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EDITOR: Judit Baranyiné Kóczy

EDITOR: Katalin Sipőcz

TITLE: Embodiment in Cross-Linguistic Studies

SUBTITLE: The 'Heart'

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SUMMARY

Iwona Kraska-Szlenk has written a short introductory chapter to the volume under review which is titled "Embodied lexicon and the 'head'". In it, she discusses the concept of 'embodiment' on the one hand and body part terms on the other and then introduces the rest of the chapters in the book. However, she also makes a very important claim about the book (p. 3): "The present publication is unique in bringing together studies devoted to one body part."

The chapters that follow the introduction are divided into two parts. The first part is titled "Comparative studies", and the second part is titled "Case studies". There are seven chapters in the first part, and six chapters in the second part.

The first of the comparative studies is written by Aleksandra Wilkos and Mateus Cruz Maciel de Carvalho, who compare metaphors of 'head(s)' in European and Brazilian Portuguese. In their theoretical framework section; they discuss how cognitive linguistics views metaphors and polysemy, paying particular attention to the concept of the 'embodied mind'. This is also the concept that they emphasize in their conclusions: they say that their data suggests commonalities not only between European and Brazilian Portuguese but also between languages more generally.

The second comparative study by Luca Ciucci compares the lexeme 'head' in three languages of the Zamucoan family. One of these languages, Old Zamuco, is no longer spoken. The two other languages are endangered; they are "spoken in the Chaco lowlands of South America" (p. 28). Before discussing how the lexeme 'head' is used in these three languages, Ciucci introduces his readers to some of their relevant morphological features, also devoting a section to historical data. Then he tells us that, in these languages, the 'head' can figuratively stand for 'hair', 'intellect', and 'beginning', or 'most important part of something', among other things (p. 48).

Next comes a chapter that compares the "noun corresponding to 'head' in a few Chadic languages" (p. 53). The chapter takes us from America to Africa, as Chadic "languages are spoken in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger" (Frajzyngier 1996: 13). The title of the chapter poses a question: "What the grammaticalization of 'head' reveals about the semantic structure of a language?" Its author, Zygmunt Frajzyngier, ultimately wants to answer the more general question "why grammatical systems in some languages code functions that are not encoded in grammatical systems of other languages" (p. 51). He wants to show that such differences between languages need not have cultural origins; this he does by pointing out that only one of the languages he has studied "has grammaticalized the noun 'head' as a marker of the point of view of the affected subject" (p. 73).

Moving onto the fourth chapter by Helma Pasch, we stay in Africa. She has titled her chapter “‘Head’ in some non-Bantu languages of the oriental province of DR Congo”. Her focus is on the Ubangian languages of Zande and Ngbandi. She begins by discussing metonymies and metaphors, and then continues to the theme of grammaticalization. In her analysis of ‘head’ metaphors, she makes an important distinction between the human head (the upper part, e.g., ‘tree-top’) and the animal head (the important end which may move forward, e.g., ‘point of knife’). Similarly, in her analysis of grammaticalization, she divides her findings into ‘head’ = UP and ‘head’ = FRONT, but also adds a section on ‘head’ as counting unit and category marker.

Then the book takes us to China. Yongxian Luo’s chapter “‘Head’ as a link of embodiment in Chinese” deals not only with ‘head’ but also with ‘brain’ and ‘neck’. Luo begins by considering historical sources and primary meaning of ‘head(s)”; his chapter includes a table representing “[v]arious forms of pictographs for human head in Old Chinese and their approximate time depth” (p. 102). Like Pasch in the previous chapter, Luo discusses both metaphors and grammaticalization. In the section on grammaticalization, he compares Chinese to Lue, a Tai language, and Lakkja, “a Kam-Sui language spoken in northeast Guangxi” (p. 108). Luo’s chapter is aptly summarized in a chart depicting the “[m]eaning extensions of ‘head’, ‘brain’ and ‘neck’ in Chinese” (p. 121).

Leaving ‘brain’ and ‘neck’ behind, the next chapter continues with discussing further body parts. It is written by Kelsie Pattillo who has titled it “From head to toe: How languages extend the head to name body parts”. Her data “come from 11 languages representing 9 language families and four geographic areas: South America, North America, Eurasia, and Australia-New Guinea” (p. 125). She begins by discussing studies that deal with how human body parts are used to name things outside the body, but soon moves on to consider the possibility of using some body parts to name other body parts. Her own study covers digit terms, knee terms, foot terms, and wrist terms. Her main aim seems to be to prove a previous suggestion about a cross-linguistic tendency to be incorrect. The suggestion was formulated as follows by Wilkins (1996: 273–274): “Where the waist provides a midline, it is a natural tendency for terms referring to parts of the upper body to shift to refer to parts of the lower body and vice versa (e.g. ‘elbow’ <-> ‘knee’; ‘uvula’ <-> ‘clitoris’; ‘anus’ <-> ‘mouth’).”

The last chapter in the “Comparative studies” section is by the editor of the volume, Iwona Kraska-Szlenk. Her topic is “Metonymic extensions of the body part ‘head’ in mental and social domains”, and she has collected examples from many different languages ranging from Amharic to Zapotec. She begins by acknowledging that there has already been plenty of research on terms for body parts and their various extended meanings but emphasizes that there is still room for comparative studies. She then briefly discusses metaphors of ‘head’ before turning her attention to metonymies. One of her foci is ‘head’ as the locus of thinking and reasoning; she presents data from French, Indonesian, Oromo, Polish, and Swahili to illustrate this. An interesting section in her chapter deals with what she calls “infrequent extensions” which include, for instance, an example from Pirahã where the lexeme for ‘head’ can be used to refer to ‘language’ (p. 149).

Part Two, “Case studies”, begins with a chapter by Izabela Will who discusses “The conceptualization of HEAD among the Hausa based on verbal and nonverbal representations”. After a short introduction, she gives plenty of examples of how the word for ‘head’ is used in Hausa. Her analysis is summarized in two figures: one illustrates “metonymical extension of kai ‘head’” (p. 165) and the other “metaphorical extension of kai ‘head’” (p. 171). The former includes, for example, ‘hair’ and ‘person’, and the latter, for example, ‘front’ and ‘top’. As the title promises, Will also deals with how speakers of Hausa position and move their heads in various situations and which cultural meanings this carries. She points out, among other things, that it is polite to turn the head aside and avoid eye contact when listening to one’s superiors. Lastly, Will deals with gestures that suggest that ‘head’ is associated with thinking and the mind.

Chapter Nine, in its turn, treats the semantics of Amharic ras ‘head’ and qəl ‘gourd’ > ‘skull’ > ‘head’. The chapter is written by Abinet Sime who begins it with an Amharic riddle. He then points out that metaphors and metonymies are not only material for riddles but an everyday

phenomenon. Like many authors of this volume, Sime is interested in both metaphor, metonymy, and grammaticalization. He covers the topics of inter-field transfers (e.g., ‘pillow for head’), intra-field transfers (e.g., ‘head for hair’), and Amharic idioms with ‘head’. The idioms have to do, among other things, with a person’s intellect and maturity. If one is intelligent, one’s ‘head’ is ‘open’, whereas an ‘abandoned head’ means the opposite (p. 196). When a person matures, ‘their head becomes firm’ (p. 197); it is no longer like a baby’s soft head.

Chapter Ten on ‘head’ idioms in Turkish has five authors: Filiz Mutlu, Aysel Kapan, Ali Yagiz Sen, Hilal Yıldırım-Gündoğdu, and Aslı Göksel. They tell us that their “data consists of 350 idioms from a corpus” and covers “five different lexical items that refer to ‘head’ in Turkish” (p. 205). However, they especially focus on two terms, *baş* and *kafa*. With the help of the idiom corpus, they are able to identify more semantic differences between these two terms than a dictionary entry alone would suggest. They also discuss syntactic differences between the two terms; these relate to inalienable and alienable possession.

The next chapter has a funny title, “He cracked his head feverishly”, and in fact contains many examples of creative expressions. The subtitle tells us which language is in turn: “Conceptualizations of HEAD and THINKING in Hungarian”. The author of the chapter is Judit Baranyiné Kóczy. The chapter includes two important figures, the first of which is borrowed from a book in Hungarian by Tolcsvai Nagy (2013: 245). It shows the “polysemic network of the Hungarian *fej* ‘head’”, with meanings ranging from a body part to person to fruit of a plant (pp. 221–222). The other important figure summarizes Baranyiné Kóczy’s own research on the “conceptualizations of THOUGHT in expressions of *fej* ‘head’ in Hungarian” (p. 243) which she presents in the chapter. She claims that in Hungarian, thoughts can be conceptualized as, for example, objects in a drug store, music, threads, or plants.

The last two case studies take us to Brazil and Australia, respectively. In Chapter Twelve, Mateus Cruz Maciel de Carvalho discusses the “[s]emantic extensions of *tatini* ‘her head’ and *tati* ‘his head’ in Deni (Arawá)”. Before reporting his findings concerning ‘head’ in Deni, he writes both about cognitive linguistic research on body part terms and about noun classes in Deni. The noun classes in Deni comprise inalienably possessed nouns, free nouns, and so-called *ka*-nouns. According to Cruz Maciel de Carvalho, neither the first nor second person forms of ‘head’ are used in Deni to denote other than the body part ‘head’. He writes: “Conversely, the forms of third person feminine *tatini* and masculine *tati* have been attested to in other domains of the Deni experience” (p. 255). One of his examples concerns the river which Deni speakers use as a point of orientation; they use the form *tatini-ne-hene* (3POSS-head-F-DIR) to say, ‘up the river’ (p. 258).

The last chapter has been written by Alice Gaby and John Bradley who discuss the term *wulaya* which means ‘head’ in Yanyuwa. They first introduce the endangered language. Their study itself comprises four sections, dealing with ‘head’ as a part of the body, metonymic extensions, metaphorical extensions, and proper names, respectively. In the proper names section, they break down the place name *Wirdinyjawulaya* into three main parts, *wirdi nya-ja wulaya* (leader MASC-this head). They explain that the place name means “This hill is the boss/leader”, which is fitting since the hill “is located at the highest point on the North Island” (p. 270).

In addition to the chapters described above, the volume under review contains two indexes, an index of languages, and an index of names. The index of languages indexes both individual languages and linguistic families. The index of names indexes authors that the chapters refer to. If we consider authors that have not themselves written to the volume, the following appear to be the most popular: I. Chomé, B. Heine, M. Johnson, T. Kuteva, and G. Lakoff. This reflects the theoretical orientation of the book. It is nested in cognitive linguistic research on embodiment, metaphors, and metonymy, and in grammaticalization research. F. Sharifian’s cultural linguistics (e.g., 2017) should also be mentioned, although it plays a slightly smaller role in the book.

EVALUATION

This book is one in a series of books on body part terms which Kraska-Szlenk has edited. In 2014, she edited a book titled “The body in language: Comparative studies of linguistic embodiment”

with Matthias Brenzinger. In 2020, she edited another volume, “Body part terms in conceptualization and language usage”. Moreover, she has edited a twin volume to the volume under review, together with Melike Baş, in 2022. It is called “Embodiment in cross-linguistic Studies: The ‘eye’”. Thus, the volume on the ‘head’ is no longer “unique in bringing together studies devoted to one body part” (p. 3). That Kraska-Szlenk has edited all these volumes on body part terms is a noteworthy achievement. In addition, she has written a comparative study titled “Semantic extensions of body part terms: Common patterns and their interpretation” that has been published in the journal *Language Sciences* (Kraska-Szlenk 2014).

Considering whether similar books have been edited by other people, there is one volume in particular that comes to mind, “Culture, body, and language: Conceptualizations of internal body organs across cultures and languages” that was edited by Sharifian, Dirven, Yu, and Niemeier as early as in 2008. Many of its chapters dealt with the body part term ‘heart’, although it also covered other body organs such as the ‘guts’ and the ‘liver’. Thus, one might even venture to say that Sharifian et al.’s (2008) book brought “together studies devoted to one body part” (p. 3), the ‘heart’, and thus preceded the two volumes on the ‘head’ and ‘eye’ edited by Kraska-Szlenk and Kraska-Szlenk and Baş (2022).

To consider the strengths of Kraska-Szlenk’s volume on the ‘head’, a major strength is that it is certainly focused. Although the articles sometimes give examples of expressions attesting other body parts, such as the ‘neck’ and ‘brain’ mentioned above, the focus is on the ‘head’. The reader is presented with plenty of authentic examples representing many various languages and attesting the ‘head’.

Another strength of the volume is precisely that it contains empirical data from many various languages, even endangered languages. It is important to preserve data, and particularly also data on metaphors, from endangered languages. This has been emphasized, for example, by Mühlhäusler (2012), who wrote an introduction to the book “Endangered metaphors”, promoting linguistic diversity. When a language is lost, an entire understanding of the world is lost, including important knowledge on how to best adapt to a particular environment.

A third strength of the volume is that it is theoretically unified. As mentioned above, the authors refer to cognitive linguistic research on embodiment, metaphors, and metonymies, and to research on grammaticalization. One could perhaps say that the main focus of the book is on meaning but that there is also a notable focus on morphology and grammar in many of the articles. A further thread that runs through the book is culture; the readers acquire information about many various cultures from different parts of the globe. In brief, Kraska-Szlenk has succeeded in editing a coherent volume on the topic of ‘head’ as a body part term.

If one is nitpicky, one can also see potential weaknesses in the book. To begin with, while the book is theoretically unified, it focuses on presenting empirical data rather than on pursuing theoretical discussions. This may cause challenges to a reader not familiar with all the theoretical issues that are discussed relatively briefly, for example, the characteristics of languages unknown to the reader. Moreover, considering that the book contains very much information on the ‘head’ in many different languages, the readers could have benefited from a closing chapter summarizing and discussing the “meaning” and importance of all that information. Such a closing chapter could have brought together information about characteristics of the body part term ‘head’ that seem to be common across many languages and even linguistic families, as well as information about characteristics of ‘head’ that are particular to specific languages.

As regards the empirical data presented in the chapters, there is variation in how much data has been analyzed and how it has been collected. This is of course natural because the authors have used different research methods, but not every chapter is equally thorough. To illustrate this point, one can simply consider the length of some chapters: While Will and Baranyiné Kócsy both write 26 pages about Hausa and Hungarian, respectively, Gaby and Bradley write only 10 pages about the endangered language of Yanyuwa. Note that this is not to say that the chapter about Yanyuwa is not important.

This book can be recommended to several different groups of people. The first two groups that come to mind are general linguists interested in the body part term 'head' and historical linguists interested in its grammaticalization. A major group that the editor and authors probably have had in mind are cognitive linguists interested in how language is embodied or, to be more specific, how the embodied nature of language is reflected in the use of the term 'head'. To put it differently, the book is certainly addressed to people interested in metaphors and metonymies of the 'head', and in their universal versus language- and culture-specific characteristics. Furthermore, a potential reader could be interested in the endangered languages of Zamucoan and Yanyuwa, or in any of the languages treated at length in the book. Interesting examples from the book could surely also be used in teaching about grammaticalization or 'embodiment' to pique students' interest in those topics.

Lastly, a few words on potential future research that this book might inspire. Knowing that Kraska-Szlenk has edited another book on the 'eye', one wonders whether she plans to edit further volumes on, for example, the 'leg' or the 'hand'. If she does so, at some point she will potentially be able to revisit the topic of "Semantic extensions of body part terms: Common patterns and their interpretation" (Kraska-Szlenk 2014), having brought together much more evidence than previously existed within the covers of single books.

To conclude, to cover a topic comprehensively is a dream that many scholars aspire to. Kraska-Szlenk seems to be on a journey towards such a dream, together with her fellow authors and editors.

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