific moment in time but to events located on the structural plane. The difference between habituals and generics is that the former refer to individual instances (tokens) (“my cat”, “that bird”), while generics refer to types of entities (“cats”, “birds”). Another difference is that generics do not necessarily involve repeated events but may also be states (e.g., “cats have four legs”). The distinctive semantic features of iterativity, habituality and genericity are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1.** Iterativity, habituality genericity: semantic features.

	REPETITION	PLANE	SUBJECT
ITERATIVE	+	actual	instance
HABITUAL	+	structural	instance
GENERIC	+/-	structural	type

<sup>8</sup> My discussion of iterativity, habituality and genericity mainly draws on Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar analysis. Alternative approaches are the contributions in Bertinetto & Lenci, 2012; Carlson & Pelletier, 1995; Carlson, 2012. Typological studies are Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca, 1994 and Dahl, 1995.