

SEMIOTICS

FALL SEMESTER 2005



Arne Achenbach: *Four Pairs of Shoes*, 1997

CORRECTED VERSION
(SEPTEMBER 1, 2005)

Center for Semiotics

UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS

Syntax and Conceptualization

Svend Østergaard | **Tuesdays in seminar weeks, 12:00-14:00. Building 1.463, room 222**

In this seminar we will start out by explaining what is cognitive linguistics? If we change *and* to *is* in the above title we see one aspect of this, namely that conceptual meaning and syntactic structure cannot be considered as independent of each other.

Later in the course we will discuss syntax in more details but before that there will be an introduction to basic notions of cognitive linguistics. This includes the notion of *construal* which is related to the notion of *frame*. By selecting a specific construction or specific lexematic material the speaker activates a frame in the mind of the hearer. For instance, by selecting the Danish verb *æde* instead of *spise* the speaker wants to invoke an animal as opposed to a human frame. Those two frames are joined in the corresponding English verb *eat*. Other basic notions that we will discuss are: *fictive motion*, *categorization*, *metaphor*, *figure/ground*, *viewpoint*,

deixis, and *topological/geometric schematization*. In the end of the semester we will return to the question of syntax. There will be a short introduction to William Crofts radical construction grammar according to which constructions are the primitive units of syntactic representation, and grammatical categories are defined by constructions, not the other way round. Moreover, not only are grammatical categories construction-specific, but constructions are language specific. In other words, syntactic structure is almost entirely language-specific.

Suitable literature is W. Croft and D. A. Cruse (2005): *Cognitive linguistics*. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. For an easier introduction see: F. Ungerer and H. J. Schmid (1996): *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics*. London.

Language and the Brain

Mikkel Wallentin | **Wednesdays in seminar weeks, 10:00-12:00. Building 1.463, room 216**

Mikkel Wallentin is a PhD student at Center for Semiotics and Centre for Functionally Integrative Neuroscience (CFIN)

Our knowledge of the implementation of language by the brain was grounded in the middle of the 19th century. By post-mortem examinations of patients whom while living had suffered from a loss of language function, two primary language centres were discovered in the left hemisphere of the brain: A frontal region (Broca's region) found to be responsible for speech production along with a region of the temporal lobe (Wernicke's region), considered responsible for

language comprehension. This simple model of brain regions involved in language processing still dominates all textbooks in neuroscience. But new research both from the field of cognitive linguistics and results from brain scanning experiments questions if this model can be said to be adequate. In these 8 seminars the classical neurological model of language function is presented, and in the view of these recent findings it is discussed to what extent the classical model still holds true today.

A Presentation of an Interactional Approach to Cognitive Processes of Meaning Construction in Everyday Social Life

Anders Hougaard & Gitte Rasmussen |

Wednesdays, August 31, September 28, October 26, November 23. 16:00 - 18:00. Building I.463, room 216

This seminar presents ongoing research which aims at establishing a solid, empirical, micro-sociological foundation for the study of cognitive processes of meaning construction in everyday social life. More specifically the approach that is presented establishes cognitive descriptions, new cognitive concepts and a critical evaluation of, in particular, mental spaces theory and the second generation cognitive semantics paradigm on the basis of conversation analytic studies of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. The specific contribution of this approach is that it reverses the methods of “traditional” approaches to meaning construction which focus on the individual meaningful object (word, utterance, gesture, etc.) and then bring in social contexts in an ad hoc fashion to determine meaning products. The approach we present starts out with considering the systematics of the context and then “zooms in” on individual actions, determining their meaning and social significance in accordance with their systematic situatedness. Besides introducing the audience to methods, concepts, findings as well as the historical and philosophical background of ethnomethodological conversation analysis (EMCA), the seminar presents specific topics - both cognitive and sociological - of the ongoing research:

- Interactional scripts
- The organization and nature of the base space
- Relevance
- Interactional mental spaces
- Interactional procedures and phenomena
- Socially embodied cognition
- Situated meaning construction
- and much more

Additionally we will relate our research to traditional research in the field of cognition (cognitive semantics) and pragmatics and to new research. Our approach turns out to emerge independently of, but in the historical context of a movement in conversation analysis, discursive psychology and ethnomethodology towards considering the cognitive impact of empirical studies of social life. We consider this a landmark in the progress of cognitive semantics and cognitive science at large.

Requirements

Basic knowledge of dominant theories of cognitive semantics and cognitive semiotics is an advantage.

Literature

To be announced

SEMINAR IN COGNITIVE SEMANTICS

Conceptual Integration Theory

Line Brandt |

Wednesdays, September 14, October 12, November 9, December 7, 16:00 - 18:00. Building 1.463, room 216

In this seminar we will discuss the historical development of conceptual integration theory (a.k.a. blending theory) within the field of cognitive semantics. We will outline the major philosophical and theoretical differences between what has provisionally been dubbed the Aarhus school and the American school (see reading list) and discuss the general applicability of blending analysis as a tool in cognitive semiotics, including semiotic textual analysis.

Readings

Brandt & Brandt: 'Making Sense of a Blend – A cognitive-semiotic approach to metaphor' (2002, revised 2005, in press)
'Cognitive Poetics and Imagery' (2005, in press)

Fauconnier & Turner: *The Way We Think. Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*, New York: Basic Books (2002)

Grady, Oakley & Coulson: 'Blending and Metaphor', in *Metaphor in cognitive linguistics*, G. Steen & R. Gibbs (eds.), Philadelphia: John Benjamins (1999)

Suggested reading order

– Fauconnier & Turner

– Grady et al.

These two texts explain the theory in its original form (American school).

– Brandt & Brandt: *Making Sense of a Blend* – This article specifically discusses the Grady et al. article, and explains the theory within a semiotic framework (Aarhus school).

– Brandt & Brandt: *Cognitive Poetics* – In this article we apply conceptual integration theory to textual analysis and discuss our view of cognitive poetics as a new field in cognitive science.

Both of these articles can be downloaded from the homepage: click on Faculty/Staff and go to my page.

SEMINAR ON COGNITIVE AESTHETICS

Schemata and Visual Thinking in Aesthetic Experience

Peer F. Bundgård | **Thursdays in seminar weeks, 10:00 - 12:00. Building 1.467, room 415**

The first part of this course will be devoted to a description of those formal and not necessarily artistic elements that play a fundamental role in the forming of aesthetic meaning and aesthetic experience. A crucial hypothesis to this effect is that aesthetic experience rides on or further exploits perceptual structures that are also highly significant in everyday perception: these are phenomena such as qualitative discontinuities (contrasts), symmetry/asymmetry, perceptual and cultural frames, and micro-

narrative settings. We shall read literature that unfolds and corroborates these ideas: Rudolf Arnheim, Ernst Gombrich, Michael Leyton, Roman Ingarden, Hirstein & Ramashandran, Gestalt Theory, and recent semiotic theories on "visual thinking" in aesthetic experience. And we shall go through a lot of concrete examples that show the anchoring of aesthetic meaning on the basic tenets of everyday visual thinking.

Motor behavior, perception, and intentionality

Svend Østergaard | **Thursdays in seminar weeks, 14:00 - 16:00. Building 1.465, room 130**

The topics in this seminar will mainly concern motor behavior and its relation to perception, concept formation, mental imagery, action planning, self-identification, and social interaction. During the course we will discuss Milner and Goodale's theory of a dichotomous visual brain. We will discuss the mirror system and its implications for social cognition. We will even touch upon psychoanalysis in presenting theories that connect schizophrenia with dysfunctions in the

integration of motor behavior with the feeling of a self. The notions of *perception, body, self*, etc. have been treated in classical philosophy and we will also discuss that in relation to the knowledge that is established in experimental neuro-cognition.

All the topics in this seminar are taken from M. Jeannerod's works, especially *The Cognitive Neuroscience of Action*. Relevant papers by M. Jeannerod, C. D. Frith, and others will be distributed during the course.

SEMINAR

Cognitive Musicology

Ole Kühl | **Thursdays, September 1 & 29, October 27, November 24, 16:00 - 18:00. Building 1.465, room 130**

Music is a symbolic form of aesthetic communication. Through music we share vital information about ourselves and the world. We all feel that music is talking to us, even if it does not produce a well defined referential content: music moves us emotionally, bodily and mentally.

Cognitive science offers a new perspective on the content structure of the musical message: musical experience can be seen as embodied. According to such a view, music is drawing on pre-verbal layers of meaning.

The meaning of a musical message is partly subjective and partly objective. Personal experience – the feelings and the mental imagery - is mostly subjective. On the

objective side we find not only the musical structure (as dealt with in traditional musicology), but also the socio-cultural background-framing (which is the topic of ethnomusicology and popular music studies). But, more importantly, the functional structure of the process "making-sense-of-music" has stable properties across individual and cultural boundaries and can be described objectively.

Such a description would not only make cognitive musicology a sparring partner for neuromusicology, providing interpretative models for empirical data; it would also offer the possibility of grounding musicological tools in human cognition.

SEMINAR

Narratology

Svend Østergaard & Peer F. Bundgård | **Fridays in seminar weeks, 10:00 - 12:00. Building I.463, room 222**

In the narratology seminar we want to examine the principles for establishing coherence in the narrative. According to cognitive semantics, the mind search for a so-called scheme that can account for the connections between different fragments. These schemes constitute a hierarchy with very general schemes at the top, such as the source-path-goal scheme, and more image-like schemes lower in the hierarchy, as for instance, a scheme for eating at a restaurant. Interpreting the text is in fact

to find a very general scheme in which the semantics of the lexematic material fit. Another aim of the seminar is to examine how viewpoint is distributed in the text and to look at the relation between the narrative and the enunciation. Texts dealing with these theoretical problems will be distributed during the course and the theories will be tested on suitable narratives by Calvino, Cortazar, and others.

SEMINAR

Cognition & Semiotics

Peer F. Bundgård | **Wednesdays in seminar weeks, 14:00 - 16:00. Building I.463, room 222**

The course will be a mainly introductory course in the major theories and concepts underpinning what today is known as “cognitive semiotics”. This entails reading of key texts written by cognitive linguists and philosophers: Marc Johnson, George Lakoff, Ron Langacker, Len Talmy, Mark Turner & Gilles Fauconnier, Charles Fillmore, and others. We will discuss concepts that are fundamental, not only in linguistics, but also in cognition proper: for example metaphor, attention, force dynamics, schema, frame, conceptual integration,

mental space. If there is time left, we shall explore some of the links that relate cognitive linguistics and certain trends in cognitive science to phenomenology – otherwise this will be the subject matter of next semester’s course.

The course will be closely linked to all the other seminars this semester since it is intended to provide insight in some of the ideas, crucial hypotheses, and concepts that underlie our analyses in aesthetics, linguistics and philosophy of mind.

SEMINAR CALENDAR FALL 2005

AUGUST

Tuesday 30		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 31	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 1	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Cognitive Musicology
Friday 2	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	
Tuesday 13		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 14	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 15	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest lecture
Friday 16	10-12: Narratology	14-16: Student Symposium	
Tuesday 27		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 28	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 29	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Cognitive Musicology
Friday 30	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	

OCTOBER

Tuesday 11		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 12	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 13	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest lecture
Friday 14	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	
Tuesday 25		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 26	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 27	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Cognitive Musicology
Friday 28	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 8		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 9	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 10	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest lecture
Friday 11	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	
Tuesday 22		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 23	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 24	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Cognitive Musicology
Friday 25	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	

DECEMBER

Tuesday 6		12-14: Cognitive Linguistics	
Wednesday 7	10-12: Language & The Brain	14-16: Cognition and Semiotics	16-18: Cognitive Semantics
Thursday 8	10-12: Cognitive Aesthetics	14-16: Mind and Cognition	16-18: Guest lecture
Friday 9	10-12: Narratology	12-14: Student Symposium	

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UNIVERSITY OF AARHUS

www.hum.au.dk/semiotics

ADDRESS Bygning 1467, 4. etage, Jens Chr. Skous Vej 7, 8000 Århus C, Denmark PHONE (+45) 89 42 54 99 E-MAIL semtina@hum.au.dk