

Applied Cognitive Linguistics II: Language Pedagogy



Cognitive Linguistics Research

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Applied Cognitive Linguistics II: Language Pedagogy

Edited by
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Applied Cognitive Linguistics. Vol. I. Theory and Language Acquisition

Applied Cognitive Linguistics. Vol. II. Language Pedagogy

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Duisburg, Bremen, and Landau

July 2001

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Introduction

René Dirven, Susanne Niemeier and Martin Pütz

As a usage-based language theory, cognitive linguistics is predestined to have an impact on applied research in a number of areas such as language in society, language and ideology, language acquisition, foreign language learning, and language pedagogy. Still, although cognitive linguistics is a rapidly expanding linguistic paradigm, the impact of this new linguistic theory on various branches of applied research and on their pedagogical implications is only now beginning to be more generally felt¹. Thus the present volume and its twin volume *Applied Cognitive Linguistics. Volume 1: Theory and Acquisition* are the first longer publications concentrating on the links between the theoretical views of CL and their relevance for applications in the areas of language acquisition, learning, and pedagogy. These fields can now be dealt with in one coherent framework, which – as the book title shows - we have called *Applied Cognitive Linguistics*.

The editors are convinced that CL has much to offer for these research areas and therefore we more than welcome the burgeoning interest in these fields. While the other volume deals with theoretical issues and approaches to the area of first language acquisition, the present volume focuses on second or foreign language learning and its pedagogy. The editors see the phenomena of “second language acquisition” and “foreign language learning” as complementary processes and thus reject Krashen’s classical division into, and artificial opposition between, acquisition and learning (see also the discussions by McLaughlin 1978 and Taylor 1993). In its view of language as being based on and rooted in cognition, CL can only accept that both processes – unconscious acquisition and awareness in learning – go hand in hand and are always both present in language instruction scenarios, albeit in widely varying degrees.

The contributions in this volume approach language pedagogy in various ways, each of which highlights different aspects in which CL theory may be useful when applied to foreign language instruction. It is striking that various papers deal with some of the most intractable problems in foreign language learning, such as phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, phraseology, metaphor and word derivation. Almost all the papers in the present volume deal with idiomatic layers in the language. As said before, this applies to topics such as phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions and conventional phrases, as well as metaphorical extensions in lexis, morphology, syntax and text structure. The mastering of these areas of the foreign language has traditionally been reserved for advanced stages in FLL. But the learning materials discussed in the papers by Dirven and by Kurtyka are aimed at both intermediate and advanced learners, and must therefore present the insights of CL in a relatively easily accessible way. Thanks to CL insights, the area of idiomaticity in language has become far less opaque than was hitherto assumed in both linguistics and language pedagogy. The distinction between a rule-based syntax and a rule-insensitive area of idiomatic units has been shown to be less rigid and far more fuzzy than was believed before (see especially Taylor forthcoming). Both areas exhibit many cases of transition, vagueness, and overlap. Rule-governed morpho-syntax contains a lot of irregularities, and many conventionalized constructions have a highly idiomatic character. Also the reverse is true: idiomaticity contains a great deal of regularity. By showing the systematic elements in phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, phraseology, and especially metaphorical avenues in language, the learning materials may trigger off new impulses for the acquisition of a more sophisticated level of competence in FL.

Not only intermediate and advanced learners can be better catered for in CL-inspired learning materials; also absolute beginners and the group from beginners to intermediate learners can profit from CL findings about language. Thus the whole problem of basic vocabulary, which was mainly based on frequency counts, can to a large extent be redefined and rethought, as Ungerer's contribution shows, in terms of the distinction between basic-level terms and superordi-

nate and subordinate levels of conceptual and linguistic categorization.

Our aim in editing this volume has thus been to make ongoing research and recent findings available to a larger audience, which – we hope – will have an impact at grassroots level, both on actual language teaching, and on the learning and acquisition going on in foreign language classes inside and outside schools. We firmly believe that CL offers ways and means to facilitate foreign language learning because it enables us to point out the motivation behind every aspect of language. Language thus becomes explainable, and once learners see the way or ways a language works, they may start constructing and reconstructing their own hypotheses about the language they are learning. As has been shown often enough, learning by insight is much more effective than mere rote learning. (See the studies by Plunkett et al. 1993 and by Riding et al. 1993, 1996). Getting the learners to (re-)discover the motivated structures and principles that govern a foreign language may also lead to a greater degree of learner autonomy. Furthermore, this perspective is in line with current constructivist learning theories, which claim that learners do not learn what the teacher teaches but that each of them constructs their own realms of knowledge, choosing certain bits of information offered by the teacher and fitting these building blocks into their own constructions of knowledge (see Wendt 1996).

We are not claiming that in traditional foreign language instruction such connections never appear and are never focused upon or explained, but rather, if it happens, it does not happen in any systematic way. Therefore we would like to suggest that teachers at least take the possibility of a different and more holistic approach to language analysis and learning into account, so as not to miss this chance of facilitating the learning processes. All of the papers in this volume suggest ways in which current research in CL may usefully be applied to foreign language instruction.

The contribution by **René Dirven** (Duisburg, Germany), “English phrasal verbs: theory and didactic application” makes two major points: (1) applied work must be based upon the best possible descriptive work, and (2) the applied linguist must approach descriptive

work with a strong critical mind. For these purposes the author selects one approach amongst the many recent CL analyses of phrasal verbs, i.e. Gries. Dirven shows that this thorough analysis of particle verbs is not yet sufficiently metaphorically oriented and therefore cannot account for native speakers' intuitions, but only for corpus phenomena. In the second part of his paper Dirven evaluates the link between descriptive linguistics and applied linguistics while evaluating the late Brygida Rudzka's didactic grammar of phrasal verbs. Research, both in CL circles and elsewhere, develops very quickly, and Rudzka's materials, which were written some five years ago, reflect the state of the art at that moment. This temporal lacuna shows that applied linguists must have at their disposal reliable surveys of high-quality descriptive work or else set it up themselves. This is what Rudzka did in her time, and she was one of the first to embark upon an applied or didactic grammar. Another positive aspect is that she manages to exploit the potential of radial network representations as learning aids. In fact the author might have used this type of representation for all the particles discussed in her applied grammar. Radial networks can also serve the heuristic function of checking the completeness of the presentation, its internal coherence, and its gradual build-up from the concrete to the abstract. By using the descriptive analysis of Tyler and Evans and the corresponding radial networks, it is shown that Rudzka did not manage to program all the prototypical senses of the particle *out* nor the internal clusters of senses. These reservations concerning Rudzka's presentation are not meant as negative criticism, but only as a reminder of the fact that descriptive CL work is highly relevant in each step of producing learning grammars. All in all, Rudzka-Ostyn's work remains a unique milestone on the road to a fully-fledged Pedagogical Grammar of English.

The contribution of **Andrzej Kurtyka** (Kraków, Poland), "Teaching English phrasal verbs: a cognitive approach", complements Dirven's paper very well insofar as it deals with the same topic in English grammar and also focuses on Rudzka-Ostyn's work. Whereas Dirven concentrates on the link between descriptive and applied work, Kurtyka takes the learner's perspective and concentrates on the

didactic link between learning materials and the learner in his learning situation. First, the contribution discusses various traditional common ways of teaching phrasal verbs as found in a variety of ELT books. The author provides psychological evidence to show that these non-semantic approaches may not be sufficient to clarify the complex character of phrasal verbs, and introduces the alternative semantic-conceptual approach developed by Rudzka-Ostyn. This is a didactic application of CL, largely based on the concepts of trajector and landmark, and the extension of prototypical literal senses into metaphorized, more abstract senses, all kept together in radial networks. Earlier approaches tended to list many different particles with one and the same verb to show their different uses. But this type of presentation only presents facts, not the motivation behind these facts, and can only lead to rote learning. Rudzka-Ostyn proceeds the other way round; she takes different verbs, all with the same preposition or particle, and shows how all the senses of the particle start from a prototype as center and gradually branch in several directions. Since this procedure also exhibits the motivations for the extensions from the prototypical center to the many different senses, learners can embark on the insightful learning of the semantics of phrasal verbs. Rudzka-Ostyn introduces a teaching method which makes use not only of the natural tendency of our memory to respond more actively to visual imagery, but first and foremost of the memory's ability to make mental generalizations on the basis of the rich linguistic input presented in the syllabus. Here rule formulation is almost entirely absent, but the grammar of phrasal verbs is visual, repeatable in many different forms, and generalization-inducing.

A further contribution on phraseology is provided by **Kurt Queller** (Idaho, USA) in his paper "A usage-based approach to modeling and teaching the phrasal lexicon". The paper deals with the question, or rather "the puzzle", of why native speakers of a language so frequently select conventional phrasal patterns (ranging from collocations to conversational routines), whereas non-native speakers do not seem to have that ability. The author suggests an approach aimed at helping L2-learners grasp the schematic structuring of countless individual items which, for native speakers, lends coherence and motiva-

tion to the phrasal lexicon. Again, Langacker's usage-based model is considered to be eminently suited to exploring pedagogical applications of a new, usage-based analysis of an English syntactic category, the prepositional/adverbial particle *over*. Queller speaks about 'the chaotic character of dispersal events', as these are usually embodied in human experience and as they find expression in a prototype 'chaotic dispersal' schema for the category '(all) over'. Queller suggests that only the more fully specified prototype can account coherently for many usage facts such as (a) the preferred collocation of '(all) over' with verbs connoting messy dispersal, (b) a preferred reference within the phrasal pattern, (c) the negative judgement implied in certain expressions, and (d) the nuance of random motion generally recognized for expressions like e.g. 'running all over the yard'. The paper sketches an HTML-style format for presenting this category to non-native learners in a way that does equal justice both to basic-level, lexically entrenched phrasal units and to the prototype-centered network structure that organizes them within the mental lexicon. Queller concludes by discussing contributions that a pedagogical emphasis on phrasal-lexical units and on the low-level prototype schemata that organize them can make toward refining cognitive linguistics theories of lexical network structure.

With the contribution by **Zoltán Kövecses** (Budapest, Hungary), "A cognitive linguistic view of learning idioms in an FLT context", the problems of phrasal verbs and phraseological expressions are widened to include the more general level of idiomaticity. The paper deals with the question of how a cognitive linguistic view enhances the learning and teaching of idioms in the foreign language classroom. Most idiomatic expressions are based on metaphors. One of the most frequent sources for metaphorical idioms is the human body (as many as one sixth of 12,000 idiomatic expressions in a dictionary of idioms are body-based). The interesting fact is that a given source domain, e.g. FIRE (as in *a house on fire*) can be mapped to a wide range of target domains such as anger, love, imagination, conflict, energy, enthusiasm, and many more. By combining idiomatic expressions with their underlying source domains, they may become more transparent to the learner, who now sees the motivation behind the

idiomatic meaning. This even holds for dead idioms such as *a wet blanket*, which is used to quench a fire and as an idiom denotes a person or act damping the feelings of enthusiasm in an individual or group. Although these links are no longer felt by the native speaker, they are valid for the foreign language learner, who discovers in every idiomatic expression something of its original mapping process. Kövecses further suggests that idiom dictionaries be built up along such metaphorical source domains. Also in the FL classroom this may be an ideal learning strategy. In a small-scale experiment with two groups of 15 learners it turned out that the group that was introduced to the underlying metaphorical source domains performed much better than the other group, both on the expressions dealt with before (82% retention vs. 73%) and on novel expressions not dealt with before (77% vs. 52%). The author comes to the conclusion that CL indeed has much to offer to FLL and that CL insights can provide a useful general strategy for achieving this objective.

While Kövecses's paper deals with metaphors as core elements in idioms, the contribution by **Antonio Barcelona** (Murcia, Spain), "On the systematic contrastive analysis of conceptual metaphors. Case studies and proposed methodology", focuses on the contrasts and commonalities between basic metaphors in English and in Spanish. As such it is a study continuing the older tradition of (applied) contrastive analysis, which had its heyday in the sixties and seventies, but since then lost much of its impetus and impact on language pedagogy. CL is certainly called upon to revive contrastive analysis, as already signaled by Soffritti's 1998 contribution to the *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*.² Barcelona's contrastive analysis sets the pace for the type of contrastive analysis that CL can contribute to language pedagogy and foreign language learning. Contrastive analysis can provide the fine-grained comparison between the ways a conceptual metaphor is linguistically realized in two languages. Whereas a coarse-grained comparison only highlights the many correspondences in two languages, a fine-grained analysis can unveil the many idiomatic differences and ultimately predict a number of errors learners can be helped to avoid. The author illustrates this, by way of introduction to a larger project, for the emo-

tional domains of sadness/happiness, anger, and romantic love. In English the conceptual metaphors for emotional states tend to invoke the CONTAINER image, as in *He flew into a rage* or *The news threw him into a terrible rage*. Spanish is not container-oriented here: *Su conducta me puso furioso* 'His behavior me put furious', i.e., *His behavior made me furious*. It is these many different lexical/idiomatic and grammatical realizations of metaphors in both languages that must be found out and programmed into learning materials. The author also stipulates a number of methodological principles or strategies at phrasal and clausal level that may be applied in the contrastive analysis. He concludes by pointing out the relevance such contrastive work may have for applied linguistics in the areas of language learning, translation, and interlinguistic lexicography.

The contribution by **Friedrich Ungerer** (Rostock, Germany), "Basicness and conceptual hierarchies in foreign language learning: a corpus-based study", widens the scope of topics once again. The paper sets out to discuss Rosch's prototype theory and its application to first language acquisition in the sense that the primacy of the basic level implies that, for example, superordinate and subordinate concepts are acquired later than basic ones. It is hypothesized that this sequence is also followed in the foreign language teaching context. Formerly, FL vocabulary learning was strongly based upon frequency counts and the many improvements made to it on the basis of availability needs or other principles. But there was not any semantic principle underlying the composition of basic vocabulary lists, nor was there any systematic link to the rest of the vocabulary. The strong hierarchical relationship of basic-level terms both to the superordinate categories they belong to and to the subordinate categories they dominate and keep together makes a systematic ordering of vocabulary learning possible. Moreover, basic-level terms have a high frequency range and in fact enable a semantic principle to account for the frequency of certain words. Ungerer has set up his own list of basic-level terms on the basis of a corpus. His corpus study comprises German textbooks of English plus two popular newspapers (*The Sun* and *The Daily Mirror*) and one quality paper (*The Guardian*). With reference to language teaching, the analysis shows that, for

example, basic level items are to be preferred as entry points where the superordinate concepts involve “less tangible taxonomic notions”. Metonymic superordinates are often as easily accessed as basic level terms and should therefore be introduced early and without the support of the respective basic level items.

The contribution by **Klaus-Uwe Panther and Linda Thornburg** (Hamburg, Germany), “A conceptual analysis of English *-er* nominals”, is the volume’s best illustration of what we can understand by the notion of “the best possible description” of a given area of syntax. Although Ryder (1991, 1999) had already dealt with the theme of *-er* nominals along cognitive lines, the authors show that a more unified account for all phenomena, especially one accounting for the noun-derived ones such as *back-hander*, is necessary: “Our findings considerably weaken the traditional assumption that the non-verb based *-er* nominals constitute an erratic if not “chaotic” category. And to the degree we can reduce chaos, our findings will have relevance to the teaching and learning of this extremely productive derivational pattern in English”. The authors therefore focus on English morphology, presenting a non-rule-based account of *-er* nominals in English. They argue that a contrast between verb-based and non-verb-based *-er* nominals claimed by other authors does not hold up, as the *-er* nominals can be accounted for by a general conceptual schema independent of the syntactic category of their bases. They show that *-er* nominals do not constitute a conceptual category in the classic sense of the word, but that they form a complex conceptual category with a prototypical center and a network of other senses. So here again, just as in the approaches by Rudzka and by Tyler and Evans, discussed in Dirven’s contribution, the notion of (radial) network also plays a central role. The authors see five major sub-categories of *-er* nominals, four of them being object nominals, and the fifth being an event nominal. The prototypical category is the human agent nominal as in *baker*. Next to it are the non-human animate nominals such as types of dogs like *retriever*, *biter*, *pointer*. Also close to the prototype are metaphorical inanimate nominals such as *skyscraper*. A huge sub-category is constituted by instrument nominals such as *three-wheeler*; many, if not most of them are noun-based, but share the general char-

acteristic of all object nominals, i.e. some (implied) entity does something to some other entity, which metonymically or metaphorically involves a whole action. Event nominals such as *backhander* differ from object nominals in that their referents are events. Thus a *backhander* is not a person, but an event, i.e. a stroke in tennis given from a backhand position. Again metonymy is ubiquitous here too. All this is illustrated and visualized by many figures and tables, so that the whole analysis and presentation can serve as a rich linguistic quarry and input for the applied linguist who wants to program and to construct teaching materials on the basis of this solid framework. The authors themselves also discuss the implications that their findings have for foreign language instruction and conclude: "...the rich conceptual motivations of grammatical phenomena is much more promising as a methodological tool in language pedagogy" than chaos. The motivations they have offered are precisely the five categories of meaningful types of *-er* nominals with their many motivated subcategories. Here is a lot of food for thought for the applied linguist.

The last contribution shifts the perspective again, both geographically and culturally. It is by **Hans-Georg Wolf** (Berlin, Germany) and **Augustin Simo Bobda** (Yaoundé, Cameroon), and is entitled "The African cultural model of community in English language instruction in Cameroon: The need for more systematicity." The paper shows the importance of the cognitive and cultural context in the field of language teaching for ESL varieties of English in the anglophone part of Cameroon. The authors point out that the main problem in terms of the organization and design of textbooks lies in the ethnocentric bias that represents a Western life-style and Western values, thereby alienating the students from their own indigenous culture. 'Indigenization' here is understood in a far broader sense than just being the inclusion of local lexical items; above all it encompasses a realization of the underlying culture-specific models of thought. The authors suspect that educators and authors of textbooks are seemingly unaware of the systematic nature of the cultural knowledge they utilize and that they only intuitively make use of various facets of African culture. Based on an analysis of Longman's textbook of English, the *Secondary English Project for Cameroon* (Book 5), the authors

introduce the basic structure of the African model of community and provide instances of its realization in language teaching materials. The authors suggest that the African model of community is particularly suited to the introduction of the methodological concept of 'cultural model' developed within cognitive anthropology (Holland and Quinn, eds., 1987). The African model is different from the Western conception of the individual or the 'self' in the sense that in African, Latin-American and many Southern European cultures individuals see themselves as part of an encompassing social relationship. Wolf and Simo Bobda cite numerous examples of conceptual metaphors and linguistic expressions which lie at the heart of African spirituality: the sanctity of life, the role of spirits and ancestors and the relation between illness, misfortune, and sin. The authors conclude by raising the question of whether or not the application of the cultural models expressed in L2 varieties jeopardize intelligibility. The assertion is clearly negated.

Notes

1. For a few earlier papers, see the Reference section: for cognitive research on lexicon and grammar learning see Dirven (1989), Dirven and Taylor (1994), Rudzka s.a., Rudzka et al. (1991), Taylor (1987, 1993), and for cognitive learning style research see Heidemann (1996), McLaughlin (1978), Plunkett and Marchman (1993), and Riding et al. (1993, 1996).
2. This is part of the unsigned chapter 10 "Language comparison: Sociology of language, language typology and contrastive linguistics" in Dirven and Verspoor (1998).

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Section 1

**Bottom-up approaches:
Phrasal verbs and phraseological
expressions**

English phrasal verbs: theory and didactic application*

René Dirven

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to emphasize one very essential aspect of didactic applications of linguistic descriptions. It is not sufficient to use some or other descriptive analysis of a grammar segment, but the applied linguist must be informed about the continued evolutions in the field and base his programming of learning problems on the best, even if they are the latest, descriptive proposals. As the discussion will show, these cannot even be taken for granted, but must be approached critically and cautiously. The theoretical part of this paper is the continuation of a discussion started in a twin paper “Recent cognitive approaches to English phrasal verbs” (Dirven forthcoming) and explores the status of the two elements in phrasal verbs and of the construction as a whole (Sections 2 and 3). The didactic application in Section 4 concentrates on a pedagogical grammar of English phrasal verbs by the late Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn and takes up various elements from that twin paper.

2. Status of the particle within phrasal verbs

Gries (1997, 1999) investigates the alternation between the two structural possibilities of particle placement with transitive phrasal verbs: the post-verb position (construction 1) as in (1a) and the post-DO (direct object) position (construction 2), as in (1b).

- (1) a. He *picked up* a pencil. Construction 1: post-verb position
 b. He *picked* the pencil *up*. Construction 2: post-DO position

The deeper principle which Gries proposes as the underlying principle for the various factors adduced in the literature, and which he empirically explores in a corpus, is the consciousness principle, manifesting itself in the degree of attention needed to set up mental contact with the NP's referent in the direct object.

He formulates his consciousness hypothesis as follows: "construction 1 will be preferred with objects requiring a high amount of consciousness and construction 2 will be preferred with objects requiring none or only a limited amount of consciousness for their processing" (Gries 1997: 64). The degree of consciousness is in its turn determined by two sub-principles, in the order of importance as given here (which is not emphasized by Gries): the discourse context and the entrenchment of the linguistic form denoting a referent. Objects that are new in the discourse context like *a pencil* in (1a) prefer construction 1, whereas objects that are accessible or active via the discourse context preferably occur in construction 2 as in (1b). Similarly, according to Gries (1997: 64), poorly entrenched objects such as abstract entities prefer construction 1, but fairly well entrenched objects such as human persons are more frequent and therefore more acceptable in construction 2. Whereas the principle of the discourse context explains the obligatory use of construction 2 in (2a), the entrenchment principle would necessitate construction 1 in (2b):

- (2) a. He has got malaria. He *picked it up* in Kenya.
 b. He has got malaria. He *picked up* that disease in Kenya.
 c. He has got malaria. He *picked* THAT disease *up* in Kenya.

But for 9 out of 10 informants¹ also construction 2 as in (2c) is acceptable with abstract nouns, for 8 without any reservation, for one under the condition of a stressed form, indicated by upper case. It is further to be expected that not only the nature of the direct object, but also the degree of metaphorization of each single element of a particle verb or of the whole construction plays a major role.