Toward Organizing the Hunt for Special and Minor Sentence Types: A Look at Some Cognitive Approaches

Typological surveys (Sadock & Zwicky 1985; König & Siemund 2007, 2013) have found it convenient to distinguish between major and minor sentence types, counting declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives among the former, and exclamatives and optatives among the latter. In addition, subtypes such as prohibitives, forming special imperatives by the addition of negation, have been identified. In this talk I will be concerned with the question as to what structure or "logic" (if any) organizes the field of major and minor as well as general and special types. Presupposing a sufficiently clear understanding of taxonomies of illocution types (e.g., Searle & Vanderveken 1985; Zaefferer 2001, 2007) and formal proposals for the structure of clausal peripheries (e.g., Rizzi 1997; Speas & Tenny 2003), I discuss the potential contribution of "cognitive" approaches such as those by Croft (1994) and Panther & Köpcke (2008).