

Seizi Iwata: *A Lexical Network Approach to Verbal Semantics*. Tokyo: Kaitakusha, 1998, xvii + 253 pp., ISBN 4-7589-0192-9 (paperback)

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In this book Seizi Iwata provides a study of the polysemy of some selected verbs and sheds light on a number of significant aspects of the lexical network that are meant “to show that a verb is to be analyzed as a network of interrelated senses, which consists of two kinds of sub-network, and ... to investigate the links constituting the network” (p. 1). What particularly distinguishes this book from other or similar studies in this field is its focus on the integration of insights from both conceptual semantics and cognitive linguistics and the more or less detailed presentation of two basic findings: (a) a simple lexical entry is not sufficient to accommodate multiple senses, (b) the relatedness among “verbal” senses can only be captured by means of a lexical network approach.

To those working in the lexical semantics field, these two findings do not really come as a surprise; but if it is taken for granted that verbs in general can be assumed to constitute units which evoke *un petit drame*, Iwata’s investigation should receive as much attention as possible in the linguistic community.

Iwata’s book, or his “cumulative” doctoral thesis to be more precise, consists of ten chapters, the first six being more theoretically minded, the final four more applied in nature. Chapters 4 to 7 seem to have their own private history: chapter 4 was published as a separate paper in *Studia Linguistica* in 1996, chapter 5 is a translation from a Japanese source text, chapter 6 goes back to a lecture, and chapter 7 represents a slightly revised version of a paper published in 1991.

The more theoretical parts of the book incorporate recurrent motifs, such as lexical abbreviation theory (Jackendoff), construction grammar (Goldberg), grammatical and semantic network (gs network) and thematic relations. In working out the various subsenses of a verb, Iwata rejects Jackendoff’s attempt to collapse multiple senses into a single entry, formally expressed in conceptual structure, and opts for the set-up of a dual network. The distinction between a grammatical and a semantic sub-network he advocates is meant to capture both argument structure (with a view to possible positional alternations) and domain shift, as shown by metaphorical mappings. Furthermore, Iwata claims that Jackendoff is unable to properly handle the well-known metaphorical *hit* or *strike* verbs,

since the latter's lexical abbreviation theory is supposedly exclusively concerned with spatial senses.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are mainly concerned with the exemplification of the grammatical network; chapter 2 in particular is concerned with the unraveling of the intricacies of locative alternation verbs of the type introduced by Rappaport and Levin, including sentential pairs, such as *Jack sprayed paint on the wall* versus *Jack sprayed the wall with paint* or *Bill loaded cartons onto the truck* versus *Bill loaded the truck with cartons* (p. 38). In rejecting Rappaport and Levin's solution, Iwata presents an analysis on the basis of an L-meaning/P-meaning distinction, the first type of meaning pertaining to a lexical verb (which is wider and more general than a P-meaning), the second type to phrasal meaning as it is associated with a particular syntactic frame. Much of what Iwata has to say here has been said before, but his brief summary of the relevant literature is worth reading.

Chapter 3 is divided into various parts; in the first part, the author provides a fairly brief exposition of the basic concepts and methods of construction grammar. He evaluates it against empirical evidence including caused motion, ditransitive or resultative constructions, and inevitably comes to the conclusion that his conception of a single L-meaning which gives possible rise to two or more P-meaning variants via a form–meaning correlation is in fact similar to Goldberg's.

What the reader finds in the following sections is an exemplification of the L-/P-meaning approach, based on verbs of removal (*clear* and *wipe*), zero-derived denominal verbs as in *to sugar the tea* or *to bag the groceries* (p. 77), causative alternation as in pairs such as *The vase broke* versus *Antonia broke the vase* or *The door opened* versus *Pat opened the door* (p. 84) and multiple direct objects as in *He tied his shoe/his shoelace/a bow with his shoelace* (p. 90). Iwata successfully contrasts the lexical rule approach along the lines of Levin and Rappaport with his own and maintains that his analysis of certain form–meaning correspondences provides the clue for a better understanding of verbal polysemy. But whereas Goldberg claims that constructions provide syntactic and semantic properties which are not lexically encoded in the verb, Iwata states that syntactic and semantic information is lexically encoded, with change of location and change of state being directly encoded in the L-meaning of verbs that may enter into alterations; this point of view will, however, be unacceptable to the majority of readers of this journal.

Chapter 4 is an attempt to revise and reformulate the generalizations made in a couple of publications by Jackendoff pertaining to motion and extent constructions as in *Amy went from Denver to Indianapolis* and

Highway 36 goes from Denver to Indianapolis (p. 95). In stating that the event/state distinction follows from the presence/absence of the passage of time, his analysis parallels Langacker's, but he surprisingly rejects the well-known metaphor-based and image-schema approach. It goes without saying that these approaches have much more to offer than Iwata is inclined to admit.

Chapters 5 and 6 form part of a section that deals with another subnetwork within his approach, i.e., the semantic one. The starting point here is the idea that both Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor approach (i.e., the mapping of incongruous domains) and Jackendoff's thematic relation hypothesis (i.e., an abstract conceptual organization can be applied to any field based on thematic parallelism) share some common properties, since both of them claim to explain polysemy in lexical items such as *turn*, *go*, or *keep*. On closer inspection, however, it is revealed that they are irreconcilable with regard to the elaboration of extensional senses of either *go*, *be*, or *stay*.

A number of similar observations are made in chapter 6, in that an account of domain shift is intended to show that reference to domain shift properties, and constraints in particular, is essential. What makes cognitive linguists prick up their ears here is Iwata's admission that not every aspect of meaning can be represented in an algebraic expression like Jackendoff's conceptual structure; but they are likely to be amused when faced with the statement that generative lexical semantics is not completely at odds with cognitive linguistics. On the other hand, one can only agree with the author when he claims that field-specific properties are likely to constrain the range of senses of a lexical item, as can be shown in *between*, *from/to*, *over*, *spread*, or *around*.

Chapters 7 to 10 are meant to bolster Iwata's plea for an integrated lexical network theory; "integrated" here implies the combining of the advantages of conceptual argument structure theory, frame semantic mapping approach, construction grammar and conceptual metaphor theory. In chapter 7 he is concerned with the relationships among the senses of *pass*, in chapter 8 we find a focus on *extend*, and chapter 9 provides us with a short story about *cover*. Chapter 10 closes the book with a discussion of interlexical, i.e., semantic, relations between lexical items.

The reviewer cannot help thinking that, although the book is able to impart some wisdom on the subject of verbal semantics and verbal polysemy in particular, it is in a way incomplete and the suggestions made go only halfway towards solving the main problems he intends to tackle. Since the book is meant to cover new methodological ground, the details discussed ought to exhibit considerable technical depth. However, this challenge is hardly ever met; and while it must be emphasized that some

of the passages in the book are presented with remarkable lucidity and transparency, it cannot be denied that the reader sometimes has difficulties in following the train of thought, possibly due to the lack of explicit background information.

The core of Iwata's book is an attempt at reconciling different approaches from a conceptual or cognitive point of view. The major aspects of his approach were developed in earlier articles by the author (as already mentioned) and are now and then, too briefly outlined in the first sections of the book, accompanied by a strong commitment to a conceptual orientation à la Jackendoff or Levin and Rappaport. However, in spite of the undisputedly cognitive aspects of his approach, it is not really obvious where other cognitive facets of the book are to be found. Major pillars of research in cognitive linguistics, such as the principle of indexicality or iconicity, the egocentric and anthropocentric view of the world, the principle of sequential order, the principle of distance, or the principle of quantity are notably absent.

The major flaws of the investigation, however, concern the lack of clear methodological principles for the identification of distinct senses, the vagueness about whether the distinctions arrived at are semantic or conceptual, or both, and the uncertainty about what the cognitive interpretation of the networks should be. It is especially the methodology in this investigation which tends to be rather vulnerable, because it is mainly based on intuition or introspection and the discussion of made-up examples. Only very few data seem to be based on a "corpus" of authentic examples arbitrarily and unsystematically taken from the Collins COBUILD; that is to say that the introduction of rigid analytical tools and procedures would have helped to improve our knowledge about the full range of intricacies of verbal polysemy. In sum, the impression prevails that Iwata's lexical network approach to verb meanings is less cognitive in its foundations and orientations than the table of contents suggests. As far as the impact of Iwata's synthesis of conceptual semantics and cognitive linguistics on lexical semantics is concerned, there can be no doubt that his book is worth considering, although it does not really represent a major step forward and although some linguists may frown upon its basically eclectic approach. The accounts of grammatical and semantic network issues and their use as an operational testing device for notions accepted in lexical semantics can be seen as a remarkable achievement on the way toward a better understanding of verbal semantics. Whether the book will have a lasting effect on lexical semantics as a whole will largely depend on future refinements to the methodological and conceptual apparatus.