Cognitive Linguistics

Overarching term for a large field (like functionalism) ➞ Cognitive linguists believe that the storage and retrieval of linguistic data is not significantly different from the storage and retrieval of other knowledge.

1. Cognitive linguists deny that the mind has any module for language-acquisition that is unique and autonomous.

↳ Contrasting with generative grammar

➞ Human linguistic ability is innate **but** it is separate from the rest of cognition.

2. Cognitive linguists understand grammar in terms of conceptualization

➞ linguistic phenomena (phonemes, morphemes, etc.) are conceptual in nature

3. Cognitive linguists claim that knowledge of language arises out of language use

- No clear demarcation between lexicon and grammar
- Grammar can be described with symbolic assemblies in a similar way to those describing lexicon

Ronald Langacker (1942-)

Cognitive grammar is a cognitive approach to language developed by Ronald Langacker, which considers **the basic units of language to be symbols or conventional pairings of a semantic structure with a phonological label**.

Grammar consists of constraints on how these units can be combined to generate larger phrases which are also a pairing of semantics and phonology. The semantic aspects are modeled as image schemas rather than propositions, and because of the tight binding with the label, each can invoke the other.

Cognitive Grammar

"Language is shaped and constrained by the functions it serves" (Langacker)

- **semiological function:** allowing conceptualizations to be symbolized by means of sound and gestures

Cognitive Grammar (cont)

↳ CG emphasises the semiological function of language

- **interactive function:** involves communication, manipulation, expressiveness, and social communion

↳ "fully acknowledges the grounding of language in social interaction"

"Grammar is symbolic in nature"

Symbol: the pairing between a semantic structure and a phonological structure, such that one is able to evoke the other

Cognitive Grammar: concerned with how symbols combine to form complex expressions

⚑ language is a gradation between lexicon and grammar, which in other frameworks tend to be viewed as separate

Principles of CG (P.I.N.)

INTEGRATION / NATURALNESS / PATIENCE

- **Principle of integration** → importance of considering information from multiple sources
- **Principle of naturalness** → consideration of semiological and interactive functions b2b biological, cognitive, and sociocultural grounding
- **Principle of patience** → do not jump ahead of the theory

Structures

Semantic structure: conceptualizations exploited for linguistic purposes → signified

Phonological structure: sounds, gestures, orthographic representations → signifier

Symbolic structure: not distinct from semantic and phonological structure rather incorporates them → sign

SEMANTIC STRUCTURE + PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE = SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE

Symbolic assemblies

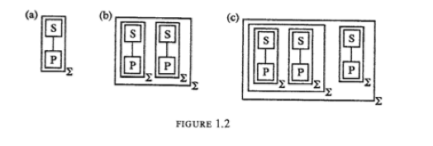


FIGURE 1.2

Symbolic assemblies: structures of greater symbolic complexity

→ Morphemes have zero symbolic complexity

Lexicon

Cognitive linguist's **lexicon:** the set of **fixed expressions** in a language (not words)

→ fixed expressions are conventionally established

→ no strict boundary between lexicon and nonlexical expressions

→ lexicon is to some extent shared among speakers of a language but to some extent also individual

Basic lexical phenomena

Association: association between a semantic and phonological structure in a symbolic relationship

Automatization: "through repetition or rehearsal, a complex structure is thoroughly mastered, to the point that using it is virtually automatic and requires little conscious monitoring"

Unit status: when an expression is so often used it becomes entrenched, e.g., the alphabet or the Pledge of Allegiance

Schematization: the process of extracting the commonality inherent in multiple experiences to arrive at a conception representing a higher level of abstraction

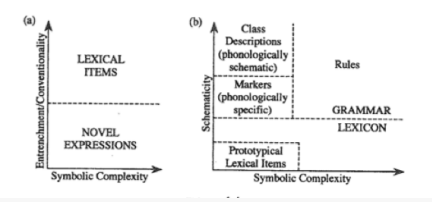
→ *ring 'circular piece of jewelry worn on finger' → 'circular adornment worn on the body' → 'circular object' → 'circular entity'*

Categorization: the interpretation of experience with respect to previously existing structures

Category: a set of elements judged equivalent for some purpose

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Grammar as Symbolic Assemblies



- The difference between lexicon and grammar is level of schematicity, i.e., abstractness
- Grammatical markers
- Grammatical classes
- Grammatical rules

Content Requirement

the only elements ascribable to a linguistic system are:
(i) semantic, phonological, and symbolic structures that actually occur as parts of expressions;
(ii) schematizations of permitted structures;
(iii) categorizing relationships between permitted structures.
example w/ phonological structures
(i) specific elements are sufficiently frequent to become entrenched as units
(ii) segments and syllables can be schematized (natural classes, schematic templates of syllable structure, etc.)
(iii) categorizing relationships between schemas and their instantiations



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