

## Reseñas

BUTLER, Christopher and MARTÍN ARISTA, Javier (eds). 2009. *Deconstructing Constructions*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins. (306 pp) ISBN: 978-90272-0574-2

This collective volume constitutes a contribution to the study of the points of convergence and divergence among several linguistic theories of functional and constructional basis that represents a further step in the direction of previous publications by the editors, including Martín Arista ed. (1993), Butler, Mairal Usón, Martín Arista and Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (1999) and Butler (2003a, 2003b). The book is divided into three parts. The first focuses on theoretical questions, the second presents some developments of the Lexical Constructional Model and the third discusses certain particular constructions.

In the first part, the chapter by Daniel García Velasco, entitled ‘Innovative coinage: its place in the grammar’, raises a number of questions relating to the formation of denominal verbs by conversion, as in *book-to book*, and discusses the consequences that considering these coinages a part of the grammar has for a linguistic theory of functional or constructional inspiration. The chapter by Johan Pedersen, entitled ‘The construction of macro-events: a typological perspective’, takes a new look at Talmy’s distinction between satellite-framed languages (languages, which, like the Romance ones, code some adverbial meanings as satellites, i.e. *la botella entró en la cueva flotando*) and verb-framed languages (languages such as the Germanic ones, in which some adverbial meanings are coded by the verb itself, i.e. *the bottle floated into the cave*). Pedersen carries out a contrastive analysis of a short story in six languages (Danish, English, German, Spanish, Italian and French) and reaches the conclusion that Talmy’s framework requires a further distinction between lexical and schematic constructional levels of analysis. Beatriz Martínez Fernández’s chapter, entitled ‘Constructions, co-composition and merge’, analyses English verbs of BREAKING, which cannot be explained by means of a specific construction. Martínez Fernández coins the term *merge* to refer to the simultaneous expression of motion and change of state, as in *Paula smashed the guitar through the wall* (the opposite phenomenon in this

framework is co-composition, holding when the event is semantically analysable). The author then discusses the question of how to deal with merge in Role and Reference Grammar (Foley and Van Valin 1984; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) to conclude that lexical representation by means of predicates and metapredicates, as well as aktionsart modes, can distinguish merge from co-composition. Javier Martín Arista's chapter, which is entitled 'A typology of morphological constructions', applies the layered clausal structure of Role and Reference Grammar, comprising the Nucleus, the Core and the Clause (along with the relevant arguments, argument-adjuncts and peripheries) to morphological analysis and proposes a typology of morphological constructions which ultimately distinguishes inflectional from derivational morphology. The main difference is drawn between recursive (derivational) and non-recursive (inflectional) morphology, but the typology of morphological constructions also includes endocentric (category-preserving), exocentric (category-changing) constructions and other minor types.

The second part of this book revolves around the Lexical Constructional Model. To open this part, Christopher Butler, in a chapter entitled 'The Lexical Constructional Model: Genesis, strengths and challenges', inserts this linguistic model into the linguistic background in which it belongs, including several structuralist, functionalist, constructivist and cognitivist theories and schools. Butler reviews the issues and advances of the model and comes to the conclusion that a number of areas call for further research. The chapter by Ricardo Mairal Usón and Francisco José Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, entitled 'Levels of semantic representation in meaning construction', propose a synthesis of functional and constructional approaches in terms of the template, which can be lexical or constructional. Both types of template consist of slots into which elements of meaning and structure are inserted, in such a way that the representation includes lexical, syntactic and contextual information which, moreover, is presented in a highly organized, explicit and hierarchical fashion.

The third section of the book opens with Francisco González-García's chapter, which is entitled 'Measuring out reflexivity in secondary predication in English and Spanish: evidence from cognition verbs'. González-García discusses the cognition verb FIND and its Spanish counterpart ENCONTRAR and distinguishes two related constructions, the reflexive subjective-transitive construction and the self-descriptive subjective-transitive construction. Francisco Cortés Rodríguez's chapter, entitled 'The inchoative construction: semantic representation and unification constraints' takes a further step in the study of lexical and constructional templates by discussing the phenomenon of subsumption, understood as relationship between lexical templates and constructional templates that results into the insertion of the former into the latter. According to Cortés Rodríguez subsumption is restricted by the external constraint of metonymy of the type PROCESS FOR ACTION as well as by internal constraints imposed by complementation, causativity and internal aspect. Finally, Pilar Guerrero Medina's chapter, entitled 'Semantic and pragmatic constraints on the English *get*-passive', argues that the explanation for the English *get*-passive cannot be based on lexical

aspects only. Guerrero Medina divides the *get*-passive into five semantic classes and relates its structure to a family of constructions of two types, the causative and the spontaneous.

This book does an excellent job in meeting its stated goal of comparing linguistic theories and frameworks by coming up with several synthetic proposals that arise from a discussion that combines extensive knowledge of the theoretical background with expertise in the grammarians' data. From the theoretical point of view, its strongest point is the contribution from functional theories to constructional and cognitive models. Indeed, explanatory resources central to the functional school of linguistics, such as the subcategorization frame comprising the syntax and semantics of a lexical entry (Dik 1997) and the layered structure of the clause (Foley and Van Valin 1984; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) and the word (Martín Arista 2008, 2011) are incorporated into the constructional framework (Goldberg 1995, 2006) and combined with principles of Lakoffian cognitive linguistics, such as the metonymy. Overall, this synthetic proposal is ingenious and elegant and represents a step forward in theoretical research. Moreover, it makes much needed progress in the direction of offering explanations based on syntactic, semantic and contextual-situational principles. Speaking of individual theories, Role and Reference Grammar contributes in the most significant way to the reinforcement of the semantic-syntactic basis of constructional and cognitive approaches that this book puts forward. Indeed, Role and Reference Grammar has made use of the layered structure of the clause since the first version of the theory by Foley and Van Valin (1984) and has developed a general theory of event structure, internal aspect and the linking between semantics and syntax (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). Other functional grammars, such as Dik's (1997) Functional Grammar as well as the latest development of the theory, Functional Discourse Grammar (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008), are also cited by a number of contributors to the book and certainly provide the Lexical Constructional Model with explanatory principles so fundamental in the context of the model as the combination of the grammar with a contextual and a conceptual component, the expansion of linguistic expressions based on four levels of linguistic organization, the existence of variables and constraints in different layers and the projection of the syntax of lexical items from their subcategorization frames. To do justice to construction grammars, however, it is necessary to remark that functional grammars have been incorporating constructive notions for more than a decade, thus the works by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997), Martín Arista (2003) and the chapters by Cortés Rodríguez, Guerrero Medina, Martín Arista and Martínez Fernández in this volume. From the empirical point of view, all contributions are based on interesting and novel material. In this sense, one of the most remarkable aspects of this book is the large number of fine-grained studies of individual languages that it contains. Such languages belong to the Germanic and the Romance family in most cases (Danish, English, German, French, Italian and Spanish) but also to non-Indoeuropean groups, such as the Australian Pitjantjatjara-Yakunitjatjara. There is much to be learned from these detailed case studies, particularly from those based on

comparative analysis and corpora, such as Pedersen's. In spite of the range of languages covered and the complexity of the data presented, the argumentation is solid and convincing as well as fluid and easy to follow.

Overall, the editors have succeeded in bringing together a coherent collection of papers that offer an excellent reflection on the current state of the art in the area as well as a wealth of stimulating ideas on linguistic analysis. For this reason, the overall impression left by the book is excellent and I warmly recommend it.

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