

From lexical senses to discursive uses – a case study of the verb *wonder*

Christelle Lacassain (Sorbonne University, Paris)

What has made *wonder* such a polysemic and multifunctional verb, and why? In my talk, I will address these multifaceted questions at the syntax-semantics-pragmatics interface, using the theoretical concepts which are helpful for the proper characterisation of the uses of *wonder*. I will focus on the semantics of *wonder*, the concepts of cognition and emotion, the properties of cognitive and emotive verbs and verbal typologies to explain the different, although related, meanings and discursive functions of the verb *wonder*. I will also discuss the correlated concepts of pragmaticalisation (Erman & Kotsinas 1993, Frank-Job 2006), grammaticalisation and subjectification (Traugott 1982, 1989).

A corpus-based typology of the respective complementation patterns and meanings of cognitive and emotive *wonder* will be presented, so as to analyse the various discursive uses of *wonder*, which differ according to whether the verb originally expresses cognition or emotion. I will also shed light on the factors that allow for the discursive functions of *wonder*, as the verb is not in itself a discourse marker. A qualitative, corpus-based analysis will help not only to identify the pragmatic effects featured in spoken contexts but also to highlight the role of co-textual and contextual elements in such effects. Finally, I will try to determine whether *wonder* can be analysed as an instance of pragmaticalisation in some contexts. Different hypotheses will be discussed to account for the ‘pragmaticalisation’ path, including the matrix-clause hypothesis (Brinton 2008) in relation to parentheticals.

BIO

Christelle Lacassain is Professor of English linguistics at Sorbonne University, and head of the Sorbonne Center for Linguistics (CELISO, research team 7332). She completed a PhD in English Linguistics on the complementation of perception verbs, integrating syntactic, semantic and cognitive and dimensions.

The main focus of her work is verb complementation in contemporary English within the theoretical frameworks of Enunciative and Cognitive Linguistics. Her research interests can be grouped into four major, intertwined areas: (i) complements of English mental verbs, particularly perception, cognition and emotion verbs, along with the contrastive study of perception verbs in English and French; (ii) the syntax-semantics interface, in connection with cognition; (iii) discourse analysis and pragmatics; (iv) theoretical and grammatical concepts.