

Editorial

There is no doubt that Cognitive Linguistics is nowadays one of the latest, most versatile, and interdisciplinary trends in Linguistic theory. In general terms, Cognitive Linguistics deals with different issues involved in the interaction of language, experience, and cognition. Moreover, the influence of Cognitive Theory on Applied Linguistics and, more specifically, on the research currently carried out in academic language and in the field of LSP has also become a source of innovation. Thus, the range of investigation interests may cover from more classical aspects related to metaphor and categorization, to more recent studies of the interrelation between discourse and cognition. In this respect, it is worthwhile mentioning, for instance, the studies on metaphor and metonymy phenomena at the level of discourse, including text coherence and text development as well as their role in scientific and technical communication. Likewise, it is not surprising that since Cognitive Linguistics focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information, recent contributions to Cognitive Linguistics arrive from the area of Sociolinguistics and social cognition, as shown in the main subjects proposed in the latest international cognitive conference.

As previously mentioned, the applications of Cognitive Linguistics to LSP teaching is an emergent field of study, very recently opened and being currently developed in an interdisciplinary way. Therefore, it is worthwhile to make some considerations about the state of the art of cognitive research applied to the classroom. Despite the novelty of this approach, three major directions can already be distinguished in the general application of cognitive contributions to foreign language learning. The first one to be mentioned is the approach known as "cognitive learning strategies". This area has been receiving more and more attention in second language acquisition for several decades. Its origins come from cognitive psychology, which was one of the dominant modes of strategy analysis in the late 1970s and was still influential well into the 1980s. The focus of interest of learning strategies lies mainly in the learner's psychology, its objective being to identify the type of strategies that are more relevant in the learning process. According to this theory, the way learners manipulate metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies has to be taken into account. Therefore, the role of teachers is twofold, on the one hand, to find out the strategies that students prefer to use and, on the other, to determine the type of tasks that can influence the cognitive strategies in the learning process in an adequate way.

The second main direction concerns the way that concepts are categorised to some extent in accordance with central examples of categories, as stated in the prototypicality theory first formulated by the psychologist Eleanor Rosch. Since then the theory has been applied to other fields by other specialists, such as Michio Sugeno, professor of Artificial Intelligence in Tokyo University, and his work in the theory known as fuzzy set. A third line of investigation concerns the study of conceptual and linguistic metaphor, which argues for the exploitation of contextualised metaphor as a separate and fundamental learning item. On the other hand, in grammar teaching, Cognitive Linguistics works by making students aware of the importance of conveying meaning through the function of formal linguistic items and of the conceptual interface between syntax and semantics. And, finally, in the study of discourse, a top-down approach to texts is applied, helping students understand the codes and formalities associated not only with their community linguistic group but also with genre studies. The students should also be aware of the experiential background of language-in-use, including the cultural background, the discourse context, and the psychological environment of linguistic performance.

Under "Cognitive Studies in LSP", this special volume of *Ibérica* includes some articles that have been selected taking into account the different contributions they could offer in the LSP aspects that have been mentioned above. The idea came about after the celebration of the "Developing Cognitive Linguistics in Languages for Specific Purposes Seminar" preceding the Ist International AELFE Conference held in Madrid in September 2002. Thus, M. White, G. Cuadrado, and J. Herráez highlight the metaphorical aspects of various LSP conceptual and linguistic fields; J. Littlemore's article is concerned with the study of learning strategies applied to metaphor use. A. Roldán is interested in looking at communication and its strategies from a cognitive viewpoint, and P. Durán analyses the mental mechanisms related to the processing of second language new vocabulary.

This volume also contains two book reviews of very recent publications on Cognitive Theory from different perspectives: P. Robinson's (2001), reviewed by M. Millán and R. Jackendoff's (2002) by P. Úbeda.

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