

**A Cognitive (Construction) Grammar approach to written academic
English as a lingua franca: the emerging elaborated abstract construction
in three disciplinary communities**

The purpose of the present dissertation is to identify and explore the emerging elaborated abstract construction in three academic disciplinary communities, i.e. law, linguistics, and literary studies. The rationale behind formulating the above aim stemmed from current studies in two research fields, i.e. academic English as a lingua franca and Cognitive (Construction) Grammar, the integration of which was perceived as facilitating further advancements in both areas. To provide a detailed account of the avenues along which these developments could proceed, culminating in the emergence of the elaborated abstract construction, i.e. to establish a well-grounded motivation for the current project, the dissertation is divided into three main parts, each consisting of two chapters.

The first part is dedicated to (academic) English as a lingua franca. To be more specific, the first chapter focuses on defining the concept of a lingua franca and presenting the main theoretical approaches used in theorizing English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF). The chapter commences with a description of lingua francas and ELF from a sociolinguistic angle, utilizing three continua of features employed to characterize lingua francas. In this way, ELF is presented as related to, yet still different from, other lingua francas, and its uniquely global role is duly emphasized. Next, the chapter focuses on discussing two approaches embraced in ELF theorizing, i.e. competence-based and usage-based, presenting complementary views upon the relationship between linguistic knowledge and language use. The first chapter concludes with an indication that a usage-based approach, with its emergent and emerging perspectives, appears most promising in ELF theorizing as it adequately captures an interplay of fluidity and stability inherent in ELF, particularly in the academic domain.

Consequently, the second chapter concentrates on describing academic ELF from a usage-based perspective. In this chapter, the role of ELF among academic (disciplinary) communities is discussed, highlighting ELF's crucial function in international research dissemination. Simultaneously, the usage-based perspective outlined in Chapter 1 is further elaborated through two models employed for theorizing academic ELF, i.e. Linear Unit

Grammar (henceforth LUG) and Construction Grammar (henceforth CxG), corresponding to a more emergent and a more emerging perspective, respectively. Subsequently, specific methodological solutions adopted for exploring academic ELF are delineated in two steps. Firstly, principles of constructing spoken and written academic ELF corpora are provided. Secondly, methods of analyzing spoken and written data in accordance with LUG and CxG are discussed. The chapter ends with a suggestion that a more comprehensive account of academic ELF can be achieved through integrating the principles of LUG and CxG. This integration, as it is further proposed, should enable a proper incorporation of the embodied dimension, including Gestalt principles, into theorizing and researching academic ELF. In this way, the many clines along which LUG and CxG are placed, all of which are essentially related to the emergent-emerging continuum, could be reconciled.

The second part of this dissertation is devoted to delineating a framework for the above-mentioned reconciliation, presenting Cognitive (Construction) Grammar (henceforth C(C)G) as an approach capable of compensating for the gaps (already) identified in usage-based theorizing of ELF. Thus, the third chapter synthesizes the cognitive and constructionist commitments of C(C)G. Firstly, the chapter presents Gestalt-based cognitive processes as uniquely highlighted in C(C)G and explains how these processes are connected to basic concepts, and thus foundational to the conceptual system and the representation of constructions. Next, the chapter elaborates on the notion of a construction and introduces three clines by which constructions can be described, i.e. fixedness-novelty, specificity-schematicity, and simplicity-complexity, simultaneously emphasizing that constructionhood can be observed at many levels.

The fourth chapter, in turn, aims to describe a C(C)G approach to constructions at one such level, i.e. discourse. The chapter begins by defining discourse and presenting discourse genres as constructions, highlighting their (potentially) multimodal nature, and then discusses ways in which discourse genres can be researched as constructions. To align with the division introduced in Chapter 2, the chapter presents selected studies on both spoken and written data, uncovering the heterogeneity of the solutions adopted and thus the many ways in which non-academic and academic discourse genre constructions can be interpreted. The chapter concludes that the uncertain ontological status of discourse genre constructions, which is particularly noticeable in the academic domain and in the written mode, requires further C(C)G-based research so that a clear and replicable method of identifying and describing discourse genre constructions could be devised.

The final part of this dissertation describes the study designed to develop a method of identifying and describing one type of discourse genre constructions, i.e. the elaborated abstract construction emerging in three academic ELF disciplinary communities. The fifth chapter presents the DISCOWER corpus, i.e. a new written ELF corpus created with the intention of providing a database for the identification of the elaborated abstract construction. Hence, the chapter presents how the assumptions of LUG and CxG are integrated in and through the cognitive and constructionist commitments characteristic of C(C)G to guide the process of compiling the DISCOWER corpus. To be more specific, in accordance with the general principles of corpus compilation, the creation of DISCOWER is described with reference to four aspects, i.e. corpus units, external criteria, corpus balance, and methods of data description. The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of comprehensively characterizing elaborated abstracts tentatively delineated in the corpus as constructions.

Finally, the sixth chapter aims at systematically identifying and exploring the emerging elaborated abstract construction, which could be perceived as a stabilizing discourse genre construction attributed to academic ELF users. To identify and explore the construction, the continua of features through which constructions are described in C(C)G are used and hence elaborated abstracts are presented with reference to their degrees of fixedness, specificity and simplicity. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the elaborated abstract construction is reliably depicted as emerging in the academic ELF disciplinary communities of law, linguistics, and literary studies. The chapter concludes with a summary of its findings as well as presenting the limitations observed.

The dissertation ends with a conclusion that outlines potential implications of the study in relation to both the research fields embraced in the present work, i.e., academic ELF and C(C)G, as well as related areas of inquiry.

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