Cognitive Linguistics

An Introduction

Vyvyan Evans and
Melanie Green

ROUTLEDGE

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS
AN INTRODUCTION

Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green

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Preface

The nature of this book

This book represents a general introduction to the area of theoretical linguistics known as cognitive linguistics. It consists of three main parts. Part I provides an overview of some of the main aims, assumptions and commitments of the cognitive linguistics enterprise, and provides an indicative sketch of some of the descriptive analyses and theoretical positions that are representative of cognitive linguistics. The next two parts focus on the two best-developed research frameworks in cognitive linguistics: cognitive semantics (Part II), and cognitive approaches to grammar (Part III). Although some cognitive linguists (notably Langacker) have extended their theories to account for phonology as well as meaning and grammar, we will be mainly concerned with meaning and grammar in this book, and will have little to say about phonology. In part, this reflects the fact that phonology has received relatively little attention within cognitive linguistics (although this situation is changing), and in part this reflects our own interests.

Who is this book for?

Our aim has been to provide a reasonably comprehensive general introduction to cognitive linguistics that is accessible enough for undergraduate students at the university level, while also serving as a work of reference both for linguists and for scholars from neighbouring disciplines. While striving for accessibility, we have also retained considerable detail (including relevant citations in the running text), so that readers (including research students and professional linguists unfamiliar with cognitive linguistics, as well as interested readers from

neighbouring disciplines), are provided with a route into the primary literature. In selecting the material presented, and in the presentation itself, we have attempted to provide as balanced a perspective as possible. However, cognitive linguistics represents a collection of approaches rather than a unified theoretical framework, and different authors often take quite distinct positions on similar phenomena, sometimes relying on distinct terminology. It follows that what we present here under the name of 'cognitive linguistics' should be understood as a presentation of the cognitive approach 'as we see it'.

Using the book

We have designed the book so that, in general terms, each chapter builds on preceding chapters. In particular, our decision to present the material on cognitive semantics (Part II) before the material on cognitive approaches to grammar (Part III) reflects the fact that cognitive grammarians assume much of what has been established by cognitive semanticists in developing their approaches. However, because different readers and course tutors will need to use the book in ways tailored to their specific objectives, we have attempted to make Part II and Part III of the book relatively independent so that they can be used for separate courses. The book has sufficient coverage to provide the basis for a number of different courses. We outline below suggestions for 'routes' through the book for three different types of course, assuming 12 teaching weeks at the rate of one chapter per week. Of course, these suggestions can be adjusted depending on teaching time available, level of course and so on. The suggestions made here reflect undergraduate courses taught at the University of Sussex, where this textbook was piloted prior to publication.

Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green
Linguistics and English Language Department
University of Sussex

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