

Modes of Cognition and Cognitive Linguistic Typology

Yoshihisa NAKAMURA
 Kanazawa University

In this paper we posit two modes of cognition, i.e. Interactional- and Displaced-modes, and discuss the possibility of cognitive linguistic typology based on them, and touch on some closely related issues.

We emphasize that cognitive world is a world emerging through direct interactions between the conceptualizer and some outer-world and further contend that in an extreme form of the interaction the conceptualizer and the conceptualized are not differentiated, i.e. they are one. This type of cognition is termed 'Interactional' mode of cognition (hereafter I-mode cognition). This cognition model is diagrammed as Figure 1. The ellipse depicts the 'field of cognition,' the circle (C) shows a conceptualizer, and the rectangle with a circle in it (③) represents a state of affairs that emerges through the interaction. The double-headed arrow (①) indicates some interaction between the conceptualizer and the event. The broken-line arrow (②) stands for a cognitive process to construe the event.

Figure1: I-mode (Interactional mode)

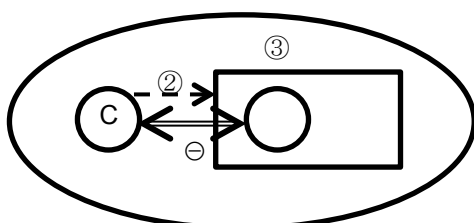
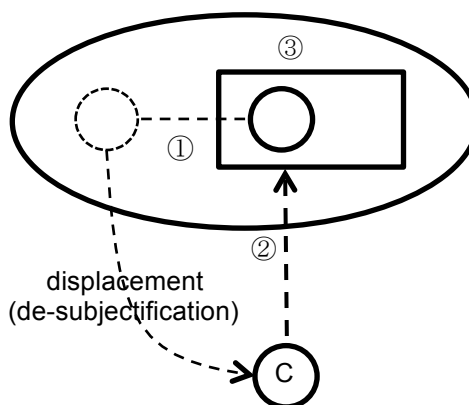


Figure 2: D-mode (Displaced mode)



We claim that we might tend to view the world or the state of affairs as if we are not involved in the interaction by displacing ourselves from the interaction and view the state of affairs from outside of the field of cognition in I-mode. This type of cognition is called 'Displaced' mode of cognition (hereafter D-mode cognition), which is illustrated as Figure 2 above.

The process from I-mode to D-mode is termed 'Desubjectification.' Languages differ in their degree of desubjectification and the proposed cognitive typology can accommodate various linguistic phenomena between the Japanese and English languages. English is a typical language of extremely high, and Japanese a typical one of extremely low, degree of desubjectification, while other languages come in between. Not only does this cognitive typology address issues and provide analyses that are crucial for an understanding of the true cognitive linguistic typology and which are frequently absent from the current debate, but it can also offer a cognitive framework for understanding linguistic typology that might be of considerably more cognitive than some of the ones currently observed in 'have' vs. 'become', topic- vs. subject-prominent, verb- vs. satellite-framed, and recursive vs. non-recursive languages.

In the 6-layer scenario of language evolution (Heine and Kuteva 2007: 111, 299), it is only at layer V that categories that may be taken to be suggestive of concepts relating to displacement and subordination/recursion, such as pronouns, definite articles, relative clause markers, complementizers, case markers, and tense markers are attested. Relative and complement markers are formal means for presenting clausal subordination leading to recursion, whereas pronouns and definite markers allow for displaced reference and with tense markers states of affairs can be represented as detached from the here-and-now. In this way the grammaticalization of the categories at layer V represents the characteristics of D-mode (i.e. displacement and meta-cognition). If these categories are the decisive feature of human language as Heine and Kuteva claim, the cognitive transition from I- to D- modes is claimed to be critical to the emergence of human language. The linguistic typology based on the modes of cognition proposed here is also said to be closely related to language evolution and well-accorded with the evolutionary linguistics' spirit; "Nothing in linguistics makes sense except in the light of evolution" which is the recast of Dobzhansky's "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution."

References

Heine, B. and T. Kuteva. 2007. *The Genesis of Grammar*. Oxford UP