schopft"[20] — which would allow the two extremes to have a great deal in common.

There may be a noteworthy cultural difference between ancient Latin or Roman society, with its impersonal *oportet*, and the modern European societies in which *du sollst* or *you ought*, spoken by one's elders, leads each of us by and by to say *ich soll* or *I ought*. The verb, requiring a personal subject, is instrumental in making us conscious of norms; for when we begin to say *I ought*, we have both internalized the grammatical interchangeability of the pronouns in combination with the verb and — at the same time — grasped the meaning of this verb in family and social life.

I would not claim to penetrate the subtle depths of psychoanalytic thought. My purpose has been only to explore some linguistic ramifications of Freudianism, which I respect as a philosophic cult rather than a science.

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20 *Gesammelte Werke*, XIII (1940), 267. The ambiguity of the German conjunction *wenn* 'when' or 'if' permits the translation "when the ego forms its superego out of the id," as given in *Complete Psychological Works* (above, note 14), p. 38; but we could also make it "if the ego," etc.

THE DEFINITION OF THE VERB IN LANGACKER'S COGNITIVE GRAMMAR: HOW TO DEAL WITH GRAMMATICAL MEANING?

Patrick Duffley
Laval University

In a discipline dominated by formalization and theory-internal argumentation, the endeavour to take a cognitive approach to grammar based on analytical constructs that are either well-attested independently of language or have prima-facie cognitive plausibility (such as processing time, event coordination, figure/ground alignment, sequential scanning, degrees of schematicity, etc) can only be welcomed as a breath of fresh air in a stuffy room. The return to a focus on meaning as central to virtually all linguistic concerns (Langacker 1987b: 12) is also an important step in the right direction: meaning is what language is all about and the analyst who ignores it cannot but give a distorted image of the object he is purporting to describe and explain. Moreover at a time when the prevailing assumption is that semantic structure is universal, it is a pleasant surprise to find a linguist asserting that:

> Lexicon and grammar are storehouses of conventional imagery, which differs substantially from language to language. If one language says I am cold, a second I have cold, and a third It is cold to me, these expressions differ semantically even though they refer to the same experience, for they employ different images to structure the same basic content.
>
> (Ibid: 47)

It comes as somewhat of a disappointment therefore to find the same linguist assuming that nouns and verbs are "universal grammatical categories" for which one can propose "universally valid semantic characterizations" (Langacker 1987a: 1) applicable to all languages and defining verbs as "relational predications ... which profile processes" as opposed to "atemporal relations" (ibid.: 71). This paper will constitute an attempt to show that such an assumption not only goes against the author's own principles but is invalid from the point of view of linguistic methodology. I will also endeavour to put my finger on what it is in the cognitive grammar theory which has led to this type of universalizing approach.

As illustrated by the quote given above, cognitive grammar claims to treat semantic structure as language-specific. It follows from this postulate that if categories such as noun and verb are "semantically definable" (1987b: 189), they can only be meaningfully defined within the framework of each individual language.

Consequently, if one remains coherent with such a principle, the only methodologically valid way of establishing that these two parts of speech are universals would be to do an inventory of all the languages of the world and show that: (1) nouns and verbs are universally attested and (2) their semantic content is basically the same in all cases. This is not however the procedure followed by Langacker: the only language from which he gives examples to illustrate his universal definition of nouns and verbs is English.

The very origin of the terms "noun" and "verb" and of the notion of "parts of speech" is sufficient to call for methodological caution in this question however. As everyone knows, these terms go back to Greek grammar, where the analysis of the sentence into parts of speech was originally a logical division between the onoma ('name') and the rhema ('predicate'), with the latter including not only verbs but also some adjectives which could be predicated directly of a subject (cf Robins 1979: 26-27). This classification was refined into its final form in Greek by Dionysius Thrax (100 B.C.) who distinguished eight word-classes: noun, verb, participle, conjunction, preposition, article, pronoun and adverb. The point which calls for caution is simply this: there is nothing a priori which says that noun or verb, or any other of these Greek categories, must necessarily occur with the same value in any other language. Indeed, as a case in point, Latin grammarians were faced with the embarrassment of not having an article in their own language; their reaction was to create a new part of speech so as to be able to rival the eight-member Greek system at least quantitatively — this is how the interjection was born. If one pursues the universalistic tendency to its ultimate logical conclusion, moreover, one is led to set up a system like that of Brøndal 1948. The latter postulates that since languages have a logical basis, which must be identical for all of them, one can propose a logical scheme of fifteen possible parts of speech which is not realized as such in any known language but which represents the only choices available, according to Brøndal, to all the particular idioms of the world. Deduction from logical categories to linguistic ones is not a methodology which is proper to linguistics however. The latter is first and foremost an inductive endeavour whereby it is only through observation and analysis of how meaning is structured and correlated with the physical sign in particular languages that we can arrive at valid conclusions about how language works in general. In place of Brøndal's logical categories, cognitive grammar seems to be using those of cognitive psychology. But the methodological problem remains basically the same.

Because of this, even on the level of the only language from which examples of verbs are given, the cognitive grammar approach glosses over certain semantic aspects of English verbs which are linguistically significant. For instance, Langacker treats the cognitive content of the verb in English as if it were internally simple; in actual fact, however, it is not. Thus while defining

the verb as a word that designates a process, i.e. that evokes the conceptualization of the sequential evolution of a situation through time, does reveal something about the overall impression produced by this type of word in English, at the same time it disregards the fact that this impression is achieved by the coming together of several semantic components whose presence can be detected by fairly well-recognized methods such as commutation and drawing implications about the internal nature of the verb from observations of how it can be used syntactically. To give an example, the form sings in She sings folk songs can be shown to contain the ideas of:

a) non-past tense (established by comparison with sang)

b) indicative mood (compared with He insisted that she sing folk songs)

c) third person (sings vs sing)

To which one could add, at the expense of more elaborate argumentation:

d) perfective (or completive) aspect (The form sings represents the event 'singing' in exactly the same way as the bare infinitive form sing, which is in opposition to the -ing form as perfective vs imperfective.)

Surely these components of meaning are important semantic factors in the English verb and are even responsible for the resulting image which cognitive grammar attempts to describe. Cognitive grammar takes a highly synthetic view however, which focusses exclusively on the overall resulting impression and neglects to carry out a prior analysis of what elements of meaning are involved in the production of this impression. This constitutes description of what is observed — of the data — not explanation.

Another related facet of the cognitive analysis where it seems to leave aside facts which are linguistically pertinent is that the cognitive content of the noun or verb is not the same from one language to another. Thus the Latin noun included in its semantic content the notion of case whereas the English noun has eliminated this component and is consequently much more abstract than its case-bound Latin counterpart, being conceivable outside of any particular relation to the verb. That this is linguistically significant has been shown by Hewson (1972) who demonstrates that there is a correlation between the degree of generality of the noun category and the appearance of an article category: the maximum number of cases allowing the development of an article seems to be four; above that the noun is not sufficiently general for the cognitive need for an article to be perceived. Phenomena like this showing the effects of the variation in cognitive

content of what grammarians call a "noun" from one language to another are lost sight of however in the highly synthetic universal definition of the noun as a "predication which designates a region in some conceptual domain" offered by cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987a: 58).

A further unsatisfactory aspect of the cognitive analysis inasmuch as it applies to English is that there are words which have far more in common with Langacker's verb category than with anything else in the English language but which are nevertheless not classified as verbs by this approach. This is the case for both the infinitive and the present participle which not only participate in an aspectual opposition between perfective and imperfective:

(3) I saw him cross/crossing the street,

but are also used in a wide range of syntactic constructions characteristic of the verb such as:

a) use with direct and indirect objects:

To tell/Telling <u>him that</u> is not going to be easy.

b) use in the passive construction:

He let it <u>be known</u> that he was not happy.

I saw him <u>being chased</u> down the street by a dog yesterday.

c) use in the perfect construction:

They are rumoured to <u>have sold</u> their share in the company.

<u>Having said</u> all he had to say, he left.

d) use in the progressive construction:

They are supposed to <u>be waiting</u> for us.

e) use with a predicate adjunct to the subject:

It is no fun to be <u>sick</u> during the holidays.

He is too busy getting <u>rich</u> to think of his family.

Why are these forms not included in the category of the verb when they have so much in common with the finite forms that are classified as verbs?

The answer to this and many of the other questions raised in this paper lies, I believe, in the fact that Langacker's criteria of classification and analysis are cognitive and not linguistic. In his desire to avoid formalistic and theory-internal analytical constructs, he seems to have gone to the opposite extreme of dealing with language as if it was pure cognition, i.e. as if it was merely a mirror of the perceptual and conceptual processes common to all human beings. That each language should reflect such processes is undeniable. But each one does so in its own idiosyncratic way, something which cognitive grammar recognizes in theory but which in practise gives way to an exclusive focus on universal cognitive processes in the case of the definitions of the noun and verb as we have seen in this discussion. If one looks only for universals however, one will find only universals, and consequently what is specifically linguistic will be lost sight of, i.e. what makes each language what it is and is due to the fact that in humans language is a learned and not a species-determined phenomenon as it is with bumblebees and song sparrows. By invoking only analytical constructs established independently of linguistic research by cognitive psychology and related sciences, cognitive grammar is inherently predisposed to universalism of this sort however. Psychology is concerned with cognitive processes which are common to all human beings; linguistics is not, at least not as a starting-point for linguistic research.

Cognitive grammar has originated from a healthy distrust of a certain form of linguistics which works almost exclusively with theory-internal argumentation. It would be a pity however if this distrust of linguistics were to turn into a distrust of language itself as an indicator of cognitive processing. For language is undoubtedly the most precise and subtle instrument for indicating to another human being what is going on inside one's own mind. Through the essential relation on which it is based — that between sign and significate — it allows the hearer to mentally reconstruct a representation of the experience had by the speaker, something which makes language unique among the products of man's cognitive abilities. If, in the way language is actually used, the hearer behaves as if the most efficient way to grasp the cognitive content present in the speaker's mind is to pay close attention to the linguistic signs he is emitting (which always belong to one particular language) and let them call to his own mind the significates they evoke, should not the linguist also focus his attention first and foremost on investigating how sound is linked to sense in particular languages before chasing after universals? Let us have a healthy distrust of linguistics, and especially of linguists, but never of language itself.

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PROTOTYPICALITY AND IDIOMATICITY

Minoji Akimoto
Aoyama Gakuin University

1. Preliminary Remarks. The noun plays a crucial role in 'verb+object' idioms. In such examples as lose face, make headway and take place, the nouns are considered to have a low degree of nouniness (cf. Ross (1973)). This fact can be simply demonstrated by such grammatical tests as are all applicable to ordinary nouns:
    a. *What did he lose?
    b. *Headway, she made (it) in her thesis.
    c. *The meetings took occasional places.
    These irregularities have been mostly discussed in the domain of grammar (for instance, Fraser (1970)). The present paper attempts to shed certain light on the structure of such 'verb+object' idioms [1] synchronically and diachronically, with particular reference to the theory of the prototype, thereby establishing more universal generalisations about idiom formation.

2. Previous Studies of the Prototype. The theory of the prototype has its origin in psychology, but has been applied to linguistic analyses during the past decade (Aitchison (1987), Coleman and Kay (1981), Fillmore (1978), Lakoff (1987), Taylor (1989) and Tsohatzidis (1990)). Except Lakoff, who refers briefly to idioms, they have made no reference to idioms. The concept of 'prototype' enables us to distinguish between the central and peripheral examples of a category.[2]
    According to Langacker (1987) and Hopper and Thompson (1984), prototypical nouns have the following properties: (1) visibility/tangibility, (2) referentiality, (3) definiteness, (4) concreteness, (5) countability, and (6) salience/prominence (in discourse).
    Without going into the details of these properties, and while accepting that they are applicable to ordinary nouns such as boy, dog and house, I will take 'body' nouns as examples and apply the properties to them. Body nouns may not be discussed on the same footing as ordinary nouns, but they are useful for the present argument[3]