

Language as an exercise in creative recycling

This talk gives an overview of the fundamental features that characterize Construction Grammar as a distinct approach to linguistic analysis, one that presupposes variation as an inherent feature of grammar. I will discuss the theory's conceptual underpinnings, introduce the basics of its formalism, and briefly demonstrate the ways in which a constructional analysis is generally carried out. The center of attention will be on the notion 'construction' as a theoretical entity and the basic unit of analysis, which allows for both the Gestalt-like, holistic view of linguistic patterning (unlike formal theories of language) and for keeping track of the internal properties of larger patterns (like any other grammatical theory). In the second half of the talk I will focus on the theory's potential for capturing the multilayered nature of linguistic structure, using a particular type of relative clauses in Czech as an illustrative example. The goal is to motivate the network-based organization of grammar that is grounded in recurrent patterns of usage.

<http://www.ujc.cas.cz/zakladni-informace/pracovnici/fried-mirjam.html>