<<词汇-语法五十年>>

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内容概要

本书精选了发表在国外期刊上的20篇有关"词汇-语法"的论文,以面向语言工业为主导,所选的文章,从整体上能反映出"词汇-语法"的历史轨迹,因其经典性、全面性、平衡性和接受性而具有极高的适读性。

《词汇-语法五十年(1960-2010词汇-语法英语论文精选)》是一本介绍并不依附于美国所谓"主流"语言学的学派的论文集,适合从事汉语研究、语言教学、词典编纂、翻译软件的研究者阅读。

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章节摘录

Consequences of the Metalanguage being Included in the Language Maurice Gross On several occasions, Z.S. Hams stated that the metalanguage of grammar was part of the lan-guage. At first sight, this statement is disturbing, but when understood in respect to Hams's practice of grammar construction, it has far-reaching consequences. In principle, the metalanguage of a sci-entific field is made of concepts and of statements involving these concepts: the laws of the field. In quantum physics for example, concepts are elementary particles, Planck's constant, etc., and state-ments are Heisenberg's uncertainty relations, etc. In syntax the concepts are essentially the gram-matical categories of words (i.e. the parts of speech), and statements are the rules that assemble the words and/or categories into higher units such as phrases and sentences. Modern structural lin-guists, such as Leonard Bloomfield, set out to formalize the metalanguage, and this activity has be-come the main trend, whether in generative syntax or in the various logical systems that aim at re-presenting meaning. Meanwhile, the corresponding descriptive work has all but disappeared, at least for languages such as English that should be the main empirical background for theories. Formali-zation results in a set of abstract symbols and well-defined formal rules, which, in an obvious way, have not much to do with the units of natural language. Inclusion of the metalanguage in the language can be seen as a methodological principle or as an empirical discovery. We will discuss various aspects of this statement by presenting different ex-amples. We are convinced that the principle has deep consequences for linguistics, but that it may take time and research efforts to measure its full impact. For Hams, grammar is the formalized description of a given language, say English. As in any scientific activity, the metalanguage is constructed by the specialists of the field who agree on an object to describe, that is, on facts to be accounted for. Then abstract entities are de-fined and refined in order to improve the understanding of facts. Consensus among specialists is reached through experiments, but facts and experiments must be reproducible. It goes without saying that research programmes should be common to the linguistic community, whether involved in parti-cular language descriptions or m comparing and abstracting descriptions across languages. Elements of the metalanguage of grammar have been deeply engrained by education amongpeople. Examples are: ——The categories of words such as verb, n , oun , adjective , preposition.affixes , more abstract units are the phrases : noun phrases , verb phrases , etc. and gram, matical functions, such as subject or object. ——The rules of grammar, such as All of these concepts have been refined into subcategories agreement rules, pronominalization rules, etc. according to descriptive needs and ac-cording to the main application of grammar, which is the teaching of first Most of these concepts are part of a cultural heritage, dating at least to Greek and and second languages. Roman civi-lization. Until recently, they have been thought to be universal and have been exported as such by Christian missionaries who used them to describe the languages of Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania. Although specialists have often argued that the Creco-Roman categories are irrelevant to most of these exotic languages, the educational systems of most colonized countries are stuck with this grammatical framework which has been transmitted from generation to generation with remarka-ble stability. In fact, the relevance of the Greek-Roman metalanguage even to European languages is far from obvious, but has almost never been questioned. Categories of words have been demonstrated to be useful, for example in the formulation of agreement rules. Confirmation of their value and gener-ality dates back only the nineteenth century, when dictionaries with substantial coverage of the words of a language were built and categories assigned to each word.

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