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Toward a cognitive semantics : Volume I

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Abstrak

The linguistic representation of conceptual structure is the central concern of this volume and of its companion volume. While such conceptual organization in language had once been insu½ciently addressed, attention to it has been increasing over the last two to three decades. The growing research in this relatively recent linguistic domainÐwhich has generally come to be known as cognitive linguisticsÐhas developed into an alternative approach to the study of language that now complements other approaches. The work gathered in the present pair of volumes has been a part of this growth of research and has helped to foster it. Under the common title Toward a Cognitive Semantics, these volumes include most of my published material up to the present. Further, this material has been wholly revised, extended, augmented by unpublished material, and thematically organized. Under its individual title Concept Structuring Systems, the present volume, volume I, highlights the material that demonstrates the fundamental systems by which language shapes concepts. And under the individual title Typology and Process in Concept Structuring, volume II highlights the material on typologies according to which concepts are structured and processes by which they are structured. The nature and necessity of cognitive linguistics are perhaps best characterized at the outset. To this end, I consider cognitive linguistics within a larger framework of approaches to the analysis of language. For a heuristic comparison, one can select three such approaches that address the content-related portion of language (here setting phonology aside). With simple labels, these three approaches can be designated as the formal, the psychological, and the conceptual. Particular research traditions have largely based themselves within one of these approaches, while aimingÐwith greater or lesser successÐto address the concerns of the other two approaches. These relationships suggest the following sketch.