



Contextualization and Methodology: Thirty Years of Cognitive Linguistics

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Questions

questions after 30 years of Cognitive Linguistics

- is there a unifying factor behind the development of Cognitive Linguistics ?
- if so, in which direction could Cognitive Linguistics develop in the future ?

Questions

questions after 30 years of Cognitive Linguistics

- is there a uniformity in the development of Cognitive Linguistics
- if so, what is the theoretical framework and a sociological entity (a community of scholars)

Cognitive Linguistics

Approach

- present a brief overview of the history of Cognitive Linguistics
- situate CL in the context of the history of linguistics, and thus identify major underlying trends in the development of CL
- draw methodological and theoretical conclusions from that analysis

TOC

Step I. Thirty Years of Cognitive Linguistics

Step II. The Wider Context

Step III. Cognitive Linguistics as a Recontextualizing Approach

Step IV. Methodological Consequences

Overall Conclusion

Step I

Thirty Years of Cognitive Linguistics

Thirty years of CL

three landmarks in the history of CL

Thirty years of CL

three landmarks in the history of CL

- 1975-1977

the early beginnings:

Talmy 1975 on figure/ground

Langacker 1976 on Cognitive Grammar

Lakoff 1977 on 'gestalt' models

Thirty years of CL

three landmarks in the history of CL

- 1987-1989

entering the international scene:

1987 Langacker: Foundations of Cognitive Grammar

1987 Lakoff: Women, Fire & Dangerous Things

1988 Rudzka-Ostyn (ed.), Topics in CL

1989 1st Intl Cognitive Linguistics Conference

1989 launching Cognitive Linguistics, the journal

Thirty years of CL

three landmarks in the history of CL

- from 1996-1998 on
international consolidation:

publication of textbooks and reference works
foundation of national ICLA affiliates

Thirty years of e

three landmarks in the history

- from 1996-1998 on international consolidation

publication of textbooks
foundation of national ICLA a

Spain 1998, Finland 2001,
Poland 2001, Russia 2004,
Germany 2005, France
2005, Japan 2005, Korea
2005, UK 2006, China 2006

Thirty years of

Ungerer & Schmid 1996



three landmarks in the history of

- from 1996-1998 on international consolidation

publication of textbooks and
foundation of national ICLAs

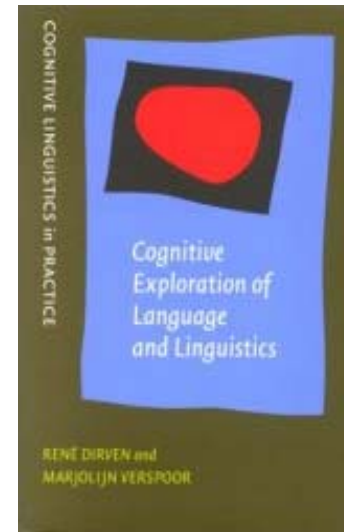
Thirty years of

three landmarks in the history

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publication of textbooks and
foundation of national ICLAs

Dirven & Verspoor 1998



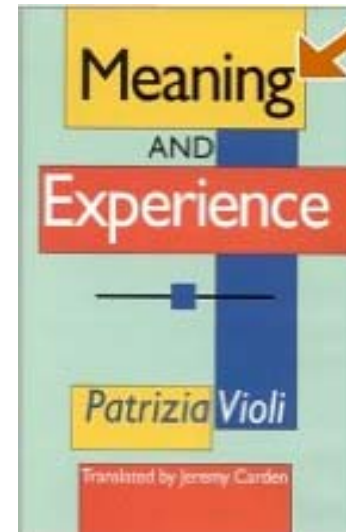
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Violi 2001



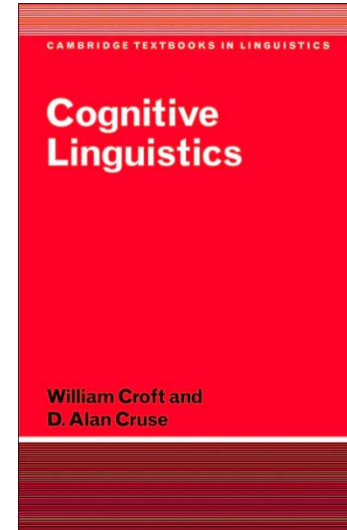
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Croft & Cruse 2004



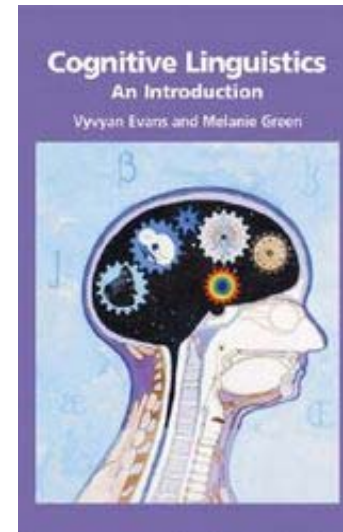
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Evans & Green 2006



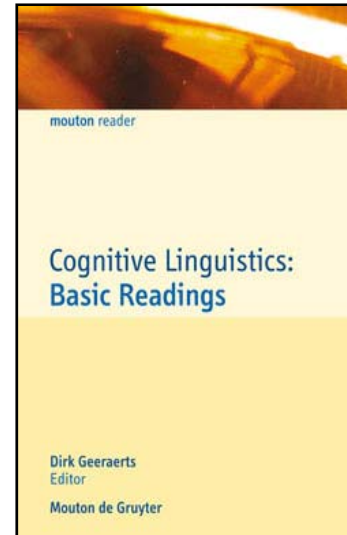
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Geeraerts 2006



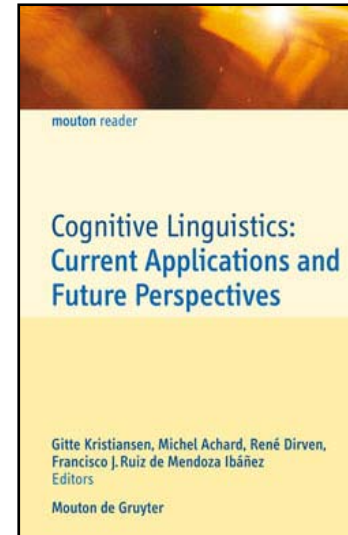
Thirty years of

three landmarks in the history

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Kristiansen et al. 2006



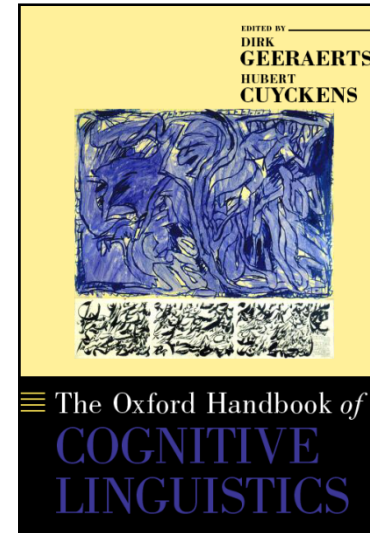
Thirty years of

Geeraerts & Cuyckens 2007

three landmarks in the history of

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Thirty years of CL

simplifying in three decades:

- 1977-1987: the pioneering stage
- 1987-1997: the expansion stage
- 1997-2007: the consolidation stage

Thirty years of CL

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→ what are the theoretical developments accompanying this sociological expansion ?

Thirty years of CL

simplifying in three decades:

- 1977-1987: the pioneering stage
- 1987-1997: the expansion stage
- 1997-2007: the consolidation stage

→ (and should we expect the emergence of the 4th stage distinguished by the Kuhnian sociology of science – internal conflict and fragmentation?)

Step II

The Wider Context

Overview

an overview of the development of linguistic theory in the 20th century:

- decontextualization
- initial reactions
- recontextualization

claim: CL epitomizes the recontextualizing tendency

Saussurean Grammar

- **langue:**
a social system
a collective set of coded conventions
- **parole:**
an individual, psychological activity
a set of combinations from the code

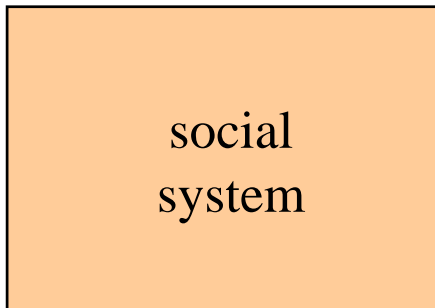
Saussurean Grammar

- a missing link:
where is the locus of an individual's knowledge of the social system ?
what is the bridge between the social code and the individual activity ?

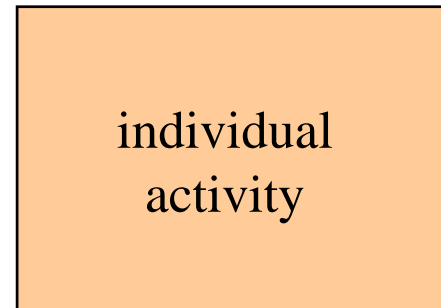
graphically:

Saussurean Grammar

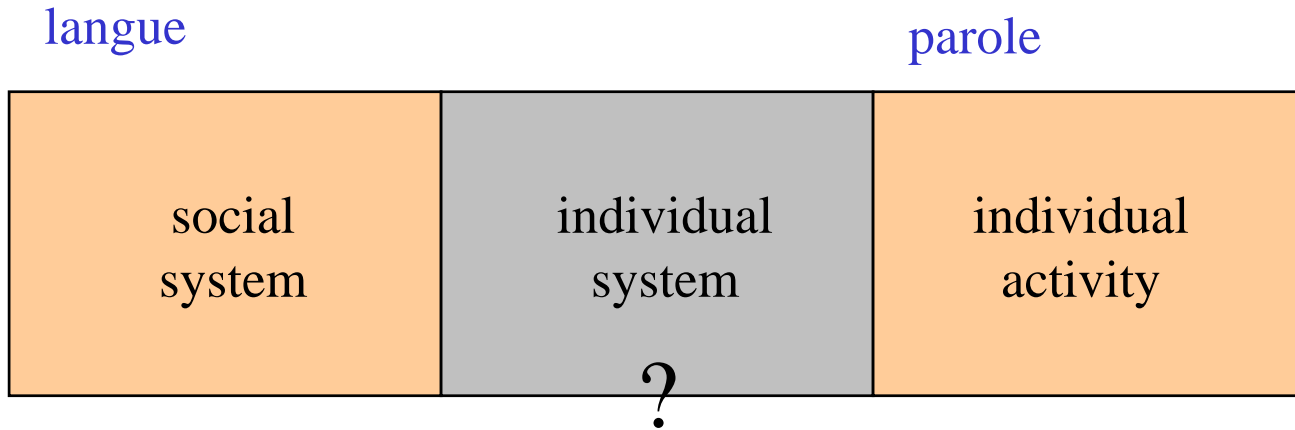
langue



parole



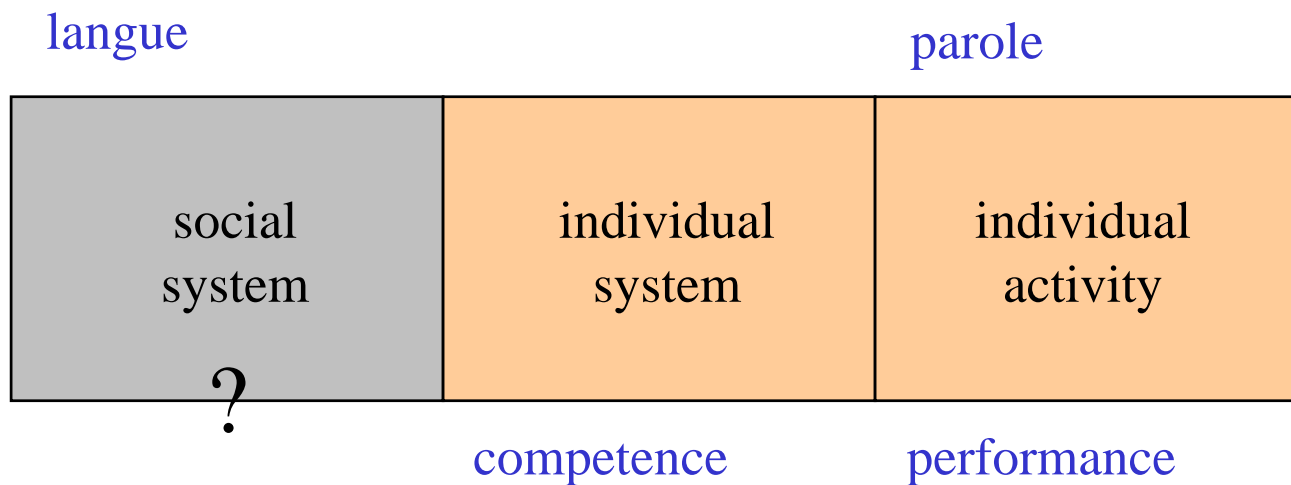
Saussurean Grammar



Chomskyan Grammar

- **competence:**
filling in the gap
an individual's knowledge of the language
- but creating a new hiatus:
the social nature of the system remains out of sight
again a binary instead of a ternary division

Chomskyan Grammar

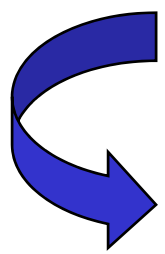


Chomskyan Grammar

consequences of the Chomskyan position:

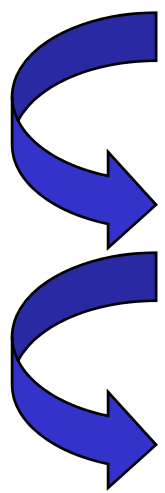
- where does the individual knowledge of the language come from ? if the source of linguistic knowledge is not social, what is it ?
⇒ innateness, a genetic conception of language
- hence: a stepping-stone development, leading by an internal logic to an isolation of grammar:

if it cannot be social, it has to be genetic



if it cannot be social, it has to be genetic

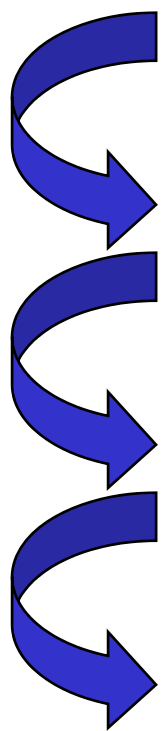
if it is genetic, it cannot be semantic or lexical



if it cannot be social, it has to be genetic

if it is genetic, it cannot be semantic or lexical

if it cannot be semantic or lexical, it's about formal rule systems



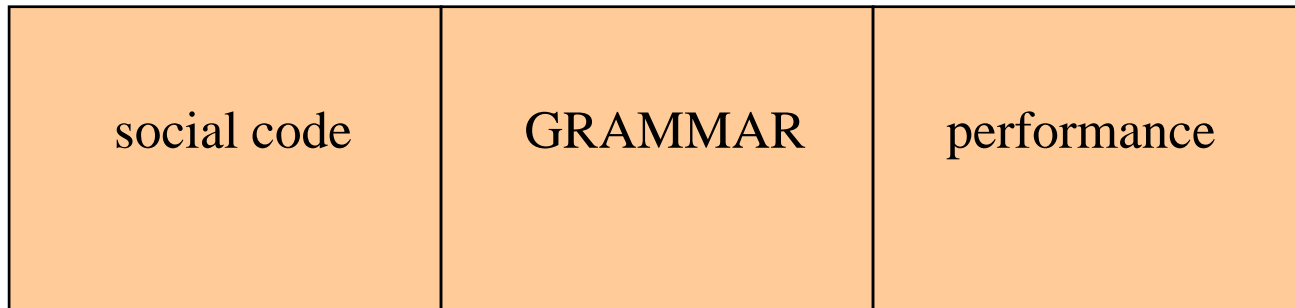
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if it is genetic, it cannot be semantic or lexical

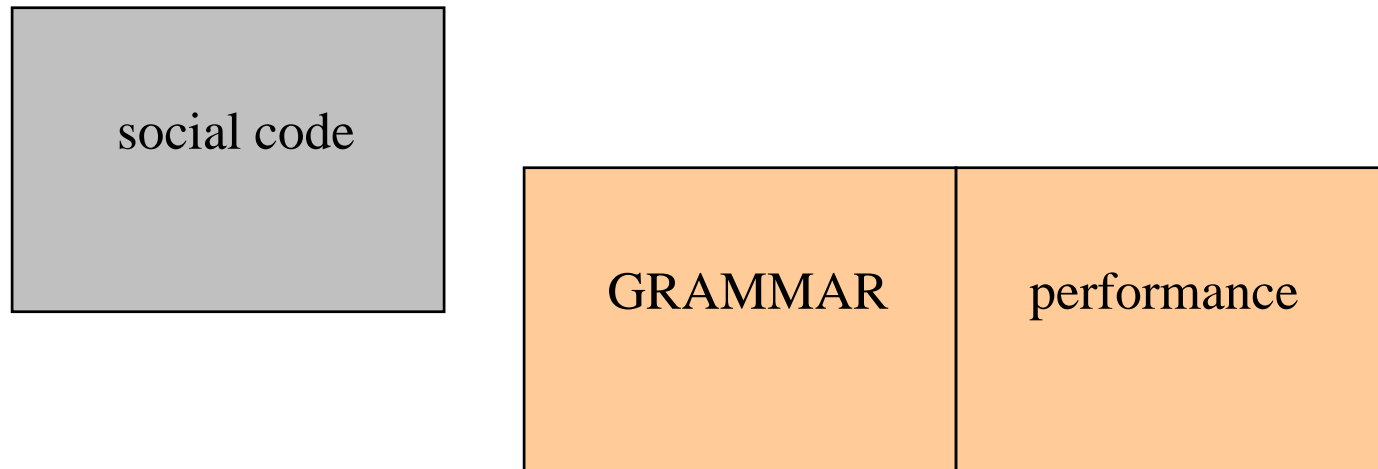
if it cannot be semantic or lexical, it's about formal rule systems

if it's about formal rule systems, the application of the rules is trivial

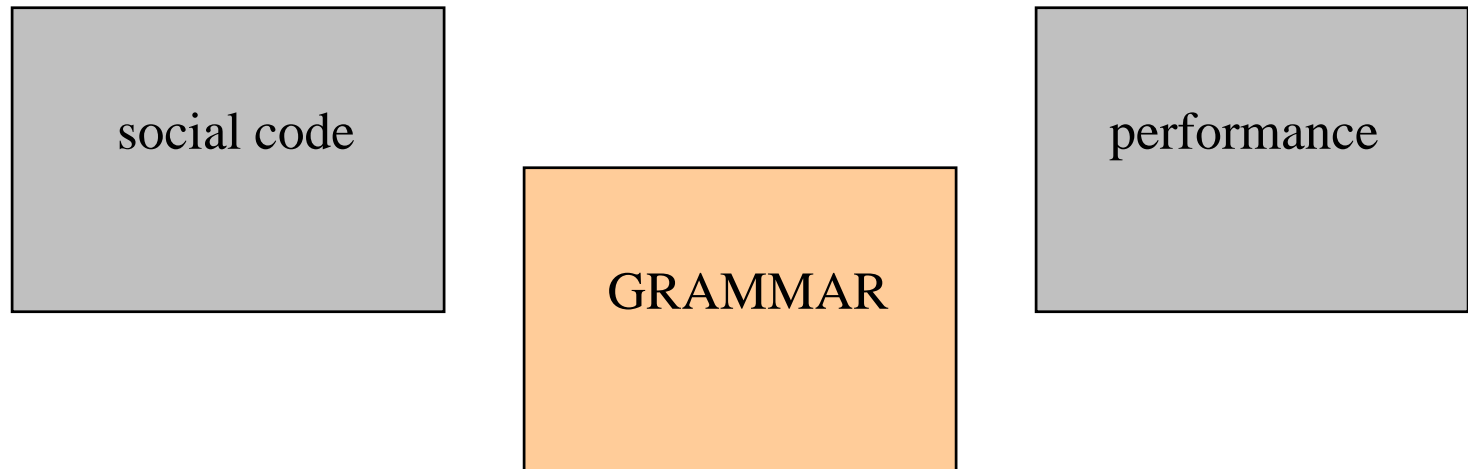
Chomskyan Grammar



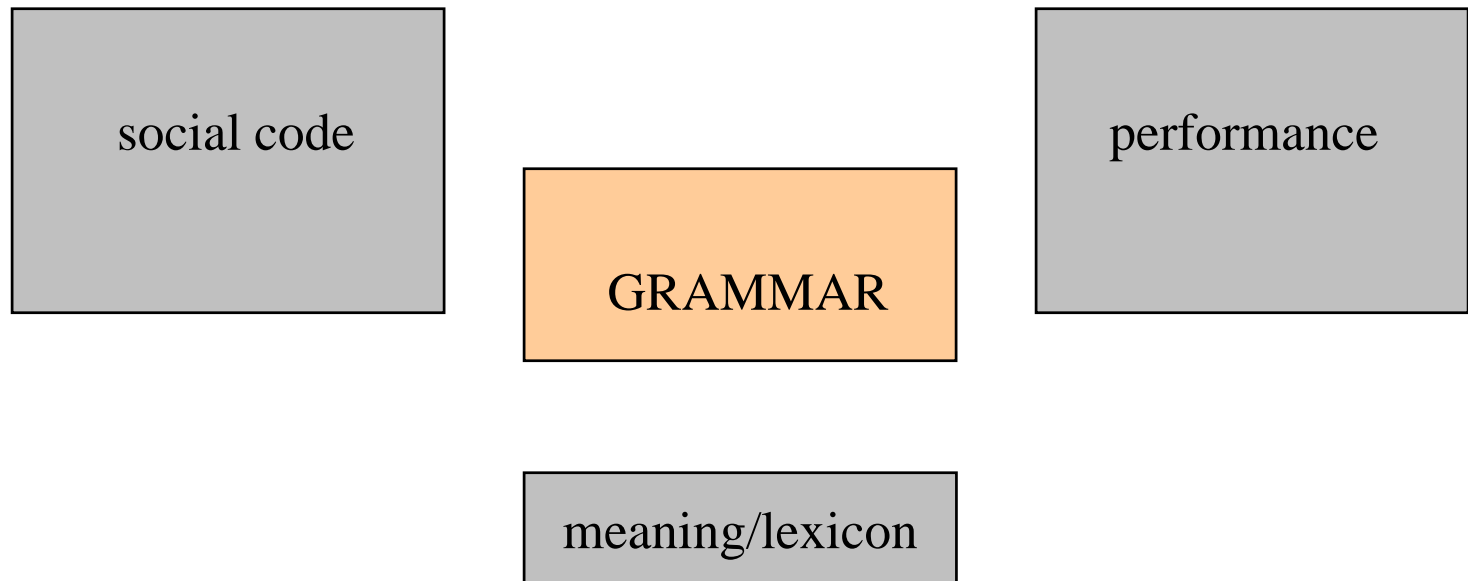
Chomskyan Grammar



Chomskyan Grammar



Chomskyan Grammar



Chomskyan Grammar

in other words: a restrictive strategy that separates the autonomous grammatical module from different forms of context:

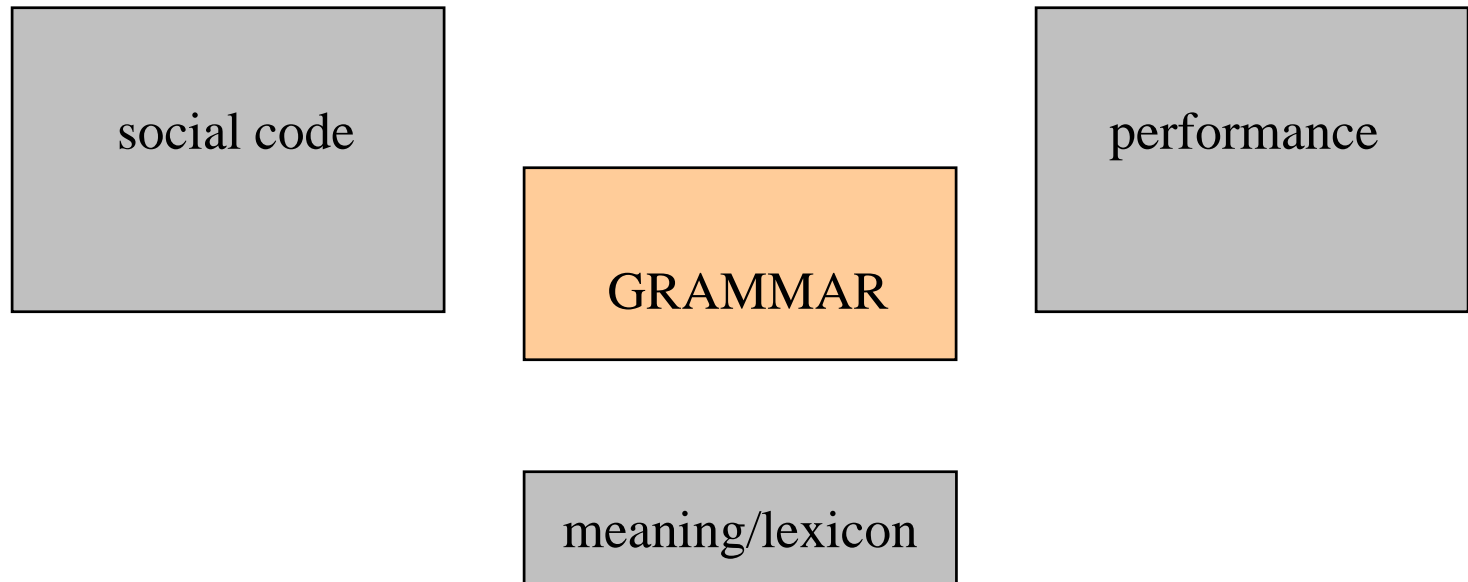
- the **social** context
- the **discursive** context of actual language use
- the **cognitive** context of meaning and experience

↳ decontextualisation

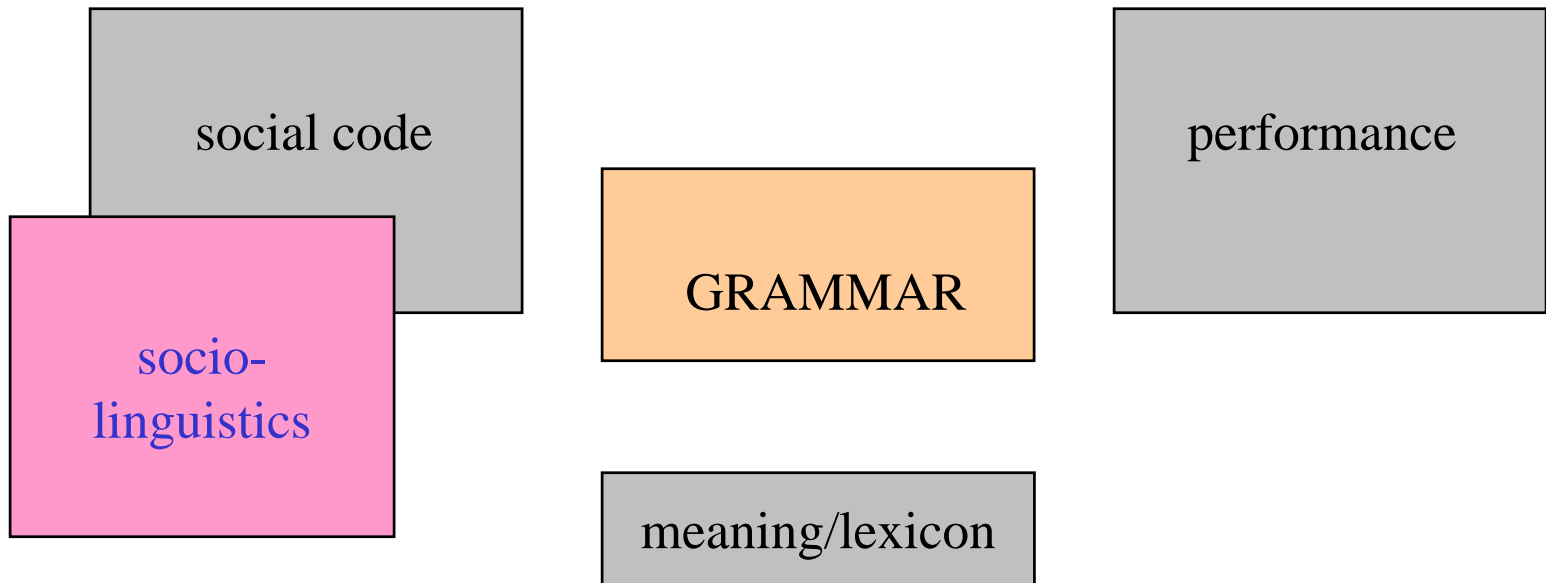
Initial reactions

- 1960-1980:
- the discarded aspects of language are developed separately, as disciplines more or less independent from theoretical grammar

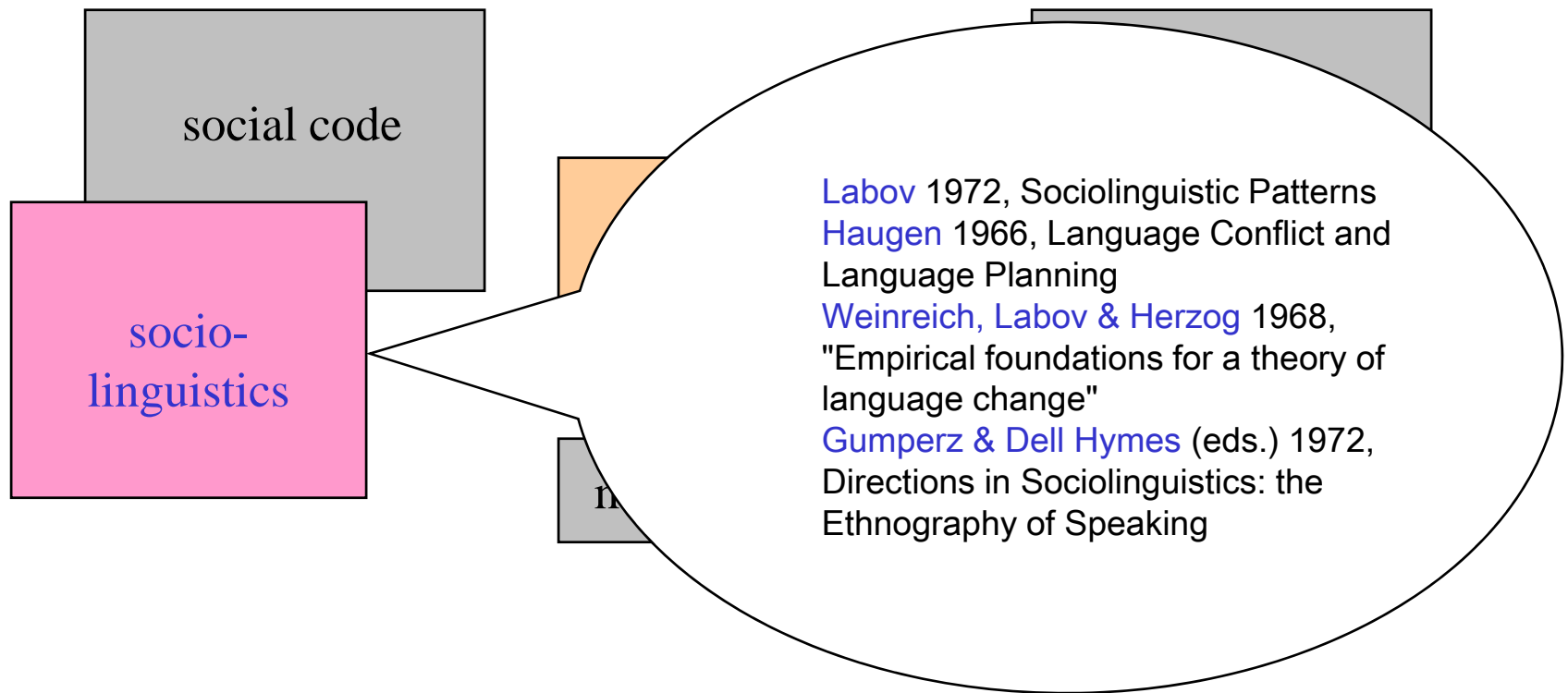
Initial reactions



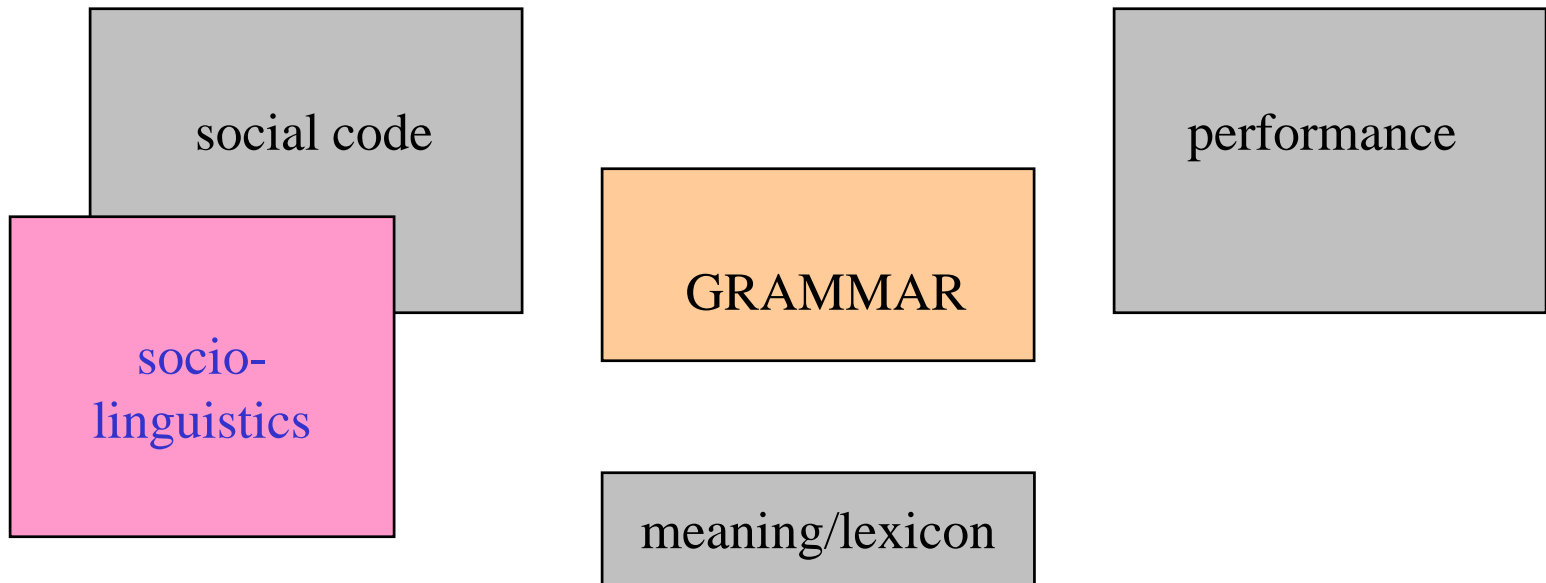
Initial reactions



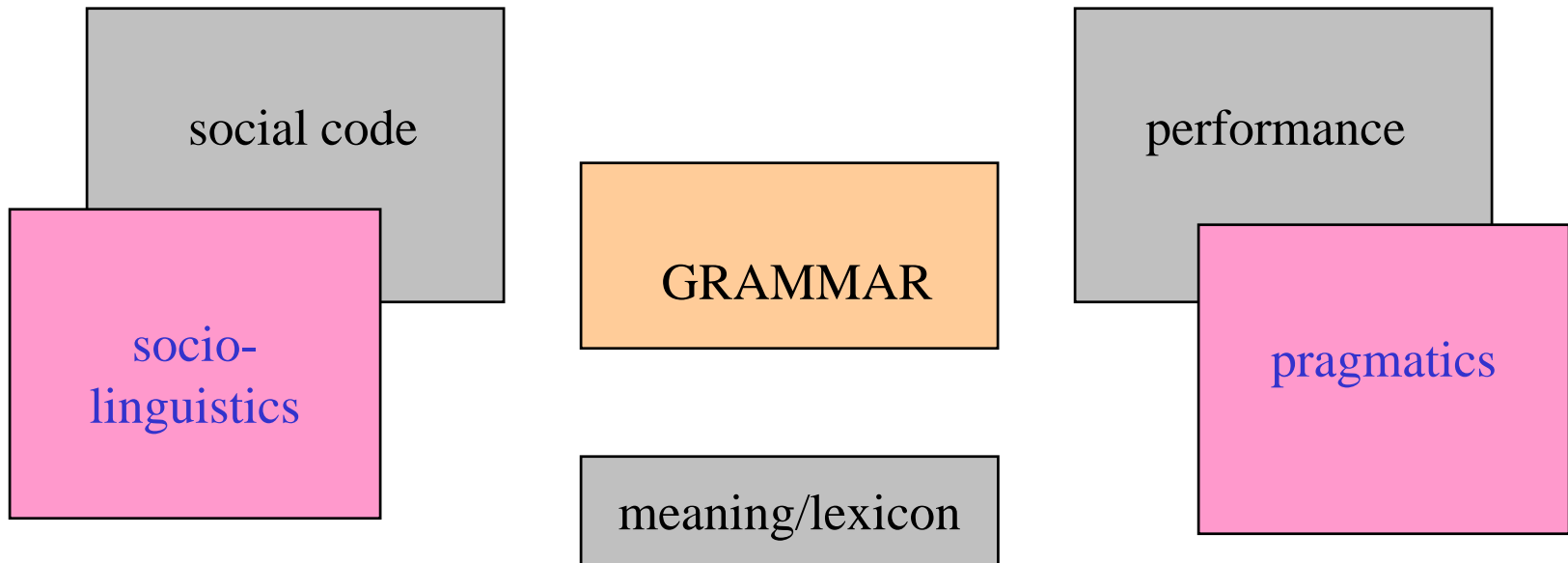
Initial reactions



Initial reactions



Initial reactions



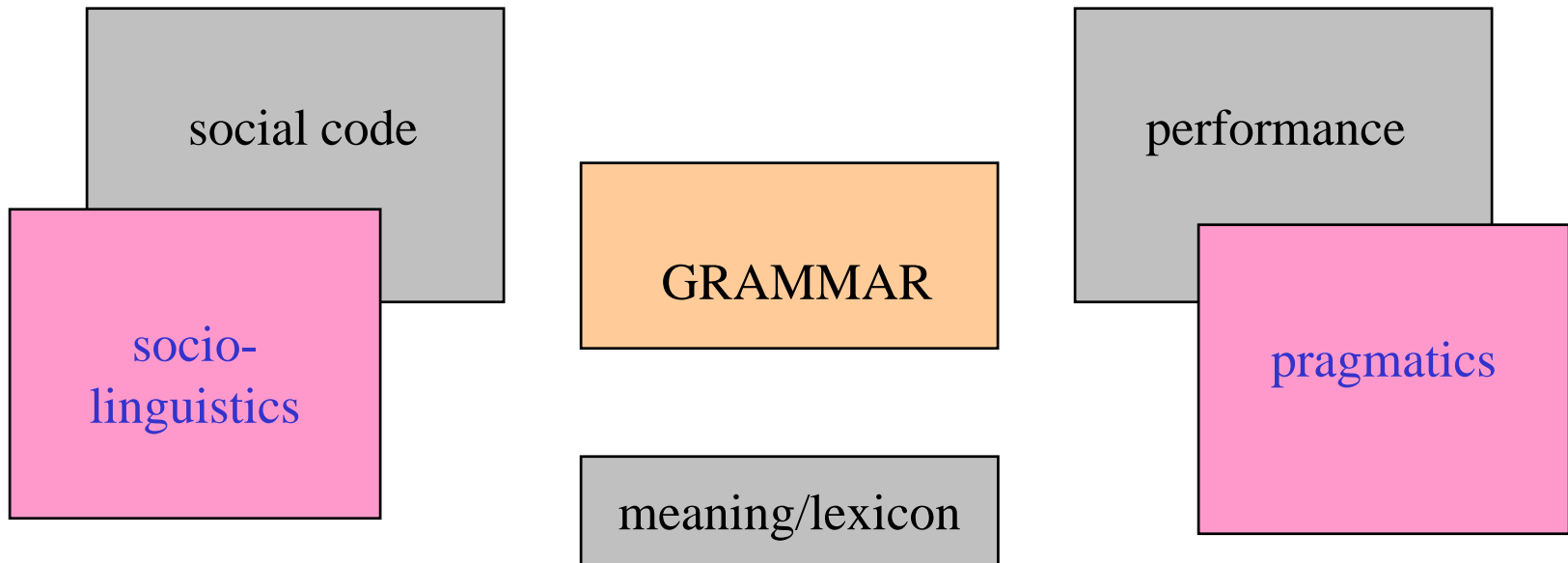
Initial reactions

Grice 1975, "Logic and conversation"
Stalnaker 1974, "Pragmatic presuppositions"
Gazdar 1979, Pragmatics: Implicature, Presupposition and Logical Form
Coulthard 1977, An Introduction to Discourse Analysis
Gumperz 1982, Discourse Strategies
Brown & Yule 1983, Discourse Analysis
Tannen 1984, Conversational Style

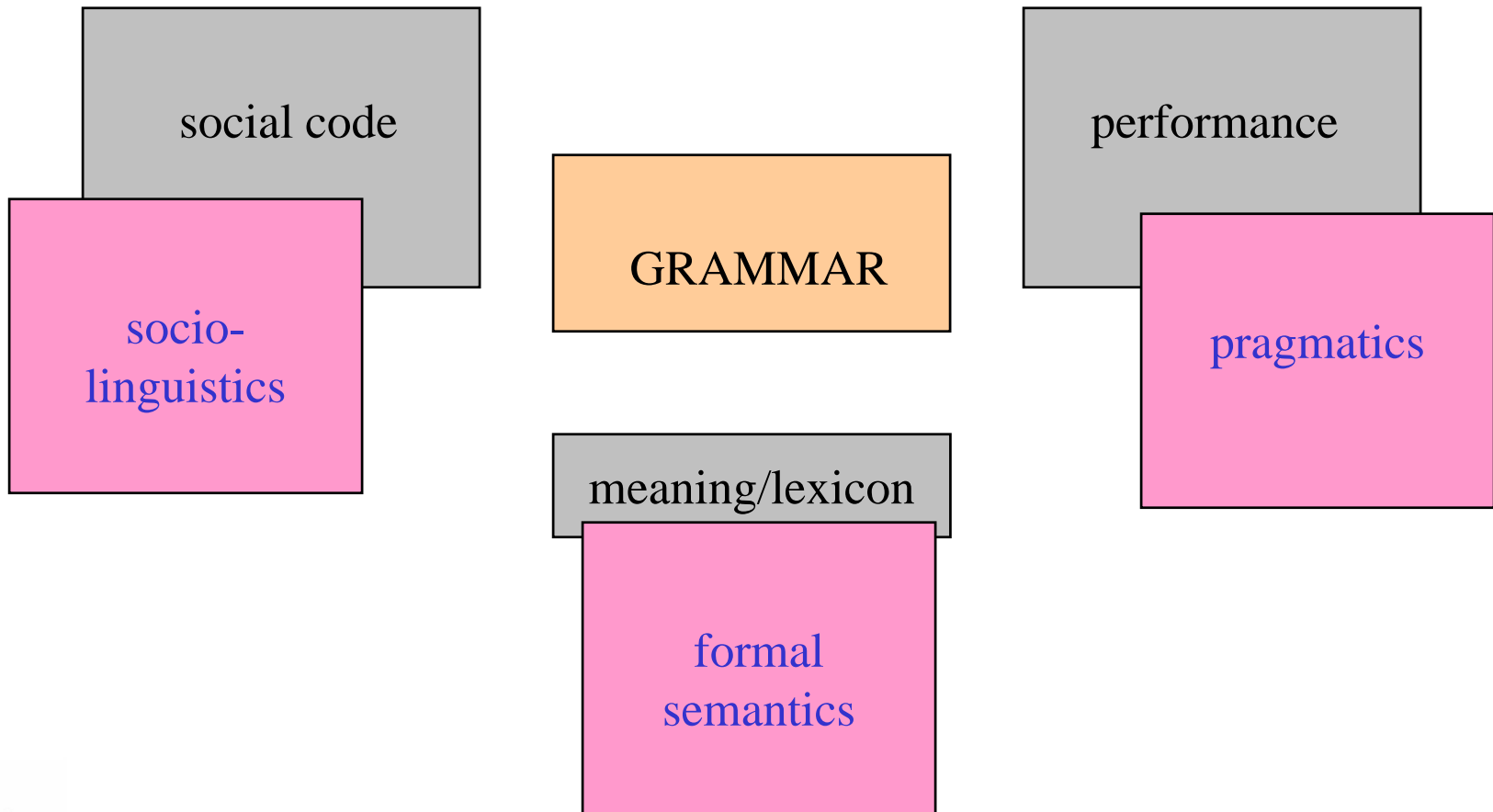
performance

pragmatics

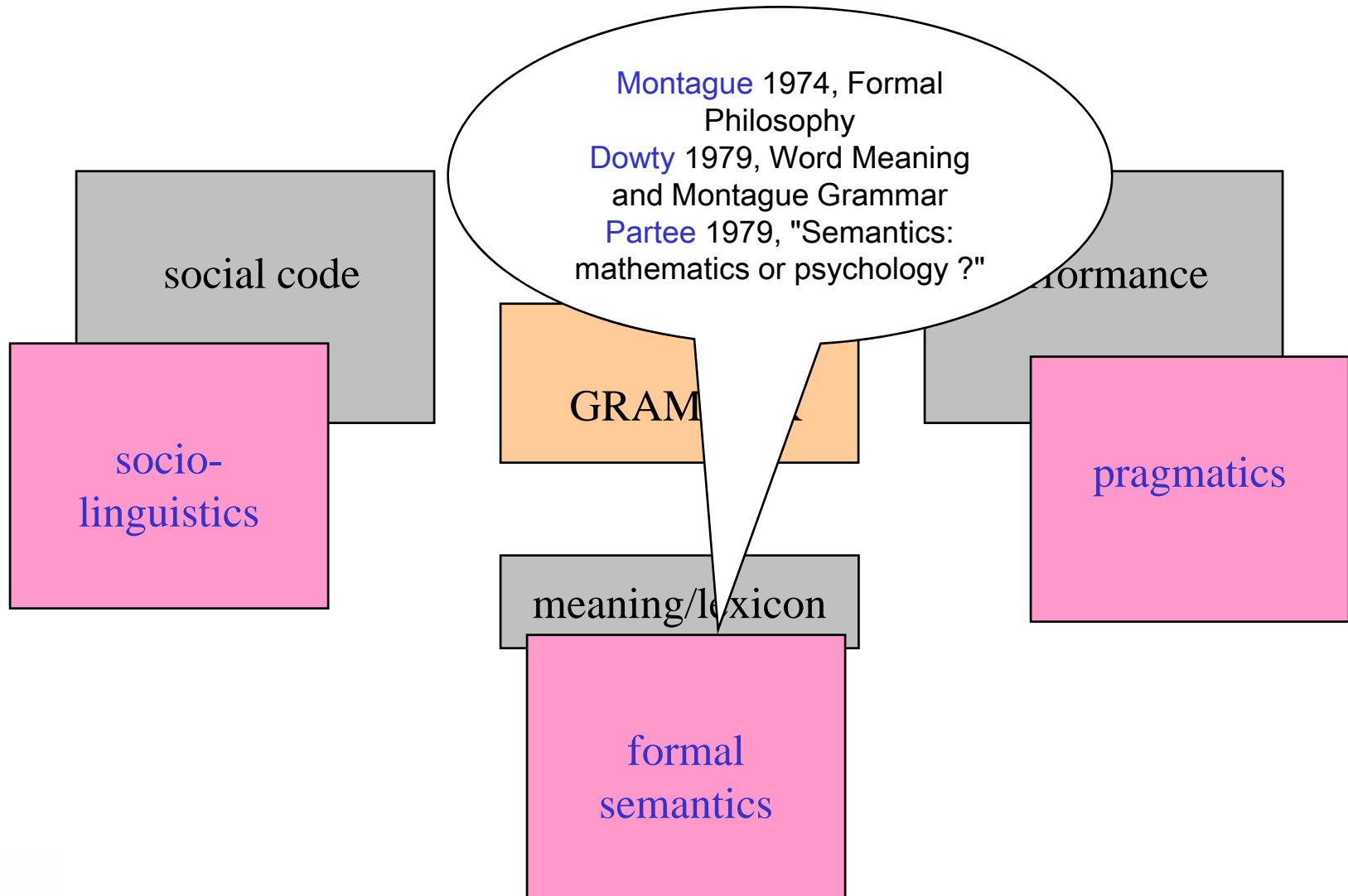
Initial reactions



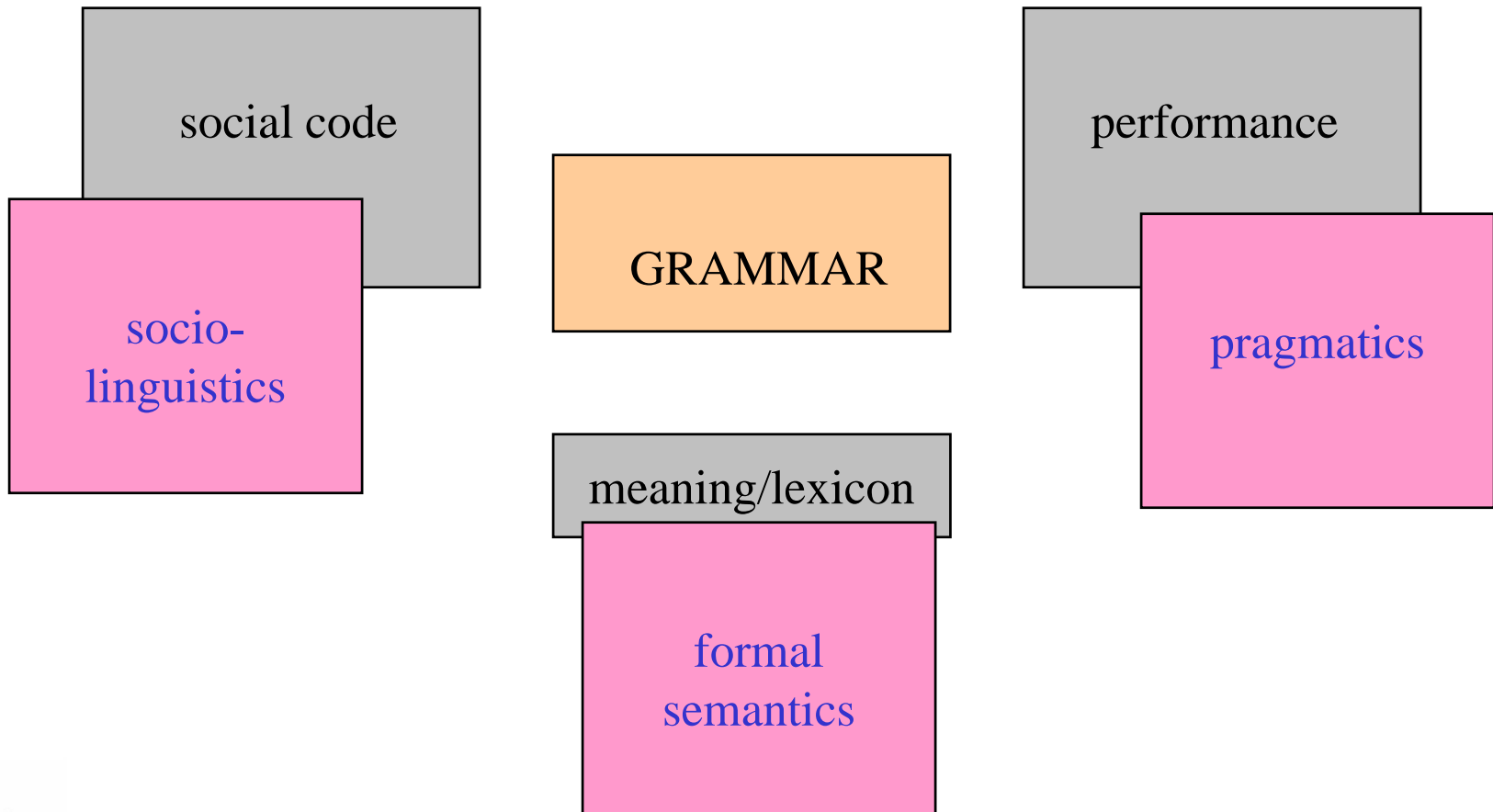
Initial reactions



Initial reactions



Initial reactions



Contemporary trends

general (or at least growing) tendency of dissatisfaction with the **modular** view of linguistics, in favor of an **integrated** approach:

the peripheral aspects that were being developed largely separately and autonomously, are being linked up more narrowly with the grammar itself (which can then no longer be autonomous)

Contemporary trends

my claim for today:

although this re-incorporating tendency is far from being unique for CL,

a) CL is probably the most radical instantiation of the recontextualising trend in contemporary linguistics

b) this shows up in the fact that the recovery of the various aspects of context structures the internal historical development of CL

focus here is on b)

a) asks for a systematic comparison of theories

Contemporary trends

↳ how does this work in CL ?

i.e. how does CL integrate the different facets that were discarded by the decontextualizing approach ?

- meaning
- the lexicon
- the performance level
- the social side of language

Step III

Cognitive Linguistics as a Recontextualizing Approach

Recovering meaning

the **basic vocabulary** of CL involves a set of semantic concepts:

prototype, schematic network, conceptual metaphor, metonymy, conceptual integration, idealized cognitive models, frames

and all sorts of construal mechanisms

Recovering the lexicon

the family of **construction grammars** constitute a lexicalist approach in various respects

- constructions may consist of abstract entities together with lexically specific elements
- constructions, even if abstract, have to be studied together with their lexical realization
- semantically, constructions exhibit the same structural features as lexical categories

Recovering performance

from the beginning of CL, there is an interest in pragmatic meaning (cp. grammaticalization research), but the tendency becomes outspoken with

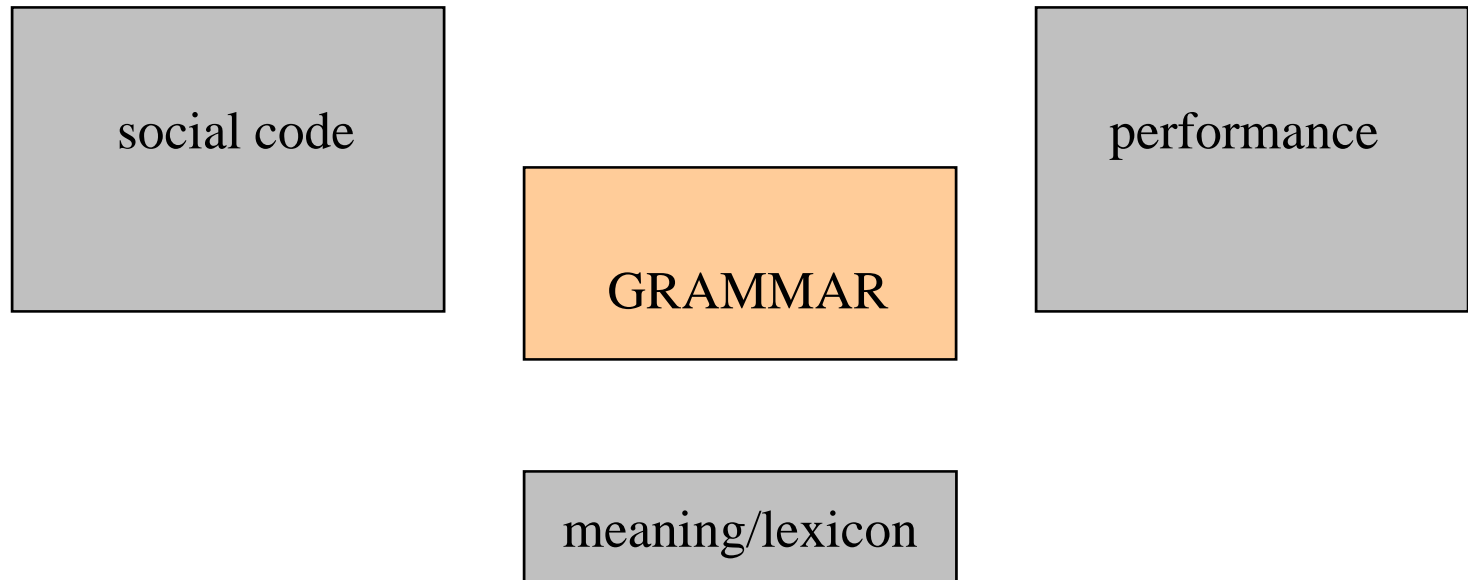
- the definition CL as a **usage-based** theory of grammar
- the growing interest in **applied CL** (acquisition, poetics, language learning, critical discourse analysis and framing)

Recovering the social context

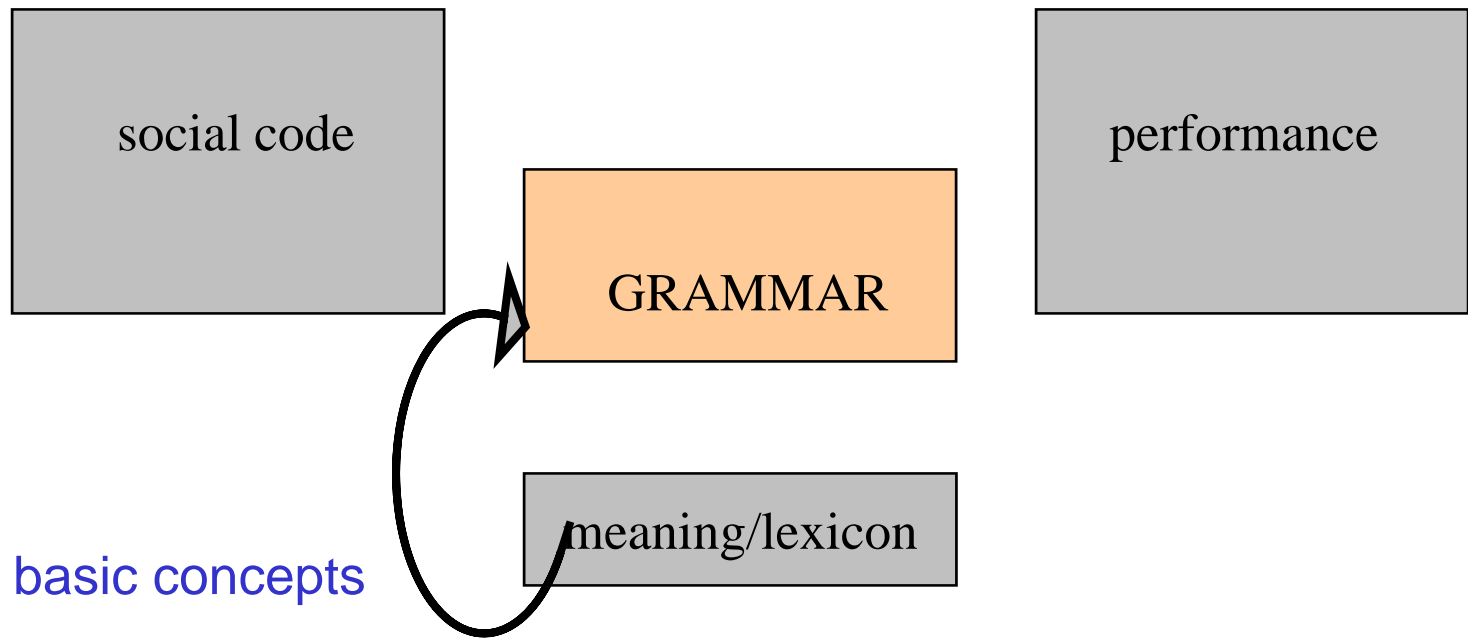
two major tendencies:

- situated embodiment and the sociocultural background of meaning: **biocultural linguistics** (Sinha, Zlatev, Harder ...)
- variationist CL: **cognitive sociolinguistics**
CL from the point of view of lectal variation (dialectal, regiolectal, sociolectal, stylistic variation)
Kristiansen & Dirven (eds.) 2008

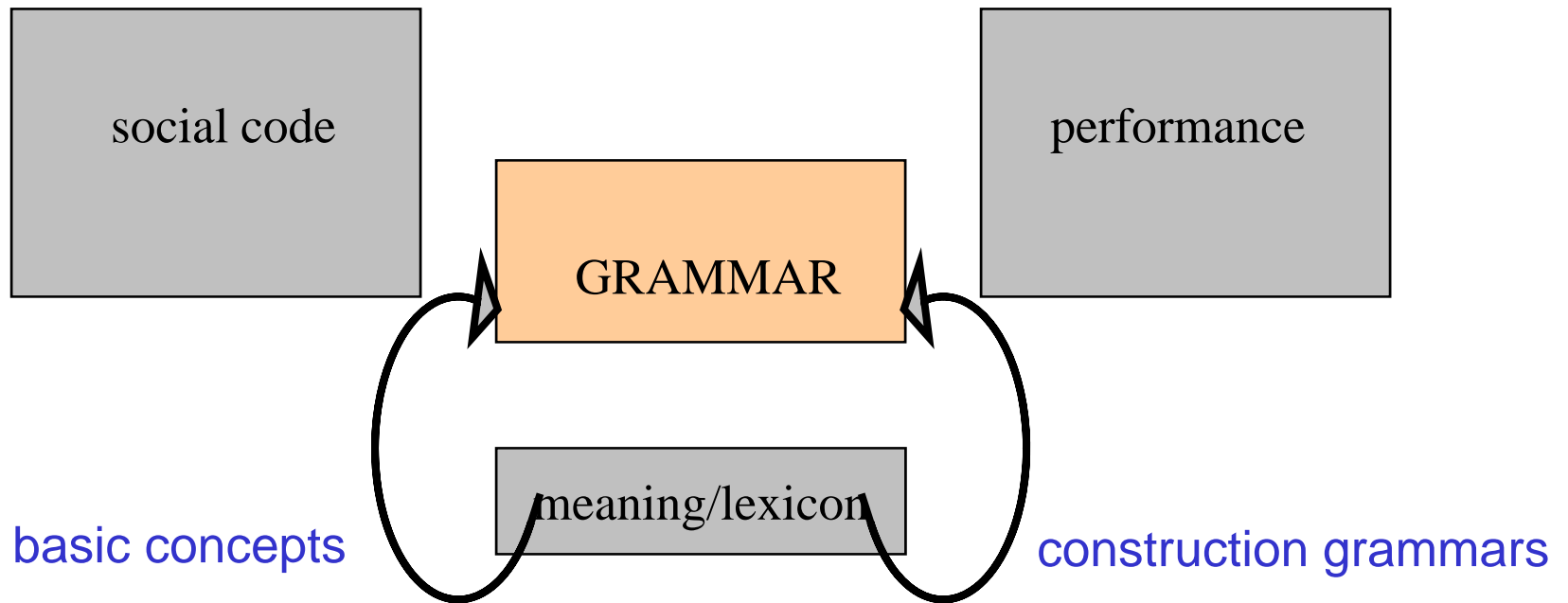
Summary



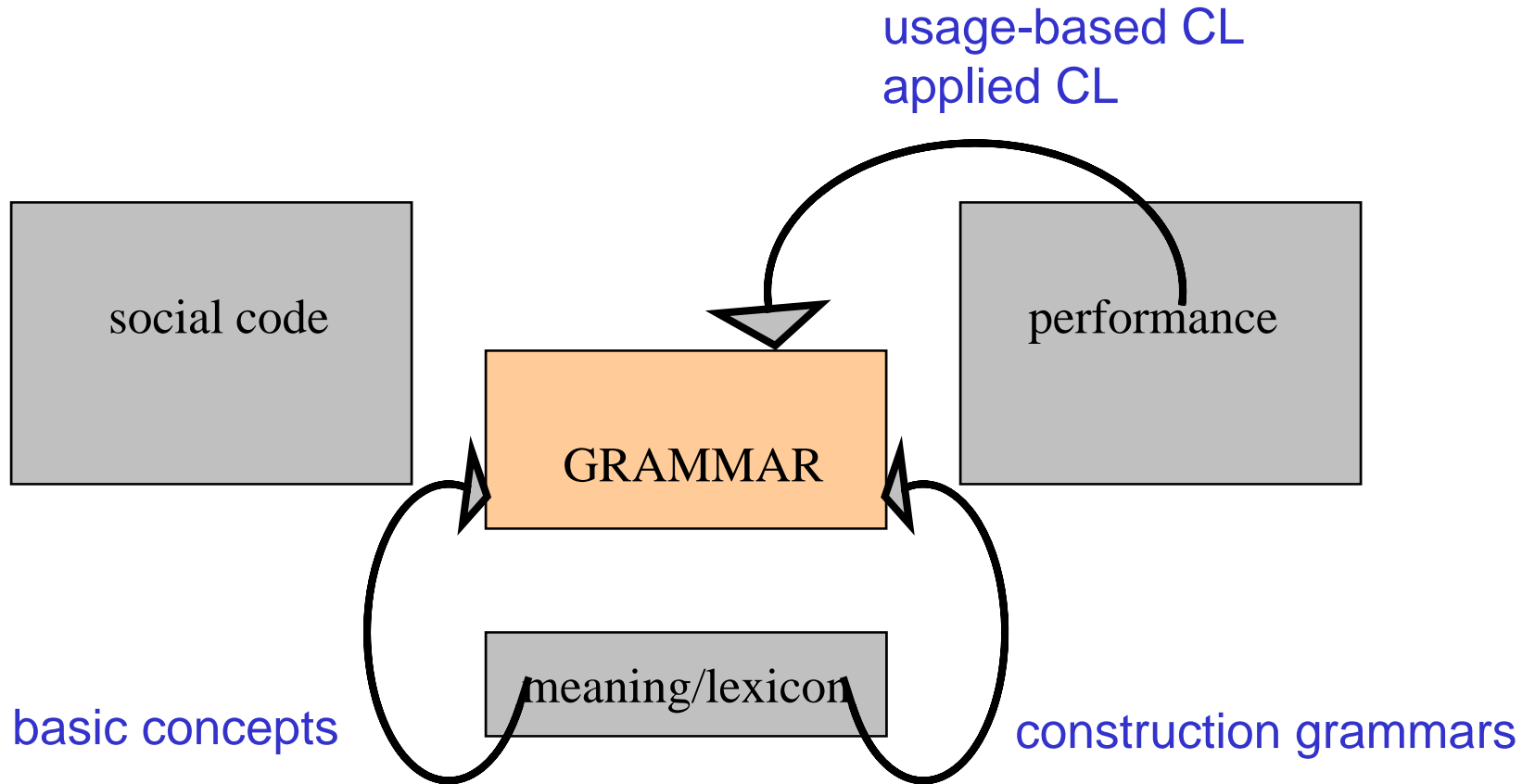
Summary



Summary



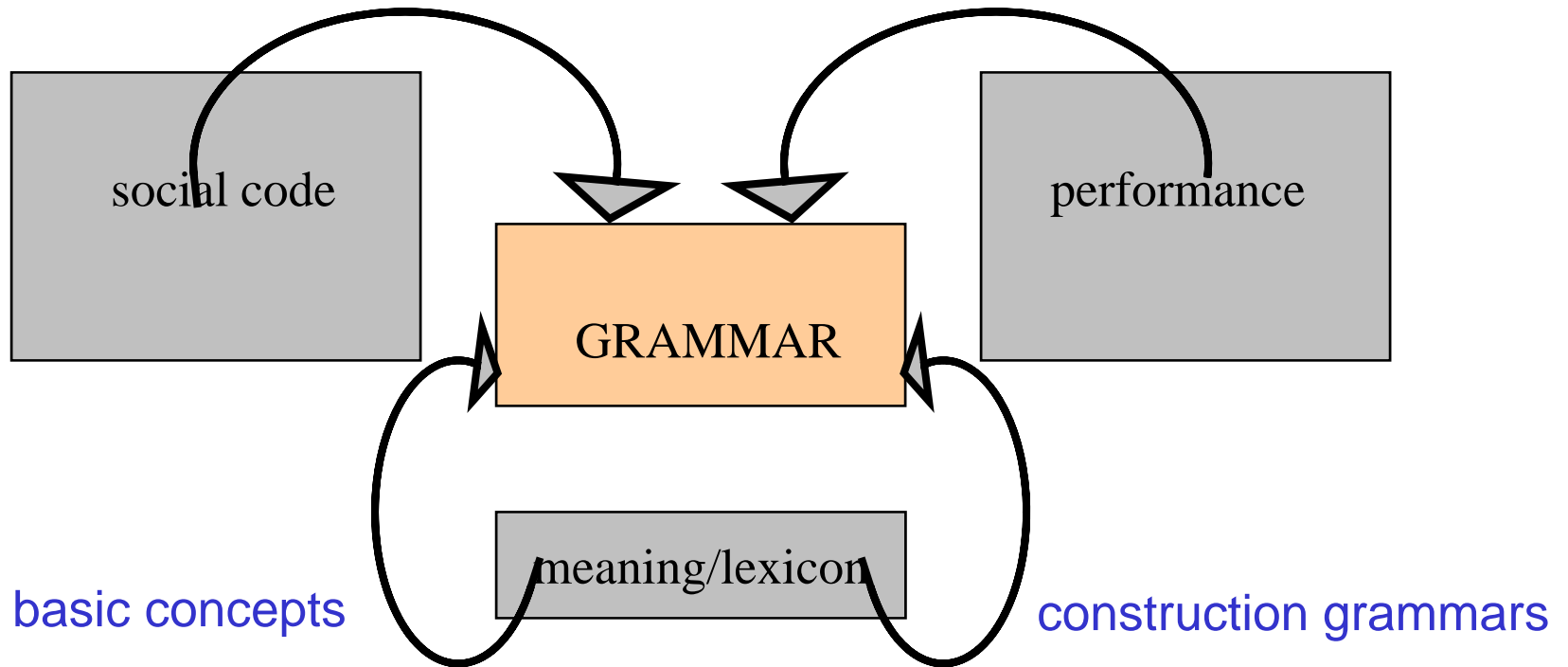
Summary



Summary

cultural CL
variationist CL

usage-based CL
applied CL



Recontextualization

in the context of contemporary linguistics,
CL epitomizes the gradual recovery of the ‘peripheral’
modules that were discarded by a decontextualizing
approach to grammar

in the context of the internal development of CL,
this recovery takes the form of a gradual broadening
of the notion of context:

Recontextualization

- from the beginning, in its basic concepts, CL assumes a **contextualized notion of meaning**: meaning in language is not isolated, but is integrated with other types of cognition

existing categories → polysemy

encyclopedic knowledge → frames and ICM's

general cognitive capacities → construal

Recontextualization

- usage-based approaches add the **discursive** context of actual language use;
some focal points of investigation:
 - the dialectic interplay between structure and use (e.g. Exemplar-base Phonology, Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change)
 - the discourse function of items and the discursive grounding of constructions (Current Discourse Space)

Recontextualization

- biocultural CL and variationist CL add the **social** context of cultures and lectal variation

→ the underlying drift of CL consists of a systematic recontextualization of the grammar

Chronology

can we map this contextual expansion onto the chronological evolution of CL?

- the **pioneering stage** and the **consolidation stage** focused largely on the basic concepts
- the **expansion stage** was devoted to the broadening of the relevant notion of context;
some chronological landmarks:

Chronology

- construction grammar:
Goldberg 1995 Constructions
Croft 1999 Radical Construction Grammar
- usage-based approaches:
Barlow & Kemmer 2000 Usage-based Models of
Language; Tomasello 2003 Constructing a Language
- variationist approaches:
Kristiansen & Dirven 2008 Cognitive Sociolinguistics

Step IV

Methodological Consequences

Methodological consequences

if we can agree that CL is essentially characterized by a recontextualizing 'drift', there are specific consequences with regard to

- the observational basis of linguistic research
- the analytical method of linguistic research
- the theoretical model of the grammar

The observational basis

if you take a usage-based model seriously, you will have to study actual language use

→ a shift from introspective conceptual analysis to the study of non-elicited language use: **corpus linguistics**
on line processes: **experimental research**

The analytical tools

if you take the dialectic relationship between structure and use seriously, you need to take into account patterns of use (frequency and entrenchment)

if you wish to investigate how diverse factors like meaning, structure, discourse and lectal variation interact, the sheer complexity of the phenomena calls for appropriate methods

→ a shift towards **quantitative testing of hypotheses**

The theoretical model

if we assume that factors like meaning, structure, discourse and lectal variation co-determine grammatical phenomena, then we cannot exclude a radical non-modular conception of grammar

→ a shift towards **a multifactorial descriptive model** of the grammar that does not a priori impose a distinction between various levels of analysis

Where do we stand?

quantitative corpus-based or experimental research is not the traditional way of doing CL, but it is an emerging trend

theoretical justification: see contributions by Gibbs and Geeraerts in 1st volume of the new series Applications of Cognitive Linguistics

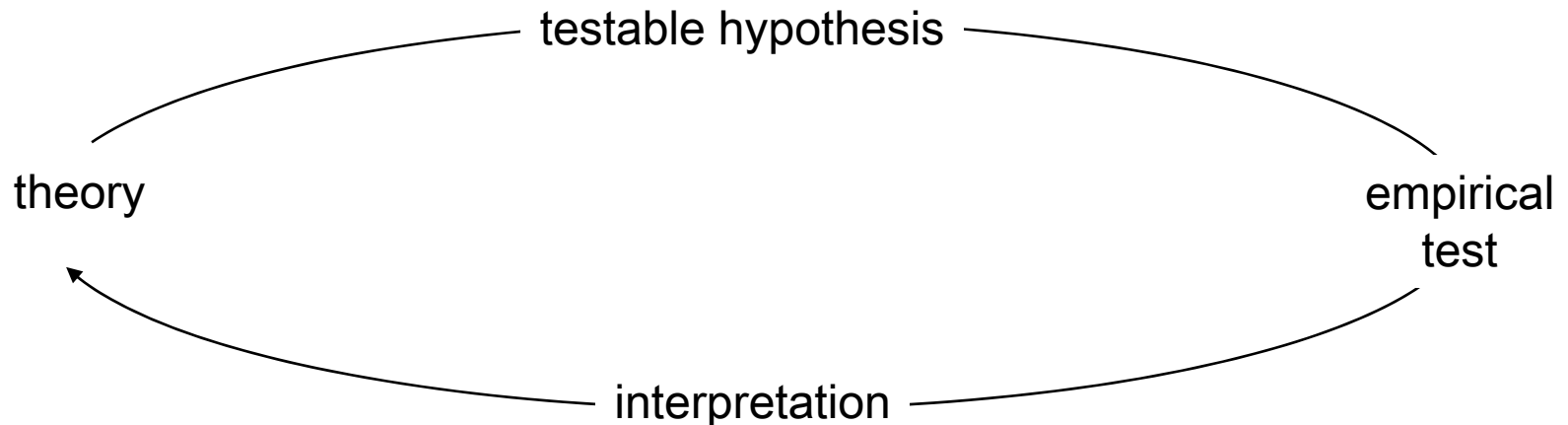
practical implementation: growing presence of advanced quantitative analysis, a.o. Gries/Stefanowitsch c.s.
QLVL

The theoretical model

- interpretative hypotheses based on typically CL-based assumptions can be **empirically tested**, i.e. they can be subjected to the empirical cycle

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The theoretical model

- such tests need to involve all the **types of context** that form part of the underlying ‘recontextualizing drift’ of CL (semantic, constructional, lexical, discursive, lectal context)
- the resulting model is a **multifactorial grammar** in which grammatical phenomena are simultaneously sensitive to various factors

Overall Conclusions

The first 30 years

- is there a unifying factor behind the development of Cognitive Linguistics ?
- if contemporary linguistics is indeed going through a phase of **recontextualisation** after the Chomskyan decontextualisation of the grammar, then CL represents that recontextualizing tendency more than any other contemporary approach in linguistics

And beyond

- if so, in which direction could Cognitive Linguistics develop in the future ?
- if CL continues on the path of corpus-based and experimental usage-based analyses, then a (quantified, evidence-based) **multifactorial model of the grammar** is a perfect embodiment of a recontextualized grammar
- or will the methodological requirements for implementing such a model lead to ruptures?



for further information:

<http://www.ling.arts.kuleuven.be/qlvl>

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