**HISTORICAL RETROSPECT or why space became a central concern in today’s linguistics**

**chain 1**
Long-standing empiricist and pragmatist tradition

Localist* strand in linguistics (case theory, Wülner 1827, Hjelmslev 1935, Anderson 1971)

**chain 2**

The “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis”. Spatial relations as a testing ground, besides color categories, mass / count (Lucy 1992b), counterfactuals (Lucy 1992a).


**chain 3**
Rise of semantics within Generative Grammar. The Generative Semantics movement (Lakoff, McCawley, Ross…). Langacker and Talmy close to GS.


**“In any semantic field of [EVENTS] and [STATES], the principal event-, state-, path- and place-functions are a subset of those used for the analysis of spatial location and motion”** (1983 : 188).
Ex. field: Possession
BEPOSS ATPOSS = ‘belong to’
GOPOSS TOPOSS = ‘receive’
CAUSE STAYPOSS ATPOSS = ‘keep’ etc.

* Lyons (1977, vol. 2 : 718): Localism is “the hypothesis that spatial expressions are more basic, grammatically and semantically, than various kinds of non spatial expressions (cf. Anderson, 1971, 1973). Spatial expressions are linguistically more basic, according to the localists, in that they serve as structural templates, as it were, for other expressions; and the reason why this should be so, it is plausibly suggested by psychologists, is that spatial organization is of central importance in human cognition (cf. Miller & Johnson-Laird, 1976 : 375ff).”