

INTRODUCTION

The Wealth and Breadth of Construction-Based Research

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The first major Construction Grammar publications started appearing in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s (e.g. Lakoff 1987; Fillmore 1988; Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor 1989; Goldberg 1992, 1995). These pioneering works zoomed in on a range of remarkable linguistic patterns from present-day English – including the *let alone* construction, the *way* construction, the ditransitive construction, the caused-motion construction, etc. – which they took as case studies for a groundbreaking theoretical proposal: the whole of grammar was to be seen as a structured network of conventionalized form-meaning pairings – ‘constructions’ – at varying levels of schematicity and complexity.

Research in Construction Grammar has markedly expanded, matured and blossomed since its trailblazers first started sneezing napkins off the table. The past thirty years have witnessed, among many other things, the continuing development of different theoretical strands (such as Berkeley Construction Grammar, Cognitive Construction Grammar, Sign-Based Construction Grammar, Radical Construction Grammar, Fluid Construction Grammar, etc.), cross-fertilization across linguistic (sub-)disciplines (including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, language acquisition, and historical linguistics), thriving publication outlets dedicated to Construction Grammar research (such as the *Constructional Approaches to Language* book series, and the high-ranking journal *Constructions and Frames*), ten

successful editions of the International Conference on Construction Grammar (ICCG), and, most importantly of course, an ever-growing community of enthusiastic scholars across the globe.

The constructionist approach to grammar has also come to occupy a firm place in the linguistic research carried out at Belgian universities. It should therefore come as no surprise that the 11th ICCG conference was set to take place in this small but active Construction Grammar hub – more particularly, at the University of Antwerp, in August 2020. However, due to the COVID pandemic and ensuing lockdowns, ICCG11 had to be postponed to a later date. In order to be able to offer an alternative initiative to promote ongoing interaction within the international constructionist community at a time when in-person gatherings are virtually impossible, the *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* launched the idea of devoting a Special Issue to *Squibs in Construction Grammar*. Authors of accepted ICCG11 papers were invited to contribute a short paper on a topic related to current discussions in (any strand of) construction-based grammar, thereby adding a poignant theoretical contribution to the field. This initiative was met with a lot of enthusiasm, to the effect that we ended up receiving many more submissions than we could ultimately retain.

We are very proud to present the present compilation of 31 squibs, with which we attempt to do justice to the theoretical and methodological breadth and wealth of current research in Construction Grammar. While some squibs tackle major questions that have always been at the center of the constructionist enterprise, such as how to identify and delineate a construction, others embark on new and exciting research avenues, exploring, for instance, the potential of Construction Grammar approaches to the study of writing processes, dialectal variation, and discourse phenomena. Different studies tap into different levels of linguistic analysis – going from pragmatics over morphosyntax to phonology – and different domains of linguistic research, including (but not limited to) constructional morphology,

historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. And while Germanic and Romance languages remain the most popular object languages, our volume also includes studies on, for instance, Greek, Russian, Japanese, and Austronesian languages, which testifies to the promise the constructional framework holds for an increasingly wider array of future research.

This diversity of research domains and associated methodologies, of levels of linguistic analysis, and of object languages does not detract from the fact that each of these squibs subscribes to the basic tenets of the theory of Construction Grammar. In fact, by adopting a broad approach both with respect to form (ranging from phonemes to stretches of discourse) and with respect to meaning (incorporating all aspects of use), this volume recognizes and underlines the importance and pervasiveness of form-meaning pairings, and the way they are organized and shaped by experience, for the analysis of linguistic phenomena. It speaks to the strength of the constructional enterprise that it can accommodate such a plethora of perspectives which all share the common goal of strengthening and building on the unifying foundations that were laid over thirty years ago.

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