GUEST EDITORS' NOTE

The present volume—which could be entitled *Hungarian Studies in Cognitive Semantics*—is intended to give the reader at least a vague impression of the problems tackled by cognitive semantics research in Hungary. However, right at the outset the identification of what kind of approaches count as manifestations of cognitive semantics is anything but trivial. First, some commentators evaluate the latter as one of the most significant developments in the history of linguistics constituting a "revolution" (cf. for example Tomasello 1999, 478), while others—most notably formal semanticists—consider it to be a blind alley. Second, despite a series of well known attempts found in textbooks and companions, there have not been found firm criteria yielding a generally acceptable definition of "cognitive semantics" so far. Third, the impossibility of such a definition is closely connected to the fact that the theories which call themselves "cognitive semantic" very often accept diametrically opposed empirical hypotheses and incompatible methodological principles. To mention just the most straightforward example, approaches conforming to the standards of the analytic philosophy of science may label themselves as "cognitive semantics" just as those which radically reject the latter—think of the well-known dichotomy between modular and holistic cognitive semantics (see Gardner 1985 and Müller 1991 on the historical roots of this dichotomy). Fourth, the links which irrespective of the differences are assumed to connect various approaches to the field are very often of a social nature rather than a matter of the rational content of the particular theories (see e.g., Tomasello 1999; Redeker–Janssen 1999; Eckardt 1993).

Against the background of these difficulties, instead of relying on some generally accepted points of departure resulting in necessary and sufficient conditions of cognitive semantics research, in compiling the present special issue the editors made use of vague guiding principles only. According to these, the papers exhibit the following characteristics in different ways and to different degrees:

(i) The acceptance of the methodological assumption that linguistics, whatever it may be, should be conducted as one of the subdisciplines of cognitive science.

(ii) In accordance with this, cognitive semantics is such that its object of investigation is "meaning" as part of cognition (whatever "meaning" means).

(iii) As a result of the constitutive interdisciplinarity of cognitive science, cognitive semantic approaches are also of an essentially interdisciplinary nature.

(iv) At least partly social aspects such as the reference to the "canon" that is a set of seminal monographs which motivated research (see for example Fauconnier 1994; Jackendoff 1983; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff–Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987; 1991; Sweetser 1990, etc.)—together with introductory works and collections of papers popularizing the basic ideas and making the first results known for a relatively wide audience (Bierwisch–Lang 1989; Janssen–Redeker 1999; Allwood–Gärdenfors 1999; Rudzka-Ostyn 1988; Schwarz 1992, etc.).

(v) Clearly social aspects like the existence of institutions (research programmes, projects, journals, associations, university departments etc.) devoted to cognitive semantics research.

Bearing in mind both the difficulties and the guiding principles thus mentioned, the present volume is structured as follows. The first part (Kövecses, Benczes) includes papers which represent cognitive semantics as an established scientific enterprise in the sense of (i), (ii) and (iv) and (v) in so far as they further develop and apply approaches which are known as paradigm examples of cognitive semantics. This part is entitled *Intradisciplinary Approaches*, because the papers clearly support the development of cognitive semantics as a relatively autonomous discipline, although, like each of the approaches, they show interdisciplinary features as well. The papers in the second part entitled *Methodological Issues* (Győri, and Kertész–Rákosi) emphasize, along the lines of (i), (ii) and (iii), the flexibility of cognitive semantic research: both of them are characterized by a rather extreme kind of interdisciplinarity, they seem to strive to transgress the boundaries of institutionalized cognitive semantic theories and even question some of the basic tenets and methodological background assumptions of the latter. Finally, in accordance with (ii) the two papers (Pethő, Vecsey) of the third part (*Cognitive Aspects of Proper Names*) exemplify how and to what extent cognitivist considerations may lead to the reinterpreation of the problem of "meaning" raised by the analytical philosophy of language. In this respect, they nicely illustrate the thesis according to which one of the objectives of cognitive semantics is the reformulation and empirical solution of philosphical problems (see e.g., Gardner 1985).

As this structure suggests, the present compilation differs from most special issues of *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* in that its aim is not to illus-

trate applications of linguistic theories to Hungarian data, but rather, all the papers centre on deeply rooted theoretical, foundational and methodological problems of cognitive semantics research per se in a way in which these problems have been raised and discussed in Hungary today.

In *A Broad View of Cognitive Linguistics* Zoltán Kövecses argues for one of the central assumptions of cognitive semantics according to which the latter, beside giving an insight into linguistic structure, may also tackle a wide variety of social and cultural phenomena. The author claims that human understanders and producers of language possess cognitive capacities which are independent of their ability to use language. Thus he demonstrates that cognitive linguistics is far more than a theory of language. In particular, it may be interpreted as a theory of "meaning-making" in general in its innumerable linguistic, social and cultural facets.

In the first part of her paper *Metaphor- and Metonymy-based Compounds in English: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach* Réka Benczes puts forward two hypotheses. Firstly, metaphor and metonymy theory can account for the semantics of noun–noun compounds which is activated by metaphor and/or metonymy. Secondly, there are regular patterns of metaphor- and metonymy-based compounds, depending on which constituent is affected by conceptual metaphor and/or metonymy. In the second part she examines metaphor- and metonymy-based noun–noun compounds whose meaning is affected by the simultaneous activation of both metaphor and metonymy. Finally, she analyzes the productive patterns that underlie this latter type.

Gábor Győri (*The Adaptive Nature of "Meaning as Understanding"*) discusses semantic change as a cognitive adaptation process. The author puts forward his claim according to which such a process adjusts the culturally shared conceptual category system of a language to changing conditions in the environment. In this way the evolutionary function of cognition supports the adaptive orientation in a flexible way relative to the stability of environmental conditions. Consequently, the cognitive function of language is to promote social cognition in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge that proves functional and adaptive in the given physical, social and cultural environment of a group of individuals. From this finding the author draws a series of further conclusions concerning the nature of the adaptive construal of phenomena, semantic leaps in the form of metaphor, metonymy and other kinds of meaning extension, and the nature of semantic change.

András Kertész and Csilla Rákosi (*Whole-part and Part-whole Inferences in Generative and Cognitive Linguistics*) raise methodological problems of theory formation in general and of cognitive semantics in particular. Their paper focuses on the relation between the analytical philosophy of

science on the one hand and modular and holistic approaches to cognitive linguistics, on the other. It is argued that Chomsky's, Bierwisch and Lang's, and Lakoff and Johnson's approaches all apply non-demonstrative inferences which the analytical philosophy of science evaluates as fallacies. The authors outline a metatheoretical framework that centres on plausible inferences and they show that the inferences the theories mentioned make use of are plausible rather than fallacious. As a result, they draw far-reaching conclusions concerning basic aspects of theory formation in linguistics and thus they motivate the revaluation of the methodological foundations of linguistic inquiry.

Gergely Pethő's paper (*On Intuitions about Proper Names*) presents a fierce criticism of an empirical experiment concerning the use of proper names. Machery et al. (2004) carried out an experiment which tested the intuition of US and Chinese students about the use of proper names and which was intended to be the empirical counterpart of one of Kripke's thought experiments. They arrived at the conclusion that the way most respondents used proper names is not compatible with the causal-historical theory of proper names suggested by Kripke. Pethő shows, firstly, that this experiment is burdened with a series of technical difficulties as a result of which this conclusion is untenable. Secondly, he also argues that there is a series of deep conceptual problems which question the acceptability of Machery et al.'s line of argumentation and confirm the legitimacy of the author's criticism.

Zoltán Vecsey's contribution entitled *The Semantic Content of Partially Descriptive Names* offers a critique of the approach developed by Scott Soames in his recent book *Beyond Rigidity* which puts forward a new version of millianism. Soames assumes that some linguistically complex names such as *Professor Saul Kripke* or *Princeton University* have partially descriptive semantic content. According to Soames, in addition to their unique referents, these names are always associated with a special kind of description. However, Vecsey argues that Soames's theory of partially descriptive names is unworkable. The author claims that descriptive contents can be found only in the background knowledge of competent speakers.

Each paper was refereed by at least two reviewers. The editors are grateful to them for their contribution to the quality of this special issue. The papers were prepared and the issue itself was compiled within the project *Empirical Foundations of Cognitive Semantic Theories* conducted by the Research Group for Theoretical Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the University of Debrecen.

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