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William Croft and D. Alan Cruse
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Cognitive Linguistics

Cognitive Linguistics argues that language is governed by general cognitive principles, rather than by a special-purpose language module. This introductory textbook surveys the field of cognitive linguistics as a distinct area of study, presenting its theoretical foundations and the arguments supporting it. Clearly organized and accessibly written, it provides a useful introduction to the relationship between language and cognitive processing in the human brain. It covers the main topics likely to be encountered in a course or seminar, and provides a synthesis of study and research in this fast-growing field of linguistics. The authors begin by explaining the conceptual structures and cognitive processes governing linguistic representation and behavior, and go on to explore cognitive approaches to lexical semantics, as well as syntactic representation and analysis, focusing on the closely related frameworks of cognitive grammar and construction grammar. This much-needed introduction will be welcomed by students in linguistics and cognitive science.

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Preface

This book provides an overview of the basic principles and methods of cognitive linguistics, in particular as they are applied to semantic and syntactic issues. It is intended to be used as a textbook for a course on cognitive linguistics for advanced undergraduates and postgraduate students, as well as functioning as an introduction to this approach to language for linguists and researchers in neighboring disciplines. Parts I and II may also function as a textbook for a course on cognitive semantics, supplemented by case studies from the cognitive linguistic literature. Part III may also function as introductory reading for a course on construction grammar, followed by readings from the literature that delve into the details of particular theories of construction grammar and the analyses of particular constructions.

The chapters of the book were independently written, but jointly discussed. Croft is responsible for chapters 1–3 and 9–12, and Cruse for chapters 4–8 (this fact will no doubt be obvious to the reader). Cruse also contributed to §3.2.1, and Croft to §8.2. Although we have written our chapters independently, the book represents a single coherent perspective on cognitive linguistics. We agree on all of the major points, and most of the minor ones; what minor disagreements remain do not compromise the integrity of the analysis as a whole.

Croft would like to thank members of the linguistics and psychology departments at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany, and Jóhanna Barðdal, Chuck Fillmore, Laura Janda, Paul Kay and Ron Langacker for their comments on earlier versions of Part III, and Liliana Albertazzi and the participants in the Workshop on ‘Which Semantics?’, Bolzano, Italy, 1995 for their comments on topics dealt with in Part I. Cruse would like to thank Liliana Albertazzi and fellow-participants (George Lakoff, Ron Langacker and Len Talmy) at the Summer School on Cognitive Semantics, Bolzano, Italy, 1999; Arie Verhagen and the students at the LOT Winter School, Leiden, Holland, 2002; and members of the Equipe Rhéma, University of Lyon, France, for their comments on various topics dealt with in the book. Last but not least, we both thank the students of successive classes on cognitive linguistics at the University of Manchester, who used materials that eventually became the chapters presented here. Of course, all responsibility for the final product remains with us.