



**HAL**  
open science

**Expressing and Describing Surprise, Celle Agnès,  
Lansari Laure (eds.), Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John  
Benjamin Publishing Company, 2015. 246 pages.**

Samia Ounoughi

► **To cite this version:**

Samia Ounoughi. Expressing and Describing Surprise, Celle Agnès, Lansari Laure (eds.), Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2015. 246 pages.. LIDIL - Revue de linguistique et de didactique des langues, 2019. hal-02463075

**HAL Id: hal-02463075**

**<https://hal.science/hal-02463075>**

Submitted on 4 Feb 2020

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

*Expressing and Describing Surprise*, Celle Agnès, Lansari Laure (eds.), Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2015. 246 pages.

Samia Ounoughi, LIDILEM, Université Grenoble Alpes

This volume gathers a collection of 10 articles the aim of which is to analyse surprise and to single out the ways in which this specific primary emotion is connected with both human cognition and linguistics. The authors' individual and common projects add degree to existing research on emotions by exploring surprise not only from a psychological or semantic standpoint, which they nonetheless take into account, but through cognition and linguistics. The broadness of the corpora involved is to be noted as authors wanted to avoid an English language centred approach, sometimes resorting to NSM Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Goddard) and also using corpora of various languages like Malay (Goddard), Italian (Ascone), French (Tutin) or Cheyenne (Celle et al.). These articles also complement one another by tackling written and oral corpora in diverse fields of knowledge and culture, like scientific language (Tutin), situations of daily life (Peterson) and even casual exchanges on social media (Ascone).

Since the definition of surprise as an emotion can be questioned, the authors also put their exploration methods to the test as well as the feasibility of their process to reach reliable conclusions (Krawczak & Glynn). GRID, for instance, is a research paradigm based on a questionnaire that Soriano et al. applied to cross disciplines and give a picture of surprise as felt and expressed by natives of various languages and cultures. Beyond cultures and languages, surprise is also investigated in the field of scientific writing where subjectivity is the least expected and yet exists. Funding her research on a corpus of hundreds of articles in human sciences, Agnès Tutin shows how, in such a specific domain, surprise shifts from an affect to "a state of consciousness."

The way in which these contributions also tackle the analysis of surprise at various phases of speech construction also adds to the depth of comprehension of surprise through linguistics that this rich volume brings about. While semantic explorations involving the meaning of surprise-related words in oral or written corpora, starting with the dictionary, others seek to highlight the connections on a syntactic level involving both context and situation (Celle et al., Clavel). Indeed, the seminal aspect of interaction in emotions is approached through the questioning and exploration of the concept of mirativity (the markers pointing to the newness of information in the recipient's response), which is used by most authors (Krawczak &

Glynn, Peterson, Celle et Al.). Such questions as the degree of congruity or incongruity between the emotion and its shape in discourse are explored (Krawczak, Glynn). Authors also take research a step further by challenging commonly accepted ideas such as surprise necessarily stemming from a response to a stimulus, demonstrating that the recipient's own profile and experience also here act a major part (Celle et al.).

In every respect, this collection of articles reminds us the width and depth of such a basic reaction as surprise. The variety of methods and language supports also give an idea of what linguistics and cognition can do to enhance research thanks to a natural insight into many other disciplines. This, of course cannot go without a degree of complexity as the multiplicity of parameters inherent to a human and humane understanding cannot be ignored. And yet, the reading of this volume plunges the reader in a fabulous universe, a trip worth taking.