Grounding

Cognitive Linguistics Research
21

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Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York

Grounding

The Epistemic Footing of Deixis and Reference

Edited by
Frank Brisard

Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York 2002

Mouton de Gruyter (formerly Mouton, The Hague)
is a Division of Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin

∞ Printed on acid-free paper
which falls within
the guidelines of the ANSI
to ensure permanence and durability.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grounding : the epistemic footing of deixis and reference / edited by Frank Brisard.
p. cm. – (Cognitive linguistics research ; 21)
Some of the papers presented during the 7th International Pragmatics Conference, held in Budapest, Hungary in July 2000.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 3 11 017369 7 (alk. paper)
1. Cognitive grammar. 2. Grammar, Comparative and general – Deixis. 3. Reference (Linguistics). I. Brisard, Frank. II. International Pragmatics Conference (7th : 2000 : Budapest, Hungary). III. Series.

P165 .G76 2002
415–dc21

2002033656

ISBN 3 11 017369 7

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek

Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>.

Printing: WB-Druck, Rieden/Allgäu
Binding: Lüderitz & Bauer, Berlin
Printed in Germany

Acknowledgments

I should like to thank the editors of the "Cognitive Linguistics Research" series, René Dirven, Ron Langacker, and John Taylor, for the interest they expressed in the theme of the present volume, as well as for the time and energy dedicated to reading and sometimes rereading the individual contributions presented here. I also thank the staff at Mouton de Gruyter for their professional help in dealing with the practical sides of the publication process, and especially Birgit Sievert, who has graciously guided me through this process without ever, or so it seems, putting me through the wringer.

In addition, I am grateful to a number of people who have allowed me, in one way or another, to put all worries aside and focus on the completion of this enterprise. For one, Dominiek Sandra's continuous support and affable companionship remain a source of inspiration to me. On a more practical note, most of the work going into the preparation of the manuscript has been carried out at the University of Alberta (Edmonton, Canada), which I have had the pleasure to visit during the academic year 2001–2002. In particular, my thanks go to Gary Libben and Sally Rice at the Department of Linguistics, for their hospitable reception and quite simply for putting up with me.

Finally, I also appreciate the opportunity granted to me by the organizers of the 7th International Pragmatics Conference, held in Budapest, Hungary in July 2000, to put together a panel on "Grounding". Some of the chapters included in the present volume have first been presented during that conference, which offered a wide-ranging platform while allowing a sharp focus on matters of grammar and grounding within the confines of our panel.

I have been able to work on this project as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Fund for Scientific Research – Flanders (Belgium).

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Introduction: The epistemic basis of deixis and reference

Frank Brisard

> "As if... there were no single Destiny, ... but rather a choice among a great many possible ones, their number steadily diminishing each time a Choice be made, till at last 'reduc'd,' to the events that do happen to us, as we pass among 'em, thro' Time unredeemable, — much as a Lens, indeed, may receive all the Light from some vast celestial Field of View, and reduce it to a single Point. Suggests an optical person..."
>
> Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*

1. Grounding and grounding predications

Grounding is proposed as a technical term in Cognitive Grammar[1] to characterize grammatical predications that indicate the relationship of a designated entity to the ground or situation of speech, including the speech event itself, its participants, and their respective spheres of knowledge. By definition, grounding predications are obligatory grammatical elements needed to turn nouns into full *nominals*, and verbs into *finite clauses*. When this happens, the resulting nominal designates an instance of the thing type presented by the head noun, just like a finite clause is taken to designate an instance of the process type expressed by the main verb. This selection of instances is made possible by the very nature of the grounding function, which incorporates some relation between the ground and a designated process or thing whose main import can arguably be called "deictic" (Langacker 1994).[2] The relationship in question can be one of straightforward inclusion in the ground, but of course it need not be. Typical of

grounding predications is that the conceptual relationship which they specify is left "offstage" or "unprofiled", in contrast with some of the more "objective" deictic expressions in lexicon and grammar (such as *I*, *here*, or *now*). In a language like English, the class of grounding predications includes demonstratives, articles, and a number of quantifiers for nominals, and tense and modals for finite clauses. Other languages will usually display a similar range of grounding predications, including the same or related morphemes in both the nominal and the clausal realms, although it is not always clear where exactly the line should be drawn between strict grounding predications and those grammatical predications that appear to aspire to grounding status (always through a process of grammaticalization) without quite having reached it as yet.

In proposing an initial approximation of the function of grounding predications, the first volume of Langacker's (1987: 126–129) *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar* sets the scene for a truly meaning-oriented approach to the fair number of ramifications that deixis presents in the context of grammar. It is maintained that all grammatically elaborated "phrases"[3] — full nominals and finite clauses — are necessarily deictic, or grounded, in some way or the other, making reference to an element of the ground that is meant to enable a more or less unique identification of the entity that is at issue in the nominal or clause (i.e., its head, or rather what it refers to). Prototypically, those aspects of the ground, and thus of grounding predications, most likely to establish the conditions that lead to the successful communication of intended referents are restricted to such abstract domains as space and time. Space is most relevant for the nominal paradigm, which is often concerned with things that can be located relative to a deictic center. By contrast, time is more relevant for the verb paradigm, with its systematic insistence on the temporal location of processes. More schematically, issues that are raised by the interpretation of grounding predications revolve around the *(non)existence* of processes and the *accessibility* of things (which are presupposed to exist in some space, if not in reality). In addition, when we are considering grounding predications as necessarily contributing to the formation of nominals or finite clauses (whether in a phonologically overt way or

not), the conceptualization involved in such grammatical, as opposed to lexical, manifestations of deixis is more of a subjective nature (Langacker 1993). This means that the grounding relation itself is not what motivates the expression of the relevant nominal or clause, and it is reflected in the nonfocal status of true grounding predications, which can generally be found quite literally in the margins of the "phrases" they ground (English nominal determiners are a case in point here), or even take on the form of bound morphemes (as in the case of tense/agreement inflections on finite verb forms).

Interestingly, the same introductory volume to Cognitive Grammar primarily speaks of *epistemic grounding* as the most directly pertinent frame for explicating the meanings of deictic expressions falling under this definition. Thus, deixis, which has traditionally been taken to be concerned essentially, if not absolutely, with reference and identification, loses the aura of "objectivity" that has been bestowed upon it by the many logical treatments of grammatical function words and morphemes. (These treatments invariably rely on a correspondence theory of meaning, in which deictic expressions merely reflect physical properties of the worlds they describe.) Instead, for all grounding purposes deixis is now being presented as a psychological concern marking a grammatical category that is also, and perhaps more basically so, aimed at the qualification of referential contents (in terms of their accessibility and/or degree of reality). This epistemic turn in Cognitive Grammar imposes a perspective on the functions of deictic grammatical expressions that acknowledges the significance of how referents are assessed with respect to the knowledge repertoires of discourse participants, rather than focusing on so-called objective properties that relate referents directly to coordinates in the outer world. Thus, it is the participants' knowledge systems, whether construed at a local or more global level of deliberation, that constitute reference points for the successful interpretation of simple and syntactically complex, grounded expressions. It is the shared responsibility of the discourse participants to provide and/or identify anchors that allow the relative positioning of such expressions with respect to some negotiable frame of knowledge. This grounding process happens on top of the recognition of decontextual-

ized semantic contents as contained in the nongrounding elements of grammatical "phrases" (e.g., in nominal expressions that are not determiners or quantifiers, and in nonfinite verb forms). The layered conception of linguistic representations, in which grounding occupies the topmost (epistemically oriented) level, is, incidentally, quite compatible with earlier work in Space Grammar (Langacker 1975, 1978), where the constituency of clauses is tackled from a functional-stratigraphic perspective. There, the *epistemic path*, reflecting various conceptual steps involved in the construction of an *objective content*, represents an essential quality of the compositional trajectory that leads to fully interpretable and contextually situated utterances.[4] This type of construction is also called *construal*, a notion which is essential to the general enterprise of a conceptualist semantics (as in Cognitive Grammar), and in particular to the description and analysis of highly schematic grammatical meaning types.

Quantity and (in)definiteness serve as the main measures for the grounding of nominals, while reality, as defined within the *dynamic evolutionary model* (Langacker 1991: 277), provides the benchmark against which the substance of full clauses is checked. In accordance with their highly grammaticalized status, grounding predications always constitute the final step in the formation of contextually transparent (if not always totally unequivocal) utterances.[5] They do this by relating a designatum, defined as the profile or point of focal interest within a given predication, to (an element of) the ground without, importantly, having this relation itself be profiled. This implies that the act of grounding is not one that exhibits a referential character per se. Rather, it builds upon an already presupposed act of reference as contained within the profiled portion of a predication and, in a way, qualifies a designated referent's relation to the physical, mental, or social world that is at issue at a given moment in discourse. The stuff of reference (or profiling) itself is established entirely through the semantic content of the head of a predication, whether nominal or clausal. When combined with the specific instructions provided by a grounding predication, discourse participants equipped with a knowledge of which *type* of nominal or clausal referent they are looking for, are able to select fairly specific (or even individual) instances in

the "real world" or some other cognitive domain, but not as the direct result of what the grounding predication in question has specified through its own profile. Grounding predications, in other words, tend to set up a path and point out a region in which to look for intended referents, but they never indicate these referents as such, or only schematically.[6]

The conceptual implication here is that nongrounded profiles can, at best, suggest possible referents only at the level of the type which they are supposed to instantiate. Following Langacker, grounding predications allow the identification of a particular token that is to be selected on the basis of such type specifications, precisely because they can delimit the range of referents through their intimation of singular reference points that more or less pinpoint the relevant region of the ground (or outside it) that needs to be searched. Accordingly, one could say, grounding predications *situate* things or processes that are themselves *designated* by the lexical heads that also describe them, and more often than not this situating is seen as taking place in space and time, two of the more conceptually salient dimensions of the ground. Unfortunately, it is exactly the latter tendency to thoroughly spatialize or temporalize deictic meanings which could insinuate that the practical work of arriving at a grounded nominal or clause is still primarily framed in terms of the *location* of entities with respect to the (physical) speech situation, as upheld in orthodox studies of deixis.[7] The fundamentally epistemic character ascribed to these predications in Cognitive Grammar should prevent such a move, however. At least at the ultimate level of explanation, it is not necessary that grounding predications *directly* incorporate notions of, say, a referent's spatial and temporal proximity/distance, or of its unique identifiability in the case of definite descriptions (including the so-called definite tenses), even if they tend to do so prototypically.

The aim of grounding a predication is to establish mental contact with, or direct someone's attention to, a referent which discourse participants are presumably able to determine, given 1) the semantic content of the "phrase" to which the grounding predication attaches, and 2) the nature of the grounding relation proper. For this, it does

not suffice to point out that the ground, as the locus of physical and mental events, is composed of several dimensions in which things and processes can be located. Rather, discourse participants need to call upon certain cognitive abilities, crucially mediated by the assumption of a shared repertoire of background knowledge, that should enable them to find out which dimensions are attended to and how exactly these can do the job of singling out the "right", intended instance of reference. This is called the *coordination of reference* (Langacker 1991: 91), which again stresses the notion that a grounding act is not particularly concerned with reference itself, or with the more specific location of referents with respect to the ground. Instead, grounding appears to be about the procedures that allow an interpreter to address such referential concerns on an inferential basis (with locations in space and time as potential physical correlates to the schematic instructions that grounding predications proffer). In line with the epistemic orientation noted above, grounding predications, as they are actually used in discourse, are not, or not exclusively, concerned with the location of specified instances in space, time, or even discourse. Indeed, the functional range of this type of predication is overwhelming, including many modal and even affective meaning nuances, and it would not only be theoretically but also empirically flawed to treat such uses as fundamentally "secondary", or derived from the purely referential function which many grounding predications obviously also exhibit.

Examples of nonreferential uses of grounding predications abound, both in the realm of the noun and in that of the verb, and we will see many such cases in the course of the following chapters. Thus, neither demonstratives nor articles function exclusively as expressions of the spatial proximity or distance of an intended referent, or of its unique identifiability within a (mentally constructed) space, respectively. Likewise, tense is by no means to be taken as dealing with locations in time only. The ubiquity and creativity of modal and discourse uses of tenses challenge the popular conception that basic temporal frames (past, present, and future) can always serve as source domains for the attested variety of such meaning "extensions". In fact, the main difficulty with these and other allegedly deviant

cases is not that linguists have not been aware of their attestation or choose not to include them within the scope of their analyses (although this does constitute an accepted strategy, especially within formal-semantic and -pragmatic accounts of deictic constructions). It is the insistence to treat such recognizably nonprototypical meanings of grounding predications as in any way untrue to their referential origins that is the theoretical reason for the analytical problems that typify many studies of deixis and related phenomena in grammar. In such cases, the decision to resort to pragmatics for the explication of so-called "secondary" uses only shows that an auxiliary discipline is called in *faute de mieux*, treating all cases that do not conform to an a-priori conception of what a grammatical category should logically (as opposed to empirically) indicate.

2. Grammatical implications

Perhaps the time has come to turn the tables and ask whether referential (possibly locative) meanings, as important components in the use of grounding predications, are not themselves subservient to more basic concepts that are not intrinsically domain-specific. Thus, attempts to ground the meaning of grounding itself in schematic, procedural categories might present promising alternatives to the idea that (grammatical) deixis is only concerned with the identification of referents. Such categories, whatever their exact nature turns out to be, may then point in the direction of a general notion of *control* governing the use of grounding predications and generating, in turn, concrete inferences in specific domains like time and space, but also modality and discourse. Conceived along these lines, a comprehensive overview of grounding should address such diverse topics as *definiteness* (in articles, demonstratives, and tenses), *quantification* (both in nominal quantifiers[8] and in the realm of modal verbs), *tense* (plus certain grammatical manifestations of aspect, such as [im]perfectivity), and *mood*. Finally, a whole range of modal expressions can be taken into account as well, including auxiliaries but also other grammatical and lexical categories, if only to establish a clear

dividing line between actual grounding predications and the non-grounding expression of epistemic modality.

The chapters included in the present volume are divided into two parts, dealing with nominal and clausal grounding, respectively. Both grammatically and conceptually, there is no denying that there are important ways in which the two types of grounding diverge, depending on the different "basic cognitive models" they invoke. For nouns, the preexistence and relative permanence of the things they designate is typically taken for granted, such that the selection of nominal referents needs to separate the intended targets from potential competitors in the same search domain. This is not true for processes (as designated by finite clauses), instances of which are typically transient and in any case unique to a specific configuration of events in time. These basic, and other more subtle, differences account for the fact that issues of nominal and clausal grounding tend to focus on different reflexes of the cardinal concerns that seem to be involved in grounding, viz., definiteness, quantification, and proximity vs. distance. What unites these concerns in a grammatical sense is that grounding predications, whether nominal or clausal, always seem to be about a speaker (iconically) indicating the amount of "effort" that goes into determining the epistemic status of a referent (in terms of its definiteness, its proximity/distance vis-à-vis an *origo*, or its quantificational evaluation with respect to some reference mass). Thus, "[i]n both the nominal and the clausal realms, overt marking signals an attempt by C [the conceptualizer] to bring matters "under control" with respect to what is primarily at issue" (Langacker 1994: 140).

Part I of the present volume, on nominal grounding, concentrates on the interpretation of definite descriptions. The first two chapters, by *Richard Epstein* ("Grounding, subjectivity and definite descriptions") and *Ritva Laury* ("Interaction, grounding and third-person referential forms"), propose a radical break with the presumption of identifiability for definite nominals and turn to alternative models — all of them in principle compatible with equivalent analytical work in Cognitive Grammar — that leave room for dynamic and jointly creative uses of these expressions in discourse (including naturally occurring conversation). The latter usage types may cover issues of sali-

ence, role/value status, and perspective that do not exactly reflect preexisting configurations of the objective world but that, instead, rely on the subjective ability of speakers to construe referents, including other discourse participants, under a range of specific "guises" and impose those construals on their audience. Above all, Laury also questions the assumption of an "egocentric" arrangement underlying the use of third-person pronouns and definite nominals, since the coordination of reference that is at stake here is typically not one that simply asks the hearer to "extract" a corresponding representation of the intended referent from the speaker's mind (or to reconstruct such a representation on the basis of information that is exclusively speaker-oriented). Rather, many and possibly all facets of grounding reveal something of a "sociocentric" (or "allocentric", or even "ecocentric") structure, in line with treatments of indexicality in ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, where definiteness is a property of referents that needs to be negotiated in interaction and is thus not entirely given at the outset of any interactional episode. In these chapters, it is also remarked that qualifications of definiteness and the subjective concerns of construal that go with it are not restricted to acts of judging the availability of nominal referents (things), whose existence can be taken for granted globally or constructed locally, but appear in clausal environments as well. In the latter case, the notion of definiteness, as applied to the temporal domain, only seems to matter to the conception of "real" (i.e., "non-quantified") processes, just like for nominals.

Despite the clear differences between instances of nominal and of clausal grounding, there also appears to be an extensive parallelism in the notions that operate throughout the category of grounding predications. This symmetry has been noted by Langacker (1994) and is developed in detail for a number of concrete grammatical domains in the chapters by *Walter De Mulder* and *Carl Vetters* ("The French *imparfait*, determiners and grounding") and *Theo Janssen* ("Deictic principles of pronominals, demonstratives, and tenses"). The first of these deals with the *imparfait*, one of two past tenses in French. It examines close links between this tense and some of the procedures underlying the use of definite articles (including their so-called parti-

tive counterparts). In this case, anaphoricity, as a property related to the recovery of an antecedent entity for the interpretation of an expression's particular "viewpoint", ties phenomena of grounding in the domains of tense and determiners together. Also, De Mulder and Vetter's analysis makes extensive use of Fauconnier's (1994) "Mental-Space" approach to define the relevance of constructing accessible spaces or planes different from the ground (and from which the process designated by the *imparfait* should be seen as "actual"), a tendency which is mirrored in other contributions to this volume — notably, in the chapters by Achard, Brisard, and Doiz-Bienzobas.[9] Janssen's chapter, on the other hand, investigates the wide-ranging symmetry that can be postulated for the deictic meanings of personal pronouns, demonstratives, and tenses in a variety of languages. For this, he puts forward a central analytical metaphor, that of a mental field of vision divided into specific regions that can then be associated with distinct forms within a single paradigm of grounding predications. Implicit in this approach is the idea that deictic elements always express some kind of "referential concern" that is obviously related to their purely referential functions but does not exhaust them. Janssen is careful to include many "attitudinal" uses of certain grounding predications within his scope of analysis as well.

Part II, on clausal grounding, features analyses of tense, mood, and aspect in various languages. In Cognitive Grammar terms, the interest that unites these divergent categories is to be found in the dynamic evolutionary model of reality to which they all orient. Starting with (inflectional) mood, a marginal phenomenon in English grammar, *Michel Achard* ("The meaning and distribution of French mood inflections") points out that the selection of different moods is related to the speaker's effort to signal a state of affairs' status with respect to reality and other, locally constructed mental spaces. In fact, it turns out that French mood resembles English grounding modals to a large extent in this respect, even if the grammatical mechanics of the two systems tend to differ considerably. Still, both inflectional mood and modal auxiliaries can be said to focus on a conception of the "structure of the world" and on how the knowledge of that structure directly affects the expression of real and less than real "propositions".

Of course, indicating the likelihood of an event's occurrence is what modals in general, including nongrounding ones, seem to do if they have acquired any kind of epistemic range as part of their meaning at all. Consequently, one of the problems conjured up by this account is the question to what extent one could entertain the possibility of also including non- or semi-grammatical predications in the discussion of grounding. In other words, the extent to which grounding status is a binary or a gradient notion is still in dispute. *Tanja Mortelmans* ("A study of the German modals *sollen* and *müssen* as "grounding predications" in interrogatives") seems to go for the gradient interpretation of grounding, which in her case makes good sense in light of the highly grammaticalized status of the German modals under consideration. The crux of the argument here is that some *uses*, in restricted contexts, may qualify as grounding in the strict sense of the term, even if there is not one German modal in its entirety that can claim such a status. *Jan Nuyts* ("Grounding and the system of epistemic expressions in Dutch") appears to follow these very same lines of reasoning when he looks at lexical expressions of epistemic modality, but actually goes much further and effectively argues for a conceptual, not grammatical, definition of grounding. It remains to be seen whether or not the separation of a conceptual layer of representation from a strictly linguistic one is legitimate in Cognitive Grammar, which assumes the relevance of a conceptual semantics that is directly linked to phonological form.

Tense and aspect are traditionally, and often rightly, seen as intricately intertwined. The same picture emerges from the remaining chapters in the second part of this volume, which stress the heavy interaction that goes on between tense predications and various aspectual notions, in particular that of the contrast between a perfective and an imperfective construal of events. *Frank Brisard* ("The English present") adopts a nontemporal definition of tense and tries to show how present-time and other meanings of the English present tense emerge from a more basic epistemic concern with the structure of the world (as represented through the ground). In his account, (im)perfectivity, as a matter of semantic aspect, imposes a global split between "states" and "actions" in the English lexicon. The inter-

action of the present tense with this aspectual category results in a peculiar distribution of simple and progressive marking, which reflects a preoccupation with revealing certain states of affairs as constitutive of the ground (pretty much extraneous to any temporal point that might also be made), and others as nonconstitutive or incidental. The Polish verb system, like the English, contrasts a past with a nonpast tense as well, but it adds to this a grammatical manifestation of (im)perfectivity that is responsible for very specific inferences in futurate contexts of nonpast tense uses. *Agata Kochańska* ("A cognitive grammar analysis of Polish nonpast perfectives and imperfectives") explains such inferences by referring to Cognitive Grammar's distinction between actual and virtual planes of reference within which to locate designated processes, in conjunction with the better-known contrast between projected and potential reality. All of these notions, as it turns out, are ultimately epistemic. Finally, *Aintzane Doiz-Bienzobas* ("The preterit and the imperfect as grounding predications") observes similar effects in analyzing the two past tenses in Spanish, which differ mainly in their assignment of (past) states of affairs to an actual or structural plane of conceptualization. Her analysis of the Spanish preterit and imperfect is first and foremost rooted in a Mental-Space approach to "discourse tracking devices", which implies that the "viewpoint" from which states of affairs are set up (and their accessibility is determined) takes on a central role in defining the meanings of these clausal grounding predications.

Fauconnier's (1994: xix) statement, cited in Epstein's chapter, that "unusual cases reveal the general nature of the operations at work, whereas the typical cases do not" serves as a key methodological principle adhered to in many of the present contributions. Especially for grounding predications, relatively atypical modal, affective, and also generic usage types happen to illustrate the basic epistemic workings of this grammatical class in a much more revealing way than the so-called referential uses, which can be seen as parasitic upon the "coordinating" function of grounding. Related to the concern with uncovering "marginal" usage types, then, is the decision, also respected in many chapters, to shy away from introspectively constructed linguistic examples and concentrate on the actual use in

context of grounding predications. That, too, constitutes a practice of "grounding", be it at a metatheoretical level and as applied to the analysis of language, rather than to linguistic structure per se. In combination with the vast range of crosslinguistic observations and the recourse to various distinct analytical methods (from psycholinguistic experimentation, over corpus analysis, to the qualitative analysis of spoken and written discourse), the present volume hopes to offer a diversified picture of the many routes that grounding theory, as formulated within Cognitive Grammar, can lead us onto.

Both the subjective character and the strictly grammatical status of grounding predications present themselves as crucial to any adequate understanding of the nature of grounding. This is precisely why grounding predications form a separate class in grammar, even if they share an attentiveness to epistemic modality with many other items and constructions in language. The fundamental question that needs to be answered in this respect touches on the very essence of grounding, insofar as there is no more or less discrete and universal phenomenon of grounding to begin with, if the quality of its modal concerns does not differ from that of (less grammaticalized and) lexical expressions of epistemic modality — see especially the chapters by Laury, Mortelmans, and Nuyts. In the words of Nuyts (this volume: 458), we might ask "why languages tend to grammatically code qualificational dimensions, but not dimensions of the "object world"", where "qualification" is to be understood as a subjective sensitivity to how objects are linguistically presented (rather than to what is actually being presented). Although no division between lexicon and grammar should be assumed to derive from this, it is probably appropriate to see grammar as the locus of a world view that transcends local concerns with "accidental" properties of the world to be described (in any case much more so than lexicon, which tends to be easily affected by concrete cultural models that have no claim to any kind of transcendental status in language). Grammar, in other words, seems to offer a collection of metaphysical questions (or an ethnometaphysics, for that matter) that need to be addressed time and again in the course of any structured episode of symbolic interactional behavior, and it is very unlikely that lexicon might be up to the

task of providing elements that are sufficiently general to be able to fulfill this function. In this picture of grammar, it surely looks as if the notion of the ground has a privileged and even primitive status, so that the next step would be to substantiate this conception, in the face of its fundamentally abstract and schematic makeup, and ask how and why it has developed in the first place.

3. Theoretical implications

Space and time, as important correlates to the meanings of many grounding predications, can be said to belong to the realm of immediate sensations (see, e.g., the "Transcendental aesthetic" section of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*). They are the stuff that is always already given in our conceptual (propositional, argumentative) dealings with the world and upon which we build the substance of rational understanding. Any representation presupposes the restrictive dimensions of space and time as the forms in which the brute matter of experience is cast, and these forms are always immediately available, here and now. Thus, space and time cannot be treated as concepts in their own right but rather as modes or modalities of presentation. (Conceptual) re-presentations are presentations that have been fitted into these modes. But the modes themselves are not so much conceptual as they are procedural, providing instructions on how to treat and integrate representational content. Now, in grammar it is not representations that are of primary concern, in the sense that a representation pertains to the construal of an *objective scene*. What lies behind this relation of construal, and what is correspondingly indicated by grammatical means, is something of a "directing" instance, a role that might conceivably be performed by all sorts of constructions, including grounding predications. This, of course, is also a matter of construal (or of *constituting the world*), but it is crucially one of subjective import, in that it relates whatever content there is to express to the ground.

In a Husserlian vein, we might say that the fundamental crisis of Western civilization does not primarily pertain to the foundations of

reason, but rather to the scientific project of defining "real" objects in the world, i.e., that which is given in the sensibilities of space and time (Husserl 1970).[10] In contrast to what science itself might pretend, the formation of intelligible objects, or concepts, does not proceed *sui generis* but needs to be "prepared". Space and time perform this preparatory work. Husserl contended that, in modern civilization, we are "losing ground" (and the sense of community that goes with it). That is to say that the "here and now" of our experiences, the actuality and immediacy immanent in the feeling of "belonging" that is conjured up by the ground (*Grund* or *[Ur-]Erde*), are somehow fundamentally affected by this loss. The problem of the ground in Husserl's phenomenology, then, is one of modality and not of content. It is intimately connected with his notion of the "lifeworld", specifying a "pre-understanding sedimented in a deep-seated stratum of things that are taken for granted, of certainties, and of unquestioned assumptions" (Habermas 1998: 236–237), so as to absorb and regulate the risk of disagreement — an "epistemic" risk (on the transcendental relationship between the ground and acts of communication, see also Lyotard 1991: chapter 8).

It is to this conception of a "ground" that grounding predications can be taken to "refer" when they indicate degrees of epistemic certainty or control (over objects in space and time), and for this it is absolutely necessary that grounding predications operate in the realm of the subjective, i.e., in grammar. For the "pre-predicative knowledge" that forms the horizon of a massive background consensus is not about objects of deliberation, but about ways in which to present such objects. In other words, the categories and meanings that grounding predications have to offer are unthematic and cannot accurately be seen as explicit topics of reflection. That would be like questioning the frame of a picture, when what people normally do is focus on its (referential) contents. Of course, it is possible to thematize, as it were, the meanings expressed by grounding predications, but then such a process would need to convert the background character of this information into something of a foregrounded, or "objective", status, which might involve lexicalizing grammatical meanings. Thus, one does not typically question the pastness of a situation,

as presented in an utterance like *He graduated with honors*, by merely repeating the utterance in a contrastive tone of voice: *What? He graduated with honors?* (with heavy stress on the past-tense morpheme, to indicate something like 'What? His graduation [with honors] is located at a time prior to the time of speaking?').[11] Instead, one typically resorts to lexical means in order to indicate where exactly the problem with the utterance at hand is to be located: e.g., *What? He **already** graduated? (I thought he was still in high school...).* Questioning and (re)negotiating the position of elements within or outside the ground is in principle always possible, but it is not primarily perceived as going on in grammar and whenever it does happen, chances are that objectifying predications are called in to signal the fact that the information at stake is (temporarily) removed from the ground — or, from another perspective, that (some element of) the ground itself is put "onstage".

If the ground, as a privileged domain that provides a baseline for grammatical expressions, is a collection of (nonpropositional)[12] "statements" of the immediately familiar (as well as, by implication, one that negatively defines the surprising), it should be obvious that this entity is neither static nor completely private. The metaphysical objects involved are not eternal, and their constitution is a matter of intersubjective praxis, rather than theoretical debate (cf. Laury's use of the label "sociocentric" in this volume to characterize grounding practices). In this light, the importance of related research into issues of deixis needs to be more fully appreciated. As grounding affects all structural levels of language, it also interacts with the discursive and argumentative organization of *text*. Thus, the same term covers a similar concept in discourse analysis, where it designates the relationship between (discursive) foreground and background (incidentally also assigning a discourse-pragmatic function to "syntax"; see, e.g., the contributions to Tomlin 1987). Furthermore, grounding is directly drawn into any discussion of *indexicality*, which has received considerable attention from linguistic anthropologists and critical linguists alike. In the so-called Chicago School, including Goffman and the work of Silverstein and Hanks, indexical or deictic categories figure among the foremost indicators of reflexive or meta-linguistic

awareness, and grammar is seen as the primary locus in which to look for strategies resorted to by language users to communicate their assessment of the overall status of what is being said. (Goffman [1981: 325–326] talks of the speaker shifting alignments, "a combination of production format and participation status".) The assessment/alignment can be made in epistemic terms, and such epistemic judgments are central to the organization of grammar.

As should be clear by now, there is nothing to prevent concrete grammatical analyses of grounding predications from focusing on discursive, interpersonal (social), or affective functions, as long as these are not treated as mere connotations pragmatically derived from an "essential", truth-conditional semantics of the predications in question. The status of referential usage types as somehow essential to the meaning of functional categories is quite understandable from a "native" angle, yet there is no compelling reason to adopt the same referentialist stance in the analytic techniques and formal descriptive machinery that linguists have at their disposal (Silverstein 1976; see Epstein, this volume). Referentialism, thus defined, may be a worthy object of psychological investigation in its own right, considering how language users themselves conceive of the functions of language, but as a presupposition governing the systematic study of language it is unmistakably misguided. Obviously, considerations of strategy and alignment apply most pertinently to those instances of grounding that are traditionally taken as deictic, such as demonstratives (for space) and tense (for time). Still, it can be reasonably hypothesized that other constructions like moods/modals, determiners, and quantifiers, which belong to the same class of grounding predications in Cognitive Grammar, operate in comparable ways on the semantic contents of clauses and nominals, respectively. One of the *theoretical* challenges for a genuinely unified account of grounding, therefore, is to offer possibilities of linking the various linguistic and paralinguistic paradigms involved, thereby effectively creating a trans-paradigmatic concept of grounding. The general intuition behind this is that, throughout different disciplines, uses of the same term, "grounding", point to a general property of symbolic interaction that is differentially manifested in the range of paradigms where

this term surfaces. Attempts at such an interdisciplinary approach can be witnessed in the chapters by Brisard, Epstein, Janssen, and Laury.

One way of responding to this challenge, from the grammatical perspective, is to abandon the specific modalities of the domains in which the different grounding predications function and formulate parameters of grounding in terms of general frames for the organization of experience (and, hence, of linguistic meaning). Cognitive Grammar provides just this scenario when it proposes grounding as situated in an epistemic "stratum" of grammatical structure, i.e., as epistemically motivated. In his repeated observations of the many parallels between clausal and nominal grounding, Langacker emphasizes the unitary aspect of this grammatical phenomenon and accordingly suggests an integrated phenomenology that is not domain-specific for tackling individual constructions. In this respect, the many symmetries between conception and perception (especially vision), as noted in Langacker (1999: chapter 7), provide some extremely useful guidelines for the development of a cognitive approach to grammatical structure that is motivated by generalized conceptual capacities — rather than specialized, encapsulated symbolic skills.[13] Notably, through the postulation of different "viewing arrangements" underlying the construal of configurations that are otherwise identical, Cognitive Grammar manages to capture many of the more subtle meaning distinctions in grammar, which do not necessarily reflect a difference in objective content. This same analogy is stressed in the present volume by Janssen and Kochańska, and it is also present in accounts of mental-space construction processes, where the notion of a "viewpoint" plays a central role — see the chapter by Doiz-Bienzobas and, to a lesser extent, those by Achard, De Mulder and Vetters, and Epstein. These, and other, mechanisms offered in Cognitive Grammar allow analyses to move away from the seemingly unproblematic premises that have typified "referentialist" thinking on grounding predications, i.e., the assumption that expressions whose meanings depend on situated properties of the ground do nothing but relate the referents they designate to that ground as a physical speech event.

Grounding theory offers at least two major objections against this view. The first is that the relation which a designated entity, be it a nominal thing or a clausal process, entertains with the ground of the speech event is not exclusively, and perhaps not even primarily, of a physical or logical nature (in the sense of a spatial or temporal "logic", for instance). The main point of the conceptual models proposed in Cognitive Grammar is exactly that a schematic characterization can be given of *all* grounding predications, and that this characterization is not a matter of locating things or processes in (physical) dimensions of reality, but of qualifying the status of things or processes with respect to the structure of reality *tout court*. In this light, particular features of the meanings of grounding predications derive from such general epistemic considerations, instead of the other way around. Technically speaking, moreover, grounding predications only designate *schematic* things or processes, as we have seen. And when they combine with nouns or verb forms, the actual relationship with the ground is an aspect of subjective construal rather than an objective focus within the scene that is being described.

The focus on the subjective nature of grounding predications implies a conception of grammar that is not reflexive of contextual properties "out there" but of the speaker construing a context, possibly even creating it, and in any case designing it in function of the interaction with an addressee (i.e., also drawing on assumptions regarding what she knows or would be in a position to know). The subjective status of grounding predications, in other words, highlights the active role that a speaker plays in organizing the contents of linguistic communication. In this capacity, it is obviously related to similar organizing principles at the discourse level, as indicated above: the foreground/background distinction (corresponding to figure/ground organization in Cognitive Grammar), as well as the construction of relevant discourse spaces, where accessibility relations between space elements indicate the epistemic status of these elements. In this strand of enquiry, deictic (or grounding) elements are seen as fundamentally challenging the viability of viewing language as a self-contained, autonomous system (see also Duranti and Goodwin 1992).

The emphasis on a unifying approach to the class of grounding predications, itself comprising a number of different construction types, leads to an integrated analysis in which a limited number of cognitive principles of information structuring, attention management, and "ception" may motivate comparable linguistic observations over various domains. Thus, at an abstract level of grammatical structure, clauses and nominals make use of the same strategic concerns, apply them in similar ways, and therefore also function similarly in accordance with the semantic options projected by these strategies. This methodological preference for unification can be extended to include all possible forms of "grounding" at higher levels of organization, notably those that involve the constitution of a ground for the patterning of text and discourse as a whole, or for the construction of participant status (footing) and "framing". Also, the need to start semantic analyses of grounding predications from a perspective that is not domain-specific (i.e., not temporal, or spatial, or otherwise "objectively" framed in terms of some direct measure of identifiability) calls for a reappraisal of peripheral usage types. Against the rising hegemony of "frequency" thinking in much of current linguistics and cognitive psychology, peripheral uses, *qua* limiting cases, can indeed be seen as instantiating general principles of cognition in a more transparent way, as their functioning is not obscured by the specifics of the domains which grounding predications are often presupposed to instantiate. The resulting analyses are to be free from any logically inspired hierarchy and do not implement a strict distinction between semantic ("true") and pragmatic ("derived") meanings.

Notes

1. The name "Cognitive Grammar" will be used exclusively to refer to Langacker's (cf. 1987, 1990, 1991, 1999) semiological theory of grammar. The term "grounding", too, is used exclusively in the technical sense given to it in Cognitive Grammar, although some of the contributions contained in the present volume do indicate plausible links with certain broader conceptions of the "ground" (as an implicit background invoked in the production and comprehension of linguistic expressions). This particular focus is not to be con-

fused with some of the outstanding and obviously related endeavors of other cognitive linguists, in which the relevant terminology seems to be deployed in a somewhat looser, less structure-oriented fashion (see, e.g., Dirven and Radden's [2002] paradigmatic use of the notion of a "cognitive grammar").

2. References to Langacker (1993) and (1994) provide the respective bibliographical details for the first publication of these two papers, "Deixis and subjectivity" and "Remarks on the English grounding systems", which are cited in most of the subsequent chapters in the present volume as well. Langacker's papers are reprinted here, following this introduction, under the same titles as their originals.
3. The term "phrase" is necessarily qualified in Cognitive Grammar, as the theory does not assume any phrase-structured organization of natural language. Noun and verb phrases might emerge from grounding (conceptually grouped) units of phonological material, if the resulting structures display the appropriate heads, but they are not essential to the structured inventory of symbolic assemblies that makes up a language.
4. In Space Grammar, the ground is in effect separated from an epistemic layer of conceptualization, as the former pertains primarily to the "performative" aspects of utterance production. It should be clear, however, that the eventual integration of these two levels ("ground" and a kind of "epistemic" concern) does not go against the spirit of the earlier analyses and in fact broadens the range of semantic import that "grounding predications" may display.
5. The "chronology" suggested here is more of a procedural nature. As such, it does not necessarily reflect the relative orderings of processing stages that might be relevant to a "real-time" (or online) model of language production. Also, "utterance", here and elsewhere, may refer to full finite clauses as well as to interpretable parts thereof (insofar as these parts are themselves grounded).
6. Technically, a grounding predication also displays a profile "onstage", and thus a referential focus, just like any other predication. The profile of a grounding predication, though, is extremely schematic (merely specifying the conceptual availability of a thing or process) and therefore immediately filled in, as it were, by the nominal or clausal head that it modifies. The latter process relies on perfectly mundane relations of correspondence between the elements of the semantic poles of predications that are syntactically integrated.
7. Location is a special type of situation and, as such, canonically tied to an act of reference. Reference is thus a special type of situation, too (i.e., one among various possible acts of situating or "contextualizing" things and processes).
8. Nominal quantification is conspicuously absent in the present volume. In fact, except for work by Langacker and some analysis of quantification by Israel (1996) in the context of polar sensitivity, I am not aware of any substantial discussions on the topic within Cognitive Grammar.

9. In Fauconnier's model, it is the conception of the "base (space)" that comes closest to illustrating what the function of the ground could be in discourse. If a base space is a starting point for the construction of mental spaces and sets up discourse elements which can be linked to various other frames "by background knowledge and previous meaning construction" (Fauconnier 1997: 42), then this might be seen as a direct manifestation of knowledge springing from the ground. Note that the base *is not* the ground, but a construction whose import is shaped by what discourse participants are locally seeing as belonging to the ground. This neither implies that the ground is a static repertoire of knowledge, nor does it even presuppose that there is any other independent means of getting at the ground, because the only way to access its contents, analytically speaking, is exactly by looking at the behavior and function of base spaces in contextually anchored instances of discourse. Still, it is useful for grammatical purposes to maintain a distinction between the ground and the base, if only because the two notions apparently pertain to epistemic concerns that differ considerably in their scope as well as in their degree of contextual relevance. Furthermore, it should be clear that the ground is definitely not to be equated either with a kind of "focus space" (like a "belief space"), which presents what is actually at issue in an utterance. Even though the ground can be seen as made up of countless beliefs, it does not present any of them as a focus of attention.
10. We are talking about the natural sciences "of space and time" here, including, crucially, arithmetic (time), geometry (space), and mechanics (space and time). Note that the conception of space (and time) that is entertained in most cognitive-linguistic thinking about grammar is topological, not geometric (Talmy 1988; cf. Langacker 1994 for a mild critique).
11. In principle, such a contrastive strategy is indeed possible and may sometimes be resorted to, but in any case, as a marked option, the meaningful use of heavy stress alone seems to involve a kind of "objectifying" force, then.
12. This is, crucially, how the ground differs from the notion of "context", which is equally pervasive in the organization of interaction. Context, as it has been traditionally defined in formal semantics, is a collection of propositional beliefs used to "enrich" or "complete" the (semantically underspecified) contents of "what is said" in an utterance. This conception of context is useful in its own right, but it does not directly tackle the theme of the ground, which is nonpropositional and in fact shapes the very form in which to address the specifics of context.
13. The idea of "ception" as a general mode or "module" of cognition, comprising principles of con- and perception, should be attributed to Talmy (e.g., 1996).

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Deixis and subjectivity

Ronald W. Langacker

If the task of devising a linguistic theory were just beginning, and linguists were free to imagine some basic properties of an optimal theoretical framework, what might they come up with? What might they offer as reasonable grounds for judging a theory to be natural, elegant, and revelatory?[1]

They might very well imagine a linguistic theory conceived in full harmony with the semiotic function of language, that of allowing conceptualizations to be symbolized by phonological sequences. Such a theory would posit only the minimal apparatus required for this function: semantic structures, phonological structures, and symbolic links between the two. It would recognize that all grammatical constructs are meaningful, thereby reducing grammar to symbolic relationships between semantic and phonological structures. By viewing grammar and lexicon as a continuum of symbolic structures, it would thus achieve a fundamental conceptual unification. It would further recognize conventionalized aspects of pragmatics — including deixis — as constituting an integral part of linguistic semantics, treated in the same fashion as any other aspect of semantic structure. Finally, such a theory would be founded on a view of meaning that acknowledged its conceptual basis and fully accommodated our capacity for construing a situation in alternate ways (e.g. as seen from different perspectives). A theory of this sort would obviously be of great interest from both the linguistic and the semiological standpoints.

A theory with these properties has of course been available to the theoretical linguistic community for over two decades. It goes by the name of Cognitive Grammar (CG), and has been successfully applied to a substantial, ever-widening array of languages and linguistic phenomena.[2] Reasonably precise semantic characterizations have been proposed for a large number of grammatical markers, and for such

basic grammatical notions as noun, verb, head, complement, modifier, coordination, subordination, subject, object, auxiliary verb, transitivity, unaccusative, and ergativity. Our interest here is the conceptual characterization of deictic elements, in particular those essential to the formation of nominals (i.e. noun phrases) and finite clauses. A revealing semantic analysis of these elements, one that explains their special grammatical properties, pivots on the phenomenon of subjectivity, which pertains to vantage point and the relationship between the subject and object of conception. Subjectivity proves to have substantial linguistic significance, both synchronic and diachronic.

1. A symbolic view of grammar

CG posits just three basic kinds of structures: semantic, phonological, and symbolic. Symbolic structures are not distinct from the other two, but reside in the symbolization of semantic structures by phonological structures: [[SEM]/[PHON]]. The most obvious examples of symbolic structures are lexical items, e.g. [[PENCIL]/[pencil]]. A central tenet of CG is that morphology and syntax are also symbolic in nature. It claims, in other words, that only symbolic structures are required for the full and proper characterization of grammatical structure. A further contention is that lexicon, morphology, and syntax form a continuum; only arbitrarily can they be divided into separate and discrete "components".

The basic import of this symbolic conception of grammar is that all grammatical elements have some kind of semantic value. The inherent plausibility of this claim is most evident for "grammatical morphemes" and "function words", many of which are clearly meaningful (e.g. prepositions). These form a gradation with lexical items, and markers toward the nonlexical end of the scale are better analyzed as having an abstract or redundant meaning than none at all (cf. Langacker 1988). I have argued elsewhere (1987a, 1987c) that basic grammatical categories such as noun and verb can be attributed not only prototypical semantic values, but also highly abstract characterizations applicable to all class members. The same is true for such

grammatical notions as subject, object, clause, subordination, and transitivity. Whereas a subject, for example, is prototypically both an agent and a topic, I believe that every subject is correctly described more abstractly as a clause-level figure (Langacker 1991, 1999b, 2001a). What about grammatical rules? These are just patterns for the integration of simpler symbolic structures to form progressively more complex ones. These patterns are themselves complex symbolic structures; they can be thought of as templates used for assembling and evaluating expressions. Structurally, such a template is directly parallel to the expressions it characterizes, but abstracts away from their points of divergence to reveal their schematic commonality.

This symbolic account of grammar presupposes an appropriate view of linguistic semantics. I assume, first, that meaning is correctly identified with conceptualization (or mental experience), in the broadest sense of that term. It includes, for example, both sensory and motor experience, as well as a speaker's conception of the social, cultural, and linguistic context. I further assume that linguistic semantics is properly regarded as being encyclopedic in scope (Haiman 1980; Langacker 1987a: chapter 4; cf. Wierzbicka 1995). There is no precise delimitation between semantics and pragmatics (or "linguistic" vs. "extralinguistic" knowledge).[3] As the basis for its meaning, an expression invokes an open-ended array of conceptions pertaining in some fashion to the entity it designates. Any facet of this knowledge (essentially anything we know about the entity) may prove important on a given occasion or for a specific linguistic purpose. Finally, I assume that meaning is critically dependent on construal, i.e. on our capacity for conceptualizing the same situation in alternate ways. Owing to construal, expressions that describe the same objective situation and convey the same conceptual content (or have the same truth conditions) can nevertheless be semantically quite distinct.

Numerous aspects of construal have been identified. One aspect is our ability to conceive of an entity at various levels of specificity and detail, as witnessed by hierarchies such as *thing* > *creature* > *insect* > *fly* > *fruit fly*, each term being schematic for the one that follows. With respect to their meanings, grammatical elements (including the

templates describing grammatical constructions) cluster toward the schematic end of the spectrum, but crucially, this lack of semantic specificity is not the same as meaninglessness. A second aspect of construal is our capacity for conceptualizing one structure against the background provided by another. Under this heading fall such varied and essential phenomena as metaphor, presupposition, and discourse continuity. Three additional aspects of construal are especially significant for present purposes: scope, prominence, and perspective.

An expression's scope comprises the full array of conceptual content that it specifically evokes and relies upon for its characterization. Essential to the meaning of *lid*, for instance, is the schematic conception of a container, and also that of one object covering another. Likewise, the characterization of *knuckle* relies on the conception of a finger, while the latter in turn invokes the notion of a hand. The concept of a finger thus constitutes the immediate scope for *knuckle*, and the concept of a hand, its overall scope. Indirectly, of course, *knuckle*'s overall scope can further be thought of as including the conception of an arm and even the body as a whole (since hand evokes arm, and arm evokes body). An expression's scope need not, then, be sharply or precisely delimited. It must however be attributed not only a certain minimal inclusiveness but also some kind of bounding — it does not extend indefinitely (cf. Casad and Langacker 1985; Langacker 1993b, 1995, 2001b).

Of the various types of prominence having linguistic significance, two stand out as being especially important for grammatical structure. The first of these is profiling: within its scope (the array of conceptual content it evokes), every expression singles out a particular substructure as a kind of focal point; this substructure — the profile — can be characterized as the entity which the expression designates. For example, with respect to the conceived relationship involving a container and its cover, the noun *lid* profiles (designates) the cover, as shown in Figure 1(a). (Note that heavy lines indicate profiling.) Similarly, the verb *arrive* evokes the conception of an entity moving along a spatial path to a goal, but within that overall conception (its scope) it profiles only the final portion of the trajectory, as sketched in Figure 1(b). These examples illustrate a fundamental contrast be-

tween nominal and relational expressions. A nominal expression (such as a noun or pronoun) profiles a thing, given a highly abstract definition of that term (see Langacker 1987a: part II, 1987c). A relational expression (e.g. a verb, preposition, adjective, or adverb) profiles a relationship, also abstractly defined. For our purposes here, we can simply represent a thing by means of a circle, and a relationship by means of a line connecting the entities it associates, as shown in Figure 2(a).

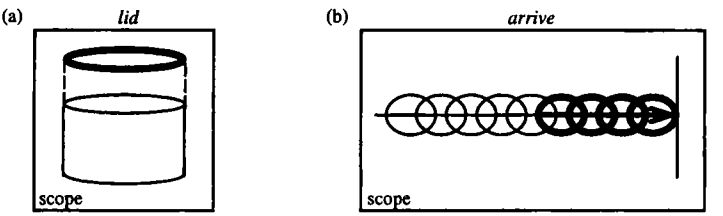

Figure 1. Profiling

A second type of prominence, which I analyze in terms of figure/ground organization, involves the participants in a relational expression. Consider the semantic contrast between *X is near Y* and *Y is near X*, which evoke the same conceptual content and profile the same relationship. What, then, is the nature of their difference? In *X is near Y*, the concern is with locating X — which is thus the figure within the profiled relationship — and Y is invoked as a reference point for this purpose. The reverse is true in *Y is near X*. Adopting the term trajector (tr) for the relational figure, and landmark (lm) for an additional salient participant, we can say that the two expressions impose alternate trajector/landmark alignments on the scene they invoke.[4] Their subtle semantic contrast does not reside in conceptual content (or truth conditions), but is rather a matter of construal (choice of relational figure). Expressions invoking the same conceptual content may also differ in meaning due to other aspects of construal, notably profiling. Thus, if Figure 2(a) represents the verb *employ*, we obtain the nouns *employer* and *employee* by restricting the profile to its trajector and landmark, respectively, as shown in (b) and

(c). The imposition of these nominal profiles constitutes the semantic value of the suffixes *-er* and *-ee*.[5]

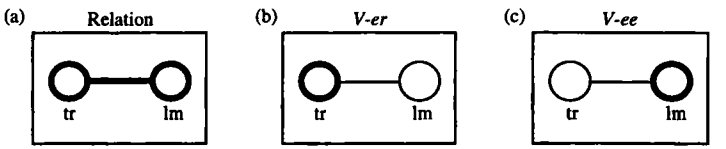

Figure 2. Trajector/landmark alignment

The final aspect of construal, perspective, includes such factors as vantage point and orientation. Their linguistic relevance is apparent from an expression such as *Jack is to the left of Jill*, whose interpretation depends on whether, for purposes of determining left vs. right, the speaker adopts his own vantage point or Jill's, and also on which way they are facing (cf. Vandeloise 1991; Casad and Langacker 1985). A related factor, subjectivity, will be the primary focus of our later discussion.

2. Nominals and finite clauses

A basic tenet of CG is that grammatical notions are susceptible to semantic characterization. For sake of discussion, let me simply take it as established that every noun profiles a thing (abstractly defined), whereas every verb designates a particular kind of relationship called a process (in which a profiled relation is followed sequentially in its evolution through time). The problem I want to address is how to characterize the related notions nominal (my term for "noun phrase"[6]) and finite clause. There is no disputing their fundamental linguistic importance — these constituent types figure prominently in the description of every language. Yet the nature and even the possibility of viable semantic definitions is less than obvious.

The problem can be posed in the following manner: what is the semantic distinction between, on the one hand, a simple noun like *dog*, and on the other, a full nominal such as *a dog*, *this shaggy dog*, *every dog*, or *the dog in the driveway*? Likewise, what semantic fac-

tor consistently distinguishes a simple verb stem like *jump* from a full finite clause such as *He jumped*, *He will jump*, *He might not jump*, or *Jump!*? It is not a matter of profiling. If we consider a simple noun (*dog*), an intermediate-level structure (*shaggy dog*), and a full nominal (*this shaggy dog*), we find that each of them profiles a thing. By the same token, the verb *jump* and the finite clause *He jumped* are alike in that each profiles a process. The semantic basis for these distinctions must therefore lie elsewhere.

I suggest that, whereas a simple noun or verb stem merely specifies a type, a full nominal or finite clause designates a grounded instance of that type. Of the terms that figure in this definition, I will not say much here about the type/instance distinction (see Langacker 1991 for extensive discussion). Let me simply note that, by itself, a noun like *dog* fails even to evoke a specific number of instances. For example, the compound *dog hater* does not specifically indicate whether one or multiple dogs are involved, let alone refer to any particular instance of the *dog* category. A noun or a verb stem serves only the minimal semantic function of providing an initial type specification, which undergoes refinement, adjustment, and quantification at higher levels of organization in the assembly of a nominal or a finite clause. Grounding constitutes the final, criterial step in their assembly. The essential property of a nominal or a finite clause is that it not only profiles an instance of the thing or process type in question, but indicates the status of this instance vis-à-vis the ground.

I use the term ground for the speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances. In one way or another, the elements that serve a grounding function specify the relationship between some facet of the ground and the entity profiled by the nominal or clause. For nominals in English, grounding elements include demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*), articles (*the, a*, unstressed *some*, zero), and certain quantifiers (*all, most, some, no, any, every, each*). One aspect of the grounding relationship they express is either definiteness or indefiniteness, where definiteness implies (roughly) that the speaker and hearer have both succeeded in establishing mental contact with the profiled thing instance (i.e. they have singled it out for individual conscious awareness).[7] For English finite clauses, the grounding ele-

ments are tense (so-called "present" and "past") and the modals (*may, will, shall, can, must*). The former specify whether or not the designated process is immediate to the ground (either temporally or in a more abstract sense), while the absence vs. the presence of a modal indicates whether this process belongs to reality (where the ground is located) or is merely potential.

3. Deixis and grounding

A deictic expression can be characterized as one that includes the ground within its scope. Grounding elements are therefore deictic in nature, since they specify a relationship between some facet of the ground and the nominal or processual profile. However, not every deictic expression serves a grounding function in the sense of being criterial to the formation of a nominal or a finite clause. The adverb *now*, for instance, is deictic because it makes reference to the time of speaking, but a clause is not rendered finite by its presence; note its occurrence as part of an infinitival complement: *She would really like* ***to be here now***. We thus face the task of ascertaining what is special about grounding elements. What is it that distinguishes them from other deictic expressions and makes them capable of deriving a finite clause or a nominal?

Deictic expressions can be classified in various ways. One basis for classification is the nature of their profile: a deictic element can profile either a thing or a relationship. In fact, many deictic expressions can assume both nominal and relational values, representing different grammatical classes accordingly. Consider *yesterday*, which has both nominal and adverbial function. Its nominal meaning (as in *Yesterday was pleasant*, or *I thought of yesterday*) is depicted in Figure 3(a). As a noun, *yesterday* evokes the conception of a sequence of days extending through time (t) and profiles (designates) the day immediately prior to the one containing the ground (G). When *yesterday* is used adverbially (e.g. *It arrived yesterday*), it has the value sketched in Figure 3(b). It evokes essentially the same conceptual content as in its nominal use, but profiles the relationship between

some event (e.g. *It arrived*) and the day in question, which respectively serve as trajector and landmark. Observe, however, that *yesterday* is deictic in either capacity by virtue of invoking the ground as a point of reference.[8]

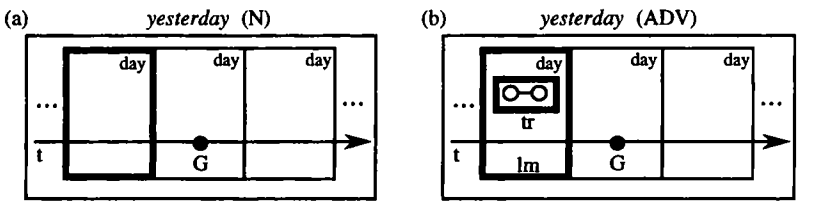

Figure 3. Nominal and relational construal

An alternate basis for classification is the salience of the ground's role within the conception that constitutes a deictic element's meaning. An expression that does not invoke the ground at all is of course nondeictic for that very reason; considered in isolation, a simple noun or verb (e.g. *dog* or *jump*) has this character. The ground does fall within the scope of expressions like *yesterday*, but there it remains implicit and nonsalient, serving only as an "offstage" reference point. It can however be put "onstage" and made a specific focus of attention. One option is for some facet of the ground to be singled out as the profile of a nominal expression; examples include the pronouns *I* and *you*, as well as *here* and *now* in their nominal uses. The pronoun *you* is sketched in Figure 4(a), where S and H represent the speaker and hearer, and the dashed-line rectangle delimits the onstage region. A second option is for a ground element to function as one of the focal participants in a relational expression (i.e. as its trajector or primary landmark). Thus a prepositional phrase like *near you* involves the configuration diagrammed in Figure 4(b). Finally, the speech event itself can go onstage as the process designated by a finite clause, as shown in 4(c). That is the distinguishing property of an explicit performative (e.g. *I order you to desist!*).

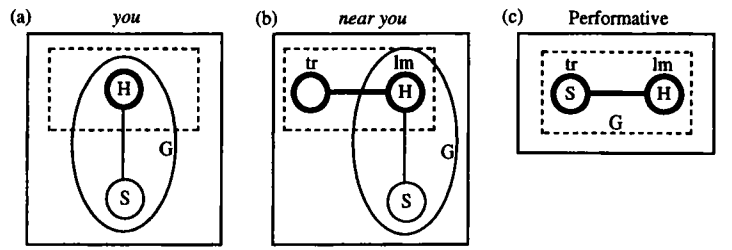

Figure 4. "Onstage" construals of the ground

Along this parameter, a grounding element would appear to be most similar to expressions like *yesterday*. A demonstrative or tense marker, for example, certainly does include the ground within its scope, but it is not explicitly mentioned nor is it particularly salient — rather than being profiled (as in the case of *you*, *now*, or *here*), the ground remains implicit and serves as a reference point. Yet a word like *yesterday* is insufficient by itself to ground a clause in the sense of making it finite. Observe the felicity of using it to modify an infinitival clause: *I would like* ***to have finished yesterday***. We must therefore address the question of why certain expressions invoking the ground as an offstage reference point function as grounding elements while others do not. What is it that crucially distinguishes *yesterday*, for instance, from the past-tense morpheme?

A true grounding element, I suggest, is grammatical rather than lexical in nature and has a particular kind of meaning.[9] Like other grammatical elements, grounding expressions tend to be abstract and schematic semantically, and to have a "relativistic" or "topological" nature as opposed to indicating a specific shape or value (cf. Talmy 1988). Moreover, their characterization pertains to fundamental cognitive notions whose import is not unreasonably described as "epistemic": notions such as reality, time, immediacy, and mental contact. Thus the definite article specifies mental contact by the speaker and hearer, while the demonstratives make a further specification regarding proximity. The presence or absence of a modal indicates whether a process falls within reality. The opposition between "present" and "past" tense is best analyzed in terms of whether a process is immediate to the ground or distant in either time or reality (see Langacker

1991: chapter 6). By contrast, *yesterday* invokes a higher-order conceptual structure and has more of a metric character. It presupposes a conception involving a succession of days — a series of discrete metric units superimposed on the temporal axis — and confines a process to one specific unit within the sequence (whereas the past-tense morpheme merely indicates removal from the time of speaking, or at most temporal anteriority).

Grounding elements can therefore be distinguished from words like *yesterday* owing to their grammatical status and the nature of their conceptual content. There are however other expressions that seem quite comparable in terms of conceptual content yet do not serve a grounding function. For example, *possible* offers a reasonable paraphrase for the modal *may* (in its epistemic value). Likewise, *before now* would appear to be equivalent to a past-tense morpheme. And for the two components of the demonstrative *this*, namely definiteness and proximity to the speaker, the glosses *known to us* and *near me* may at least be in the ballpark. Despite their apparent semantic equivalence, these expressions show very different grammatical behavior from the corresponding grounding elements. The reason, I will argue, is that they are not in fact semantically equivalent. Even if we attribute to them precisely the same conceptual content, they nonetheless differ in meaning by virtue of how they construe that content. We will see that the crucial factors are profiling, subjectivity, and the salience accorded the ground. Especially interesting are the interrelationships among these factors.

4. Grammatical behavior

At least five grammatical properties are characteristic of grounding elements and collectively distinguish them from other kinds of expression, including their seeming paraphrases. In CG, such properties are taken as being symptomatic of underlying conceptual differences. The first two properties suggest a difference in profiling. The remaining three pertain to subjectivity.

Property 1: Strikingly, the expressions that come to mind as paraphrases of grounding elements are headed by adjectives, prepositions, and participles. These are all analyzed in CG as belonging to the broad class of what I will call atemporal expressions, which are distinguished by their profiles from both nouns and verbs.[10] As shown in (1), atemporal expressions are typically able to follow the verb *be* as the lexical head of a clause:

(1)a. *That they will ultimately prevail is* ***possible.***
b. *Probably the filing deadline was* ***before now.***
c. *The culprit is* ***known to us*** *and* ***near me.***

However, the corresponding grounding elements cannot occur in the same position:[11]

(2)a. **That they will ultimately prevail is* ***may.***
b. **Probably the filing deadline was* ***-ed.***
c. **The culprit is* ***this.***

Note further that many quantifiers serve as clausal heads, as in (3a), but we see from (3b) that the ones identified as grounding elements cannot:

(3)a. *His problems are* ***{few/many/three/several}.***
b. **His problems are* ***{all/most/some/each/every/any/no}.***

From these observations, we may draw the conclusion that the grounding elements are not atemporal expressions (i.e. they do not profile atemporal relations).

Property 2: Many grounding elements are capable of functioning as nominal or clausal pro forms. For example, *this* can stand alone as a full nominal with possible anaphoric reference (e.g. *This bothers him a lot*). The same is true of *all, most, some, each, any*, and the other demonstratives. By the same token, the modals can stand alone as finite clauses (except that they are not immune to the general requirement that a finite clause have an overt subject): *She may*; *They*

must; *You should*. The proper conclusion is that a grounding element is itself either a schematic nominal, in which case it profiles a thing, or else a schematic finite clause, which implies a processual profile.

Taken together, properties 1 and 2 motivate the analysis sketched in Figure 5. A pivotal feature of the account is that a grounding element profiles only the *grounded entity*, not the *grounding relationship*. The grounded entity is a thing or process that corresponds to the profile of the nominal or clausal head. In the nominal *this dog*, for instance, the profile of *this* corresponds to that of the head noun *dog*, and in the clause *She jumped*, the process designated by the past-tense morpheme is equated with *jump*. The grounding element itself is highly schematic in regard to the profiled thing or process — its essential content resides in the grounding relationship (R_g) that locates the profiled entity vis-à-vis the ground (e.g. a relationship of definiteness, proximity, or temporal anteriority). But like the ground itself, the grounding relationship remains offstage and unprofiled. It is only the grounded entity, the one whose epistemic status in relation to the ground is being specified, that goes onstage as the focus of attention.

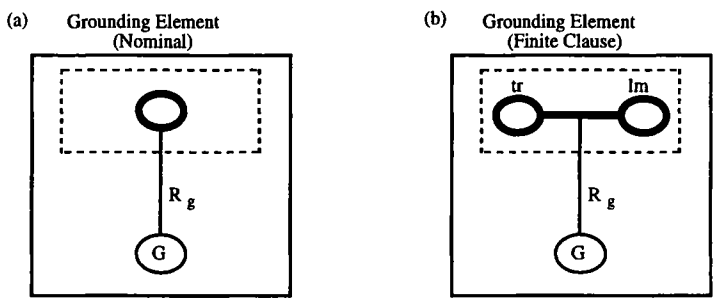

Figure 5. Nominal and clausal grounding

Property 3: A grounding element does not specifically mention the ground, despite invoking it as a reference point. In contrast to such paraphrases as *before now*, *near me*, and *known to us*, a grounding element does not explicitly refer to any facet of the ground (e.g. the speaker, the addressee, or the time of speaking) and cannot be made to do so. Observe, for example, that the reference points of *near* and

known can either remain covert or be spelled out overtly by a first- or second-person pronoun: *It is near* vs. *It is near me*; *a nearby store* vs. *a store near us*; *a known criminal* vs. *a criminal known to us*. However, a demonstrative does not take a complement that would specify its reference points. There is no direct way to expand a nominal such as *this dog* to allow explicit mention of the speaker and hearer: **this me dog*; **this (to) us dog*; **(the) dog this me*; **(the) dog this (to) us*.[12]

Property 4: Many expressions that take the ground as a default reference point allow some other entity to assume this function in particular circumstances. Thus, whereas *across the street* in (4a) is interpreted as meaning across the street from the speaker, and *immediately* as referring to the time just subsequent to the time of speaking, in (4b) these same expressions take as their reference points the main-clause subject (*Jennifer*) and the time of the main-clause verb (*notice*):

(4)a. *The shop* ***across the street*** *is going to close* ***immediately***.
b. *Jennifer noticed that the shop* ***across the street*** *was going to close* ***immediately***.

Grounding elements do not show the same degree of flexibility. In most circumstances, they can only take as their reference point the ground defined by the actual speech event. Consider the subordinate clause in (5):

(5) *Jennifer noticed that* ***this*** *wall needs a new coat of paint.*

Although *this* and *-s* belong to a clause describing a conception entertained by the main-clause subject, it is not Jennifer and her perception that they invoke as reference points, but rather the actual speaker and the time of his utterance. The wall in question must be in proximity to the actual speaker (Jennifer's present location being irrelevant), and the situation of its needing a new coat of paint is construed as extending through the actual time of speaking.

Property 5: The final property is the one with which we started, namely that a grounding element (which may be zero phonologically)

is prerequisite to the formation of a nominal or a finite clause. From a noun like *dog*, for instance, a full nominal can be derived just by adding a demonstrative (e.g. *this dog*), but not its relational paraphrase — to constitute a nominal, *dog near me and known to us* still requires grounding.

If properties 1 and 2 reflect the basic structure of grounding elements, the remaining properties raise more fundamental questions: Why do they have such a structure? What is the nature of the grounding function? The key to the matter is the notion of subjectivity, to which we now turn.

5. Subjectivity

I will use the terms subjective, objective, and their derivatives in special, technical senses that are most easily described and understood in regard to perception. They pertain to the inherent asymmetry between the roles of subject and object of perception, i.e. between the perceiving individual and the entity being perceived. Diagrammed in Figure 6 is a canonical viewing arrangement, which has the following components: V is the viewer; the box corresponds to the visual field, and thus encompasses the full range of perception at any given moment; the dashed rectangle indicates the general locus of viewing attention (the onstage region); P is the perceived entity, the specific focus of attention; and the dashed arrow represents the perceptual relationship. Suppose, now, that the respective roles of V and P as the subject and object of perception are maximally asymmetrical. This is so when (i) V and P are wholly distinct; (ii) P is sharply delimited and perceived with full acuity; and (iii) V's attention is directed outward, so that he does not perceive himself in any way — V is exclusively the subject of perception, not at all its object. With respect to this ideally asymmetrical viewing arrangement, I say that V construes P with maximal objectivity, and construes himself with maximal subjectivity.

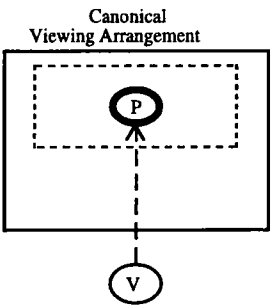

Figure 6. Canonical viewing arrangement

Thus subjective and objective construal are respectively characteristic of the entities serving as the source of a perceptual path and as its target. An entity is construed objectively to the extent that it is external yet fully accessible to the perceiver, and salient by virtue of being put onstage as the specific focus of viewing attention. On the other hand, the viewer is construed subjectively when he directs his gaze outward and focuses exclusively on an external region, so that he himself is left offstage and unperceived; although his role is crucial to the perceptual relationship, the viewer remains implicit and nonsalient for essentially the same reason that a flashlight fails to illuminate itself, and the eyeballs can never see themselves directly. There are, of course, many kinds of departure from this idealized viewing arrangement, each having some effect on the degree of subjectivity/objectivity with which the participating entities are construed. For example, if I glance down and look at myself (as best I can), the object of perception receives a less objective construal than when I attend to an external object. Or suppose that I am watching a television monitor, and being televised doing so, with the picture being fed to that same monitor. The effect of this special viewing arrangement is to objectify both the perceptual relationship and my own (normally subjective) role within it, with the consequence that both are objectively construed.

Our concern here is with conception overall, not just the special case of perception. I believe, however, that the foregoing perceptual notions all instantiate general conceptual phenomena which have

substantial linguistic import (Langacker 1995, 2001b; cf. Talmy 1996). The conceptualizations that interest us are the meanings of linguistic expressions. The relevant conceptualizers are thus the speaker and the addressee. Moreover, the viewing arrangement depicted in Figure 6 can be given a linguistic interpretation, such that each element corresponds to a particular linguistic construct. Corresponding to the viewer (V) are the speaker and hearer, whose conceptualization of an expression's meaning is represented by the dashed arrow. The solid-line box delimits the expression's overall scope, and the dashed rectangle, its immediate scope. Lastly, P can be identified as the expression's profile, which is by definition the focal point in its immediate scope.

The notions subjectivity and objectivity also have a general conceptual interpretation, with respect to which their perceptual manifestation constitutes a special case. An entity is construed objectively to the extent that it is distinct from the conceptualizer and is put onstage as a salient object of conception. Being the focal point within the onstage region, an expression's profile has a high degree of objectivity. An entity receives a subjective construal to the extent that it functions as the subject of conception but not as the object. The highest degree of subjectivity thus attaches to the speaker and hearer, specifically in regard to those expressions that do not in any way include them within their scope. Of course, they only achieve this maximal subjectivity in simple or fragmentary expressions, such as a noun or a verb taken in isolation (*dog*; *jump*). By virtue of grounding, any expression that contains a full nominal or a finite clause necessarily has the ground within its scope, with the consequence that its subjectivity is in some measure diminished (cf. Figures 5 and 6). Let me suggest, however, that with grounding elements this diminution is quite minimal. An important characteristic of grounding elements is that, although they necessarily invoke the ground in some fashion, they construe the ground with the highest degree of subjectivity consistent with its inclusion in their scope. By recognizing this essential property of grounding elements, we can start to explain their grammatical behavior.

Properties 1 and 2 follow from the generalization that a grounding element profiles the grounded entity rather than the grounding relationship. This in turn is a consequence of the fact that a grounding element construes the ground itself with maximal subjectivity (given that the ground falls within its scope). Suppose one did attempt to profile the relationship (R_g) between the grounded entity and the subjectively construed ground. The resulting configuration, diagrammed in Figure 7, turns out to be impermissible when one considers the characterizations of certain constructs. The profile necessarily has a highly objective construal, for it is characterized as the focus of attention within the onstage region. Moreover, the trajector and landmark of a relational expression are focal points within its profile, so that they too are highly salient and objectively construed. It would therefore be contradictory for the ground to serve as the landmark of such a relationship and at the same time to be offstage and construed with extreme subjectivity. Hence the ground's subjectivity entails the configuration of Figure 5, where only the grounded entity is onstage and in profile.

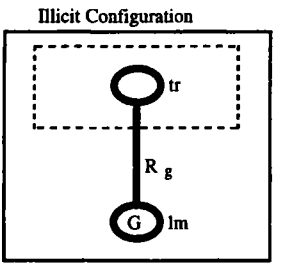

Figure 7. Illicit grounding configuration

Property 3 — the failure of grounding elements to take complements that mention the ground explicitly (e.g. **this {me/[to] us} dog*) — also follows directly from the ground's subjectivity. I have argued elsewhere (1985) that entities construed subjectively tend to be left implicit, because explicit mention has an objectifying impact. Hence the sentences in (6) are semantically distinct, even assuming that in (6b) the locative reference point is known with certainty to be the speaker: