# Phenomenology and Cognitive Linguistics

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe some similarities, as well as differences, between theoretical proposals emanating from the tradition of phenomenology and the currently popular approach to language and cognition known as *cognitive linguistics* (hence CL). This is a rather demanding and potentially controversial topic. For one thing, neither CL nor phenomenology constitute monolithic theories, and are actually rife with internal controversies. This forces me to make certain "schematizations", since it is impossible to deal with the complexity of these debates in the space here allotted.

Phenomenology was founded by Edmund Husserl over a century ago as a new foundational philosophy, based on "the careful description of what appears to consciousness precisely in the manner of its appearing" (Moran 2005: 1). While students and descendants such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre and Gurwitsch, to mention only those most famous ones, developed this tradition in their own directions, I believe that the figure of Husserl arches over these, and in the same way that he urged to "go back to the things themselves", it is necessary to "go back to Husserl" in order to truly understand what phenomenology is about. I think also that it is fair to say that the past decade has brought about a reappraisal of Husserl, along with the increased familiarity with his late and mainly posthumously published work. Husserl's high relevance for present "hot topics" such as the nature of consciousness, the embodiment of subjectivity and the intersubjective constitution of the lifeworld, is widely acknowledged (Thompson 2001; Zahavi 2001, Depraz 2001; Moran 2005; Gallagher 2005). Hence, I will mostly regard Husserl as "metonymic" for phenomenology, and make brief excursions into the work of other phenomenologists, including moderns ones, only when this is called for. Furthermore, other chapters in this *Handbook* are bound to treat the debates within phenomenology in much more detail.

CL emerged in the late 1970's, to a large extent as a reaction to the dominance of formalist approaches to language and cognition such as *generative linguistics* (Chomsky 1975), *logical semantics* (e.g. Montague 1974), and *computationalist cognitive science* (Gardner 1987). The "founding fathers" of CL (cf. Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007b) are typically considered to be George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker and Leonard Talmy, all California-based linguists. However, it was clear from the start that the ambitions of at least some CL researchers involved not just a new linguistics, but a novel philosophical theory labeled "experientialism" or "embodied realism" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987). Based on professed "empirical discoveries" such as the mind's embodiment, the (predominantly) unconscious nature of thought and the metaphorical nature of abstract concepts, Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 1) claim that their approach constitutes a revolution in Western thought:

What would happen if we started with these empirical discoveries about the nature of the mind and constructed philosophy anew? The answer is that empirically responsible philosophy would require our culture to abandon some of its deepest theoretical assumptions.

It is in this quest for providing a new philosophy – grounded in "experience", and with a central role played by the living body – that one may be tempted to find the clearest rapprochement between CL and phenomenology. The insistence of an "empirically responsible philosophy" is furthermore reminiscent of present discussions of "naturalizing" phenomenology (cf. Gallagher & Broested-Soerensen 2006). However, a more careful consideration of the writings of Lakoff and Johnson shows that their version of "experientialism" is quite inconsistent with phenomenology, which I will attempt to show in this chapter.

But while these authors are commonly taken as representing "the" philosophy of CL, this is not the case. Over the past 10-15 years, CL has considerably diversified and many have formulated alternative positions on crucial issues such as the nature of meaning, representation, grammar – and, especially relevant for this chapter – consciousness, embodiment and intersubjectivity. Zlatev (1997, 2007a) has criticized the Lakoff-Johnson approach for lacking a socio-cultural perspective and, in agreement with Itkonen (2003), for failing to account for the essential *normativity* of language (see Section 2.2). Haser (2005) has presented an extended and influential critique of the philosophy of Lakoff and Johnson, with emphasis on their theory of "conceptual metaphor", showing that despite occasional claims to the contrary linguistic meaning is regarded by "mainstream CL" as a private, mental, "in the head" phenomenon. This is at odds with the meaning-externalism that has dominated philosophy since Wittgenstein (1953), and I will argue that at least one form of externalism is consistent with a phenomenology acknowledging the distinction between linguistic *intuition* and *introspection* (cf. Section 2.2). Two recent anthologies within the main publication series of CL, "Cognitive Linguistic Research" edited by Hampe (2005) and Ziemke, Zlatev and Frank (2007), have demonstrated the amount of theoretical divergence with respect to, respectively, the central theoretical notion of *image schemas* (cf. Section 3.2) and the meta-theoretical concept of *embodiment* (cf. Section 2.4).

The most authoritative summary of CL research up to date, *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007a), represents much of the diversity mentioned in the previous paragraph, including the introspection-based analyses of Talmy (2000), the most developed theory of grammar within CL, the *Cognitive Grammar* of Langacker (1987, 2006), and the influential theory of *Conceptual Integration* ("blending") (Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Turner 2007), with roots in literature studies. Interestingly, the editors (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007b) point out in their introductory chapter to a rising tension within CL, which they formulate in epistemological/methodological terms:

> If we understand *empirical methods* to refer to forms of research (like corpus linguistics, experimentation, and neurological modeling) that do not rely on introspection and intuition but that try to ground linguistic analysis on the firm basis of objective observation, then we can certainly witness a growing appeal to such empirical methods within Cognitive Linguistics… (ibid: 16) /…/ Because meanings do not present themselves directly in the corpus data, will introspection not always be used in any cognitive analysis of language? (For an explicit defense of such a position, albeit in terms of "intuition" rather than "introspection" see Itkonen 2003). (ibid: 18)

One of the major contentions of this chapter is that a phenomenological perspective would allow the resolution of this tension. In brief: in a similar way that phenomenological psychology can be argued to serve as prerequisite for empirical psychology[1], a *phenomenological (cognitive) linguistics* sets the conditions for linguistic "empirical methods" (in the narrow sense of the term used by Geeraerts and Cuyckens, which is quite common nowadays). Thus, while the first part of my presentation will be mostly critical, the motivation is not negative per se, but to clear the ground for a *true* rapprochement between CL and phenomenology. Since many of the controversies on which I will touch concern the "naturalization" of CL, these debates may also have significance for corresponding debates concerning phenomenology itself (e.g. Varela 1996; Sheets-Johnstone 2004; Overgaard 2004).

## 2. Fundamental issues: "Experientialism" vs. phenomenology

Lakoff and Johnson provide occasional references to "phenomenology", but in ways that are quite confusing, and sometimes even contradictory. For instance, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 181-182) pay homage to "the central insights of the phenomenological tradition, such as the rejection of epistemological foundationalism, the stress on the centrality of the body in the structuring of experience, and the importance of that structure in understanding." At the same time, only a few pages later they refer to "the tradition of Husserl" as one form of the criticized "objectivist tradition of Western philosophy" (ibid: 195) – an apparent self-contradiction, also noticed by Haser (2005: 88). In what is probably the most philosophically elaborated work on experientialism up to date, *The Body in the Mind*, Johnson (1987: xxxvii) writes: "some of my most important claims are anticipated in the work of philosophers who might claim allegiance to phenomenology of the post-Husserlian varieties" and describes his method as "a form of descriptive or empirical phenomenology". At the same time, the name of the founder of phenomenology, Husserl, always seems to appear in a negative context in experientialist writings, and that of Merleau-Ponty, whose work is possibly most relevant for the proposed "embodied realism", hardly at all (cf. Nerlich and Clarke 2007).

In this section I will focus on what may be called the "official philosophy" of CL, *experientialism*, and point out (mostly) inconsistencies with phenomenology. At the same time, I will introduce some of the criticism directed at Lakoff and Johnson form less-central representatives of CL, and (conversely) show their affinity with a phenomenological perspective. One of these, Esa Itkonen (1978, 1997, 2003), has been especially influential over CL during recent years (cf. the quotation by Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007b in the previous section; also Zlatev 2007a, 2007b; Harder 2007).

### 2.1 Metaphysics

Experientialism is contrasted with "Objectivism" on the one hand, and with "Subjectivism" on the other (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: Chapters 25-29). The first is characterized as an "offending cluster of assumptions that has lead to this blindness towards imagination" (Johnson 1987: ix-x), one of these assumptions being formulated as: "there is an objective reality, and we can say things that are objectively, absolutely and unconditionally true about it" (ibid: 187). In some contexts, Objectivism is

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[1] "The experimental method is indispensible. /…/ But this does not alter the fact that it presupposes what no experiment can accomplish, namely the analysis of conscious life itself. /…/ Phenomenological psychology is interested primarily in the necessary a priori of every possible empirical psychology" (Kockelmans 1967: 425, 447, quoted by Itkonen 2003: 110). The complementary relationship between phenomenological psychology (Husserl [1925] 1977; Gurwitsch 1964) and phenomenological philosophy, focusing respectively on the ego and world poles of the intentional relation is discussed by Sonesson (2007).

called a "myth" (along with Subjectivism and Experientialism), apparently meaning some sort of pre-theoretical, culture-specific conceptual framework. In others, however, it is explicitly stated that "objectivist metaphysics … is a false theory" (Lakoff 1988: 124). As Haser (2005: Chapter 5) shows in detail, it is indeed hard to understand what exactly "objectivism" refers to, and why so many diverse philosophers from Frege and "the followers of Husserl" to Davidson and Goodman are claimed to fall prey to its errors. "Subjectivism" – represented by "contemporary interpretations (probably *mis*interpretations) of recent Continental philosophy, especially the traditions of phenomenology and existentialism" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 223) – is presented as the anti-thesis. It is characterized by statements of "café phenomenology" (ibid: 224) such as: "Meaning is always a matter of what is meaningful and significant to a person. What an individual finds meaningful and is significant to him are matters of intuition, imagination, feeling and individual experience" (ibid: 224).

Experientialism is presented as a "synthesis", agreeing with Objectivism on the existence of an "external reality", but with Subjectivism that this reality is mediated by human experience. A correspondence theory of truth is possible only from "within" a given conceptual scheme. Despite claims to the contrary, the doctrine of experientialism thus implies not only what Husserl called "anthropologism" (Husserl 2001[1900], Prol #36), but cultural relativism: "Being objective is always relative to a conceptual system and a set of cultural values." (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 227). In general, Lakoff and Johnson avoid paying explicit tribute to other philosophers, but both Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) acknowledge Putnam's (1981) *internal realism* as making essentially the same claims, and indeed Lakoff (1987) refers to "internal realism" as being a valid theoretical extension of commonsense "basic realism", while Objectivism is an invalid one. More recently, Johnson and Rohrer (2007: 21) refer to their doctrine as "embodied realism", and see its predecessors in American Pragmatism, quoting especially approvingly Dewey (1981 [1925]: 198): "to see the organism in nature, the nervous system in the organism, the brain in the nervous system, the cortex in the brain is the answer to the problems that haunt philosophy".

The foundations of phenomenology are quite different. For Husserl (and "his followers") what has primacy is not "objective reality", "consciousness", "interaction" or biology, but the Lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), as summarized by Moran (2005: 9): "As conscious beings, we always inhabit – in a pre-theoretical manner – an experiential world, given in advance (*vorgegeben*), on hand (*vorhanden*), and always experienced as a unity". This world is a correlate of a pervasive and universal "naïve" attitude, *the natural attitude* in which we focus our attention on what is "out there" – but not on ourselves as experiencers or on the act of experiencing. Various forms of objectivism such as metaphysical realism ("things in themselves", "the world as such") arise according to Husserl as "abstractions" or "absolutizations" of the natural attitude: "the objectivist, scientific attitude and the formal mathematical attitude are both abstractions from the natural attitude and in a sense presuppose it" (Moran 2005: 55). The point is thus not that such absolutizations are culturally-relative myths or even less "false theories", but that they have a tendency to be, so to say, doubly blind: both that they presuppose the natural attitude and that though basic, the natural attitude is only one among a multitude of attitudes.

Husserl recognized namely that the Lifeworld allows for *a plurality of attitudes*, which again are not "cultural schemes" but possible experiential relations that all human beings can stand in with respect to the world, actualized by particular circumstances. For example, a special type of absolutization of the natural attitude that is particularly prominent (and pernicious) is the modern "technological calculating attitude" (Moran 2005: 237). At the same time, such absolutizations make some of the alternative attitudes appear clearly, often as reactions to the distortions of the Lifeworld that the former introduce. One of these is the *psychological attitude,* in which we thematize our "inner" mental life,

rather than "outer" world. However, when these themselves are absolutized in philosophical doctrines, such as the subjective idealism of Berkeley, they too become no less distorting of the Lifeworld.

However, two attitudes have privileged status for Husserl. The first is *the personalistic attitude*. At least in his later work Husserl claimed "that the natural attitude is actually reached through a self-forgetting of the self or ego of the personalistic attitude, through abstraction from the personal, which presents the world in some kind of absolutized way, as the world of nature" (Moran 2005: 216). Importantly, the personalistic attitude reveals others as *persons* (rather than objects) on a par with the self and in this way makes clear "the intersubjective constitution of the world" (Husserl, 1970: #49). The second is the *theoretical* or *philosophical attitude*, developed in the West first in Ancient Greece, allowing for the un-concealment of the natural attitude as such: "The natural attitude is self-concealing; the theoretical attitude, on the other hand, is self-involving and self-aware and ultimately universal, transforming all human praxis (Hua 6: 334)" (quoted by Moran 2005: 150). Phenomenology, including the methods of *epoché* and the reduction, is nothing but a "purification" of this attitude: "this exploration of the dimensions of givenness of objectivity to subjectivity" (Moran 2005: 106).

In this brief exposition, I have deliberately skipped over Husserl's move to transcendental idealism and "absolute consciousness" in *Ideen I*, which made many of his former students part company with him, and which is admittedly rather hard to swallow for most modern thinkers.[2] Still, even if we take that into account, neither Husserl nor any of the other phenomenologists, including Sartre and his insistence on a "pre-positional" *cogito* (1956 [1943]) may be properly characterized as either "objectivist" or "subjectivist": all varieties of phenomenology are fervent critics of both.

Furthermore, from the standpoint of Husserl, Gurwitsch (1964), and arguably also Merleau-Ponty (see below), the metaphysics of "experientialism" is yet another distortion of the Lifeworld, and not a particularly coherent one at that. The culture-relativism (objectivity being "always relative to a conceptual system and a set of cultural values") is perhaps consistent with the later work of Heidegger, but for Husserl, this is self-refuting: why accept Lakoff and Johnson's "experientialism", combining what is considered valid (on what grounds?) from objectivism and subjectivism, as anything more than a culture-relative "myth"?  The emphasis on pan-human structures of "embodiment" can be seen as a step to address this objection. However, even if that move were successful, which I argue in Section 2.3 is not the case, that would make experientialism species-relative, and like Kant's "anthropologism" ultimately unsatisfactory. The major problem from a phenomenological perspective, however, is that "experientialism" is based on neither of the two most authentic attitudes toward the Lifeworld – the personalistic and the philosophical – but oscillates uneasily between the psychological/subjective and the *biological* attitudes. When it takes the first option – made most explicit in the writings of one of the other two "founding fathers", Talmy (see Section 2.2) – and e.g. describes meanings as mental entities, it faces the problems of subjectivism. Since this is clearly unsatisfactory, there is a predictable move in the opposite direction, with claims of reducing meaning and experience to neurobiology, as evidenced in the most recent work of Lakoff (Gallese and Lakoff 2005; Dodge and Lakoff 2005). Consider statements such as the following: "Linguistic structure is below the level of consciousness

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[2] However, some modern philosophers of mind, bedeviled with the failures of both physicalist and dualist theories to explain consciousness, appear to be willing to adopt a form of monism which is reminiscent of Husserl's transcentendal idealism, e.g. Honderich (2006) theory of "radical externalism" or "consciousness as existence".

because the brain structures that compute them are unconscious" (ibid: 86) and "The brain is thus the seat of explanation for cognitive linguistic results" (ibid: 70).

From a phenomenological perspective, this is clearly an objectivist absolutization of the natural attitude, which is ultimately reductionist.[3] As pointed out by (Husserl 1989 [1952], #51: 201): "He who sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, as it were, through the eyes of natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences". Even the most "naturalized" of the classical phenomenologists, Merleau-Ponty, argued rather for "abandoning the body as an object… and going back to the body which I experience at this moment" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 75).

## 2.2 Methodology: phenomenological and "empirical" methods

In a recent "study in phenomenological semiotics" Sonesson (2007: 90) has argued that linguistics as a whole presupposes an explicit or implicit phenomenological method, i.e. a careful analysis of what appears in consciousness when we reflect on our knowledge and use of language:

> All human and social sciences which aspire to discover regularities, such as linguistics and other semiotic sciences, *necessarily start out from phenomenology* – and we should be happy if those phenomenological investigations sometime manage to be as meticulous as those of Husserl and Gurwitsch. (emphasis added)

Johnson also claims to be employing a method of "descriptive or empirical phenomenology" (Johnson 1987: xxxvii) or "informal phenomenological analysis of the structural dimensions of sensory-motor experience" (Johnson 2005: 21). In practice, Johnson includes references to everyday situations in which certain invariants of experience are focused on and labeled "image schemas" (for more discussion of this notion, cf. Section 3.2). Since the linguistic expressions used to refer to these are also used in other, and more abstract, contexts the latter are postulated to be derived from "conceptual metaphors". For example, the following passage is meant to show the prevalence of the CONTAINER image schema:

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[3] Some (like an anonymous reviewer) are liable to dispute this claim, and point out that Lakoff and Johnson (1999) postulate different "levels of embodiment" (cf. Section 2.4), while Rohrer (2007a; 2007b) explicitly argues that his "levels of investigation" framework in not reductionist: "research in embodied cognitive science should not seek to reduce such phenomena to another level but should instead bridge across these levels" (Rohrer 2007a: 346). Lakoff and Johnson (1999) describe their ontological position as being one of "noneliminative physicalism" (ibid: 109), where "each level is taken as real, as having a theoretical ontology necessary to explain phenomena. … explanation and motivation flow in both directions." (ibid: 113). However, while this may qualify as an *epistemological* non-reductionism, ontologically Lakoff and Johnson are physicalists, accepting without any argument "the lack of any mind-body gap" (ibid: 96). Also, just considering that 4 of the 6 "levels of investigation" in Rohrer's "non-reductive" framework deal with increasingly high-grained analysis of the brain ("Neural systems", "Neuroanatomy", "Neurocellular systems" and "Subcellular systems"), while the two highest: "Communicative and cultural systems" and "Performance domain" are characterized as "Multiple central nervous systems" and "Central nervous systems" shows what is *really real* for this strand of cognitive linguistic thinking. A non-reductionist neuroscientific cognitive linguistics is indeed possible, but as in neurophenomenology (Varela 1996), that would mean not privileging the objective, third-person perspective, but rather starting from, and keeping a focus on, the *experiences* of speakers, while looking for correlations with these in e.g. neuroimaging studies. I am not aware that any CL-researchers have carried out such projects, but they are of course quite possible.

> You wake *out* of a deep sleep and peer *out* from beneath the covers *into* your room. You gradually emerge *out* of your stupor, pull yourself *out* from under the covers, climb *into* your robe, stretch *out* your limbs, and walk *in* a daze *out* of the bedroom and *into* the bathroom. You look *in* the mirror and see your face staring *out* at you. ... Once you are more awake you may even get lost *in* the newspaper, might enter *into* a conversation, which leads to your speaking *out* on some topic (Johnson 1987: 31, emphasis in original).

Walking-into-the-bathroom is presumably an instance of the "pre-conceptual" schema derived from sensory-motor experience, while getting-lost-in-the-newspaper does not have the CONTAINER structure in itself, but rather inherits it via a "conceptual metaphor" (see Johnson this volume). However, while walking into bathrooms and being lost in newspapers are clearly *experiences*, and as such can be subjected to phenomenological analysis, the structures claimed to underlie them are theoretical constructs which may not. Hence, it is unsurprising when Johnson claims:

> However, we must keep in mind that phenomenological analysis is *never enough*, because image schemas typically operate beneath the level of conscious awareness. That is why we *must go beyond phenomenology* to employ standard explanatory methods of linguistics, psychology and neuroscience. (Johnson 2005: 21, emphasis added).

This seems rather contradictory – first phenomenological analysis (even if "informal") is used to uncover structures, which are later claimed to be accessible only through the "standard explanatory methods" of natural science, since they operate "beneath the level of conscious awareness". The last quotation is also revealing of a highly problematic conception of both phenomenology and linguistics. First, phenomenology is mostly concerned not with structures and processes which "typically operate" on/above (?) "the level of conscious awareness", but rather the contrary: with what is normally non-thematic, or in the "margins" of consciousness, but which through reflection and phenomenological analysis can be brought into awareness. Sonesson (2007) gives the following simple example: while speakers are not aware of the inventory of phonemes in their language, by conducting a linguistic analysis finding "minimal pairs": e.g. *roar* vs. *lore*, /r/ and /l/ can be identified as phonemes in English, but not in a language such as Japanese.

Secondly, by placing it on a par with psychology (presumably "empirical") and even more so "neuroscience", Johnson is aligning linguistics with the natural sciences. Itkonen (1978, 2003, 2005, 2008) argues against such a misguided application of a "physicalistic attitude":

> For years now, leading representatives of theoretical linguistics have been arguing that humans, being guided by a blind "language instinct", can be described in physico-biological terms. … this conception has been shown to be fundamentally false. Humans are also, and crucially, social, normative, and conscious beings… (Itkonen 2003: 151)

To see why Johnson's reasoning is inconsistent with phenomenology – while the claims of Itkonen in fact are – let us look again at Johnson's passage illustrating the "image schema" CONTAINER given earlier. Two obvious features (bypassed by the author, as well as by the extensive CL literature on "image schemas") are (a) the repeated use of the second-person pronouns *you* and *your*, and (b) the fact that while the passage is supposed to illustrate *private*, and even unconscious, "sensory-motor experience" it is being mediated by a *public* language, in particular, the emphasized terms *in(to)* and *out of*. If the structure was truly *sensory-motor* by nature, Johnson would be at most justified to say "I"

and "mine", rather than "you" and "your".[4] The reason for this is that "experientialism" lacks a principled account of *intersubjectivity* (see Section 2.3), despite occasional claims that what are being described are "shared meanings". The meanings of the expressions illustrating these putative underlying structures, on the other hand, are intersubjectively shared between Johnson and his readers, on the basis of their common knowledge of English, along with the relevant cultural background involving robes, mirrors, newspapers etc. Following Wittgenstein (1953), thus, we may question the legitimacy of trying to explain what is "out in the open" (the *conceptual*) with "hidden" *causal* structures and processes. Of course, when investigating truly causal processes which are by their nature inaccessible to consciousness, one *should* "go beyond phenomenology" and employ "empirical methods". Such investigations are, however, qualitatively different and, as argued at length by both Husserl and Wittgenstein, methodologically secondary. Itkonen makes this point as follows:

> Knowledge of the rules of language precedes any experiment. Imagine an experiment that would show that *cat* really means 'dog', or that in English the definite article does not precede but follows the noun. We would refuse to accept the results of these experiments because *in this domain our common (and pre-experimental) knowledge defines how things are*. It would be an analogous mistake that the notion of e.g., a centimeter is the result, and not a precondition, of experiments where length is measured. (Itkonen 2003: 137, emphasis added)

The domain Itkonen refers to coincides with those aspects of the Lifeworld which consist of what Searle (1995) calls "institutional facts" rather than "brute facts".[5] It is a phenomenological fact that "the rules of language" (including the meanings of words) are known on a *pre-theoretical level*, as shown by the universal existence of linguistic *intuitions* of correctness (e.g. *John loves Mary*) or incorrectness (*\*Loves John Mary*), even in the most "naïve" speakers (cf. Zlatev 2008). The job of the linguist or philosopher is first of all to provide a *theoretical* explication (rather than causal explanation) of these rules, on the basis of such intuitions. Langacker's explications in terms of pictorial diagrams, Montague's in terms of higher-order logics, or Chomsky's in terms of increasingly complex tree-diagrams thus have, whether their authors are aware of this or not, the same ontological status and methodological basis. *Intuition* is understood by Itkonen as defined by Cohen (1986: 75): "the immediate, unreflective inclination, without argument or inference, to judge that p (and that anyone who faces the same issue ought also to judge that p), where the judgment that p is a kind that is in principle not checkable by sensory experience or by accepted methods of calculation" and this is consistent with Husserl's notion of *categorical intuition* (Husserl, 2001 [1900]).

Intuition has an irreducibly *normative element* (note the "ought to" in Cohen's definition) and hence unlike *introspection* is not something private, and "subjective", even though it consists of acts of consciousness. Therefore Itkonen (1978, 2003) has correctly, though controversially, asserted that linguistics is not (primarily) an "empirical science" based on the observation of spatio-temporal occurrences of events, but a "normative science" studying intersubjectively binding norms, (primarily) through intuition. The term "normative science", however, may be confusing, since it usually refers to

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[4] And even less the first-person plural "we", as done by Rohrer (2007b: 35) in paraphrasing the same passage.

[5] Though, of course, Husserl would never have accepted the existence of "brute facts", and rather have said that they belong to another part of the Lifeworld than the institutional ones. A criticism that may be leveled at the early Husserl is that he, similar to Gibson (1979) hardly recognized the existence of the latter (cf. Sonesson 1989).

*prescriptive* fields such as rhetoric, while linguistics, like phenomenology is basically *descriptive*, though what it studies are norms (rules, conventions) rather than concrete entities such as utterances.[6]

The failure to distinguish between intuition and introspection has lead to serious misunderstandings of the methods of both phenomenology (cf. Thomasson 2002, including the quote from Dennett (1987: 154) claiming the phenomenology is based on "some sort of introspection") and (cognitive) linguistics. Talmy (2000: 4), for example, makes this double error in a single passage that has been often quoted as representative of the "non-empirical" camp within CL:

> For cognitive semantics, the main object of study itself is qualitative mental phenomena as they exist in awareness. Cognitive semantics is thus a branch of phenomenology /…/ As matters stand, the only instrumentality that can access the phenomenological content and structure of consciousness is that of introspection.

The problem is that this would appear to make phenomenological methods subjective and unreliable, and therefore "empirical methods" including those of psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics and the statistical analysis of multi-million word computerized texts (corpora) are currently seen by an increasing number of cognitive linguists as being *necessary* for providing "a truly scientific" theory of meaning and language.

This conflation of introspection and intuition (and phenomenology) is unfortunately pervasive within CL, and it is (I would hold) one of the major reasons for the tension between the "psychologistic" and "physicalistic" attitudes within CL noted earlier. On the one hand, language, and especially meaning is usually treated as something subjective and psychological: "qualitative mental phenomena" (Talmy 2000), "the mental image associated with your basic-level concept…" (Lakoff 1987: 129), "mental scanning" and "mental simulation" (Langacker 1987). Harder (2007: 1247) states this clearly: "Cognitive Linguistics focuses on mental, conceptual entities as legitimate objects of description in their own right". To counter the objection that this would imply subjectivism and anything-goes relativism, the mental is also said to be identical with, or explained by the bio-physical: "an ordered conception necessarily incorporates the *sequenced occurrence* of cognitive events as one facet of its neurological implementation" (Langacker 1986: 455) and (the previously quoted) "The brain is thus the seat of explanation for cognitive linguistic results" (Dodge and Lakoff 2005: 71).

Thus, we are faced with something of a paradox: starting from a kind of naïve phenomenology and an apotheosis of "experience" and "imagination", some of the most prominent cognitive linguists have been led to positions that may be called anti-phenomenological (cf. Section 2.4 on the "cognitive unconscious"). The resolution of this paradox, defended by some current researchers more or less closely related to CL, is that linguistic meaning and structure are neither subjective (in the mind), nor objective (in the brain), nor in the strange modern conception of the "mind/brain" (cf. Sinha 1999), but are fundamentally *intersubjective* (Itkonen 2003, 2008; Haser 2005; Zlatev 2005, 2007, 2008; Sinha and Rodríguez 2008; Harder 2007). As such they are properly studied through phenomenological methods such as intuition, empathy and explication. "Empirical methods" are also important, but they come in second place.

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[6] Again, depending on one's purposes one may need to "go beyond" such description and seek "explanations" in terms of evolution, ontogenetic development, history, neuroscience etc. Hence, there are subfields of linguistics devoted specifically to such investigations in which phenomenology is indeed "never enough": psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, diachronic (historical) linguistics etc. The grounds for these, including notions such as "sentence", "word", "sense" are, however, set by (informal) phenomenological methods.

## 2.3. Intersubjectivity

Towards the end of his monograph, Johnson (1987: 176) summarizes his discussion of "image schemata and metaphorical projections" as follows: "These embodied and imaginative structures of meaning have been shown to be shared, public and "objective", in an appropriate sense of objectivity". However, it not clear where and how this has "been shown". The use of the second-person pronouns, commented in the previous sub-section, and even the first-person plural: "An image schema is a recurring dynamic pattern of *our* perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to *our* experience…" (Johnson 1987: xiv, my emphasis) is hardly justified. The closest is probably a neo-Kantian conception that without such "structures of imagination" experience would be chaotic, combined with an empiricist/pragmatist view of "recurrent … interactions" with the environment, and finally a naturalistic conception of "embodiment": "commonalities […] exist in the way our minds are embodied" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 4) and "we all have pretty much the same embodied basic-level and spatial-relations concepts" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 107).

It is Itkonen (2003, 2008), again, who from phenomenological and Wittgensteinian positions has exposed the fact that experientialism has "no conceptual apparatus" (Itkonen 2003: 148) to account for "public shared meaning" (Johnson 1987: 190), despite the best intentions. Both Johnson (1987: xxx-xxxi) and Itkonen (2003: 145-146) quote a well-known passage from Frege (1966 [1892]) (though in different translations):

> The reference and sense [*Sinn*] of a sign are to be distinguished from the associated idea. If the reference of the sign is an object perceivable by the senses, my image of it is an internal image, arising from memories of sense impressions which I have had, and acts, both internal and external, which I have performed. Such an idea is often saturated with feeling; the clarity of its separate parts varies and oscillates. The same sense is not always connected, even in the same man, with the same idea. The idea is subjective: one man's idea is not that of another. … This constitutes an essential distinction between the idea and the sign's sense, which may be *the common property of many* and therefore is not a part or mode of the individual mind. (emphasis added)

The interpretations that Johnson and Itkonen make of *Sinn*, however, are completely at odds. Johnson writes:

> Frege thought he needed this strange third realm [i.e. *Sinn*, "sense"] to ensure the objectivity of meaning …Human cognition and understanding are bypassed as irrelevant to objective meaning relations. All mental processes (ideas, images, imaginative projections) that might explain how it is that a sign could come to connect up with the world, and with other signs, are excluded from consideration. This is the Objectivist view of meaning in its purest form (Johnson 1987: xxx – xxxi).

In response, Itkonen points out that Frege by no means "bypasses" perception, action and even emotion, as obvious from what he write on "ideas", but that his "anti-psychologism", which is very similar to that of Husserl (2001 [1900]) concerns "the common property of many": the level of intersubjective, common knowledge, which is normative, and accessible through intuition (Section 2.1). It is hardly correct to say that this "level" does not involve "human cognition and understanding",

since that would make it indeed Platonist.[7] Rather, the challenge is to articulate how the "shared, common mind" is constructed through processes and structures of human consciousness, which are different from those involved in individual experience. Common knowledge, Itkonen proposes, can be viewed as a *network*, which is not reducible to the individual pieces of thread, but is nevertheless composed by them once they come to stand in a particular structure (Itkonen 2008). Therefore, Itkonen defends a "social ontology" of meaning, which, as stated in Section 2.1 is consistent with (the later) Husserl's emphasis on intersubjectivity and the personalistic attitude, revealing "the intersubjective constitution of the world".

More recently, this "minority position" within CL, represented by Itkonen, Sinha, Zlatev and a few others, has gained some prominence, and "intersubjective" is becoming a commonplace term. Verhagen (2005, 2008) has argued that the fundamentally intersubjective nature of language is reflected in the fact that argumentative and evaluative meanings are lexicalized and codified in grammar, and thus part of conventional meaning (semantics) and not only context-specific meaning (pragmatics). Several authors in the edited volume *The Shared Mind: Perspectives on Intersubjectivity* (Zlatev, Racine, Sinha and Itkonen 2008), furthermore explore how more basic (pre-linguistic and pre-normative) processes of intersubjectivity are involved in the *emergence* of shared meaning (as well as the ego itself) from developmental and evolutionary perspectives (Gallagher and Hutto 2008; Hutto 2008; Zlatev 2008), thereby showing how conceptual/phenomenological and empirical investigations could be interrelated. The "hierarchical layerings (*Stufenbau*)" of Husserl's *genetic phenomenology* (cf. Moran 2005: 218) seem to have a close affinity with the "layered model" of the *sense of self* of Daniel Stern (2000 [1985]), which has been influential for several CL-related authors' work, such as the *mimesis hierarchy* proposed by Zlatev (2008). Stern's method of combing empathetic understanding based on primary interaction with children, with the more objective methods of developmental psychology, revealing e.g. proto-conversations (Trevarthen 1979) and neonatal imitation (Meltzoff and Moore 1983) is also a good example of how the personalistic and psychological attitudes may complement each other, rather than stand in conflict. Gallagher (2005) has contributed with phenomenological concepts such as "agency", "ownership", "body schema" and "body image" to these investigations, linking intersubjectivity to a theme that is central for both phenomenology and CL: embodiment.

**2.4 Embodiment**

The concept of *embodiment* has become a central notion not only in CL (Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Zlatev 1997; Evans 2003), but in cognitive science (Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1991; Clark 1997) and the neuroscience of consciousness (e.g. Edelman 1992; Damasio 2000). It is even claimed to unite efforts in these and other related fields into what is sometimes called "second generation cognitive science" (Gallese and Lakoff, 2005). However, due to the ambiguity or the term, demonstrated by a recent interdisciplinary collection on the topic (Ziemke, Zlatev and Frank 2007), this project of unification is unlikely to succeed.

Zlatev (2007a) argues that most "embodiment theorists", including those within CL, undervalue concepts which are central for phenomenology such as *normativity* (see 2.2), *representation*, and *intentionality*. Since these are essential concepts for any theory of language, it is unclear whether an "embodied cognitive science" has the conceptual tools to provide any coherent explanation of

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[7] This is a mistake committed by Katz (1981): "The properties Katz assigns to abstract objects appear all to be possessed by the kind of conventions of mutual knowledge that Esa Itkonen argues are constitutive of linguistic rules (Itkonen 1978; not cited in Katz 1981)" (Pateman 1987: 2).

language. This controversial claim is substantiated by examining the most authoritative presentation of this program, from the standpoint of CL (Lakoff and Johnson 1999).

Lakoff and Johnson propose that "…there are at least three levels to what we are calling the embodiment of concepts: the neural level, phenomenological conscious experience and the cognitive unconscious" (ibid: 102). Starting from the bottom, "neural embodiment concerns structures that characterize concepts and cognitive operations at the neural level" (ibid: 102). It is claimed that this level "significantly determines […] what concepts can be and what language can be" (ibid: 104). One of the most specific definitions of "an embodied concept" is provided in terms of this level only: "An embodied concept is a neural structure that is part of, or makes use of the sensorimotor system of our brains. Much of conceptual inference is, therefore, sensorimotor inference" (ibid: 20, *original emphasis*). The "neural level" refers furthermore to a higher-level description that is heavily dependent on "an important metaphor to conceptualize neural structure in electronic terms" (ibid: 103). The connectionist model of Regier (1996) is given as an instance of "neural modeling", even though it is only inspired in the most general terms from what is known about the brain.

The next level, referred to as *phenomenological embodiment*, is devoted much less attention. Its first definition is "[…] the way we schematize our own bodies and things we interact with daily" (ibid: 36), with reference to the phenomenological tradition and specifically the work of Gallagher (cf. Gallagher 2005). The second definition is considerably broader, and seems to overlap with Husserl's Lifeworld: "It [i.e. phenomenological embodiment] consists of *everything we can be aware of*, especially our own mental states, our bodies, our environment and our physical and social interactions. This is the level at which we speak of the "feel" of experience […]" (ibid: 103, emphasis added). At the same time, Lakoff and Johnson claim that "phenomenology also hypothesizes nonconscious structures that underlie and make possible the structure of our conscious experience" (ibid: 103). This introduces the main operative level in Lakoff and Johnson's account of embodiment:

> The cognitive unconscious is the massive portion of the iceberg that lies below the surface, below the visible tip that is consciousness. It consists of all those mental operations that structure and make possible all conscious experience, including the understanding and use of language. (ibid: 103)

This level is said to be "the realm of thought that is completely and irrevocably inaccessible to direct conscious introspection" (ibid: 12) and (nearly) all-pervasive: the cognitive unconscious constitutes "the 95 percent below the surface of conscious awareness [that] shapes and structures all conscious thought" (ibid: 13). Lakoff and Johnson claim that it is "hypothesized on the basis of convergent evidence, […] required for scientific explanation" (ibid: 115) and that "the detailed processes and structures of the cognitive unconscious (e.g., basic-level categories, prototypes, image schemas, nouns, verbs, and vowels) are hypothesized to make sense of conscious behavior" (ibid: 104). So it turns out that this all-important level of embodiment is a phenomenologically inaccessible theoretical construct.

Again, this is hardly consistent with phenomenology. First, "nonconscious" forms of intentionality are indeed recognized by Husserl, as well as by his successors, but these are not "completely and irrevocably inaccessible", as stated by Depraz (2001: 171-172):

> Such a functional (*fungierend*) habitual intentionality includes a part of automaticity, what Husserl calls individual *Habitualität* and collective *Sedimentierung*; but unlike what happens at the neurocomputational level, where neural processes are to be found, I have the ability to *reactivate*, as Husserl says, such an unconscious functionality so as to become aware of it (ibid: 171-172)

Second, as pointed out earlier, phenomenological analysis is not equivalent to "direct conscious introspection". Finally, many of the phenomena placed in the "cognitive unconscious" (e.g. "nouns, verbs and vowels" are clearly accessible: through linguistic analysis based on native speaker intuitions in the manner shown in Section 2.2.

It is clear that Lakoff and Johnson (1999) feel pressed to defend the "reality" of the "cognitive unconscious" and they attempt to do so repeatedly. Perhaps the most revealing statement is "To say that the cognitive unconscious is real is very much like saying that neural "computation" is real (ibid: 104). But is neural computation "real"? Within information-processing, "classical" cognitive science a common way to make the distinction between mental and non-mental without recourse to consciousness is through the notion of *computation*: mental processes are involved in (symbolic) computation, non-mental ones are not (e.g. Pinker 1994). Despite their overall opposition to information processing theorists, through their endorsement of "neural computation" Lakoff and Johnson come surprisingly close to the position of "first generation" computational cognitive scientist. Furthermore the "computational" solution to the mental/non-mental distinction does not work for a very simple reason: there is no *intrinsic* computation going on in the brain, as argued at length by e.g. Searle (2002). All talk of neural computation is metaphorical, in the sense that it is a matter of attribution from the outside. And because of that, the "computational level" is not ontologically or causally distinct from the neural level: "Except in cases where an agent is actually intentionally carrying out a computation, the computational description does not identify a separate causal level distinct from the physical structure of the organism" (Searle 2002: 126).[8]

In sum, Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of embodiment is obviously inconsistent with a phenomenological view of language, or indeed with any view emphasizing the properties of normativity (conventionality), representation and intentionality (Zlatev 2007a). Regarding the first, there are frequent references to "conventional mental imagery" (ibid: 45), but it is not even made clear whether this imagery is conscious or only part of the "cognitive unconscious" – not to mention the question of how this imagery would be shared, and furthermore known to be shared, which is necessary for it to have a normative component (see Section 2.2). One could say the same for the use of the term "conventional metaphor" in the cognitive linguistic literature – there is nothing "conventional" about neurally realized domain-to-domain mappings, at least in any conventional use of the term 'convention' (e.g. Itkonen 2003; Zinken 2007). The most Lakoff and Johnson can do to account for shared meanings is, as mentioned earlier, to point out that "commonalities […] exist in the way our minds are embodied" (ibid: 4). Concerning the concept of representation, Lakoff and Johnson are explicitly antithetical.

> As we said in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, the only workable theory of representations is one in which a representation is a flexible pattern of organism-environment

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[8] A defense of the reality of "unconscious computation", suggested by an anonymous reviewer, in line with the view of metaphor expressed by Lakoff and Johnson (1999) is that what is termed "metaphorical" is no less real than what is termed "literal", as long as it plays an explanatory role. And the level of the "cognitive unconscious" plays such a role, both upwards towards consciousness and downwards with respect to the brain. However, this seems to conflate ontology and epistemology (cf. footnote 3). While both consciousness and the brain are in the broad phenomenological sense *empirical* phenomena, "unconscious computation" is not, and simply a form of *describing* either one or the other. But in attempting to capture aspects from both – intentionality on the one hand, and bio-physical causality on the other – it becomes simply incoherent, which is why Searle (1992) argues that we would do best to dispend with it. For a more extensive argument, cf. Zlatev (2007a).

interactions, and not some inner mental entity that somehow gets hooked up with parts of the external world by a strange relation called 'reference'. We reject such classical notions of representation, along with the views of meaning and reference that are built on then. Representation is a term that we try carefully to avoid. (Johnson & Lakoff 2002: 249-250)

A similar, if not stronger, form of anti-representationalism (and anti-intentionality, see below) is advanced by Johnson and Rohrer (2007: 30): "According to our interactionist view, [neural] maps and other structures of organism-environment co-ordination are prime examples of non-representational structures of meaning, understanding, and thought." In their urge to dissociate themselves from any "dualism", scholars like Lakoff, Johnson and Rohrer, adopt a reductive "monism", where consciousness, representation, reference, intentionality all give way to all-pervading "organism-environment interactions". It is one thing to (justly) argue against "representations" or "signs" in perception and active involvement, as common within the phenomenological tradition, and quite another to deny that, say, a picture is a representation of whatever it depicts, irrespective of whether the latter exists in the "real world" or not (Sonesson 2007). It is in this latter sense that some, though not all, language use is representational (Zlatev 2007a). Furthermore, to deny that assertions are a kind of representation is to deny for example that a description of a situation can be either true or false. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) would be inconsistent to deny this since in their own definition of "embodied truth" a person holding a sentence to be "true" is said to understand the sentence to "accord" with "what he or she understands the situation to be" (ibid: 106), i.e. "a kind of cognitivist correspondence theory of truth (Haser 2005: 84), or internal realism (see Section 2.1).[9]

Finally, and perhaps most damaging for any meaningful relation between (most) "embodiment theories" in CL and phenomenology – despite cursory and misleading references to "phenomenological embodiment" – is that not only is there no room left for representation or signs (*picture consciousness*, in the sense of Husserl, see Section 3.1), but for *intentionality*. It is true that Johnson (1987) repeatedly emphasized its importance, with references to Searle (1983) if not Husserl, and in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, some of the clearly non-neural structures of the "cognitive unconscious" (e.g. the concept CHAIR) are said to be operating with some sort of "unconscious intentionality". But if this is "completely and irrevocably inaccessible" to consciousness, then this notion does not make sense from a phenomenological point of view, as argued earlier. Finally, in their most recent writings, the main "experientialist" philosophers only speak of undirected "organism-environment interactions", since any talk of intentionality would imply a form of "dualism", and this is rejected with hardly any argument in the name of "embodiment".

For lack of space, I do not delve into the radically different concept of embodiment in phenomenology (e.g. Thompson 2001; Sonesson 2007; Gallagher 2005) or the work of Zlatev (2005, 2007a, 2008) on the role of *bodily mimesis*, conscious bodily representational movement and imagery, for bridging the gap between individual bodily experience and language. I will only mention that such a conception ties naturally the notions of embodiment and intersubjectivity, which as pointed out by Zahavi (2001) was one of Husserl's crucial insights:

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[9] In the name of fairness, it should be pointed out that Lakoff, Johnson and Rohrer do not explicitly deny a representational relation between language or pictures and reality, but of "internal representations" of the kind assumed by "first generation" cognitive scientists. However, they never provide an account of "external representations" either, or of internalized such (Vygotsky 1978), and fail to draw a distinction between sensory-motor and representational processes (cf. Ikegami & Zlatev 2007), due to their insistence on a strong form of "evolutionary continuity".

My body is given to me as an interiority, as a volitional structure, and as a dimension of sensing, but it is also given as a visually and tactually appearing exteriority. But what is the relation between that which Husserl calls "Innen-" and the "Aussenleiblichkeit", i.e. what is the relation between the lived bodily inwardness on the one hand, and the externality of the body on the other? (Husserl 1973c, p. 337) /.../ I am experiencing myself in a manner that anticipates both the way in which an other would experience me and the way in which I would experience an other. This may be what Husserl is referring to when he writes that the possibility of sociality presupposes a certain intersubjectivity of the body (Zahavi 2001: 161).

## 2.5. Summary

This section has reviewed discussions within CL with respect to foundational issues which are also central for phenomenology. We may conclude that despite some superficial similarities, there is a sizable gulf between central conceptions concerning ontology, method, language, consciousness, body and intersubjectivity held by the "mainsteam" representatives of CL, and those of phenomenology. Furthermore, it seems that this gulf has been widening over the past two decades, at least in the writings of Lakoff and Johnson. From a Husserlian perspective, such a perspective suffers from a bi-polar abstraction from the multi-perspectival Lifeworld: the psychological attitude and the biological attitude. To avoid contradiction and "dualism" these are furthermore collapsed, resulting in an ontology without room not only for normativity (which was absent from the start), but even for intentionality and representations/signs. Methodologically, intuition and introspection are not distinguished, and considered at best as "evidence" on a par with that of the natural sciences. I believe that this is an attitude that may even be called "anti-phenomenological".

On the other hand, the views of critics such as Itkonen and myself, representatives of a "minor stream" within CL, were shown to be consistent with phenomenology. There are also indications that this position is increasing in influence (though of course, it is difficult for me to be objective in this case), as shown in some recent publications (Popova 2005; Croft 2007; Zlatev et al. 2008). There is even a tendency among some of the mainstream authors to "get back to experience". In a recent publication, Johnson (2005: 28) writes: "Meaning is a matter concerning how we understand situations, people, things and events, and this is as much a matter of values, felt qualities, and motivations, as it is about structures of experience". In any case, it is clear that a rapprochement between phenomenology and CL is under way, and is bound to play a major role in future debates on fundamental issues such as those discussed in this section. In the next section, I focus instead on more specific issues, where such a rapprochement already has had a beneficial influence on CL.

## 3. Phenomenological influences

### 3.1 Representation and sign

The concept of *representation* is one of the fundamental, and at the same time one of the most ambiguous ones in cognitive science. The same can be said about the concept *sign* in the various schools of semiotics (Cassirer 1957; Eco 1982; Lotman et al. 1975). Sonesson (2006, 2007) furthermore remarks on the curious parallel current tendency in both traditions to reject these fundamental concepts. But this is premature, since they are seldom given a clear explication, and if so defined differently by different authors. Thus it is unsurprising that a rational debate on their nature and role in (human) cognition and consciousness has been difficult. Still, without them a phenomenologically (and logically) valid account of e.g. language would be impossible (see Section 2.4).

Husserl, and phenomenology in general, as well as Gestalt psychology (Gurwitsch 1964) and Gibsonian ecological psychology (cf. Costall 2007) repudiate an analysis of *perception* in terms *of* "mental representations", since among other things, this leads to a form of subjectivism about the mind (combined with objectivism about the world). But this does not imply that there are no representations in consciousness in general. "One of Husserl's most significant achievements is to show that picture-consciousness [*Bildbewusstsein*] is a specific modality of consciousness. The error of modern philosophy had been to misconstrue perception and imagination as picture-consciousness." (Moran 2005: 169). In seeing a painting of, e.g. an apple, we see both the painting directly (*Bildding*), and the content represented (*Bildobjekt*) indirectly. It is the content that is the *theme,* not the actual stokes of paint and canvas of the *Bildding*. Both are to be distinguished from the actual apple (if such exists at all) that has been painted (*Sujet*).[10] Sonesson (1989, 2007) uses this analysis, along with Husserl's notion of *appresentation*, as the basis for his influential definition of the sign-concept in what has been called "phenomenological semiotics". He combines Husserl's insight with a Piagetian conception of the "sign function": "there is a *differentiation* between expression and content in the double sense… that they *do not go into each other in time and/or space*, and they are perceived to be *of different nature* (Sonesson 2007: 93, original emphasis). Taken together this implies that if a given subject (say, an infant or a non-human primate) would attempt to eat the painting of the apple, he would not be seeing it as a *sign*, since he would be collapsing the distinctions between *Bildding, Bildobjekt* and *Sujet*. Ikegami and Zlatev (2007: 200) propose defining *representation* similarly:

> A representation is a structure that consists of three parts: an *expression* that stands for a given *content* for a given *subject*. Thus defined, it is identical with the classical definition of a *sign. ...* A clear example of a representation is a picture: the depicted apple cannot be eaten, but it represents (in this case *iconically*) an apple that can.

Imagination and language can thus be said to involve representations, but (as pointed out by Husserl) also a different form of consciousness than picture-consciousness. In the case of imagination (fantasy), there is no directly perceived, unthematic *Bildding*, though still there is a differentiation between the mental image and the real situation. Language can be said to involve "*Bildding"* (though Husserl's would not have used this analogy): the spoken, written or signed expression. But what is most often thematic is not the content (sense) but the referent ("*Sujet*"). Furthermore, while in many cases there may be an associated "image" associated with the expression (cf. the quote from Frege in Section 2.3), the sense of the expression cannot be identified with this, but rather with a *shared convention for the correct application* of the expression (cf. Section 2.3). Finally, while pictures represent iconically (based on a similarity-relation between expression and content), languages does so "symbolically", i.e. based on a *conventional* (though not necessarily "arbitrary") relation between expression and content.

Such phenomenological-semiotic analyses are prerequisites for adequate empirical investigations, and indeed they have been used in developmental and evolutionary studies of transitions "from pre-representational cognition to language". For example, it is the major hypothesis of the project *Stages in the Evolution and Development of Sign Use* (Zlatev et al. 2006), that what makes human consciousness different from that of other primates is above all due to one or more aspects of the *sign-*

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[10] Sonesson (1989) has, however, shown that this picture needs to be complicated a bit. *Bildobjekt* cannot be the mediating content, since the latter involves a sort of "quasi-perception" in the words of Husserl, e.g. in perceiving a black and white photo, the skin of a given person is seen as white, or grey, while I know that the actual *Sujet* (referent) has a certain color. Hence, Sonesson adds another mediating "layer", corresponding to, in the example given, to *the apple, as I know that it is: colorful, round etc*, that would continue to exist even if the last apple on Earth were eaten.

*function* (in the sense defined in the previous section), rather than to language per se. Indeed in the experiments carried out it has been shown that even great apes have enormous difficulties in dealing adequately with pictures. Piaget (1945) furthermore, suggested that the sign-function emerges in children at the end of the sensory-motor period around 18 months, by generalizing and internalizing acts of *imitation*. The latter involves the ability to both match and differentiate between one's own body (image) and the model, and is thus a likely precursor to both picture-consciousness and language. Moreover, it may serve as the basis for the emergence of *socially-shared* meanings, since imitation implies a basic form of intersubjectivity (Zlatev 2005, 2007a, 2008). Empirical studies investigating this hypothesis are under way.

## 3.2 Image schemas

The concept of *image schema,* introduced by Johnson (1987; see Section 2.3), is central to CL. At the same time, as shown by the chapters in the volume edited by Hampe (2005), there is little agreement on its meaning. Most often image schemas are thought to be rather abstract structures such as PATH and VERTICALITY (Johnson 1987; Mandler 2004), or even more abstract ones such as CYCLE and PROCESS (cf. Grady 2005). On the other hand, sometimes "basic level" experience-types such as PUSH and GRASP are given as illustrations of image schematic structure (Gibbs 2005). While some authors characterize these as representational structures (Lakoff 1987; Grady 2005; Mandler 2004), others emphasize their non-representational, "interactional" character (Johnson and Rohrer 2007; Johnson 2005; Gibbs 2005). Some see them as part of the "cognitive unconscious" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Johnson 2005; cf. Section 2.4), but others claim that they possess phenomenal contours and hence cannot be completely unconscious (Gibbs 2005). Finally, even their "embodied" nature, in the sense of being based on physical experience, has been questioned in some definitions (Clausner and Croft 1999), while Grady (2005) argues for limiting the notion strictly to sensorimotor experience. Recently, Langacker (2006: 36) has proposed a novel, and rather interesting, interpretation of the concept as "subjectively construed mental operations" (see below).

Clearly, therefore, these are not one but a number of *different* concepts. Zlatev (2005) analyzes these differences along the "parameters": representational status, accessibility to consciousness, level of abstractness, sensory modalities, and (inter)subjectivity. In Section 2, some of the non-phenomenological interpretations of the concept where subjected to criticism, which I will not repeat. Instead, I focus on a few interpretations which appear to be more or less congruent with phenomenology, i.e. those which view image schemas as *structures or processes of consciousness*.

Grady (2005) proposes that there are at least three different levels of abstractness involved: (i) concrete schemas such as UP, for which Grady reserves the designation "image schema", (ii) more abstract schemas such as MORE, which Grady calls "response schemas" since he regards them as being the outcome of *primary metaphors*, mappings from concrete domains due to correlations in experience in early childhood, and (iii) "superschemas" such as SCALAR PROPERTY, which capture the shared structure between (i) and (ii), guaranteeing a degree of isomorphism. This hierarchy is useful, but Grady fails to specify the nature and origin of such superschemas providing the constraints on "metaphorical" mappings. Dewell (2005: 388) argues that schemas such as CONTAINMENT and UP are not "purely preverbal" but rather shaped by language itself: "the influence of language generally toward maximally precise and differentiated linear shapes that can be explicitly profiled and publicly accessed from a flexible perspective." But if even the most concrete schemas that Grady presents are language-based at least to some degree, there is perhaps even more reason to believe that this is the case with the more abstract ones. Superschemas such as ONTOLOGICAL CATEGORY (EVENT, PROCESS, THING), SCALARITY/DIMENSIONALITY, ASPECT, BOUNDEDNESS etc. are all reflected in the grammatical

systems of the worlds' languages. Does such universality imply the need for an explanation in terms of "preverbal" structures and processes as is customary in CL?

Not necessarily. As shown by Heine and Kuteva (2002) processes of grammaticalization can lead not only to language change, but to an increase in language complexity through the *evolution* of grammatical (and hence semantic) categories. As for the "metaphorical mappings" between more concrete image schemas and what Grady calls "response schemas", these could possibly be explained as deriving from (conscious) processes of *analogy* (Itkonen 2005), performed by speakers under the constraints of the shared structure (the "superschemas") in the source and target domains. Such an approach would imply a rather strong role of language on human consciousness.

Another, more consciousness-first approach, at least for the lower level of Grady's hierarchy, is suggested by the developmental psychologist Mandler (2004) who presents a theory in which infants are neither sophisticated pattern learners (as in most connectionist models) nor driven by unconscious innate "domain-specific" knowledge and language-acquisition devices, but conscious beings who construct their conceptual systems piece by piece, above all through the key process of *perceptual meaning analysis*, through which infants "consciously analyze what objects are doing. The result of this process – interpretations of the world that suffuse the mind with meaning – are also accessible to consciousness" (ibid: 292). Mandler sees image schemas like PATH and CONTAINMENT, which she defines as "analog representations that summarize spatial relations and movements in space" (ibid: 79) as resulting from this process. But in what sense are they "accessible to consciousness"? Mandler tries to answer this troublesome question by calling image schemas "conceptual/representational format" which as such is not conscious, while its *content* is consciously accessible. However, what this distinction amounts to is not clear.

On the basis of extensive experience with semantic analysis, employing the concepts of *construal* and *profiling*, as part of his theory of Cognitive Grammar, Langacker (2006: 36) proposes a rather original shift in perspective:

> … we should not think of image schemas as something we conceptualize (which the term *image* might suggest), but as *cognitive abilities inherent in the conception of other entities*. For instance, the *source-path-goal* image schema could instead be thought of as the capacity for mental scanning. The *link* schema could be thought of as the capacity to exploit a conceptual connection. The *centre-periphery* schema might be thought of as an asymmetry in mental access… Mandler's (1991) notion of perceptual [meaning] analysis – the redescription of sensorimotor experience in image schematic form – could then be explicated as the apprehension of primary experience by means of such processing capacities (presumably inborn). (emphasis added)

In other (and phenomenological) words, Langacker is proposing to regard "image schemas" not as structures, representations etc., but as *processes* of (human) consciousness through which experience is "analyzed", and which therefore, in line with the nature of *the natural attitude* (cf. Section 2.1), are in the background of consciousness, or as Langacker says "subjectively construed". However, since consciousness is always pre-thematically aware of itself, "this pre-reflective awareness can be turned into explicit reflection. Indeed, it is one of Husserl's eidetic laws that every mental process is so structured that one can turn one's gaze on it and identify its components (Ideen I #98, p.241)" (Moran 2005: 145). Thus, these processes can be investigated through eidetic variation, and not simply through "informal phenomenological analysis" (Johnson 2005). However, whether they are "inborn" (as Langacker and Mandler suppose), acquired preverbally, as Johnson hypothesises, or in some cases

even acquired "post-verbally" as suggested above, is not something that phenomenology can answer, but rather an open question for empirical psychology. This is a good example of the complementary relation between the two.

**3.3 Construal**

In CL in general, and in Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987) in particular, the notion of construal plays a central role. In its more general sense, it refers to "a range of cognitive processes" (Saeed 2003: 376) mediating between "objective reality" and linguistically expressed meaning, thus highlighting CL's position that "meaning resides in conceptualization". On the face of it, this seems to entail a subjectivist theory of meaning, facing phenomenological, Wittgensteinian and Fregean objections that linguistic meanings are necessarily intersubjective (see Section 2.3). However, there may be a way to resolve this contradiction, given a phenomenological take on the notion of construal. In a recent publication (the same in which "image schemas" are analyzed as mental processes referred to above) (Langacker 2006: 18) explains the difference between "objective" and "subjective" construal as follows:

> An entity is said to be *objectively construed*, to the extent that it goes "onstage" as an explicit, focused object of conception … An entity is *subjectively construed*, to the extent that it remains "offstage" as an implicit unselfconscious subject of conception. At issue, then, is the inherent asymmetry between the conceptualizer and the conceptualized, between *the tacit conceptualizing presence and the target of conceptualization*. (emphasis added)

It is easy to see this as a paraphrase of a phenomenological analysis of consciousness: the "objectively construed" is the *theme*, while the whole "onstage" region is the *field of consciousness* (Gurwitsch 1964). The "conceptualizer", situated in the *background* (*margins*) of consciousness ("offstage") is the ego, and the asymmetric relationship between the latter and the "conceptualized" is that of *intentionality* itself. In line with Gurwitsch's claims that "this thematic structure translates to language" (Sonesson 2007: 107), Langacker implies that all language use, and conventional linguistic meanings, utilize this structure (see Figure 1)[11]:

> In principle, an expression's conceptualizing meaning always incorporates the conceptualizing presence who apprehends and construes the situation described. … Minimally, subjectively construed elements *include the speaker, and secondarily the addressee, who employ the expression and thereby apprehend its meaning*. Minimally, objectively construed elements include the expression's *profile*, i.e. what it designates (or refers to) within the conception evoked. (Langacker 2006: 18, emphasis added)

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[11] The unacknowledged parallels between Gurwitsch and Langacker are further explored by Sonesson (2004).
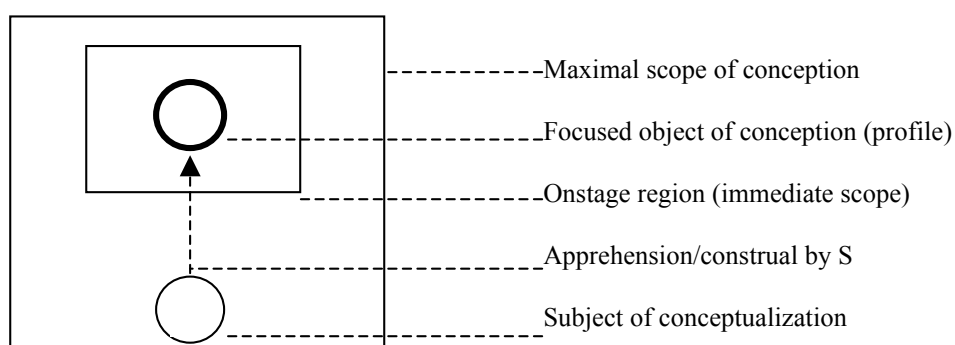
**Figure 1.** Subjective and objective construal (adapted from Langacker 2006: 19)

The novel aspect in comparison to earlier formulations is that here Langacker includes *both the speaker and the addressee* (the latter not included in the diagram) and, sympathetically interpreted, their joint "apprehension of the meaning" of the expression in the background of consciousness, i.e. the (normative) expectation of its shared meaning. This interpretation highlights both the continuity between language and perceptual consciousness (both involving intentionality and thematic structure), and some of its difference: the second is necessarily intersubjective (though at least in Husserl's later thought, the "world" itself is "constituted" through intersubjectivity, see Section 2.1). What is still lacking for language, though, is a place of the *sign* (see Section 3.1) in this analysis: Langacker writes of structures such as those in Figure 1 as the "semantic pole", while expressions are the "phonological pole" of signs. But clearly, the latter can not be seen as external to thematic structure. It could perhaps be included in the "offstage" region in Figure 1, between conceptualizer and the "onstage" (thematic) region.

Langacker proceeds to explain how this analysis can be applied to the phenomenon of *grammaticalization*, i.e. historical change whereby the meaning of lexical items becomes "bleached" in order to turn into a grammatical morpheme, e.g. the verb *going to* from verb of motion to future tense marker, as a process of "subjectification": a shift from the "onstage" to the "offstage" region. This is a more subtle analysis than simply stating that the process is one in which meanings become more "subjective" (Traugott 1989). The details of this are too complex to address here, but let us conclude by suggesting that if the phenomenological interpretation of Langacker's notion of construal suggested here is adequate, subjectification, and Cognitive Grammar analyses of a large number of semantic phenomena such as quantification, which are quite different from analyses within e.g. Montague semantics (Montague 1974), could be regarded as the fruits of a "phenomenological linguistics" (cf. Zlatev 2008).

## 4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that while the explicit philosophy and the meta-theory of "mainstream" CL are largely incongruent with phenomenology, the thinking of less "prototypical" representatives of CL such as Itkonen, Sinha, Harder and Zlatev, and perhaps more importantly: the *practice* of CL has some considerable overlaps with phenomenology. These deserve to be further explored. The incongruency between "experientialism" and phenomenology seems to be largely due to a degree of philosophical naiveté (or a particular rhetorical style) within the first (cf. Haser 2005), combined with a mentalist/subjectivist bias, inherited from the Chomskyan school, from which CL emerged at the same time as it rebelled against it (cf. Itkonen 2003). Instead of attempting to overcome this through a

sociocultural (Wittgensteinian, Vygotskyan or phenomenological) perspective, the opposite tendency of a more highly pronounced bio-physical attitude is observed in the writings of some prominent representatives (e.g. Dodge and Lakoff 2005). Consciousness, intentionality, and even representation/sign are downplayed, if not outright rejected within this attitude. When "phenomenology" is acknowledged ("Cognitive semantics is thus a branch of phenomenology" [Talmy 2000: 4]), this is interpreted subjectively, thus bringing the circle back to the beginning – and provoking new reactions from those who wish to "naturalize" language and linguistics by applying *only* "empirical methods" (cf. Section 1).

I would venture to propose that CL is currently at a crossroads: if this 30-year old tradition is to break from the vicious circle of subjectivism-physicalism, it would need to seriously reconsider its foundations, and account for concepts such as intersubjectivity, normativiy, sign-function, and consciousness, which are essential for language (Zlatev 2007a). A natural way for it to do so is by making a rapprochement with phenomenology. In the second part of this review, I have focused on some "signs" that such a rapprochement is not only possible, but under way. Space does not allow me to review some more specific analyses, in which phenomenological concepts or themes have been fruitfully applied: the analysis of "the phenomenology of negation and its expression in language" (Saury 2004), "the origins of grammar in the verbalization of experience" (Croft 2007), the role of the sense of touch in "synaesthetic metaphors" (Popova 2005) and the verbalization of "motion situations" (Zlatev, Blomberg and David in press).

Finally, what Husserl called "correlation research" into different aspects of the Lifeworld, as opposed to dogmatic metaphysical "absolutizations" seems to be urgently required in order to counter the dominant present day physicalist (and calculating) attitude, as well as to mend the rift between different kinds of research in language. On the one hand, traditional, intuition-based linguistics is based on "hermeneutic" methods such as explication (Itkonen 1978). On the other hand, psycho- and neurolinguistics study causal processes involved in, e.g. language acquisition, production and comprehension, using mechanistic (consciousness-independent) models. But if consciousness is essential for the *existence* of language, its analysis, as well as for its acquisition and use (Zlatev 2008), then a phenomenological perspective on language may help unite (in a non-reductive way) traditional and "empirical" linguistics in a truly *general* (cognitive) linguistics. Non-reductive projects of "naturalization" within phenomenology (e.g. Gallagher and Broested-Soerensen, 2006) can serve as an example of how this could be carried out in practice.

**Acknowledgments**

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