



Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (WSK) Online

Editor-in-Chief: Schierholz, Stefan J. / Wiegand, Herbert Ernst

Ed. by Demmerling, Christoph / Fellbaum, Christiane / Girnth, Heiko / Grzybek, Peter / Habermann, Mechthild / Hall, T. Alan / Helmbrecht, Johannes / Juchem-Grundmann, Constanze / Jung, Dagmar / Kilian, Jörg / Köhler, Reinhard / Kortmann, Bernd / Müller, Peter O. / Naumann, Sven / Neef, Martin / Niemeier, Susanne / Olsen, Susan / Pompino-Marschall, Bernd / Rosenberg, Peter / Rymarczyk, Jutta / Schierholz, Stefan J. / Schoenefeld, Doris / Stekeler-Weithofer, Pirmin / Warnke, Ingo H. / Weingarten, Rüdiger / Wischer, Ilse

Cognitive Grammar

Editor(s): Susanne Niemeier, Constanze Juchem-Grundmann

2013

10.1515/wsk.38.0.secondaryfigure

Published Online 31.1.2014

secondary figure

Ana María Rojo López

entity which stands out from the ground as the most prominent element after the primary figure.

sekundäre Figur

Entität, die sich vom Grund dadurch unterscheidet, dass sie nach der primären Figur das zweitsichtbarste Element ist.

In processual predications, where there are often multiple landmarks with different degrees of prominence, the secondary figure is also referred to as the primary landmark. In these cases, the secondary figure corresponds to the landmark which stands out as being specially salient, hence its name 'secondary figure'.

The secondary figure or primary landmark is usually elaborated or coded by a direct object. The direct object ranks second behind the subject with regard to the four topicality factors outlined by LANGACKER (1991: 323): thus, while a subject is prototypically an agent, human, definite and the primary figure, an object is a patient, a physical object, specifically indefinite and the secondary figure. However, from these four factors, the direct object's status as a secondary figure is the only feature that can provide a basis for a universally valid characterization of direct objects.

As in the case of subjects, there is also a fair degree of flexibility in the choice of the participants which can have the status of a secondary figure, as in the sentences *Daniel enjoys his food/homemade dinners/cooking/dinner parties at Helen's house/excellent health* . Such an array of different figures reflects differences in construal and may constitute the major semantic contrast between different verbs or variants of the same verb. The senses of the verb *enjoy* in the previous example differ since each of the objects is a focal participant with the status of a secondary clausal figure, each brings into focus a different interconnection and component relationship. For instance, the first element (*his food*) highlights the relations involving pleasure from eating food as a whole, the second (*homemade dinners*) brings into focus relations involving only one type of food (i.e., that food that is cooked at home), the third (*cooking*) focuses on relations involving pleasure from a different aspect, that of food preparation, the fourth highlights the relations involving the pleasure obtained from being in a situation (i.e., that of having dinner and spending an evening with a friend), and the fifth focuses on relations involving having the benefit of something (i.e., having good health).

Differences in the choice of secondary figure can also help to explain the distinction between constructions which consist of the same elements but differ in their grammatical makeup, such as that found in the dative shift alternation between the direct object construction (e.g., *He sent flowers to Jacqueline*) and the ditransitive (e.g., *He sent Jacqueline flowers*) construction. In Cognitive Grammar, this distinction does not reveal any discrepancy between underlying and surface structure. It is rather seen as a matter of difference in the choice of secondary figure (the mover in the direct object construction vs. the recipient in the ditransitive one). According to this view, Jacqueline is thus the true direct object and not an indirect object masquerading as a direct one.

References

direct object (Cognitive Grammar)

figure (Cognitive Grammar)

figure-ground organization (Cognitive Grammar)

foreground (Cognitive Grammar)

primary landmark (Cognitive Grammar)

prominence (Cognitive Grammar)

trajector-landmark organization (Cognitive Grammar)

Literature

LANGACKER, R.W. [1987] Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Vol. 1: Theoretical Prerequisites. Stanford, CA

LANGACKER, R.W. [1991] Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Vol. 2: Descriptive Application. Stanford, CA

LANGACKER, R.W. [2008] Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction. Oxford

Access brought to you by: Ana Rojo

Copyright © 2011–2014 by Walter de Gruyter GmbH

Powered by PubFactory