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978-1-107-00582-2 - The Language of Stories: A Cognitive Approach

Barbara Dancygier

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## The Language of Stories

How do we read stories? How do they engage our minds and create meaning? Are they a mental construct, a linguistic one, or a cultural one? What is the difference between real stories and fictional ones? This book addresses such questions by describing the conceptual and linguistic underpinnings of narrative interpretation. Barbara Dancygier discusses literary texts as linguistic artifacts, describing the processes which drive the emergence of literary meaning. If a text means something to someone, she argues, there have to be linguistic phenomena that make it possible. Drawing on blending theory and construction grammar, the book focuses its linguistic lens on the concepts of the narrator and the story, and defines narrative viewpoint in a new way. Textual use of pronouns and other referential expressions also comes under investigation, including their occurrence in constructions of speech and thought representation. The examples come from a wide spectrum of texts, primarily novels and drama, by authors such as William Shakespeare, Margaret Atwood, Philip Roth, Dave Eggers, Jan Potocki, and Mikhail Bulgakov.

BARBARA DANCYGIER is Professor in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Her publications include *Conditionals and Prediction* (Cambridge, 1998) and *Mental Spaces in Grammar* (with Eve Sweetser, Cambridge, 2005).

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for Jacek and Szymek

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