Christopher S. Butler and Francisco Gonzálvez-García. 2014. *Exploring Functional-Cognitive Space*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 579 pp. ISBN: 978-90-272-5922-6.

DANIEL GARCÍA VELASCO
Universidad de Oviedo
danielg@uniovi.es

For someone unacquainted with the field of linguistics, it may be somewhat surprising to learn that there are so many different theories and approaches which compete to offer the best possible account of the structure and use of human language. The diversity of the theoretical options available is so vast that it is just impossible for an average linguist to keep up to date with the developments in frameworks other than their own. The result is not only that one runs the risk of reinventing the wheel by suggesting linguistic analyses that may have already been proposed in an alternative model, but also, that it is difficult to discern which model is best for the study of particular phenomena. Inter-theoretical comparison is thus an invaluable enterprise in the field and any attempt at clarifying the offer in the grammatical market is always to be applauded.

The aim of *Exploring Functional-Cognitive Space* is clearly stated on the very first page of the opening chapter, where the authors claim that they intend to "investigate the relationships among a subset of those approaches to language that can be considered to fall under one or more of the areas often labelled as functionalist, cognitivist and constructionist" (1). Functionalist theories have sometimes been criticized for (allegedly) constituting a group of approaches whose only point in common is the rejection of formal (mainly Chomskyan) linguistics (Newmeyer 1998, 13). Although there are already several volumes which offer collections of articles by leading functionalist authors (e.g., Tomasello 1998, 2014; Gómez González, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Gonzálvez-García 2014), presenting the main tenets and practical applications of functional models, this work by Butler and Gonzálvez-García (henceforth B&G) fills a gap in this area by providing a careful and exhaustive examination of the differences and similarities between the theories in this group.

The book builds on previous work by the authors (e.g., Butler 2003 and Gonzálvez-García and Butler 2006, among several others). In fact, the term "functional-cognitive" itself was coined by the authors in Butler and Gonzálvez-García (2005) and is the object of explanation in the first chapter. This term is reminiscent of Van Valin and LaPolla's

"communication-and-cognition perspective" (1997) and Tomasello's "cognitive-functional" (1998), also used to group models with a functional-cognitive orientation.

The volume is divided into twelve chapters, which, setting aside the introduction and the concluding chapter, revolve around three main aspects: (i) the selection of the models to be examined; (ii) the design and structure of the questionnaire answered by the experts; and (iii) the authors' critical and statistical analysis of the questionnaire data and the relevant literature. In the first chapter, B&G clarify the terms *functionalism*, *cognitive linguistics*, *constructionist* and *usage-based approaches*, as these are terms which have all been employed with different interpretations in the literature. Essentially, functional models are said to share the following basic assumptions: (i) "language is first and foremost a means of communication between human beings in social and cognitive contexts" (3); (ii) language is not a self-contained object; and (iii) syntax is not autonomous from semantics and/or pragmatics. Similarly, B&G stress that the term *cognitive* in linguistic theory may be understood in different ways, but it is employed in Cognitive Linguistics (with capital letters) to stress the role of conceptualization and language use in the emergence of grammar. The authors make it clear that not all models examined in the volume can be considered both functional and cognitive, but the terms together serve to define a theoretical space in which the different models can be situated and their differences made visible. The remaining pages of the introductory chapter explore previous work by different authors on the characterization of functionalism, functional theories and their differences with formal linguistics.

As for the models examined in the volume, B&G argue that their selection has been guided by three main principles: (i) the set of models should reflect the "breadth of functional, cognitive and constructional linguistics today" (25); (ii) the models should have achieved independent status within the field; and (iii) they should aim at providing a complete account of language including all relevant areas of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The result is a set of sixteen approaches: Functional Discourse Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, Systemic Functional Linguistics, the work of Talmy Givón, Interactional Linguistics, Word Grammar, The Columbia School, Cognitive Grammar, Sign-Based Construction Grammar, Cognitive Construction Grammar, Embodied Construction Grammar, Frame-Semantics Construction Grammar, Radical Construction Grammar, the collostructional approach, the Lexical Constructional Model, and the Parallel Architecture.

Chapter two is then devoted to presenting the key features of each model. It would obviously be impossible to provide a detailed analysis of each within the length of one single volume, but the chapter serves its purposes well by furnishing the reader with the information that will be necessary to understand the discussion that follows. The chapter further shows B&G's profound knowledge of functional models as well as their careful examination of the literature and the selection of appropriate sources.

As mentioned earlier, a second key aspect in the book is the detailed questionnaire of fifty-eight items devised by the authors, which is answered by twenty-nine experts

in the different frameworks. I see it as one of the main strengths of B&G's book that the comparison of the different functional-cognitive models is not only based on the reading of the relevant literature but also on the answers provided by experts in those models (including on most occasions the intellectual founders of the theories themselves). Informants were asked to rate on a four-item scale the extent to which their models agree with the item. Chapter three explains the content of the questionnaire and the methodology chosen in the selection of the different features. The chapter opens with a disclaimer in which B&G state that the list of items is inevitably influenced by their own interests and background, and that some of the items might also have been included or modified by the desire of some informants to reveal important aspects of their model. The final questionnaire is then defined as a compromise between including too many specific items and keeping the questionnaire short enough so as not to put respondents off. In this respect, it is important to emphasize the scientific honesty that pervades the whole book. At different places, B&G openly discuss the difficulties they had to face in the development of the work and how certain choices they made would have been different with hindsight. For example, on page 155 they discuss several problems related to the questionnaire: how occasionally the answers were influenced by the informants' own interests or understanding of language and linguistic theory, and how some items required further clarification.

The fifty-eight items of the questionnaire are classified into six main groups. I provide one item (some in a simplified manner) for each category as an example:

1. Features related to foundational matters.
   The communicative function of language is regarded as fundamental in accounting for why languages are the way they are.
2. Features related to the range of phenomena the models intended to cover.
   This approach aims to be a full model of language as a whole rather than primarily a model of just grammar.
3. Features related to the type of data.
   Data from attested samples of language use are employed.
4. Features related to the language external factors appealed to in explanations.
   Knowledge of language is intimately related to use of language.
5. Features concerned with the form of the grammar itself.
   Empty/invisible categories are strongly dispreferred.
6. Features concerned with applications.
   There have been pedagogical applications of this approach.

As can be seen, the items move from general methodological issues to more specific questions regarding the organization of the grammar, the type of rules and categories employed and applications of the theory, points at which more differences among models are to be found.

It should be noted that comparable works on inter-theoretical comparison (e.g., González Escribano 1993) have usually tried to devise abstract independent parameters with which theories can be evaluated and compared. This strategy has the advantage that the parameters of evaluation are kept at a significant distance from the specifics of each model, but they would have been difficult to use as the basis for a questionnaire for obvious practical reasons. B&G's approach has the advantage that the questionnaire can be straightforwardly answered by experts in each model, so that the information obtained from the experts' ratings is then supplemented with B&G's critical examination of the relevant literature, and can be analyzed statistically with the tools introduced in chapter four.

Chapters five to ten represent, in the authors' own words, "the central core of the book" and take, as their organizing principle, the structure of the questionnaire (29). Each chapter is devoted to one of the six main sections into which the fifty-eight items are grouped. Each item in the questionnaire is discussed on the basis of the answers provided by the respondents and of the critical reading of the main sources, and is illustrated with a generous number of relevant quotations from fundamental works. Wherever disagreements are observed between the informants themselves and/or what is stated in the literature and the answers to the questionnaires, these are carefully discussed by B&G as on most occasions they reveal points of friction within the theories, thus highlighting areas that need further work in each model.

Finally, chapter twelve discusses the general findings. The authors show that out of the fifty-eight items, thirty-four show "predominantly positively or negative ratings" (490), which obviously confirms the relations among the models which are to some extent attributed to the historical connections among some of the approaches analyzed. The chapter further explores avenues of collaboration for the different models and suggests ways to promote dialogue among their practitioners.

To conclude this review let me just emphasize once again why I think this book is so valuable and why works of this kind are necessary and usually less appreciated than they should be. Academic honesty demands from every linguist that they should be able to make an informed decision on what to teach and what to research. As mentioned earlier, it is simply impossible to be familiar with all the theoretical options available and the technical details of each linguistic model. However, a true scientific attitude to the study of language requires "an open-mindedness to insights from whatever quarter" and an avoidance of a strategy:

> seems endemic in the cognitive sciences: one discovers a new tool, decides it is the only tool needed, and, in an act of academic (and funding) territoriality, loudly proclaims the superiority of this tool over all others. My own attitude is that we are in this together. It is going to take us a lot of tools to understand language. We should try to appreciate exactly what each of the tools we have is good for, and to recognize when new and as yet undiscovered tools are necessary. (Jackendoff 2002, xiii)

B&G's volume is thus the kind of work which helps scholars understand the relevance and advantages of each of the theoretical options (i.e., tools) in the field and it is precisely for that reason that this volume should be on every linguist's bookshelf. To this it must be added that it is a rigorous piece of academic work, constructed with scientific honesty as a basic pillar and, above all, deep fine-grained knowledge of the field. In all, it is an excellent service to the linguistic community.

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Daniel García Velasco is Senior Lecturer in English Linguistics at the University of Oviedo. His main research interests include English lexicology and syntax from a functional perspective. He is an active researcher in Simon Dik's Functional Grammar and its successor Functional Discourse Grammar.

Address: Departamento de Filología Inglesa, Francesa y Alemana. C/ Teniente Alfonso Martínez, s/n. 33011, Oviedo, Spain. Tel.: +34 985104540.