Mind, Body and (Con)Text: Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Linguistics

March 6, 7
2015
Stanley Coulter Hall
640 Oval Drive
West Lafayette, IN
Purdue University
Special thanks to:

Sponsors
Vista Higher Learning
Cengage Learning
School of Languages and Cultures
Department of Comparative Literature
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Psychological Sciences
Department of French
Department of German and Russian
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Department of Anthropology
Organizing Committee

Adrial Bryan
Valentina Concu
César Gutiérrez
Ana Hernandez-Morales
Riham Ismail
Daniel Jones
Lauren Miller
Heather Offerman
Patricia Pacheco
Aditi Rayarikar
Christina Weiler
Schedule of Events

3:30pm — Registration — Stanley Coulter (SC) Hall Lounge

4:30pm — SC239 — Keynote Address Prof. William Croft, University of New Mexico — Moderator: Prof. John Sundquist

Research interests
The processes of meaning and understanding in language, and the diversity of the languages of the world, have always fascinated me, and have guided my linguistic research. Meaning and understanding happen in interaction in language use: meaning creation is an active process. Diversity in language requires that we place linguistic variation at the center of our models of grammar. Linguistic variation is also a product of language in use. Grammatical variation forces one to rethink how we construct syntactic arguments in fundamental ways. Trying to pull together these two strands has led me to a framework for understanding how language works that is inspired by population and selection models from evolutionary biology. Although my grammatical and linguistic interests range broadly, my chief areas of interest are verbal semantics, and syntactic categories and the constructions that define them.
Construal (conceptualization) in language — Abstract for the conference
William Croft

Grammar is often taken to represent a conceptualization or construal of reality. In cognitive linguistics, the notion of construal has been used in two different ways that have been conflated together. It is argued here that these two ways should be distinguished. In the first case, language - both grammar and lexicon - construe experience. This is the classic notion of construal. Here, evidence from verbalization implies that experience must be divided into fine-grained situations, and that the mapping between linguistic form and meaning (experience) is a probabilistic one, determined by the affordance of each situation type for alternative construals. In the second case, it has been argued that grammatical constructions "construe" the meaning of the content words that occur in those constructions. There is considerable flexibility in the "construal" of word meanings when they occur in different constructions. But this is quite different from classic construal. The meanings of grammatical constructions are image schemas that are combined with the meanings contributed by words. Words have a purport or potential to be used in different grammatical constructions. The image schemas are not imposed by the grammatical constructions, since the latter are themselves compatible with different image schemas (i.e. are polysemous).
5:45pm – SC239 – Linguistics 1 – Korean, Japanese and Chinese Approaches to Cognitive Sciences

Moderator – Prof. Atsushi Fukada

HyeYeon Kim, SUNY Albany – Change in Word’s Meaning and Attitude toward the Word

Aiping Xiong, Purdue University – Influence of the Color-related Radical on Strop Effect

Yumiko Tashiro, Purdue University – Feasibility of Second Language Research with Economical Portable Eye-tracker
Schedule of Events

5:45pm SCG030 — Linguistics 2 — Frames and Semantic Change — Moderator: Prof. Elaine Francis
Marisa J. Carpenter, University of Wisconsin — Trends in Semantic Change as a Result of Shared Experiences

Letizia Cerqueglini, Ben Gurion University of Negev — Selection of Spatial Frames of References in Traditional Negev Arabic

8:00pm — Reception — 9 Irish Brothers Pub — 119 Howard Ave
West Lafayette, IN
Schedule of Events

7:30am — Breakfast – Stanley Coulter (SC) Hall Lounge

8:30am — SC239 – Literature 1 – Self, Identity and Cognitive Poetics
Moderator: Prof. Jennifer William

Imelda Wistey, Iowa State University – Creating Identity: the Use of Language in the Speeches of Beowulf and Wealhtheow

David Rodriguez, Stony Brook University – “An American is a Complex of Occasions”: Perception and Spatiality in the Modern American Epic

Mary Reding, Iowa State University – Grendel’s Monstrous Mother: Embodying Christian Absorption, Demonization and Eradication of Pagan Magic in Anglo-Saxon Society

Christiane F. de Alcantara, Purdue University – Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall: Beauty in Jane Austen’s Mansfield Park
10:30am – SC239 – Literature 2 – Cognition and Spanish Golden Age – 10:30am

Moderator: Prof. Howard Mancing

Daniela Radpay, University of Texas at Austin – Mind-Reading and Machiavellian Intelligence as Survival Strategies in El Conde Lucanor

Angela Patricia Pacheco, Purdue University – Theory of Mind in Film and Literature: an Analysis of Dulcinea in Cervante’s book Don Quixote and Jose Pozo’s Film “Donkey Xote”

Robert Fritz, Indiana University – The Cognitive (Re)Turn: Fernando de Herrera’s 16th-Century Embodied Cognitive Approach to Literary Criticism

Noon – Lunch in SC Lounge - Sponsored by Cengage Learning
Schedule of Events

1:00pm — SC239 — Guest Speaker — Dr. Emily Troscianko, Oxford University — Moderator: Prof. Paula Leverage

Research interests — My current research project draws on my previous work in cognitive literary studies to explore the relationships between mental health (specifically eating disorders) and fiction-reading, involving theoretical, empirical, and outreach work in collaboration with the eating-disorders charity Beat.

Abstract for the Conference

Individual minds, bodies, and contexts in literary reading

Over the past decade or so, the idea that the mind needs to be understood as part of the body has borne fruit in cognitive science and in cognitive literary studies, even if people still disagree, both between and within fields, about just how far-reaching the cognitive consequences of embodiment are. My own research has centred on embodiment in two rather different contexts: the study of Franz Kafka’s prose style and its effects on readers, and an investigation of the relationships between how people read and interpret fiction and their mental health. The first of these projects drew on current scientific findings and debates, and combined theoretical with empirical work, to uncover the embodied, enactive, and non-dualist nature of Kafka’s evocations of vision and emotion, arguing that these characteristics help explain the ambivalently ‘Kafkaesque’ experience of reading his fiction.

Continue on next page
My current project adds the next layer to these cognitive foundations by asking what embodiment means when it comes to individual embodied minds with individual traits and histories. My focal point here, partly because they form part of my own individual history, is eating disorders. Disordered eating stands right at the crossroads between mental and physical illness, and as such offers an important context for thinking about how mind, body, and context interact in the literary sphere, not least in relation to the dangers of dualism in folk-psychological intuitions about mind, body, and self. I outline what this project, in collaboration with the charity Beat, aims to contribute to our understanding of the reciprocal connections between reading and eating disorders. And I suggest, further, that the academic study of literature as a whole will become more informed, more precise, and more responsible if it takes into account the fact that both readers of literature and readers of literary scholarship are, after all, real people.
2:15pm — SC239 — Literature 3 — Metaphors and Chomsky

Moderator: Prof. Thomas Broden

Michael A. Winkelman, Owens Tech University – “Love Refined”: Neuroscience and “The Ecstasy” by John Donne

Leandro Siqueira Lima, Universidade Federal do Espirito Santo – An Ergo Sum Parody: Friday the Homeless Watching the World Cup

Christina Weiler, Purdue University– The Conceptual (Re)Connection of Human and Nature through Cognitive Poetic Metaphors in Novalis’ Die Lehrlinge zu Sais

John C. Bronsted, Florida Atlantic University – An Outline of a Scientific Cognitive Literary Theory
4:15pm – SC239 – Literature 4 – Memory and Cognition

Moderator: Prof. Clotilde Landais

Thomas Cosgrove, University of Massachusetts – “Mad or Well-Advised”: Shakespearean Skepticism as Counsel

Justyna Czader, Purdue University – Emotions and Memory in Mémoires

Valerie O’Brien, University of Illinois – Re-Membering through Forgetting: Life-Writing in Never let me Go
Schedule of Events

6:00pm — SC239 — Keynote Speaker — Prof. Mark Bruhn, Regis University
Moderator: Prof. Jennifer William

Research interests — Emily Dickinson once wrote “If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.” Dickinson here suggests that literary reading stimulates unusual, and perhaps otherwise unattainable, cognitive effects. My research focuses on these effects, especially as described and produced by English Romantic poets such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and William Wordsworth. I am particularly interested in how the cognitive theories and poetic practices of the Romantic era can inform present-day research in cognitive-neuroscience.
Abstract for the conference

Thinking Ahead: The Institutional Prospects of Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Linguistics

Mark Bruhn

We live in an era in which the humanities are increasingly asked to justify themselves, both internally to career-minded undergraduates and budget-conscious administrators and externally to accrediting agencies, the president, and the taxpaying public. Faced with reduced humanities funding and shrinking humanities majors, how do we make the case for private and public support of our research and teaching agendas? Cognitive approaches to literature and linguistics may offer compelling and career-making answers to this legitimate question, especially if we can articulate and demonstrate their genuinely _interdisciplinary_ applications.

8:00pm – Dinner at Ichiban - 2 S 4th Street
Lafayette IN