

Seminar 5. Cognitive Linguistics: basic concepts

<i>Questions for discussion</i>	<i>Recommended reading</i>
1. Prove that any communication takes place by means of signs. Give a definition of a sign. Characterize three kinds of typical relation between a sign and its meaning. Give examples.	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 1–4.
2. Enumerate the principles that underlie the structuring of language? What does the principle of indexicality mean?	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 5–8.
3. Comment on the principle of iconicity in language. Prove that iconicity may manifest itself in three sub-principles (sequential order, distance, quantity). Give examples.	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 8–12.
4. What does the principle of symbolicity in language refer to?	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 12–13.
5. Why does Cognitive linguistics belong to the functionalist tradition? Spell out the symbolic function and the interactive function of language.	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 6–11.
6. Dwell on key commitments shared by cognitive linguists (Generalization Commitment, Cognitive Commitment).	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 28–44.
7. Explain why <i>embodiment</i> is considered a central idea in cognitive linguistics. What is embodied experience?	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 44–45.
8. What is embodied cognition? Prove that embodied experience has consequences for cognition.	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 46–47.
9. What view of reality is known as experiential realism? Why is it juxtaposed to the objectivist view?	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 47–48.
10. Give a definition of a <i>concept</i> and a <i>conceptual category</i> . How do conceptual and linguistic categories correspond? Exemplify	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd

that different people may categorize the same thing differently	rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 13–16.
11. What is the difference between lexical and grammatical categories?	Dirven, René & Verspoor, Marjolijn. (eds.) (2004). <i>Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics</i> , 2nd rev. ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 16–20.
12. Explain the difference between Cognitive semantics and Cognitive grammar.	Evans, Vyvyan & Green, Melanie (2006). <i>Cognitive linguistics: an introduction</i> . Edinburgh University Press. pp. 48–50.
13. What assumptions is Cognitive grammar based on? Comment on them.	Radden, Günter & Dirven, René. (2007). <i>Cognitive English Grammar</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. XI–XII.
14. Prove that units of thought relate to language. Focus on <i>things</i> , <i>relations</i> and <i>conceptual cores</i> .	Radden, Günter & Dirven, René. (2007). <i>Cognitive English Grammar</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 41–57.
15. Prove that the linguistic counterpart of a conceptual situation is the sentence. Illustrate correspondences between the conceptual core and the grammatical core.	Radden, Günter & Dirven, René. (2007). <i>Cognitive English Grammar</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 47–48.
16. What does the notion of grounding refer to? What is the difference between nominal and clausal grounding? Give examples.	Radden, Günter & Dirven, René. (2007). <i>Cognitive English Grammar</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 47–48.
17. What information do the setting elements provide? Explain the difference between the grounding elements and the setting elements of a sentence?	Radden, Günter & Dirven, René. (2007). <i>Cognitive English Grammar</i> . John Benjamins Publishing Company Amsterdam / Philadelphia. pp. 50.

Practical tasks

Task 1: What types of sign (iconic, indexical, symbolic) are involved in the following cases?

- 1) inverted triangle as a road sign
- 2) sign depicting falling rocks
- 3) morse signs
- 4) frozen window panes of a car
- 5) speedometer in car
- 6) burglar alarm going off
- 7) baby crying
- 8) dog wagging its tail
- 9) animal drawings in cave dwellings
- 10) a wedding ring
- 11) a clenched fist in the air
- 12) a ring in the nose (human)

Task 2: In what way are the following expressions iconic? (sequential order, distance, quantity)

- 1) The Krio word for ‘earthquake’ is *shaky-shaky*.
- 2) Department store ad: We have rails and rails and rails of famous fashion.
- 3) Police warning: Don’t drink and drive!
- 4) Japanese *ie* ‘house’, *ieie* ‘houses’
- 5) See Naples and die.
- 6) I swear by Almighty God that what I am about to say is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Task 3: Consider the following metaphors. What might be the experiential/physical basis for them? What might be the image schemas underpinning them?

1. I’m feeling *up*. That *boosted* my spirits. My spirits *rose*. You’re in *high* spirits. Thinking about her always gives me a *lift*. I’m feeling *down*. I’m *depressed*. He’s really *low* these days. I *fell* into a depression. My spirits *sank*.

2. Get *up*. Wake *up*. I’m *up* already. He *rises* early in the morning. He *fell* asleep. He *dropped* off to sleep. He’s *under* hypnosis. He *sank* into a coma.

3. He’s at the *peak* of health. Lazarus *rose* from the dead. He’s in *top* shape. As to his health, he’s way *up* there. He *fell* ill. He’s *sinking* fast. He came *down* with the flu. His health is *declining*. He *dropped* dead.

4. The number of books printed each year keeps going *up*. His draft number is *high*. My income *rose* last year. The amount of artistic activity in this state has gone *down* in the past year. The number of errors he made is incredibly *low*. His income *fell* last year. He is *underage*. If you’re too hot, turn the heat *down*.

Task 4: Read the following sentences. Comment on how the **iconic principle of quantity** shows up in politeness strategies. Give reasons.

- *No smoking.*
- *Don’t smoke, will you?*
- *Would you mind not smoking here, please.*
- *Customers are requested to refrain from smoking if they can* (notice at Harrods).
- *We would appreciate if you could refrain from smoking cigars and pipes as it can be disturbing to other diners. Thank you.* (notice at Clos du Roi, Bath)

Task 5: Identify the conceptual core, the grammatical core, the grounding elements and the setting elements for each of the following sentences:

1. *My husband left his glasses on the train.*
2. *Tomorrow he may lose his wedding ring.*

Task 6: Read the following quotation from an imaginary Chinese encyclopaedia. Does the category of “animals” with its imaginary members make sense? Justify your answer.

On those remote pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) sucking pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel’s hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from the distance.

(J. L. Borges. 1966. *Other Inquisitions*. New York: Washington Square Press).