

## **COGNITIVE APPROACH IN LANGUAGE MEANING CONSTRUCTION: CRUSE AND CROFT’S MODEL**

### **Chnur Ibrahim Mhealddin**

Department of English, College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.  
[chnuribrahim30@gmail.com](mailto:chnuribrahim30@gmail.com)

### **Prof. Dr. Kawa Abdulkareem Rasul**

Department of Media Technical, Erbil Technical College of Administration, Polytechnic University, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.  
[kawa@epu.edu.iq](mailto:kawa@epu.edu.iq)

### **Prof. Dr. Ali Mahmood Jukil**

Department of English, College of Basic Education, Salahaddin University, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.  
[ali.jukil@su.edu.krd](mailto:ali.jukil@su.edu.krd)

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive study of the role of the encyclopaedic view and experiential view in meaning construction within the cognitive framework of studying the language. The analysis is based on the three hypotheses of meaning construction proposed by Cruse and Croft; first, Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty. Second, Knowledge of languages emerges from language use. And thirdly, Grammar is conceptualization. The three hypotheses are verified. To achieve the aim of this article, Cruse and Croft’s three models of language meaning are studied. The examples are taken from books and articles corpus. This study concludes that possessing encyclopedic view, which encompasses general knowledge and sufficient information about the words, are essential to truly understanding the meaning of the words. The encyclopedic background can attain through the experiential view; it is gaining by experience in words from various situations and activities encountered in daily life. Also, the cognitive approach suggests that ruling in all elements of language is

crucial for the interpretation of meaning.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background of the Article**

#### **The Problem of the Study**

It has been pointed out that experience, background of words and contexts do not relate to meaning construction. Thus, the best way to improve meaning construction and interpretation is by using language in the context (language usage-based) and we will be discussing Cruse and Croft's model of meaning construction which includes these three hypotheses; Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty. Second, Knowledge of languages emerges from language use. And thirdly, Grammar is conceptualization.

#### **Aims of the Study**

By following this approach, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of meaning construction and how it can be applied in practice. Identifying and explain how these three hypotheses are related to meaning construction. Exploring and explain to what extend context effect meaning interpretation.

The main **hypothesis** of this study is:

1. That meaning construction can contribute to common experience and encyclopedic view on the words.
2. Interpretations of meaning are based on context and it emerges from the use of language in the context.
3. Language imparts meaning when it is used in context.

This study is based on Cruse and Croft's model of language; first, Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty. Second, Knowledge of languages emerges from language use. And thirdly, Grammar is conceptualization. The data collection is from books and studied on the model from other corpus which includes the practical part. It will entail conducting a cognitive analysis of specific examples that have

been sourced from various books and articles. This study is limited to identification and analysis of Cruse and Croft's hypothesis and encyclopaedic and experiential view of meaning construction.

The present study is significant for those who are interest in meaning construction, language usage-based and interpretation of meanings in the context. This word presents an overall idea concerning the rise of meaning in context and how significant is using language in the context to interpret meaning.

## **2. Literature Review**

The encyclopaedic view and experiential view play a crucial role in meaning construction, and that the three models of language meaning proposed by Cruse and Croft provide framework for understanding this process. Thus, this paper shows that whether the relation between these views is complementary as far as meaning construction is concerned.

This paper adds to the ongoing discourse on the nature of meaning construction in language and presents a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms involved in the process of meaning construction. It sheds light on the meaning construction between experiential and encyclopaedic factors. Through a detailed examination of various linguistic phenomena, we demonstrate how meaning is constructed through a combination of experiential and encyclopaedic factors, and how these processes are influenced by a range of contextual factors, such as the speaker's intentions, the listener's expectations, and the situational context. It aims to illuminate how meaning is constructed where both encyclopaedic and experiential views contribute to meaning construction. It also clarifies the efficiency of Cruse and Croft's Model in accounting for the process of meaning construction.

## **3. Cognitive Linguistics**

During the second half of the 1970s and the early 1980s, cognitive linguistics emerged as a new branch of linguistics. The theory developed with the works of some prominent scholars who were interested in studying the relation of language

with the mind. Some of the most influential cognitive linguistics scholars and linguists are the followings; George Lakoff (1987), is one of the most prominent linguists now and then who applied his theory on categorization of metaphor, lexical semantics, and grammar. Ronald W. Langacker (1987–1991), who developed the theory of Cognitive Grammar, and Leonard Talmy (2000), who studied the conceptual basis of grammar. The aforementioned linguists are called 'founding fathers of cognitive linguistics'. Also, Mark Johnson is one of the noticeable linguists in cognitive linguistics that developed Image Schema Theory as well.

Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the relation between language and mind. It combines language and mind with other related fields. Cognitive linguistics includes sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, anthropological linguistics, Theolinguistics; it is the study of religious language, translation, and others.

In addition, cognitive linguistics has various dimensions; these dimensions are based on the interest of the linguists. One of the salient dimensions of linguistic study is diachronic and synchronic studies, which were proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916. Another cognitive study of language is typological or comparative linguistic study. It shows similarities and differences between two or more languages (Varpe, 2017).

#### **4. Cognitive Theory**

Cognitive theory, as a recent linguistic theory, defines cognition as “The process by which knowledge and understanding are developed in the mind” (p.288). Partridge (2006) notes the term ‘cognition’ is derived from the Latin ‘cognōscere’, which means “to know”, or “to learn about”. It relates to all mental processes which lead to thinking. The Cognitive linguistics theory emphasizes on the mental processes; thinking, judgment, remembering, learning, and solving problems. In short, the focus is on how people interpret and conceptualize meaning through mental processes.

Cognitive theory appeared as the dissatisfaction of other theories of language, especially the Generativism and Behaviorism Theory. There are many formal approaches that study language, for instance, Generativism theory. This theory cogitates that the primacy of language is syntax. The role of semantics (making meaning), and pragmatics (meaning in context) are out of the scope of language. This made cognitive linguists to raise serious objections; as Lakoff and Johnson.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) are one of the linguists who developed Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Another important theory did a dramatic change in cognitive linguistics is Frame Semantics; it was developed by Fillmore in 1982. He states that “Meanings are relativized to scenes” (Hamm, 2009). Fillmore et al., (1988) provided the basis of the theory of Construction Grammar. Also, Fauconnier developed the theory of Mental Spaces in 1994 (Fauconnier, 2018), which later gave rise to Conceptual Integration Theory (Evans, 2019).

According to Langacker, only three basic types of units are posited; semantic, phonological, and symbolic. “Bipolar” It is said to be a symbolic unit that consists of a semantic unit defining one pole and a phonological pole defining the other linguistic unit. It is an important term in cognitive grammar defined by Langacker as “I describe a symbolic structure as being bipolar” (p.15). The term is employed in a technical sense to designate a thoroughly mastered structure, i.e. a cognitive rotin”. Langacker (2012, p.15) argues that:

*“Semantic structures are conceptualizations exploited for linguistic purposes, notably as the meanings of expressions. Under the rubric phonological structure, I include not only sounds but also gestures and orthographic representations. [.....]. Symbolic structures are not distinct from semantic and phonological structures, but rather incorporate them [.....] I describe a symbolic structure as being bipolar”.*

For example: **“smart woman”** “This semantic association of smart and woman is symbolized by the integration of these words at the phonological pole” (Langacker, 2003, p. 51).

Another aspect of generativism theory is ‘universal grammar’ and the ‘unique faculty’. The human language shares some essential similarities (Chomsky, 2000). Dabrowska (2015) agrees on that, but she argues that there are some fundamental problems when it comes to the features of language. Cognitive linguists do not believe that the ability to learn a language is due to our unique faculty. Our behavior is the consequence of our cognitive processes. The ability of brain operations and mental processes is to integrate information through senses, experiences, and thoughts, which are known as cognition (Daw, 2023).

Thus, Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary approach that explores the connection between language and the mind. It encompasses a range of related fields such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, anthropological linguistics, and Theolinguistics. Additionally, cognitive linguistics encompasses various dimensions that linguists can focus on, such as diachronic and synchronic studies proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916, and typological or comparative linguistic study which highlights similarities and differences between languages.

## **5. Cognitive Linguistics and Meaning**

In the study of language, cognitive linguistics admits that meaning cannot separate from form. Cognitive linguistics theory rejects the idea that language is innate in the human brain. And it contains a set of ready-made modules of linguistic information, rather; language is the reflection of cognitive operations. Another aspect of cognitive linguistics is language as usage-based. Language is best compacted in context of use and even it develops from it (Evans, 2009).

What’s more, cognitive linguistics focuses on two primary areas; first, cognitive approach to grammar, which is the study of language organization; cognitive approach to grammar, is organizing knowledge of language; i.e. to investigate why

some sentences are grammatically acceptable and others are not. The second area is aspects of conceptual structure (cognitive semantics). It deals with a meaning construction expressed by language, human conceptual system, and semantic representation (ibid). For example argument is war (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 31) according to conceptual system argument is semantically represented as war. There is win, defense, and fail in both war and argument.

Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary theory that associates meaning with mind. It includes various subjects, namely: Cognitive Grammar, Cognitive Semantics, Cognitive Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and Cognitive Pragmatics.

In her study, Joan Bybee (2010) summarizes the field of cognitive linguistics concerning language and meaning as the following:

- 1- Language use shapes linguistic knowledge from language ties.
- 2- We shape language changes in the light of evolution, and in linguistics, try to explain the synchronic and diachronic change and state of language.
- 3- Communicative function shapes language. For example, language constructs meaning in the context and situation.
- 4- Form and meaning will change constantly, thus making variations in many linguistic units. For example, one word may impart different meaning, linguistically it is polysemy.

## **6. Language Study from Cognitive Linguistic Perspective**

Humans possess the unique cognitive ability of being able to use language. The brain is responsible for storing and retrieving the linguistic and non-linguistic related knowledge. The processes are universal. Cognitive linguistics deals with linguistic meanings and structures that share the same principle. Language is a fundamental element of mental activity. It illuminates the social and psychological relationship with the language. Also, informational elements are used to be perceived in a reasonable perspective, which must be based on conceptualization and mental processing, the difference is that the mental processes control conceptualization.

Mental processes control how sentences, words, and meanings be conceptualize (Rao, 2021).

Many reasons lead meaning construction. The reasons are; language consumer's encyclopedic views, personal behavior (experience), conceptual image (metaphor and schematization), and context. There are three main hypotheses for language from the cognitive linguistic perspective proposed by Cruse and Croft in 2004. Cruse and Croft have proposed this model in studying the meaning of language, it is a Cognitivism method. This method often seems to balance all elements of language when looking at meaning. The hypotheses are the followings:

1. Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty.
2. Knowledge of languages emerges from language use.
3. Grammar is conceptualization.

#### **6. 1. Language is not an Autonomous Cognitive Faculty.**

According to cognitive linguists, language is conceptual in nature. Language cannot be separated from cognitive ability, as Lakoff (1987) points out that “language is an integrated part of human cognition” (p. 12). Likewise, Croft and Cruse (2004) stated that cognitive linguistics deals with language as a real-time of perceptions and productions. It is expressed and involved in temporal a chain of discrete, structured symbolic units. This is most likely unique to language.

Cognitive linguists disagree with generativist or Chomskyan notion about language. Generativists separate language from cognitive ability; language is an independent, innate cognitive modular of views. Generativism separated language from non-linguistic cognitive operations and abilities. On the other hand, Croft and Cruse (2004) claim that the ways by which mental processes represent linguistic knowledge are the same ways as the cognition abilities are used for other mental activities. Usually this phenomenon cites by the following typical examples:

At no time did he leave the building.

\*At no time he left the building.

Nowhere **could** he **be** found.

\*Nowhere he **could be** found. ( Lakoff, 1990, p. 57)



So, the cognitive processes those are for linguistic knowledge of language and precisely meaning creations, are not different from the cognitive processes that people use outside the realm of language. The cognitive ability, for example, arrangement, access, and restoring linguistic knowledge, such as speaking and understanding, are the same as the process which retrieve and organize other knowledge in the brain, such as cognitive skills, such as reason, motor activity, or visual perception, to a large extend.

Semantic representation, including morphological, phonological, and syntactic representations, and they are conceptual structures. Linguistic knowledge includes the meaning and the form, which they are structured conceptually. And it represents pattern knowledge of the mind.

The structure and physical shapes of sounds and utterances are mental abilities. Yet, understanding and producing sounds and utterances are mental operations that require mental capacity. In the end, sounds and utterances are serving as input and output information of the cognitive operations as a result directs production (speaking) and comprehension (understanding).

In general, the fundamental purpose of cognitive linguistics is that there is no separate innate faculty of language. No doubt, language is innate, it determines grammatical structures genetically. Nonetheless, there are other factors that help human beings to create, such as cognitive abilities, and cultural as well as psychological experiences. The factors that are mentioned above shape the heart of cognitive semantics (to determine how meaning is constructed. The syntactic patterns, grammatical rules, and the ways that the constituents string together 'orders of the words' are abstract and linguistic symbols. They are inherently meaningful, beside to, the cognitive abilities and experiential factors are fundamental for constructing meaning.

Evans (2019) states that in contemporary linguistics, the study of language is typically divided into distinct domains, including phonetics, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, morphology, syntax, and more. This division is particularly evident in

formal linguistics, which employs approaches that employ explicit mechanical devices or procedures to manipulate theoretical primitives, thereby generating the complete range of linguistic possibilities within a given language. See figure 1.

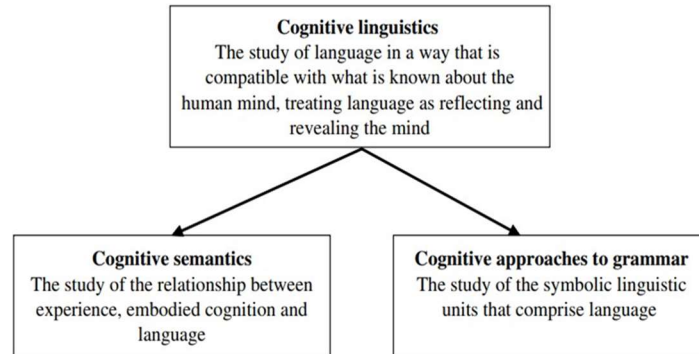


Figure (1): schematic representation of cognitive linguistics

## 6.2. Language is Usage-Based

The second theory is that language knowledge is based on language usage; Context is one of the effects that meaning changes involved in where the words are uttered and language develops from it. Utters should be contextualization; meaning needs to be constructed in a context which means using it. Human cognition categorizes phonology, morphology, and semantics in a specific statement on the specific circumstance of use (Cruse and Croft, 2004).

Talmy (2000) adopted an approach that includes ‘language use’ certain fundamental categories to structure and organize meaning; furthermore, he explains that these categories are inflections and particles.

Encyclopaedic approach is a fundamental view in cognitive lexical semantics that pertains to word meaning. Encyclopaedic knowledge is mere ‘points of access’ covering a broad range of background and detailed knowledge structure (the conceptual system). In relation to the object, it represents social and physical experience (Langacker, 1987). Linguistic meaning is better to receive from encyclopedic entries metaphorically, rather than dictionary entries. The former is

not enough, and the latter is required because it is the points of access', it provides access to a wealth of information. In sum, the encyclopaedic approach is a crucial tool for understanding word meaning and should be used in conjunction with other resources to acquire a comprehensive understanding of a word.

Evans (2006) and Evans et al., (2007) claim that all sorts of knowledge are stored in the mental lexicon. Human beings are using their encyclopedic dictionary to produce utterances and create meanings for experienced and non-experienced concepts. Talmy (2000) points "language uses certain fundamental notional categories to structure and organize meaning" (p. 410). If someone says;

**I went to the restaurant yesterday.**

If the hearer has been in a restaurant before, she /he will not be shocked by hearing the concept of the restaurant because it is not a new word and will not ask the speaker what did you do in the restaurant, since the hearer expected what the speaker did, such as taking a seat, reading the menu, ordering food...so forth. And if someone has not experienced something, for example,

**Life is a journey.**

If someone has never experienced journey, but, he knows that there are **happy** and **sad moments in life**, there are **challenges in life**, so the speaker can use these encyclopedic to extend the meaning of ' life is a journey', and create meaning metaphorically. It includes all lexical items that are stored in the mental lexicon (Ilemmens, 2015).

**6.3. Meaning is Conceptualization.**

The third theory, meaning, is conceptualization. It is the extension or based on Langacker's notion 'grammar is conceptualization'. It includes three main reasons or ideas for describing the meaning of the linguistic expression as a conceptual structure. The conceptual structure cannot be reduced to a simple truth-conditional correspondence with the world. Conceptualization, experience, and linguistic knowledge that we possess are essential in human cognitive abilities. They are used

to communicating. The reasons are; language is a reflection of the real world. Meaning is encyclopedic in nature. And semantics is based on truth conditions. What is more, idiomaticity, polysemy, and semantic extensions are peripheral rather than central to an appropriate analysis of linguistics (Cruse & Croft, 2004).

## **7. Conceptualization Entails the Followings**

Encyclopaedic and experiential views are both stages of conceptualization. They used to get a meaning of the world surrounding human beings.

### **a. Encyclopaedic view.**

Haiman (1980) stated that to comprehend a word accurately, we must evoke our background knowledge structure about the concept or the word. Merely relying on a dictionary definition, also known as the ‘dictionary view of word meaning’, is inadequate as it only provides a profile of the word. Usually this depends on the context which is called linguistic and non-linguistic decontextualization; the interpretation of sentence meaning often relies on a comprehensive understanding of the surrounding context. This understanding is then utilized to adapt the meaning of a sentence to a new context, while still preserving its original intent (Choi et al., 2021, p. 447). For example:

Bill is **cutting** bread.

Eve is **cutting** Bill's hair.

Eve is **cutting** her nails.

Bill likes **cutting** grass. ( Kiefer, 1988, p.5)

The usual instrument for cutting bread may still be a knife. For cutting someone's hair one usually uses **scissors**, for cutting nails **nail-clipper**, for cutting grass one may use one of these: **grass-shears**, a **lawn-mower**, or a **sickle**. The ‘cutting activity’ involves different instruments, but, once again, the instruments used are merely

prototypical for the activities. One may use **scissors** for **cutting bread**, and use a **scythe** for **cutting grasses**, it all depends on Encyclopaedic and experience.

### **b. Experiential view**

Many concepts are grounded in our physical and cultural experiences, regarding the former, cognitive linguists observe that our everyday bodily experience plays an important role in meaning construction and conceptualization. The bodily experience is grounded in patterns. These patterns are said to be ‘image schemas’ which emerge in our conceptual world.

Ex. **Up-down, front-back**, and figure-ground are the conceptual domains of image schemas. Which is called embodied (the embodiment of meaning). As in the following example, the experience the figure is up/ high and the ground is below/ low.

The balloon blew **up**.

But not all conceptual domains are embodied, yet even non-experiential domains receive such embodied patterns through other mechanisms, such as metaphor and metonymy. Metaphorical mapping is a mapping of creating meaning from the source domain; it usually embodied human experience, to the target domain. For example; Metaphorical mapping from space to time domains (embodied spatio - temporal experience) such as **time is money**.

Cognitive linguists believe that all linguistic units or symbolic units are meaningful, and all conceptual domains are used for meaning construction. They recovered the conceptual domain to provide conceptual content of linguistic units. Each linguistic expression has its own conceptual content; thus, each conceptual extension imposes a different construal interpretation (Lemmens, 2015). Example:

The lamp is **above** the table

The table is **under** the lamp.

The ball is **behind** the tree.

The tree is **in front of** the ball.

Their true condition is the same, but their conceptual content is different.

Also, in cognitive grammar, opposite grammatical elements receive semantic definition, for example: noun/verb element receives semantic definitions as profile and as a base for each other. An example, **kill/killing** both has the same base but different profiles which relate to our cognitive ability on how we conceive the entities.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study concludes that:

1. The most interpretations of meanings, words and sentences are contextualized.
2. The findings indicate that Crus and Croft's hypothesis are applicable for meaning construction in the context.
3. The findings show that to construct meaning, words retain their meanings in social experience and daily activities.

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## رَبِّيَازِي مَه عَرِيفِي زَمَان لَه بِنِيَاتِنَانِي وَآتَادَا: بِيرِدْوُزِي كَرُوز وَ كَرُوفْت

**پوخته:**

ئامانجی ئەم تووژینەو هیه بریتییە لە دابینکردنی لیکۆلینەو هیه کی گشتگیر لەسەر رۆلی پوانگهی ئینسایکلۆپیدی و پوانگهی ئەزموونی ، لە بنیاتنانی مانادا لە چوارچێوەی مەعریفی لیکۆلینەو هیه زماندا. ئەم لیکۆلینەو هیه لەسەر بنەمای ئەو سێ گریمانەیه بنیاتنانی مانا دروستکراوه که لەلایەن کروز و کرۆفت پێشبارکراوه. بۆ بە دەستھێنانی ئامانجی ئەم بابەتە ، سێ مۆدیلی کرۆس و کرۆفت بۆ مانای زمان لیکۆلینەو هیهمان لەسەر دەکرێت. نموونەکان لە کتیب و ووتار وەرگیراون. ئەم تووژینەو هیه وای لیکردین بگهینە ئەو ئەنجامی که هەبوونی و خاوەنداریتی پوانگهیهکی ئینسایکلۆپیدی، که زانیاری گشتی و زانیاری پێویست دەربارە ی وشەکه لەخۆدەگرێت ، گرنگه بۆ تیگه‌یشتنیکی راسته‌قینه له مانای وشه‌کان شتیکی بنه‌رته‌ییه. ئەم پاشخانە ئینسایکلۆپیدیە دەتوانرێت بە دەست بهێنرێت لە رێگه‌ی تێپروانینیکی ئەزموونییه‌وه، که بریتیه‌یه له بەدەستھێنانی ئەزموون دەربارە ی وشه‌کان له هه‌لومه‌رجی جو‌راو‌جو‌ره و چالاکیه‌کانی ژیا‌نی رۆژانه . له‌گه‌ل ئەوه‌شدا، رَّبِّيَازِي مَه عَرِيفِي ئەوه پيشان دەدات که قبولکردنی هه‌موو توخمه‌کانی زمان له لیکدانەوه‌ی مانادا زۆر گرنگه.

### منهج معرفي اللغة في بنية المعنى: نظرية كروز و كروفْت

**المخلص:**

الهدف من هذه المقالة هو تقديم دراسة شاملة لدور النظرة الانسكلوبيدية والتجريبية في بناء المعنى ضمن الاطار المعرفي لدراسة اللغة. يعتمد التحليل على الفرضيات الثلاث لبناء المعنى التي اقترحها كروز و كروفْت. تمت دراسة نماذج كروز و كروفْت الثلاثة لمعنى اللغة لغرض تحقيق الهدف من هذه المقالة. و الامثلة مأخوذة من الكتب و المقالات. هذه المقالة جعلتنا نستنتج ان امتلاك وجهة نظر موسوعية والتي تشمل المعلومات العامة والكافية حول الكلمة هو حقا امر ضروري لفهم معنى الكلمات الحقيقة, يمكن الحصول على هذه الخلفية الانسكلوبيدية فقط من خلال وجهة نظر تجريبية و التي تنظم اكتساب الخبرات عن الكلمات في الحياة اليومية والانشطة المختلفة. بالاضافة الى ذلك يقترح النهج المعرفي ان الحكم في جميع عناصر اللغة امر حاسم في تفسير المعنى.