Principles of Cognitive Linguistics
• (late ‘70s, ‘80s) moving away from …

• generative, universal grammar …
• Is language REALLY an autonomous (innate) cognitive faculty?

• Fillmore, Langacker, Lakoff, Talmy, Fauconnier, …
• Semantics, syntax, morphology, … acquisition, phonology, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, …

• semantics via truth conditionals …
• Is meaning tractable this way?

“the cat is on the mat”
- **Cognitive Linguistics vs. Generative Grammar**

- The place of **meaning** in the theory
- The relationship between **language** and **cognition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generative Grammar</th>
<th>Cognitive Linguistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>The structure of linguistic expressions is determined by a <strong>formal rule system</strong> that is largely independent of meaning.</td>
<td>Linguistic structure is a direct reflex of cognition; a particular linguistic expression is associated with a particular way of <strong>conceptualizing</strong> a given situation.</td>
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<td>There exists a rich set of principles of language design (Universal Grammar) that are <strong>specific</strong> to language.</td>
<td>Universal principles governing the design of all languages may exist, but they will eventually be found to be rooted in cognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of language is to map elements of the external (or conceptual) world onto linguistic form (governed by formal rules of grammar)</td>
<td>There is no such direct mapping: a particular situation can be <strong>construed</strong> in different ways (via different conceptualizations)</td>
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- **Cognitive Linguistics**

- Language is governed by general cognitive principles, rather than by a special-purpose language **module**

- A “**Module**” is a theoretical construct
  - not straightforwardly identifiable with a specific **anatomical** area or **functional** area of the brain
  - this makes it difficult to verify or falsify the “modular” claim
Cognitive Linguistics (Cont’d)

- Language emerges from species-specific bodily-grounded cognitive mechanisms

- Three major hypotheses in Cognitive Linguistics
  1. Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty
  2. Grammar is conceptualization
  3. Knowledge of language emerges from language use
1. Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty

- Linguistic knowledge (knowledge of meaning and form) is conceptual structure (i.e., cognitive)
  - syntactic, morphological and phonological processes are conceptual

- Cognitive processes that govern language use (construction and communication of meaning) are in principle the same as other cognitive abilities (e.g., visual perception, motor activity, reasoning)
1. Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty (Cont’d)

- Configuration of cognitive abilities involved in language comprehension and production may be unique to language, but components are not

- Not necessarily a denial of an innate human capacity for language (only a denial of an autonomous special-purpose innate capacity for language)

- Research implications
  - Conceptual structure
  - Cognitive abilities
2. Grammar is conceptualization (Langacker) 
(or, there is conceptualization in the very grammar)

- Conceptual structure cannot be reduced to a truth-conditional correspondence with the world
  - conceptual structure is subject to construals of the experienced *world*
  - what is the underlying logic for the truth-conditionals, anyway?
2. Grammar is conceptualization (Cont’d)

- Psychology of memory, categorization, perception, attention, etc., have inspired cognitive linguistic research
  - frame semantics
  - conceptual mapping theories (metaphor, metonymy, blending)
  - grammatical knowledge, etc.,
3. Knowledge of a language emerges from language use

- Semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonology are built up from our cognition of specific utterances on specific occasions of use
  - this inductive process of abstraction does not loose conventionalized subtleties and differences found in grammatical constructions and word meanings
3. Knowledge of a language emerges from language use (Cont’d)

- It responds to the views that syntax and semantics are assumed to govern the organization of linguistic knowledge
  - idiosyncratic or anomalous patterns are not epiphenomenal
  - e.g., idioms: *wide awake; all of a sudden*
  - the crucial role of conventionality

- Detailed analysis of subtle variations in syntactic behavior and semantic interpretation produce an understanding of grammar that encompasses idiosyncratic AND highly general patterns of linguistic behavior