国家精品课程

语言学导论

文 旭◎主 编

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文　旭◎主　编

作者简历

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文　旭

　　博士，教授，博士生导师，西南大学外国语学院院长，北京师范大学博士，北京外国语大学博士后。先后在美国伊利诺伊大学、加州大学伯克利分校访学，研修认知语言学。国务院政府特殊津贴获得者，教育部"新世纪优秀人才支持计划项目"获得者，教育部"优秀青年教师资助计划项目"获得者，重庆市首批高校中青年骨干教师，重庆市学术带头人。国家级精品课程"语言学导论"负责人。中国认知语言学研究会副会长，中国语用学研究会副会长，中国英语教学研究会常务理事，西部地区外语教育研究会会长。在《外语教学与研究》、《外国语》、《现代外语》等期刊上发表论文100多篇，出版学术专著或教材等16部，主持或主研国家级、省部级等科研基金项目16项。主要研究兴趣：认知语言学、语用学、语篇分析等。

前　言

　　语言是人类思维和交际的工具，是洞察人类心智最好的窗口，是人类存在的家园。现代解释学大师伽达默尔甚至认为："谁拥有语言，谁就拥有世界"。我们很难想象，没有语言，这个世界将会是什么样子。对语言进行系统而科学的研究，就是语言学。语言学是一门领先的科学（pilot science），是人文科学与自然科学之间的桥梁。著名哲学家卡西尔说："在整部科学史中也许没有一章比语言学这门科学的出现更令人神往。这门科学的重要性完全可以跟 17 世纪伽利略改变了我们关于物理世界的整个观念的新科学媲美"。

　　根据现行《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》的规定，"语言学导论"是英语专业本科生专业综合文化素质必修课程，以英语专业高年级学生为主要对象，属英语专业知识课程之一，是选修其他语言学分支课程的先决条件，也是选修其他综合文化素质课程的基础。由此可见，"语言学导论"课程在英语专业教学中具有举足轻重的地位。

　　本书是为西南大学国家级精品课程"语言学导论"编写的配套教材，既可作为英语专业语言学课程的教材，也可作为报考语言学硕士的学生和语言学研究者的参考书。作为一部配套教材，其编写的主要目的是就人类语言本质的基本问题为学生提供一些解答，使学生了解或掌握语言学的基本知识，了解语言的本质、功能和机制，掌握语言的语音、词汇、语法、语义规律，认识语言与社会、文化、思维、心理、认知、语言习得等之间的关系，并学会分析语料，了解如何进行语言及语言学研究，由此为进一步的语言学习或研究奠定基础。基于以上考虑，在本书的编写过程中，我们尽可能地突出以下特点：

　　知识性强，涵盖面广："语言学导论"主要是介绍语言学的基础知识，因此涉及语言学的方方面面。本书不仅涵盖语言学的主要分支学科，如语音学、音系学、形态学、句法学、

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语义学，还介绍了语言学研究中的一些新兴的或重要的学科，如语用学、话语分析、文体学、心理语言学、认知语言学等。我们希望通过本书的学习，可以让学生对语言学的基本概念、整个蓝图以及语言学的发展史有一个大致的认识。

语言简单，趣味性强：由于语言学的许多概念十分抽象，为降低学生阅读和理解的难度，我们在本书的编写过程中尽量使用比较简单的语言，运用大量的例子，对一些概念和理论进行深入浅出的阐述，使复杂的问题简单化。我们特别注重如何用一种科学的、生动的方式引出一个抽象的概念，因此，本书通常都是用一个故事、笑话、问题或例子引入一个概念，这极大地增强了内容的可读性和趣味性，在教学上也更具可操作性。

内容新颖，有针对性：本书不囿于对语言学中一些重要概念和经典理论的介绍，还有针对性地讨论了语言学研究中一些比较时兴的课题，如认知语言学的隐喻和转喻理论、认知文体学、批评话语分析和多模态话语分析等。这样既可以使学生"学习经典"，又可以让他们"把握前沿"，从而有利于他们的进一步学习和研究。

此外，我们为每章的练习题都提供了参考答案，并且还适时地介绍了一些必要的答题技巧。每章最后的参考文献也很丰富，我们为读者推荐了大量的相关文献，以便他们的后续阅读。书中的重要术语都用黑体标出，便于读者的查阅。在国家级精品课程"语言学导论"的网站上（http：//jpkc.swu.edu.cn/），我们还提供了许多相应的补充练习和资料，便于老师教学，利于读者学习和交流。

本书是西南大学"语言学导论"课程组成员根据多年教学实践和个人研究兴趣合作完成，是集体智慧的结晶，反映了团队的精神和力量。参加本书编写的人员有：文旭（第一章）、王颖（第二章）、夏云（第三章）、马军军（第四章）、杨炳钧（第五章）、唐瑞梁（第六章）、成军（第七章）、梁爽（第八章）、刘承宇（第九章）、杜世洪（第十章）、文旭和杨坤（第十一章）、褚修伟（第十二章）。最后由我统稿，并做了一些修改和补充。

本书在编写过程中得到了北京师范大学出版社王强先生的大力支持，我的博士研究生杨坤也付出了辛勤的劳动，在此，对他们表示衷心的感谢！

虽然我们在编写过程中力求做到语言的简明性和表述的准确性，但由于水平有限，对某些概念和理论还讲得不够清楚和透彻，不当之处在所难免，请同行专家和广大读者不吝赐教，便于以后修订、补充和完善。

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文　旭

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西南大学外国语学院

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目 录

Chapter 1　Preliminaries

1.1　Introduction

Ask people to name the most consequential inventions of world history, and you'll hear a list probably including the wheel, the telephone, the atomic bomb, the first computing machine. What might be missing from the answers, overlooked, is human natural language. For language is an invention, a fantastically successful one. Judged on longevity and extent of modern daily use, it compares with the wheel.

Language comes so naturally to us that it is easy to forget what a strange and miraculous gift it is. The gift of language is the single human trait that marks us all genetically, setting us apart from the rest of life. All over the world we humans fashion our breath into hisses and hums and squeaks and pops and listen to others do the same. We do this, of course, not only because we like the sounds but because details of the sounds contain information about the intentions of the person making them.

There is a well-known story in the Bible that reflects the importance of language in human society. According to the Old Testament, mankind spoke only one language until Nimrod began to build a tower that was to reach heaven. To prevent the people of Earth from reaching His Heaven, God spread chaos and confusion amongst them. He scattered them throughout the Earth, and forced on them different languages so that they would be prevented from communicating with one another and building another Babel.
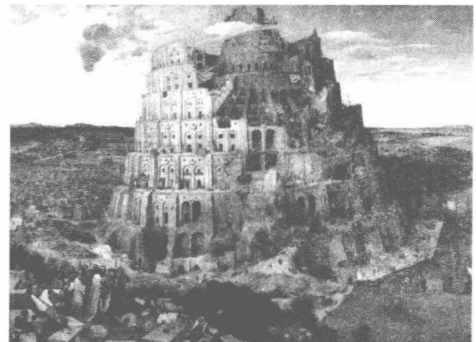
Language is what makes us human. Whatever we do, language is central to our lives and the use of language underpins the study of every other discipline. We discover our identity as individuals and

Figure 1.1　Tower of Babel

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social beings when we acquire it during childhood. It serves as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community; it is a key to the understanding of so much of human behavior, both of ourselves and of our interaction with others. It provides for present needs and future plans, and at the same time carries with it the impression of things past. By language, we live, we communicate, and we get things done. By language, we read, we write, and we keep a harmonious relationship with the people around us. People with a good mastery of language and its skill are more likely to succeed in their life and career. What is language, then?

1.2　Language

1.2.1　Definition of language

Language has fascinated people for thousands of years, and linguists have studied every detail, from the number of languages spoken in New Guinea to why the English people say *razzle-dazzle* instead of *dazzle-razzle*. Every day we speak language, and hear language, but we never stop to ask what language is? Linguists have offered various definitions of language. Yet none succeeds in satisfying all. According to the important features of languages that most linguists agreed on, a generally acceptable definition is: **Language** is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.

Language is a **system**— elements in it are not arranged and combined randomly, but according to some rules and principles. For example, we can say "I can speak English", but we cannot say "I English can speak". Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. So it is in using language. Language is **arbitrary**— there is no intrinsic connection between the word (e. g. *pen*) and the thing (e. g. with what we write) . Language is **vocal**— the primary medium for all language is sound. Language is used for human communication— it is **human-specific**, which differs greatly from the systems of animal communication. Birds, bees, crabs, spiders, and most other creatures communicate in a certain way, but the information imparted is severely limited and stimulus-bound, confined to a small set of messages.

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1.2.2 Features of language

If language is viewed only as a system of communication, then many species communicate. Then it seems that language is not the exclusive property of the human species. But, as a matter of fact, the human natural language is quite different from the system of animal communication. Although the human language has some features shared with other animals, at least five features are specific to early hominoids and modern humans: arbitrariness, cultural transmission, displacement, productivity, and duality.

(i) Arbitrariness

What's in a name? That which we call a rose.

By any other name would smell as sweet.

(Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act Ⅱ, Scene 2)

Human language is arbitrary. There is no logical or intrinsic connection between meanings and sounds, or between the things signified and the words used to signify them—between **signified** and **signifier**. This feature of language is usually called **arbitrariness**. In English, for example, bakers make bread. The French call it *pain*, the Russians *xleb*. In Chinese, the word is *mianbao*. Not only can a given thing be signified differently in different languages, but even in a single language several signs can represent the same entity or notion. We purchase a *dozen* or *twelve* books for the same price. We can write 12 or Ⅻ for the same concept, as well as TWELVE, twelve, or Twelve. Thus, to represent even a straightforward numerical concept, English permits several alternative signs. For more complex content, the variety of possible expressions in phrases and sentences seems limitless.

(ii) Cultural transmission

Language is also culturally transmitted rather than genetically transmitted. Human language is only acquired through a process of learning: a child who is completely cut off from the sound of language will acquire absolutely no facility in the use or understanding of a language. Moreover, a child will acquire only that language which forms part of the culture in which it is brought up. Although the language faculty rests upon our genetic endowment, we learn the specific words and grammatical structures of the language community in which we are raised. For example, a Chinese baby born and brought up in New York by an English family will

speak English while an English child, brought up in Beijing by a Chinese aunt, will speak Chinese.

(iii) Displacement

Displacement is that feature of language which allows us to talk about things remote in time or space, or both, from the site of communication: about the past or the future, about places which are far away, even about hypothetical and non-existent state of affairs. With the sole exception of the bee dance, displacement appears to be unique to human beings.

(iv) Productivity

Another feature of language is **productivity** or **creativity** by which there is no limit to the number of different things we can say. Language users can produce and understand indefinite numbers of utterances they ever or never heard before. This feature appears to be unique to human language: all other creatures are restricted to choosing from a short fixed list of possible "utterances".

(v) Duality

Language has at least two levels of structure. First, minimal meaningless units are combined into larger, meaningful units. Specifically, meaningless sounds are combined into meaningful words. For example, the four meaningless English phonemes /p/, /t/, /k/ and /æ/ can be arranged into /æt/ at, /pæt/ pat, /kæt/ cat, /tæp/ tap, /tæk/ tack, /tæt/ tat, /æpt/ apt, /ækt/ act, /tækt/ tact or tacked, /kæp/ cap, /kæpt/ capped, /pækt/ pact or packed, and several other items. Second, these minimal meaningful units can be combined into longer, more complex expressions. Thus, words can be combined into phrases and sentences. This higher level of organization is the essential basis for productivity: even if the range of words are limited to a small, fixed repertoire (e. g. the 850 words of C. K. Ogden's *Basic English*), an enormous number of sentences can be made. This feature of language is crucial, since, if every speech sound had its own meaning, we would not be able to produce more different meanings than we can produce speech sounds. Animal systems of communication generally lack this feature, though bird songs and whale songs arguably contain an element of duality.

1. 2. 3　Functions of language

Language is a tool of communication and thought, which can be applied to perform some functions. Generally speaking, language has seven basic functions:

phatic, directive, informative, interrogative, expressive, evocative, and performative.

Phatic function: language is used to establish an atmosphere or maintain social contact among the communicators. Greetings, farewells, and comments on the weather serve this function.

Directive function: language is used to get the hearer to do something. Most imperative sentences are of this function.

Informative function: language is used to tell something, to give information about facts, or to reason things out. Declarative sentences serve this function.

Interrogative function: language is used to obtain information from others. All questions expecting replies serve this function. However, rhetorical questions do not have interrogative function. For example, *O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?* This is a rhetorical question which does not expect a reply.

Expressive function: language is used to reveal the speaker's attitudes and feelings. Ejaculations serve this function.

Evocative function: language is used to create certain feelings in the hearers. Jokes, advertising, and propaganda serve this function.

Performative function: language is used to do things or to perform things. The judge's imprisonment sentence, the president's war or independence declaration, etc. serve this function.

1.3   Linguistics

1.3.1   Definition of linguistics

The field of linguistics is a growing and exciting area of study, with an important impact on such fields as philosophy, cognitive psychology, education, anthropology, sociology, language learning and teaching, computer science, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence, among others. That is why linguistics is called the pilot science of humanities and social sciences. If we have much knowledge of linguistics, it is much easier for us to understand other disciplines such as language learning and teaching, translation studies, and literature. At first glance this approach might seem to lie in the great academic tradition of knowing more and more about less and less

until you know everything about nothing. But please don't put the book down just yet. Read it, and you will be interested in it. It will be a travel guide to lead you into the wonders of human language and the kingdom of linguistics.

What is linguistics, then? Fundamentally, the field is concerned with the nature of language and verbal communication. **Linguistics** may be defined as the scientific study of language. Perhaps this definition is hardly sufficient to give you the positive indication of the fundamental principles of the subject. But it will be enough to say that by the scientific study of language is meant its investigation by means of controlled and empirically verifiable observations and with reference to some general theory of language. Many linguists today assume that theirs is an empirical and deductive science, and that scientific progress in the domain of their research is possible.

1. 3. 2　The scope of linguistics

The purpose of linguistics is to provide models of language which reveal features that are not immediately apparent. Linguistics seeks to describe and explain this human faculty. It is concerned with three things: discovering precisely what it means to "know a language"; providing techniques for describing this knowledge; and explaining why our knowledge takes the form it does.

Linguistics is a relatively young science, but it covers a wide scope of topics and its boundaries are difficult to define. A diagram in the shape of a wheel gives a rough impression of the scope covered (Figure 1.2). The major branches of linguistics include phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. They are fields of enquiry purely about language itself.

Phonetics is the scientific study of speech sounds. It studies how speech sounds are articulated, transmitted, and received. It deals with the physical nature of
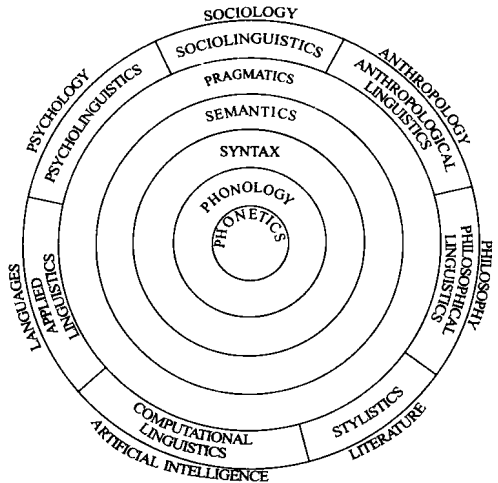

Figure 1. 2　Scope of linguistics

speech sounds, and not with their relations to other speech sounds in particular languages. It is a pure science and examines speech sounds in general.

Phonology is the study of how speech sounds function in a language. It studies the ways speech sounds are organized. It can be seen as the functional phonetics of a particular language.

Morphology is the study of the formation of words. It is a branch of linguistics which breaks words into morphemes. It can be considered as the grammar of words as syntax is the grammar of sentences.

Syntax is the study of structure of sentences. It deals with the combination of words into phrases, clauses and sentences. It is the grammar of sentence construction.

Semantics is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the study of meaning in all its formal aspects. Words have several types of meaning. A sentence needs to be well formed both syntactically and semantically. The sentence *Mary married the Mickey Mouse*, for example, is syntactically well formed but semantically ill formed, for we know that a lady cannot marry the Mickey Mouse. Semantics is concerned with such information.

Pragmatics can be defined as the study of language in use. It deals with how speakers use language in ways which cannot be predicted from linguistic knowledge alone, and how hearers arrive at the intended meaning of speakers. In a broad sense, pragmatics studies the principles observed by human beings when they communicate with one another. We can roughly say that pragmatics takes care of the meaning that is not covered by semantics. So people use the formula as its definition:
PRAGMATICS = MEANING - SEMANTICS.

The branches of linguistics above are at the very center of its scope. However, language can be also studied in relation with something else. Here, for the sake of simplicity, we just list some of them:

Discourse analysis, or **text linguistics** is the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which language is used. It deals with how sentences in spoken and written language form larger meaningful units such as paragraphs, conversations and interviews, and the various devices used by speakers and writers when they connect single sentences together into a cohesive and coherent whole.

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society: how social factors

influence the structure and use of language. It studies such matters as the linguistic identity of social groups, social attitudes to language, standard and non-standard forms of language, the patterns and needs of national language use, the relations between language and ideology or language and power, linguistic aspects of social psychology, and so on. Another name for sociolinguistics is the **sociology of language**. Linguistic and social problems are closely related, so much so that linguistics itself has sometimes been regarded as a "social" science.

Psycholinguistics is the study of connections between language and mind: the mental structures and processes which are involved in the acquisition, comprehension and production of language. Perhaps the most well-developed part of psycholinguistics is concerned with language acquisition and development in children although there is a growing amount of work being done on second language acquisition and learning.

Stylistics is the study of style in language. Narrowly, it refers to the use of the concepts and techniques of linguistics in studying the language of literary texts like poetry and novels. Broadly, it refers to the study of the aesthetic use of language, in all circumstances, not just in literature.

Forensic linguistics is the examination of linguistic evidence for legal purposes. It refers to the use of linguistic techniques to investigate crimes in which language data forms part of the evidence, such as in the use of lexical or grammatical criteria to authenticate police statements. The field of **forensic phonetics** is often distinguished as a separate domain, which refers to the use of phonetics in criminal investigations, especially in trying to identifying the sex, age and geographical background of a person whose voice is recorded and hence in identifying the speaker.

Anthropological linguistics, also **linguistic anthropology**, is the discipline which combines the concepts and techniques of linguistics and anthropology in order to examine the relations between language and culture. Anthropological linguists typically look at such phenomena as kinship terms and methods of constructing personal names and place names.

Corpus linguistics is an approach to linguistic description based on the extensive accumulation of actually occurring language data and its analysis by computers.

Computational linguistics is an approach to linguistics which employs mathematical techniques, often with the help of a computer. It includes the analysis

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