From convergence to expansion – and back again
Review of Brdar, Mario, Stefan Th. Gries and Milena Žic Fuchs (eds.). 2011.
Cognitive Linguistics: Convergence and Expansion. Human Cognitive
Processing 32. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 362 pages.
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1. Introduction

This volume offers a superb collection of fourteen articles on a wide range of interrelated topics within cognitive linguistics. Living fully up to its ambitious title, the book is based upon the keynote talks and papers presented at the "Converging and Diverging Tendencies in Cognitive Linguistics" conference, held in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in 2005, as well as a couple of papers that have been commissioned specifically for the present volume. Therefore, the six years that have elapsed between the conference and the publication of the book was definitely worth the wait, as the editors have managed to compile a volume that provides an excellent snapshot of where cognitive linguistics is right now, but at the same time also offers a glimpse into what the future might hold for cognitive linguistic research.

One of the main characteristics of the research paradigm that we now call "cognitive linguistics" is that it is not a unified theory of language, and it never has been. It started off as a number of diverse researches that went against prevailing generativist theories, namely the primacy of syntax and the modularity of language. These alternative inquiries slowly developed into a school of thought united under the banner of the primacy of meaning, non–modularism and embodiment. Nevertheless, this unification never entailed agreement on all linguistic matters, although the search for consensus on various aspects of cognitive linguistic theory and research has always been on the agenda. In fact, a number of publications have appeared in the past few years which bear witness to the convergence of ideas within cognitive linguistics. On a theoretical level, one can cite Kövecses' (2010) monograph on conceptual metaphor, which aims to establish a unified account of metaphor by drawing on the latest developments in the field, or Benczes et al.'s (2011) volume that seeks to delimit the notion of conceptual metonymy. There are plenty of examples of convergence on the empirical level, too. See, for instance, the Pragglejaz Group's (2007) attempts at establishing an across–the–board framework for metaphor identification, or Gonzalez–Marquez et al.'s (2007) outline of empirical methods for cognitive linguistic research.

At the same time, convergence within cognitive linguistics has also gone hand–in–hand with divergence. Grammar, for instance, has been approached from a number of different, yet parallel perspectives, resulting in approa-

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ches known as Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987), Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995) and Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001). Therefore, the question necessarily arises whether divergence can – or will – result in the eventual fragmentation of the field, with rival theories competing against one another.

What the present collection of articles clearly attests to is that the answer to this question is a definite "no". One of the greatest assets of the volume is that it manages to present a wide range of topics within cognitive linguistics, from a wide range of (not always converging) perspectives, which, at the same time, are closely intertwined with one another on both the theoretical and the empirical level. Like any good encyclopaedia, each and every contribution rests upon or prompts inquiries that are elaborated upon by the other articles of the volume. All in all, this book is a clear demonstration of the fact that cognitive linguistics is a paradigm that can only benefit from divergence, as non–consensus leads to the necessary expansion of the field. Expansion, however, carries with it the possibility of future convergences. The editors, therefore, have very rightly shifted the emphasis from "convergence and divergence" (the original theme of the 2005 conference) to "convergence and expansion" (the subtitle of the volume), the latter of which fully embraces and reflects the spirit of the cognitive linguistic enterprise.

The structure of the volume is clear–cut and demonstrates the role and significance of convergence and expansion within cognitive linguistics. Accordingly, the papers have been organized into three larger sections. The two articles of Part I, "Setting the scene", offer a general history and overview of the converging (and diverging) tendency of cognitive linguistics, and serve, therefore, as introductions to the further sections. Part II, "Consolidating the paradigm", contains six articles that emphasize convergence, while Part III, "Expanding the paradigm", is composed of another six contributions that offer new perspectives for cognitive linguistic research. In the following, I will provide a review of each section, to be followed by a general evaluation of the book.

2. Review of the sections

Part I of the volume contains two articles, "Convergence in cognitive linguistics" by Ronald W. Langacker, and "An overview of cognitive linguistics" by Antonio Barcelona and Javier Valenzuela. Both offer a survey of the cognitive linguistic enterprise, though from two, slightly different – but complementary – perspectives. Langacker's paper is a more subjective account, while Barcelona and Valenzuela provide a more objective outline of the past, present and future of cognitive linguistics. The main conclusion that can be drawn from both contributions is that cognitive linguistics has followed a mostly converging trend, and will most probably continue to do so, despite the diversity of opinions on many of the research areas within its scope. The two papers are, therefore, excellent introductions to the essence of the volume; at

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the same time – with their extensive and comprehensive bibliographies and easy–to–read style – they also serve as splendid overviews to anyone wishing to acquaint themselves with the aims and objectives of cognitive linguistics in general.

The first contribution of **Part II**, Jan Nuyt's "Pattern versus process concepts of grammar and mind: A cognitive–functional perspective" calls for a convergence in grammar between the construction–oriented approach of cognitive linguistics and the rule– or process–oriented approach of functional linguistics. Nuyts provides an expert study on the ambivalent relationship between cognitive and functional linguistics. He then argues that the two models of grammar are by no means incompatible; the difference lies more rather in perspective. Consequently, construction grammar focuses more rather on the output of cognitive operations, while functional grammar places the emphasis on the processes that produce this output. The next paper in Part II, Gerard Steen's "Metaphor in language and thought: How do we map the field?", necessitates convergence within the field of metaphor research. This timely and thought–provoking piece argues that the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor allows for a number of alternative interpretations regarding the relationship between metaphor in language and thought, and it is not always clear which particular alternative is meant when cognitive linguists talk about conceptual metaphor. Steen considerably clarifies the picture by offering eight different (though converging) areas of metaphor research, all of which require slightly different methods and data. Klaus–Uwe Panther and Linda L. Thornburg's paper on "Emotion and desire in independent complement clauses: A case study from German" follows in the footsteps of Nuyts' by calling for a convergence of ideas between cognitive linguistics and other (competing) approaches to language. By combining the analytical tools of cognitive linguistics and pragmatics, Panther and Thornburg analyze complement clauses of the "That it should have come to this!" type in German, which are syntactically dependent, but are at the same time independent from an illocutionary point of view. Following a cross–linguistic analysis of the data (thereby highlighting the commonality of the construction in other languages, too), the authors claim that such constructions provide further evidence for the non–compositionality of language. Furthermore, the constructions also shed light on the dynamic nature of meaning–making, which heavily relies on cognitive operations (metaphors, metonymies, blends), pragmatic inferencing and world knowledge. Branimir Belaj's "Schematic meaning of the Croatian verbal prefix *iz*–: Meaning chains and syntactic implications" also stresses the compatibility and similarity of cognitive linguistics with other approaches to language, such as functionalism or the Prague School. Within this vein, Belaj adopts an elegant solution to the seemingly erratic and homonymic cluster of *iz*– verbs in Croatian, by claiming that the various instantiations form a schematic category that is motivated by a single superschema. Supporting his argument with illuminating diagrams, Belaj reasons that the *iz*– prefix can be paraphrased as "transition from an

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intralocative to an extralocative position", which allows for more central and more peripheral instantiations as well (that are loosely connected to one another by virtue of the single semantic superschema). Antonio Barcelona investigates the semantics of bahuvrihi compounds in "The conceptual motivation of bahuvrihi compounds in English and Spanish". Within the compounding literature, bahuvrihis have typically received very little attention (for an overview, see Benczes 2006, Chapter 2), and have been dismissed as straightforward cases based on "the stylistic trick called *pars pro toto*" (Jespersen 1954: 149; italics as in original). Barcelona, however, manages to prove that the picture is far more subtle than originally assumed. Apart from the overriding CHA-RACTERISTIC PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY metonymy, the characteristic property can be conceptualized by a number of different ways in both languages, thereby exemplifying the creativity by which language users exploit alternative possibilities of conceptualisation. In a truly illuminating contribution entitled "On the subject of impersonals", Ronald W. Langacker elaborates on the meaningfulness of impersonal *it* (as in *It rained last night*). By comparing *it* with related constructions and other pronouns, and examining the function of *it* within the general cognitive model of the control cycle, Langacker demonstrates that impersonal *it* profiles the so–called relevant field, that is, the conceptualizer's scope of awareness for the issue at hand.

The first paper of **Part III**, "Do people infer the entailments of conceptual metaphors during verbal metaphor and understanding?" by Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. and Luciane C. Ferreira, ties back to Steen's contribution in Part II by emphasizing the need for a more cautious approach towards conceptual metaphor theory. By presenting the results of a psycholinguistic experiment that tested people's ability to recognize metaphorical entailments, the authors conclude that people might be able to infer entailments from conceptual metaphors when interpreting metaphorical linguistic expressions. Nevertheless, plenty of experimenting must still be done before anything definite can be stated, with the implications that cognitive linguists should also be more wary of the limiting nature of psycholinguistic evidence before claiming certainties with regard to the understanding of metaphorical entailments. Stefan Th. Gries' paper on "Corpus data in usage–based linguistics: What's the right degree of granularity for the analysis of argument structure constructions?" clarifies one of the most significant issues in corpus–based studies: which level of analysis, or granularity, is appropriate for linguistic research? Gries makes two important claims regarding corpus analysis. First, not all distinctions that are meaningful to the analysing linguist are also meaningful to language users. Second, finer–grained examinations do not necessarily result in superior results – for which Gries recommends the use of bottom–up approaches instead. The following paper by Anatol Stefanowitsch, "Cognitive linguistics meets the corpus", also offers insights into corpus linguistic methods by explaining with a hands–on approach how exactly corpus linguistic data can be incorporated into cognitive linguistic research. The easy–to–follow examples are very helpful and instructive, and

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shed considerable light on methodological issues. The second part of his paper looks at collostructional analysis, which is a quantitative corpus–linguistic method that is interpreted within a usage–based model (and, therefore, fits well with a usage–based approach to language). Heli Tissari's paper, "Oops, blush!: Beyond metaphors of emotion", ties into Steen's and Gibbs and Ferreira's by examining the psychological reality of emotion metaphors – more particularly, those of shame. In the contribution Tissari relates the embodied basis of emotion metaphors to the concept of affect, as formulated by Silvan Tomkins, and comes to the conclusion that the two theories are very much compatible and can provide a host of information on both the physiology and psychology of shame. Peter Harder in "Conceptual construal and social construction" expands the notion of construal into the social arena – that is, how social processes are able to shape conceptualizations (which then may shape the world). He illustrates his point by a close, level–by–level analysis of the Danish "cartoon crisis", that is, the publication of a cartoon of the prophet Mohammad which eventually erupted into riots and embassy burnings in the Middle East. By adopting an evolutionary approach to language change, Harder maintains that social constructionism is one of the most decisive factors in our conceptualizations – to which, therefore, cognitive linguists should pay considerably more attention. In the last piece of the volume, "The biblical story retold: A cognitive linguistic perspective", Zoltán Kövecses examines some of the central symbols and the basic story of the Bible by adopting a cognitive linguistic analysis, and claims that the Bible's symbolic meaning can be traced back to conceptual structures and cognitive mechanisms (such as metaphors, metonymies, blends) that are shared by a large number of speakers of English – and other languages that are also part of the European cultural sphere. Interestingly, Kövecses' analysis has brought to light a new type of metaphor, which emerges from schematization as a result of a metonymic process. Therefore, with Kövecses' paper convergence and expansion has gone full circle, and we have arrived at convergence once more.

3. General evaluation

The essence of the volume is neatly summed up by Panther and Thornburg (p. 88), who claim that "the time has come for cognitive linguists to look for commonalities and possible convergences of ideas, rather than emphasize the incompatibilities that exist between cognitive linguistics and competing formalist and functionalist approaches to language". This book is a manifestation of the fact that cognitive linguistics is indeed ready and willing to expand, and can only benefit by the process, as expansion (resting on past convergences) can lead to future convergences. With this timely and widely applicable volume the editors have managed to compile a thought–provoking, yet highly enjoyable book that will serve as reference for plenty of linguists – within and outside of the cognitive linguistic paradigm – for years to come.

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