Introduction
Cognitive Linguistics: Current applications and future perspectives

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1. General orientation of the volume: towards an empirical revolution

The collective volume *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives* brings together specific case studies and critical overviews of work in a variety of CL strands. Written by prominent researchers, the chapters of the volume thus provide the scientific community with an updated survey of recent research in Cognitive Linguistics. Most authors furthermore go beyond the more immediate scope of describing or exemplifying state-of-the-art research (e.g. by providing the reader with a generally accessible synthesis or a specialized case study) and explicitly address a number of pressing questions pertaining to future perspectives and future research agendas.

Together with its companion volume *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* (Cognitive Linguistics Research 34, edited by Dirk Geeraerts), it constitutes a highly informative resource for linguists and scholars in neighbouring disciplines, and in general for any scholar wishing to become familiar with what Cognitive Linguistics is all about. Whereas *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* offers an introductory survey of the foundational concepts of Cognitive Linguistics, the present volume focuses on more recent theoretical developments, illustrates the many fields of application that CL already covers (both within linguistics and in an interdisciplinary environment), and identifies the future research trends that CL is now heading for.

At the same time, the present volume is the very first issue in the new book series *Applications of Cognitive Linguistics* (ACL). In collaboration with its sister series *Cognitive Linguistics Research*, ACL offers a platform for high quality work which applies the rich framework developed in Cognitive Linguistics to a wide range of different fields of application. These
fields include descriptive linguistics, cultural linguistics, language acquisition, discourse studies, sociolinguistics, visual communication, stylistics, poetics, pedagogical linguistics, computational linguistics, signed language and still many other fields, often within an interdisciplinary framework. The goals of ACL will be summarised in section 3 of this introduction.

First and foremost, however, as the subtitle suggests, the volume overviews and explores the major avenues of the cognitive linguistic enterprise at present and towards the future. Over the last two, perhaps even three, decades, Cognitive Linguistics has gradually but firmly established itself as a complete and innovating discipline, but certainly not one which for these reasons has ceased to evolve, nor to expand. The contributions in this volume testify to the existence of a number of different strands, the most important of which may be summarised as follows. First, a number of basic concepts (cf. the twelve cornerstones of Cognitive Linguistics described and exemplified in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*) are currently being critically refined or even challenged. Second, the fact that Cognitive Linguistics is fully committed to the analysis of meaning in all its various facets naturally lends itself to multiple applications in all those areas of human communication where meaningfulness is relevant. Hence, the range of applications is expanding, not only across disciplines, but also within linguistics itself. This volume is a representative, but necessarily non-exhaustive illustration of this trend: while it covers a broader perspective than most other “readers” or “introductions” to Cognitive Linguistics, it obviously cannot reflect all of the many burgeoning applications. And last, but not least, there is a call for increasing methodological depth, to ensure a firm position for CL within Cognitive Science at large.

The volume is structured in six main sections. While the first three sections (chapters 1–8) focus on fundamental theoretical and methodological issues, the last sections (chapters 9–15) either discuss or exemplify the extent to which the cognitive linguistic framework can be applied in a variety of neighbouring disciplines (i.e. interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary applications) or to a wide range of practical language-related phenomena (applied linguistics). The distinction between these two main areas (theory and method vs. interdisciplinary applications and applied linguistics) is not, however, meant as a strictly separated one. On the contrary, application perspectives are legion in the first part, and basic theoretical issues naturally pervade the more application-oriented sections of the second part.

The first section, ‘The cognitive base’, addresses issues which in various ways relate to the basic tenet that Cognitive Linguistics is fundament-
ally usage-based. The section opens with a chapter on linguistic methodology and emphasizes the necessity of an empirical revolution. In the rest of section 1, the mental lexicon is seen as the highly flexible result of numerous usage events, and the various grammar models such as cognitive grammar, construction grammar, and radical construction grammar are revisited in terms of notational variants. The second section, ‘The conceptual leap’, looks into the embodied basis and nature of conceptual metaphor, the semiotic and indexical basis of conceptual metonymy, and the rhetorical potential of conceptual blending. The third section, ‘The psychological basis’, exhibits a possible implementation of the empirical revolution advocated in chapter 1 to the area of metaphor research.

Sections 4 to 6 exemplify a representative selection of fields of application. The first comes to the fore in section 4, ‘Go tell it on the mountain,’ which focuses on language, culture and thought. It opens with a dialogue between cognitive linguistics and anthropological linguistics, thus emphasizing the cultural core of language and the linguistic core of culture. Another long-established field is second and foreign language education (or ‘pedagogical linguistics’), which can boast of a long tradition of empirical research, but which is still in the process of discovering the “motivational” potential of a cognition- and usage-based approach to foreign language teaching and learning. Section 5, ‘The verbal and beyond’, extends the research on verbal modes of expression to other modes of conceptual self-expression. The cognitive-linguistic approach is applied to the visual modes of expression as exploited in signed languages and in the manipulation of visual metaphors in the media-dominated communication landscape. Similarly, the imaginative realities of poetic text worlds are explored in a cognitive analysis of Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall”, a choice that serves as a symbol and pun for the wall between linguistics and literary studies. In section 6, ‘Virtual reality’, computer linguistics is looking at cognitive linguistics and lays down the conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to make it testable for computational experimentation.

It must be clear that these fields of application do not exhaust the possibilities for interdisciplinary cognitively inspired explorations. To name just one area, cognitive sociolinguistics is only indirectly represented in the context of cultural linguistics. This issue will be taken up in the last part of this introduction. Let us begin, however, by introducing the fifteen chapters in slightly further detail.
2. The various contributions: foundations, applications and future perspectives

2.1. The cognitive base

This opening section critically surveys the groundwork of Cognitive Linguistics, whose main ambition it is to be a fully usage-based theory of language. In his chapter entitled “Methodology in Cognitive Linguistics”, Dirk Geeraerts examines the methodological consequences of this tenet and weighs the validity of various linguistic research methods leading to the realisation of this ambition. Geeraerts first assesses the actual situation in Cognitive Linguistics and concludes that it is a mixed picture, with a clearly growing interest in empirical methods on the one hand, but still a dominance of traditionally analytic approaches on the other. Adopting a constructive approach, he foresees a growing increase in the empirical demands on linguistics: corpus research, experimental designs, surveys, and the accompanying forms of quantitative data analysis are likely to occupy a more central position than it currently does, gradually raising the standards of scholarship in linguistics in general and in Cognitive Linguistics in particular to such a level that unsubstantiated claims will become unfashionable. Linguistics needs an empirical revolution, and empirical research, Geeraerts argues, does not involve abandoning theory formation in favor of purely descriptive research, but rather trying to provide proof for theories, and from there, refining the theories. Interpretation is thus viewed as but one step within a cycle of empirical and successful research, which, crucially, requires the operationalization of hypotheses.

Many traditional dichotomies such as competence versus performance, or lexicon versus grammar are irreconcilable with a usage-based description of language. In the chapter “Polysemy and the lexicon”, John R. Taylor looks at this continuum from the lexicon perspective, and revisits several questions which earlier CL models have treated in the form of radial networks (the extreme polysemy of ‘over’, for example). In the case of ‘over’, Taylor argues that attempts to determine just how many meanings a word has, and what these meanings might be are ultimately based on a particular model, viz. the “dictionary+grammar book” conception of language. Taylor argues that such a conception is undermined by the pervasiveness of the idiomatic and illustrates his claim with an easily repeatable, small-sized corpus-based study of some uses of the expression all over. He shows that the expression has a range of uses which cannot be de-
rived on the basis of independently identifiable meanings of its parts, and concludes that knowing a word proceeds through knowledge of the highly flexible usage range of the word, rather than through the association of the word with a fixed number of determinate meanings.

One major application of CL is likely to be in the area of linguistic descriptions of parts or even the whole of grammar, of single languages or, contrastively, across different languages. The third chapter in this section, “Cognitive approaches to grammar”, by Cristiano Broccias, outlines the development of CL grammar models and compares three CL grammar models: Langacker’s cognitive grammar (Langacker 2005), and Goldberg’s (Goldberg 1995) and Croft’s (Croft 2001) avenues into construction grammar. Finally, the chapter explores the descriptive complementary potential of mental space theory and blending theory for the representation of conceptual links in grammatical complexity. As Broccias points out, the similarities between the models described are so fundamental that they can be called “notational variants”: they all share the assumption that language must be studied in relation to other cognitive abilities and agree on the fact that language consists of far more than just a syntax plus a lexicon. Rather, language is viewed as a taxonomic hierarchy, where sharp distinctions should not be assumed; language is a “diffuse” network since much in language is a matter of degree.

2.2. The conceptual leap

This section surveys the various ways in which human thought manages to explore and conceptually structure the experiential world of man by means of mainly three cognitive operations: conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, and conceptual integration or blending, probably based to different degrees on underlying pre-conceptual building stones such as image schemas. The chapter by Tim Rohrer, “Three dogmas of embodiment: Cognitive linguistics as a cognitive science” critically reviews a series of recent approaches to another fundamental cornerstone in Cognitive Linguistics, namely the assumption that conceptual structure is “embodied”. Rohrer argues against any non-socially and non-culturally based conception of embodiment which envisages it as if it were (a) an eliminativist project (i.e. one which places the main or sole emphasis on brain structures and neurons, to the detriment of the role of socio-cultural factors), (b) a static or fixed model (as opposed to a temporally flexible and dynamic model, as well in ontogenetic, in historical as in phylogenetic terms), and (c) ultimately compatible with methods of con-
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scious introspection. In this respect, Rohrer highlights the importance of findings resulting from cross-disciplinary empirical and experimental methods, and, like most contributors to the volume calls for empirical methodological approaches which will place Cognitive Linguistics more firmly within the broader experimentally-oriented community of Cognitive Science.

In his chapter, entitled “Metonymy as a usage event”, Klaus-Uwe Panther examines the interrelation between metonymy and metaphor, arguing that the hardly distinguishable notions of ‘domain’, ‘subdomain’, ‘single domain’, and ‘separate domains’, which since 1980 have often been used as definitional criteria for differentiating metonymy from metaphor, are unclear and unreliable because they are cover terms for heterogeneous concepts and conceptual relations. Instead, Panther returns to the semiotic approach advocated by C. S. Peirce according to which the difference between metaphor and metonymy resides in the type of semiotic relation between their respective source and target: metaphor is an *iconic* relation and metonymy an *indexical* relation. In consonance with this idea, metonymy is a kind of meaning elaboration whose result is a conceptually prominent target meaning, an integrated whole that contains the backgrounded source meaning and novel meaning components resulting from the process of elaboration. Panther explores the role of context in the interpretation of metonymy in usage events in two detailed case studies and concludes that one important function of metonymy is to provide generic prompts, serving as inputs for additional pragmatic inferences that flesh out the specifics of the intended utterance meaning.

How do the cognitive operations of metaphor, metonymy and blending relate to each other and to the world of thought? In her chapter entitled “Conceptual blending in thought, rhetoric and ideology”, Seana Coulson first introduces the reader to the framework of conceptual blending theory and provides an example of a rhetorically motivated blend. Then she goes on to describe the commonalities and differences of conceptual blending and conceptual metaphor. Coulson exemplifies these by means of humorous blends and suggests that processes of conceptual blending mediate the exploitation of stable conventional mapping schemes in order to adapt shared cultural models to the idiosyncratic needs of individuals. In her section on “Persuasive absurdity,” a number of examples of persuasive texts and discourse are analyzed to highlight the point that the creative elaboration and accommodation of cultural models relies heavily on conventionalized mapping and blending schemes. In the concluding
section, Coulson briefly also touches on the relationship between the meaning of sentences and the meaning of utterances, i.e. between the standard default meanings explored by linguists and the idiosyncratic meanings speakers derive in situated instances of language use.

2.3. The psychological basis

Research into the psychological basis of linguistic processing is the proper field of psycholinguistics, a vast area from which two domains are represented: metaphor processing and language acquisition. In their chapter “The contested impact of cognitive linguistic research on the psycholinguistics of metaphor understanding”, Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. and Marcus Perlman discuss some of the most important criticisms of cognitive linguistic studies on metaphor. The authors argue that linguistic analyses alone are unable to determine what putative conceptual metaphors underlie the use of particular linguistic expressions and call for experimental research providing independent evidence for such structures. They question CL assumptions that (a) there should be a direct, or motivated, relationship between systematicity in language and people’s underlying cognitive functions (including their unconscious mental representations and brain structures, cf. Dodge and Lakoff 2005), and (b) that the complexity of metaphorical meanings requires equally complex cognitive processes to create or understand these meanings by ordinary language users, as in conceptual blending theory (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). According to Gibbs and Perlman, the challenge for cognitive linguistic research is to frame hypotheses in a falsifiable way, and in this respect they briefly outline a number of steps that cognitive linguists could adopt to deal with some of these problems. The authors conclude that despite its success, cognitive linguistic research will continue to be contested by scholars in different neighbouring disciplines until it addresses some of its methodological weaknesses in a systematic way.

The second chapter in this section, entitled “X is like Y: The emergence of similarity mappings in children’s early speech and gesture” also examines the psychological reality of basic constructs. Şeyda Özçalışkan and Susan Goldin-Meadow first discuss simple analogical mappings in terms of one of the earliest metalinguistic abilities which children master and which thus constitute the stepping-stones for the development of metaphorical thinking. The authors then present the results of research which investigated the emergence and later development of similarity mapping abilities (X is like Y) in spontaneous speech and gesture, using longitudi-
nal observations of English-speaking children from ages 1;2 to 2;10. The results show that the children began to produce similarity mappings routinely by age 2;2, initially conveying only the source domain of the mapping in their speech and relying on nonverbal modalities (i.e., gesture and communicative context) to convey the target domain. The onset of ‘X IS LIKE Y’ constructions was furthermore preceded by the onset of gesture-speech combinations expressing similarity relations without the word like. Özçalışkan and Goldin-Meadow conclude that gesture is at the cutting edge of early language development, as it both predated and serves as the supporting context for oncoming changes in speech.

2.4. Go tell it on the mountain

Section four explores cognitive approaches in the field of anthropological linguistics, now conceived as cultural linguistics, and in language pedagogy, also conceivable as pedagogical linguistics. These two fields both highlight the construal of the world according to multiple cognitive cultural models internalised in childhood and subsequently lived by or learned as new assets of cross-cultural understanding in a given cultural community. The acquisition of language and culture and the interplay between both dimensions thus constitute the main topics of this section.

Gary B. Palmer’s chapter, entitled “Energy through fusion at last: Synergies in cognitive anthropology and cognitive linguistics”, focuses on the positive results of interdisciplinary research and fruitful dialogue: Palmer reviews a series of topics to which both cognitive linguists and cognitive anthropologists have made significant research contributions, namely “language as culture”, “psychological unity vs. cultural diversity”, “distributed knowledge versus consensus in language communities”, “complex categories (reduplication and noun classifiers)”, “the new relativity in spatial orientation” and “the origins of language”. He concludes that Cognitive Linguistics is proving its value by producing insightful applications to the descriptions, analyses, and comparisons of both western and non-western languages and that a version of Cognitive Linguistics that emphasizes the cultural origins of linguistic categories enables cross-linguistic comparisons and insights into both grammar and world view that were unavailable to other paradigms in anthropology or linguistics. Conversely, cognitive linguists could do more to incorporate the frameworks of cognitive anthropology to discover cultural schemas and scenarios and provide additional evidence for proposed cognitive linguistic models.
In their chapter “Cognitive linguistic applications in second or foreign language instruction: Rationale, proposals and evaluation”, Frank Boers and Seth Lindstromberg point out that insights from Cognitive Linguistics have been taken up by education-oriented applied linguistics at a relatively slow pace in spite of the fact that a number of CL premises seem well-suited to complement current language pedagogy research. According to Boers and Lindstromberg, the CL view that appears to have the greatest potential for language pedagogy is its quest for the conceptual motivation of linguistic structures, since the presentation of segments of language as motivated is likely to enhance comprehension, retention, cultural awareness and positive learning effects. The authors survey work based on cognitive insights in second or foreign language teaching and contend that although most controlled experiments reported so far tend to be small-scale ones, taken collectively they begin to constitute a fairly robust body of evidence in favour of a CL-inspired pedagogy. Boers and Lindstromberg conclude by proposing a research agenda consisting of expanding the scope of linguistic motivation, measuring the impact of learner-connected variables on its pedagogical effectiveness and fine-tuning its implementations so as to maximise the pedagogical benefits.

### 2.5. The verbal and beyond: Vision and imagination

Verbal expression merely represents one means of conceptual self-expression. Similar means of expression include visual, pictorial, and/or rhythmic systems that can be interwoven with it, or operate in parallel or as complete alternatives. While verbal communication cannot do without its para-verbal and non-verbal support, signed language is equally composed of conceptual-content gestures and other accompanying meta-gestures signalling how the message is to be interpreted. In his chapter entitled “Visual communication: Signed language and cognition”, Terry Janzen argues that a cognitively oriented approach to signed languages allows us to gain an insight into human conceptual structures, as the mapping between conceptual space and articulation space is often expressly iconic. Janzen first provides the reader with a survey of some of the current research and findings in the area of CL and signed languages and dedicates the rest of the chapter to accounts of specific theoretical questions: what visual perception of language means for an articulation system, the relation between gesture and signs with focus on a discontinuous versus a continuous view of such domains, iconic representations (including a proposal for cognitive iconicity grounded in the theory of cognitive
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grammar), metaphor and metonymy, body partitioning, blended spaces and the embodied expression of point of view. Like other contributors, Janzen also addresses the issue of future directions for cognitive linguistic research on signed language.

In far more general terms and outside the domain of signed language, the visual mode, or rather multimodal systems, have now come to largely dominate Western and global communication systems, as Charles Forceville’s cognitive rhetoric studies have shown for the world of advertising. In the chapter “Non-verbal and multimodal metaphor in a cognitivist framework: Agendas for research,” Forceville pursues the thesis that if conceptual metaphor theory is right in assuming that humans pervasively use verbal metaphor because they largely think metaphorically, then metaphorical thought should manifest itself not just in language, but also via all other modes of communication, such as pictures, music, sounds, and gestures. Forceville offers a review of work done in this area and focuses on a series of theoretical issues that require further research, including the distinction between monomodal and multimodal metaphor, the difference between structural and creative metaphor, the question of how verbalizations of non-verbal or conceptual metaphors may affect their possible interpretation, the intriguing problem how exactly similarity between target and source is created, and the importance of genre for the construal and interpretation of metaphor.

Due to its full exploitation of the visual and the imaginative potential in poetry, narrative and drama, literature by far transcends the monomodal constraints of verbal expression. It does not come as a surprise that CL has also given rise to a cognitive approach to literature, known as cognitive poetics (or cognitive stylistics), which employs cognitive tools to interpret the imaginative depths of literary text worlds. In her chapter entitled “The fall of the wall between literary studies and linguistics: Cognitive poetics”, Margaret H. Freeman first presents a brief overview of the cognitive poetics enterprise. To Freeman, cognitive poetics is essentially an exploration into poetic iconicity, and one which links the literary text to the cognitive processes of the human mind, providing a theoretical cognitive linguistic basis for literary intuition. Next, Freeman exemplifies the field by means of a case study, analysing Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall.” Here she applies the theoretical framework pertaining to blending theory, metaphor theory, deixis, and image schemas, among others, to show how cognitive poetics, by exploring the iconic functions that create literature as the semblance of felt life contributes to our understanding of the embodied mind. The effect of “poetic iconicity” is to cre-
ate sensations, feelings, and images in language that enable the mind to encounter them as phenomenally real. The choice of “Mending Wall” as a case study undoubtedly contributes to rendering the “fall of the wall” an even more symbolic and entertaining process.

2.6. Virtual reality as a new experience

The study of the computational applications to CL is a comparatively new area of enquiry which poses a challenge both for CL, which needs to be tested in terms of its adaptability to computational requirements, and for computer science, which needs to assess its own ability to cope with the descriptive and explanatory richness of an approach to language that explicitly ties together body, mind, thinking and language.

In this context of mutual challenges, John Barnden’s chapter, entitled “Artificial intelligence, figurative language and cognitive linguistics”, discusses the relationship between CL and Artificial Intelligence. The chapter is focused on Barnden’s well-known ATT-Meta project, which is both an explanatory approach and a computer program capable of performing reasoning tasks involved in metaphorical utterances. The overall project is related to but at the same time challenges some of the central assumptions in Lakoff’s (1993) conceptual metaphor theory. However, as Barnden himself remarks, ATT-Meta is in some respects fairly close to Grady’s theory of primary metaphor (Grady 2005). Thus, rather than a mapping from machines to minds, ATT-Meta prefers to postulate transfer rules from ‘physical operation’ to ‘mental operation’. Also significantly, the ATT-Meta approach questions the usefulness of the notion of domain in computational implementations because of the high degree of arbitrariness involved in determining domain boundaries. This leads Barnden – together with other AI theorists – to disregard domain mappings and see metaphor as a matter of transferring from a pretence to reality. This move has implications for the traditional distinction between metaphor and metonymy in terms of domain-external versus domain-internal mappings. For Barnden, metaphor and metonymy are merely vague notions playing a heuristic role, while the real phenomena lie at a deeper level involving conceptual distance, similarity, contiguity, and connections between source and target, an approach which thus ties in with Panther’s criticism of the unreliability of the notion of ‘domain’.

Unlike Barnden’s contribution, the chapter by Tony Veale, entitled “Computability as a test on linguistics theories”, focuses more on computational assessment than on mutual feedback between CL and AI. The
chapter explores the explanatory power of three CL models of language processing – Attardo’s general theory of verbal humor (Attardo et al. 2002), Fauconnier and Turner’s blending theory (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) and Croft’s Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001) – in terms of several computational criteria, among them specificity, efficiency, and tractability. Computational specificity is a test of explicitness whereby every step and every data element in a process must be clearly specified. Efficiency is measured against the ability of a theory to avoid unnecessary proliferation of representations, constraints, and processes. Tractability reflects the ability to run sufficiently explicit computer specifications in a “reasonable” amount of time. The exploration allows Veale to show how the computational perspective brings to the fore a number of strengths and weaknesses in each approach. For example, while the multiple-input account provided by blending theory fares poorly in terms of efficiency, the general theory of verbal humor is more constrained in this respect. However, Attardo’s theory falls short of providing a sufficiently explanatory account of processing. The chapter ends by discussing, together with a number of structure-mapping issues, the computational feasibility of Radical Construction Grammar (RCG). All in all, Veale’s chapter suggests that computationalism can not only assess the explanatory power of a linguistic theory but also allow researchers to gain a clearer understanding of linguistic phenomena by making sure that terms and their corresponding notions have a precise theoretical meaning from the perspective of computational sufficiency.

3. Aims and scope of “Applications of Cognitive Linguistics” (ACL)

The series Applications of Cognitive Linguistics (ACL) aims at providing a platform for high quality research applying the theoretical framework developed in Cognitive Linguistics to a variety of different fields. While the Cognitive Linguistics Research series focuses on theoretical and descriptive aspects and on the cognitive, cultural and usage-based foundations of the facts of language, ACL explores the effect of these theoretical insights when applied in various linguistic sub-disciplines, in interdisciplinary research fields, and in the practice-oriented domain of applied linguistics. Furthermore, as illustrated by many contributions in this volume, not only is there a route from CL theory to a range of applications to explore, but also one which goes back from the application to the theoretical foundations and to possible implications for CL theory.
The available CL theoretical know-how, constructs and general characterisations of language are well-suited for explorative applications in the research areas traditionally known as descriptive linguistics, text linguistics, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, etc. It is indeed the case that such applications are currently in fast expansion in many fields, as the chapters just surveyed in this introduction amply show. The CL usage-based approach furthermore naturally calls for a non-restrictive interpretation of the term ‘application’: one of the main assumptions of ACL is that linguistic research must be firmly grounded in usage-based, descriptive data, which may, more often than not, imply an interdisciplinary approach to the object under scrutiny. In language pedagogy, for instance, linguistics meets with psycholinguistics and educational psychology to study the combined processes of natural and conducted acquisition of second and/or foreign languages; hence the label ‘pedagogical linguistics’ is out of place. In cultural linguistics, the deeper relation between language and culture is explored, which covers and overlaps with various scientific disciplines or fields such as (cognitive) anthropology, cross-cultural semantics, intercultural pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, social psychology and still other disciplines. In computational linguistics, amongst many other possibilities, theoretical models such as cognitive grammar, conceptual metaphor theory, blending theory, etc. are caught in self-monitoring artificial intelligence programs to test the viability of the constructs used.

As to the scope of ACL the following may serve as an attempt to spell out some examples of ACL’s orientations, at best signposting some major areas on the map, but certainly not laying out a complete map.

One major application of CL is the area of descriptive linguistics covering either the description of parts or the whole of the grammar of given languages, or else the description of language as used in given domains of human experience. The grammatical descriptions can focus on any level of linguistic organization, including syntax (e.g. Cornillie fc.), lexis, morphology and phonology, and thereby concentrate on one language in particular or be conceived cross-linguistically as contrastive studies. Descriptive applications can also focus on the exploration of theoretical models in actual language use: for example, on views of mental motion and summary scanning, on prototype theory, on construction grammar, on conceptual metaphor or metonymy (as already practiced in the many discourse studies of political (e.g. Musolff 2004), economic (e.g. Koller 2004) and even architectural communication (e.g. Caballero 2006) or on conceptual blending (as illustrated by Coulson’s chapter in this volume and in
various other studies). Further burgeoning fields in descriptive applications of CL are cognitive discourse studies, either in the tradition of blending theory or in the search for coherence relations (e.g. Sanders and Gernsbacher, eds. 2004). As shown in Freeman’s chapter in this volume, highly interesting developments are also taking place at the interface of literary studies and cognitive linguistics, known as cognitive poetics or stylistics, thereby offering many bridges to both disciplines.

Another major field is constituted by the pedagogical application of CL, which is now becoming a novel area of research in the cognitive-linguistic world (e.g. Achard and Niemeier, eds. 2004), and one which naturally finds an interdisciplinary basis in psycholinguistics, educational psychology, theoretical and descriptive linguistics, also pointed out by Boers and Lindstromberg in this volume. It is probably because of their inherently interdisciplinary orientation that pedagogical applications of linguistics, or the somewhat all-encompassing and hence misleading term ‘applied linguistics,’ has seldom (except by Pütz et al., eds. 2001) been brought together with descriptive linguistics in one organizational framework, be it journals, series of volumes, or conferences. Still, since Cognitive Linguistics offers such a strong conceptual unity in its approach to language and linguistics, it is entitled to accept the challenge of rallying such seemingly diverse applications of Cognitive Linguistics into one conceptual organic whole. The interdisciplinary character of pedagogical linguistics, or ‘language pedagogy’ – to use a more generally accepted and less misleading label – may necessitate a multi-layered foundation, but in a sense this equally applies to several other applications, such as cognitive sociolinguistics and cultural linguistics, two other fields we still want to go into.

In cognitive sociolinguistics (e.g. Kristiansen and Dirven fc.) several branches of traditional sociolinguistics are redefined from a cognitive perspective. Cognitive sociolinguistics combines the usage-based CL tenet with fine-grained research on language variation and examines the correlations with cognitive models, now widened as cultural models (e.g. Dirven et al., eds.). Sociolinguistic research which at one end tends to overlap with cultural linguistics further includes work on language policy, global language variation and ideology in socio-politico-economic areas such as political, educational, and corporate-culture frameworks.

Cultural linguistics is, as just stated, a close neighbour of cognitive sociolinguistics. Cultural linguistics makes use of the analytical tools developed within the framework of CL in order to explain many aspects of human languages in their cultural contexts, thereby exhibiting clear ties with work in cognitive anthropology, where much emphasis is being put
on the cognitive grounding of social structure and on how cultural schemas relate to action. In spatial and social cognition, on the other hand, cross-cultural studies with an emphasis on language acquisition have provided us with evidence for the social grounding of cognitive structure. Studies on cultural beliefs, values and norms (e.g. Holland and Quinn 1987; Goddard, ed. 2006) likewise constitute an interesting area of research in constant evolution. It may also be interesting to note that proponents of cultural linguistics have recently begun to explore the way their theoretical persuasion applies to language learning, language teaching and cross-cultural communication. Relevant issues in this applied perspective are the study of meaning negotiation as adjustment of cultural schemas, the analysis of the impact of conceptual metaphor and metonymy in misinterpretation in cross-cultural encounters, the study of cultural models, cultural keywords and culture-specific collocations in L2 varieties of English.

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that, in spite of the great diversity of research fields, one central cohesive factor remains and binds all strands and models within CL together: the ubiquity of the link between language in use and other cognitive faculties. Descriptive applications use the research tools of CL and explore their validity in the description of single languages or in cross-linguistic explorations. Language pedagogy may be as diversified as the functions of language in usage events, but language learning is probably the most spectacular place to look for the integration of all cognitive faculties, a new nascent set of schemas derived from language usage events and social interaction. Cultural-specific categories and models not only necessitate the adoption of psychologically real constructs, but also – and far beyond that – the adoption of models capable of accounting for culturally distributed knowledge, that is, common cultural knowledge that is not necessarily possessed by all single members of a community, but only possessed by the collectivity of the cultural community.

Although this aspect has not been restated in this final section on the new series ACL, it must be clear that – in line with the whole orientation of this volume – only empirical research, possibly including computational verification of any linguistic or cultural model, is the pre-condition and the ultimate test guaranteeing that the constructs work and can survive in the long-term future both of cognitive linguistics and its diverse fields of application.
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