

# Cambridge Elements<sup>≡</sup>

Elements in Construction Grammar

edited by

Thomas Hoffmann

*Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt*

Alexander Bergs

*Osnabrück University*

## THE MEANING OF CONSTRUCTIONS

Benoît Leclercq

*University of Lille*

Cameron Morin

*University of Paris-Cité*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-49963-7 — The Meaning of Constructions  
Benoît Leclercq, Cameron Morin  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of  
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009499637](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009499637)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781009499620

© Benoît Leclercq and Cameron Morin 2025

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions  
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take  
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009499620

First published 2025

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-009-49963-7 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-009-49965-1 Paperback  
ISSN 2753-2674 (online)  
ISSN 2753-2666 (print)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence  
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this  
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,  
accurate or appropriate.

For EU product safety concerns, contact us at Calle de José Abascal, 56, 1º, 28003  
Madrid, Spain, or email [eugpsr@cambridge.org](mailto:eugpsr@cambridge.org)

## The Meaning of Constructions

Elements in Construction Grammar

DOI: 10.1017/9781009499620  
First published online: May 2025

---

Benoît Leclercq  
*University of Lille*

Cameron Morin  
*University of Paris-Cité*

**Author for correspondence:** Benoît Leclercq, [benoit.leclercq@univ-lille.fr](mailto:benoit.leclercq@univ-lille.fr)

**Abstract:** This Element offers a primer for the study of meaning in a Construction Grammar approach. It reviews the main principles of meaning shared across constructionist frameworks, including its ubiquity in grammatical structure, its usage-based formation, and its nature as the output of cognitive representations. It also reviews the importance given to meaning in construction-based explanations of sentence composition, innovative language use, and language change. Paradoxically, the Element shows that there is no systematic framework delineating the rich structure of constructional meaning, which has led to theoretical disagreements and inconsistencies. It therefore proposes an operational model of meaning for practitioners of Construction Grammar. It details the characteristics of a complex interface of semantic, pragmatic, and social meaning, and shows how this framework sheds light on recent theoretical issues. The Element concludes by considering ways in which this framework can be used for future descriptive and theoretical research questions.

**Keywords:** Construction Grammar, meaning, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics

© Benoît Leclercq and Cameron Morin 2025

ISBNs: 9781009499637 (HB), 9781009499651 (PB), 9781009499620 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2753-2674 (online), 2753-2666 (print)

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	The Meaning-Based Assumption	2
3	Meaning in Use	14
4	A Framework of Constructional Meaning	39
5	Conclusion and Outlook	58
	References	61