Conceptualization and Construal Operations
**Conceptualization & Construals**

- **Construal**
  - When we say something, we unconsciously structure every aspect of the experience we intend to convey
  - Construal operations

- **Conceptualization** and **Construal Operations** can be observed when we analyze alternative expressions that appear **truth-functionally equivalent**
Construals: Co-extensionality and truth-functional equivalence

- Example.
  - What is the country whose capital is Bern?
  - What is the country whose official national languages are German, French, Italian, and Romansh?
  - What is the country which has boarders with France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Italy?
  - What is the country whose currency is the Swiss Franc?

- Answer:
  - {Switzerland}
Approximate Co-extensionality in natural language

1a Leave on a tree  
1b Foliage on the tree

- Difference in the choice of nominal and verbal inflection.
  - 1a-b, by plural count noun and mass noun
  - 2a-b, by simple vs. progressive form

2a Connor lives in San Diego  
2b Connor is living in San Diego

3a The chimney is above the window  
3b The window is below the chimney

- Difference in the choice of a function word
  - Preposition
  - Reversal of subject and prepositional complement
Approximate Co-extensionality in natural language (Cont’d)

4a. *Something moved in the grass*
4b. *There was a movement in the grass*

- Differ derivationally in part of speech
  - 4a-b, between verb and its derived noun

5a. *The car brushed the bicycle*
5b. *The bicycle was brushed by the car*

6a. *There was Sam sitting on the floor*
6b. *Sam was sitting on the floor*

- Differ in grammatical construction of the scene
  - 5a-b, active vs. passive voice
  - 6a-b, presentational vs. ordinary declarative
Cases with **same words** but truth-functional differences!

7a. *We have chocolate for dessert*
7b. *We have chocolates for dessert*

- Same nouns as mass or count nouns
  - 7a, Mass noun refers to a substance
  - 7b, Count noun refers to an object covered with the substance, but may not necessarily be filled with the same substance

8a. *Clara is a nuisance*
8b. *Clara, stop being a nuisance!*

- Trait or temporal features
  - 8a, behavioral trait (described by simple present)
  - 8b, describes a particular activity
Cases with same words but truth-functional differences! (Cont’d)

9a  Joe is in front of the tree
9b  Joe is behind the tree

- Differ in Joe’s relative position relative to the speaker and the tree
  - 9a-b, can be made truth-functionally equivalent if the speaker moves to the other side of the tree

11a  The dog chewed the bone
11b  The dog chewed on the bone

- The object role of the bone indicates that …
  - 11a, the bone itself is being affected by the dog’s action
  - 11b, only the meat and gristle on it is being affected
Image-Schemas

- Theoretical construct useful to investigate mechanisms that impose a conceptualization of experience
- Conceptual primitives (appear to be universal)
- Perceptual and conceptual in nature
- Schematic (abstract), but on bodily-grounded experience
- They have built-in “logics”
  - Contact schema
  - Container schema
  - Source-Path-Goal schema
  - Center-Periphery schema
  - Support schema
  - Above schema
  - Etc.
Image-Schemas (Cont’d)

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Languages around the world combine image-schemas (conceptual primitives) in different ways

- Contact schema
- Container schema
- Source-Path-Goal schema
- Center-Periphery schema
- Support schema
- Above schema
- Etc.

English **on**, as in **on the table**
German **auf**

English **on**, as in **on the wall**
German **an**
Linguistic construal operations as instances of general cognitive processes

I. Attention/Salience
II. Judgment/Comparison
III. Perspective/Situatedness
IV. Constitution/Gestalt
I. Attention/Saliency: Metonymy

- **Part for the Whole**
  - *Get your butt over here*

- **Producer for Product**
  - *They played lots of Mozart*

- **Object used for User**
  - *The buses are on strike*

- **Controller for Controlled**
  - *Bush bombed Baghdad*

- **Institution for People responsible**
  - *The Senate thinks abortion is immoral*

- **The Place for the Institution**
  - *Wall Street is in panic*

- **The Place for the Event**
  - *Iraq is becoming another Vietnam*

- **The french fries is getting impatient**
I. Attention/Saliency: Scalar Adjustment

33a *She ran across the field*
33b *She ran through the field*

- Both could describe the same field, but …
  - 33a, construes field as 2-D surface without thickness
  - 33b, construes field as 3-D volume (thickness of vegetation)

34a *We drove along the road*
34b *A squirrel ran across the road*
34c *The construction workers dug through the road*

- Examples of granularity
  - 34a, a line, a path, 1-D
  - 34b, it can be traversed, 2-D
  - 34c, it has volume, depth, 3-D
I. Attention/Salience: Dynamic

- **Fictive Motion** (Talmy)
  - The fence *stops* right after the tree
  - That highway *goes* all the way down to San Diego
  - The Equator *passes through* many countries
  - The Swiss-German boarder *runs* along the Rhine
  - The function $f(x)$ *oscillates* more and more as $x$ approaches 0