



PROJECT MUSE®

Language and space Ed. by Paul Bloom, Mary A. Peterson, Lynn Nadel, and Merrill F. Garrett (review)

Ronald W. Langacker

Language, Volume 74, Number 2, June 1998, pp. 389-392 (Review)

Published by Linguistic Society of America

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.1998.0207>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/453061/summary>

(Potential donors may write to Hall at 6125 Helen White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison WI 53706.) Volume IV will contain P-S; Volumes V and VI will complete the text and add a supplement, data summary, bibliography, further maps, and a cumulative index.

DARE has become both a model and a source for lexicographers, who hold it in great esteem. Eleven other dictionaries so far have used either published or unpublished *DARE* materials. Its influence is ubiquitous in the recent issue of *Dictionaries* devoted to dialect labels. Standards go beyond expectations. For example, evidence taken from other dictionaries was verified in the original source, a practice that has rectified errors that earlier passed from dictionary to dictionary and that demonstrates the approach the staff has taken to the evaluation and use of materials of inconsistent reliability.

DARE is an exemplary work of scholarship that presents a challenge to linguistics; work in this tradition deserves a more central place therein. As a linguist whose primary focus is outside the more systematic areas of phonology and syntax, I am convinced it is time for us to conceive of a new, poststructuralist linguistics that can incorporate both meaning and variation. We will never properly account for the contents of such a dictionary as *DARE* without it.

REFERENCES

- ALGEO, JOHN. 1993. *DARE* in the classroom. *Language variation in North American English: Research and teaching*, ed. by A. Wayne Glowka and Donald M. Lance, 140–43. New York: Modern Language Association.
- CARVER, CRAIG. 1988–94. Word histories. *The Atlantic Monthly*.
- CASSIDY, FREDERIC G. 1993. Area lexicon: The making of *DARE*. *American dialect research*, ed. by Dennis R. Preston, 93–106. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- . 1997. *DARE*: Some etymological puzzles. *Language variety in the South revisited*, ed. by Cynthia Bernstein, Thomas Nunnally, and Robin Sabino, 277–81. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- FRAZER, TIMOTHY C. 1983. Sound change and social structure in a rural community. *Language in Society* 12.313–28.
- HOROWITZ, RICK. 1997. Without more money and a lot more time . . . *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, WWW edition.
- JOHNSON, ELLEN. 1995. Kinship terms in Southern American English: From *ma* and *pa* to *mom* and *dad*. Paper presented at the fall meeting of the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics.
- . 1996a. *In the family way*: Euphemism and dysphemism surrounding childbirth and kinship. Paper presented at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association.
- . 1996b. Lexical change and variation in the southeastern United States, 1930–1990. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- KRETZSCHMAR, WILLIAM A., JR.; VIRGINIA G. McDAVID; THEODORE K. LERUD; and ELLEN JOHNSON (eds.) 1994. *Handbook of the linguistic atlas of the middle and south Atlantic states*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- LABOV, WILLIAM. 1994. *Principles of linguistic change. Volume I: Internal factors*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- LIGHTER, JONATHAN E. 1994—. *Historical dictionary of American slang*. New York: Random House.
- METCALF, ALLAN (comp.) 1993. An index by region, usage, and etymology to the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, volumes I and II. Publication of the American Dialect Society 77.
- RICKFORD, JOHN R.; THOMAS A. WASOW; NORMA MENDOZA-DENTON; and JULI ESPINOZA. 1995. Syntactic variation and change in progress: Loss of the verbal coda in topic-restricting *as far as* constructions. *Language* 71.102–31.

Department of English
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Language and space. Ed. by PAUL BLOOM, MARY A. PETERSON, LYNN NADEL, and MERRILL F. GARRETT. Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press/Bradford, 1996. Pp. x, 597. \$50.00.

Reviewed by RONALD W. LANGACKER, *University of California, San Diego*

This substantial and significant volume summarizes current thought and research on spatial expressions and their cognitive basis. A considerable variety of disciplines and methodologies

are represented—descriptive and theoretical, psychological, anthropological, crosslinguistic, acquisitional, computational, and neurological. Despite some inevitable gaps and biases, the book is reasonably described as comprehensive, sensibly arranged, and open-minded. It should prove to be a highly useful and widely used resource.

With 577 large pages of text divided into just fifteen chapters, the authors can pursue their chosen topics in consequential depth and detail. In 'The architecture of the linguistic-spatial interface' (1–30), RAY JACKENDOFF explores the relation between an algebraic CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE and a geometric (or quasitopological) SPATIAL REPRESENTATION. His characterization of lexical items allows conceptual structures to be supplemented with 'pointers' to detailed shape information and other sensory properties. Besides REPRESENTATION MODULES, he posits INTERFACE MODULES allowing limited translations between levels of encoding.

MANFRED BIERWISCH continues this modular theme in 'How much space gets into language?' (31–76). Making the point that a level of representation need not coincide with an autonomous module, he differs from Jackendoff in denying that conceptual structure is extralinguistic. Rather, he claims that phonetic form and semantic form are themselves the interfaces of language with articulation/perception on the one hand, and its conceptual/intentional counterpart, on the other.

Two main themes of the volume, perspective and frames of reference, are dealt with by WILLEM J. M. LEVELT and STEPHEN C. LEVINSON. Levelt's 'Perspective taking and ellipsis in spatial descriptions' (77–107) compares the properties of deictic, intrinsic, and absolute frames of reference. From experiments involving the description of network-like spatial paths, he claims that one aspect of planning—the decision to omit reference to a repeated step—precedes the choice of a linguistic perspective. In 'Frames of reference and Molyneux's question: Crosslinguistic evidence' (109–69), Levinson discusses alternate classifications of frames of reference in great detail. He argues that the frame dominant in a given language 'infiltrates' other modalities and thus has nonlinguistic manifestations. KAREN EMMOREY's contribution, 'The confluence of space and language in signed languages' (171–209), offers a multifaceted consideration of the role of space in ASL, with additional comments on neurological investigation and the interplay between signed languages and spatial cognition.

The longest chapter is LEONARD TALMY's 'Fictive motion in language and "ception"' (211–76). Following a catalog of the many kinds of fictive motion expressed in language, Talmy supports his hypothesis of overlapping cognitive systems by exploring what is common to PERCEPTION and CONCEPTION (hence 'ception'), with special reference to language and vision. My own analysis of the examples he presents suggests that an expression's aspectual categorization is consistently based on its factive rather than its fictive component. Consider, for example, *The signpost points to the east* vs. *The weather vane is pointing to the east*. Fictively both involve the demonstrative type of orientation path. Yet factively the former describes a stable situation of indefinite duration, making it imperfective and allowing use of the simple present, while the latter describes a temporally bounded episode, which makes it perfective and thus requires the progressive (Langacker 1987). The following paper by JOHN O'KEEFE, 'The spatial prepositions in English, vector grammar, and the cognitive map theory' (277–316), provides a vector-based description inspired by evidence from animal experiments that implicates the hippocampus in the construction of an allocentric spatial representation of the environment. Though not without insight, this chapter might have profited from appropriate consultation with some of the cognitive linguistic literature, e.g. Hawkins 1984, Talmy 1988 (for causation), Lakoff and Johnson 1980 (on vertical metaphors for social status), and Wierzbicka 1993 (for temporal uses of prepositions).

The next three chapters focus on early cognitive development and language acquisition. In 'Multiple geometric representations of objects in languages and language learners' (317–63), BARBARA LANDAU presents evidence that young children represent objects in several different ways: in coarse-grained, blob-like fashion; in terms of the length and orientation of the three principal axes; and with fine-grained representations of shape. JEAN M. MANDLER's 'Preverbal representation and language' (365–84) examines the cognitive abilities of infants and asks what it is that mediates between sensorimotor schemas and the conceptual structures reflected in language. In contrast to other authors, who hypothesize 'algebraic' or 'propositional' representa-

tions, she finds a promising answer in the IMAGE SCHEMAS posited by Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (1987). MELISSA BOWERMAN's contribution, 'Learning how to structure space for language: A crosslinguistic perspective' (385–436), is based on experimental results pertaining to the acquisition of English, Dutch, and Korean. She argues that semantic structure is a conventionalized layer of organization (even in the spatial realm) and shows that specifics of the language being acquired influence the child's spatial categorization even at a very early age.

In 'Space to think' (437–62), PHILIP N. JOHNSON-LAIRD compares the efficacy of mental models vs. propositional representations in spatial and temporal reasoning, with comments on the utility of diagrams. BARBARA TVERSKY's 'Spatial perspective in descriptions' (463–91) returns to the theme of perspectives and frames of reference as manifested in narrative descriptions. Major findings are the apparent absence of a default perspective and the fact that perspective is not necessarily consistent, even in a single discourse. The chapter by GORDON D. LOGAN and DANIEL D. SADLER, 'A computational analysis of the apprehension of spatial relations' (493–529), reports on a series of experiments which bear on the claim 'that apprehension of spatial relations requires spatial indexing, reference frame computation, and assessment of goodness of fit of spatial templates' (503). TIM SHALLICE, in 'The language-to-object perception interface: Evidence from neuropsychology' (531–52), discusses the complexities of neuropsychological deficits in relation to certain models of cognitive organization. He finds some support for a representation in terms of image schemas and further suggests that 'adding a connectionist dimension . . . enables a much fuller explanation of the detailed nature of the deficits' (548).

Finally, in 'Space and language' (553–77), the editors have their own say. They do a very reasonable job of presenting an overview, summarizing basic findings, focusing on recurring issues, and making clear how much we do not know. The gambit of using their own remarks to conclude rather than to preface the volume strikes me as being successful.

Obviously, my brief descriptions cannot begin to capture the richness and interest of the contributions. The editors are to be congratulated for having assembled a coherent volume of quality papers representing diverse outlooks in an even-handed way. It is to their credit that both formalist and functionalist approaches are included and are treated as complementary rather than being set in opposition to one another. The book is not, however, neutral in this regard. For example, it takes as its point of departure a 'consensually accepted framework' (553) based on Jackendoff's representational modularity, in turn based on Fodor's (1979) 'language of thought' hypothesis. Though I am not myself a party to any such consensus, one can hardly object to the editors revealing a general theoretical orientation, especially given its nondoctrinaire implementation. It is therefore in a constructive spirit that I append a few observations from a cognitive-functional perspective.

First, the chapters and the research reported are heavily biased toward English and Standard Average European. There are of course notable exceptions—Levinson on Tzeltal, Emmorey on ASL, Bowerman on Korean—but by and large spatial phenomena in other, diverse languages are mentioned only sporadically and not analyzed in any depth. The results of a serious typological survey might lead to a rather different formulation of certain issues.

A fundamental issue not given its due is the extent to which 'spatial' prepositions are actually based on spatial configuration, as opposed to function. Vandeloise (1991) has cogently argued for a functional account (e.g. that the 'container'/'content' function is more basic than spatial inclusion to the meaning of *in*). The editors at least raise this issue (564), and a number of authors allude to it in passing, but it is never addressed head on or in sufficient detail.

In view of the prevalence and cognitive significance of spatial metaphor, its almost total absence from the concerns of this volume is striking. Under 'metaphor', the subject index lists citations only in the chapters by Talmy and O'Keefe. To be sure, Bierwisch does give reasons for believing that 'basic structures of spatial organization . . . are projected to other domains' (49), yet the word *metaphor*—so strongly associated with cognitive linguistics—is studiously avoided.

In general, there are fewer references to the cognitive linguistic literature than might be considered appropriate. For instance, Logan and Sadler describe their notion of a spatial template (the

region of acceptability associated with a given relation) as the novel contribution of their theory. However it corresponds exactly to the construct SEARCH DOMAIN, which was introduced in cognitive grammar by Hawkins (1984) and extensively motivated in Langacker 1993 on descriptive, diachronic, and typological grounds. Regier 1996 would also have been appropriate to cite. Likewise, when the editors 'suggest that nouns are used in the case of entities (be they places, objects, or other things . . .), and that prepositions are used in the case of relations' (568), I naturally feel that some reference to my own longstanding proposal to characterize them in just that way (e.g. Langacker 1987) would not have been out of place.

Despite these qualifications, the book is well done and a good buy for the price. It is typographically handsome, and I noticed relatively few misprints.

REFERENCES

- FODOR, JERRY A. 1979. *The language of thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- HAWKINS, BRUCE W. 1984. *The semantics of English spatial prepositions*. San Diego: University of California dissertation.
- JOHNSON, MARK. 1987. *The body in the mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- LAKOFF, GEORGE. 1987. *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- , and MARK JOHNSON. 1980. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- LANGACKER, RONALD W. 1987. Nouns and verbs. *Language* 63.53–94.
- . 1993. Grammatical traces of some 'invisible' semantic constructs. *Language Sciences* 15.323–55.
- REGIER, TERRY. 1996. *The human semantic potential: Spatial language and constrained connectionism*. Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press/Bradford.
- TALMY, LEONARD. 1988. Force dynamics in language and cognition. *Cognitive Science* 12.49–100.
- VANDELOISE, CLAUDE. 1991. *Spatial prepositions: A case study from French*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- WIERZBICKA, ANNA. 1993. Why do we say *in April*, *on Thursday*, *at 10 o'clock*? In search of an explanation. *Studies in Language* 17.437–54.

Linguistics, 0108

University of California, San Diego

La Jolla, CA 92093-0108

The French influence on Middle English morphology: A corpus-based study of derivation. By CHRISTIANE DALTON-PUFFER. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996. Pp. xiii, 284. DM 158.

Reviewed by INGO PLAG, *Philipps-Universität Marburg*

The title of this book is, unfortunately, somewhat misleading. First, the book deals only with suffixation and completely excludes prefixation or conversion. Second, the scope of the book is not at all restricted to the French influence on Middle English morphology. Instead, the reader finds an impressive, comprehensive survey of Middle English suffixation, a most welcome contribution to the diachronic study of English word-formation and one which will certainly remain the standard reference on Middle English derivational morphology for quite some time.

The book begins with a brief introduction and a review of previous research (Ch. 2, 5–18) and then turns to the discussion of methodological and theoretical problems (Chs. 3–6). Ch. 3 (19–27) introduces the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts, on which the whole investigation is based. The author used the material of the periods ME1 (1150–1250), ME2 (1250–1350), and ME3 (1350–1420), which amounts to an overall corpus size of 394,720 words (i.e. tokens). Although the number of tokens is rather low in comparison to modern corpora like Cobuild or the British National Corpus, it seems that Dalton-Puffer's corpus is large enough to yield interesting and significant results. D describes in exemplary fashion how she has extracted the relevant data from the corpus.