

牛津
语言学入门丛书

丛书主编 H.G.Widdowson

Language and Culture

语言与文化

Claire Kramersch



上海外语教育出版社



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出版前言

在语言研究方面不乏详尽权威的导论。但这些学术专论都趋于冗长且学术性太强,对初学者来说大有泰山压顶之势。于是,“牛津语言学入门丛书”,这套让人们循序渐进、轻松地掌握复杂概念的过渡性简明教程,就应运而生了。

人们对语言的特定细节进行剖析之前,应该对语言整体有个大致的了解。作为供语言学研究方向的学生进行深入研究之前的热身阅读,这套丛书的主旨是为人们理解那些学术性强的语言学专著奠定理论基础。因为这套丛书浅显易懂,对那些感兴趣却并非专门从事语言研究的人进一步了解语言也大有裨益。

本套丛书采用了统一的结构模式,在“前言”之后,由“概述”、“阅读材料”、“参考书目”和“术语表”四个部分构成。第一部分概述是全书的主体,也是有关该领域研究的导论。第二部分提供与书中各章节内容相应的深入阅读的材料,其后所附的问题极具启发性,有助于读者形成对有关领域研究的独立见解。第三部分提供相应章节的参考书目,并对它们的主要内容作了点评,以便有兴趣的学习者深入学习。第四部分列出术语表,帮助初学者了解有关术语的定义。

《语言与文化》为本丛书之一,出版于1998年,是一部从语言学、社会学、人类学等角度,介绍语言与文化关系的导论性著作。作者C·克拉姆契(Claire Kramsch)是美国加州伯克利大学德语及外语习得专业的著名教授。

本书的主体(概述部分)分为七章。第一章简洁明了地对语言与文化的关系这一领域的研究现状作了系统的陈述,从

不同角度、不同层面探讨了两者之间的关系。第二章和第三章分别从符号和行为的角度讨论意义。语言作为一种符号系统,在编码和解码的过程中本身能反映某种文化意义;而语言在具体运用中,又因情景和文化等不同因素,常常表现为不同的言语行为,具有不同的文化意义。第四章和第五章分别讨论口语与书面语的语体形式和特征,以及与两种语体相对应的口头文化与书面文化的有关表现。第六章概述了语言与文化特征的关系问题,说明语言与具有识别性特征的文化密不可分。第七章介绍了该领域研究中当前比较热门的话题。

本套丛书的读者对象是英语专业高年级学生,语言学、应用语言学与相关专业研究生以及对相应领域感兴趣的人员。欢迎读者对我们的工作提出宝贵意见。

本社编辑部

2000年1月

Language and Culture

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German and Foreign Language
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For Myris

Preface

Purpose

What justification might there be for a series of introductions to language study? After all, linguistics is already well served with introductory texts: expositions and explanations which are comprehensive, authoritative, and excellent in their way. Generally speaking, however, their way is the essentially academic one of providing a detailed initiation into the discipline of linguistics, and they tend to be lengthy and technical: appropriately so, given their purpose. But they can be quite daunting to the novice. There is also a need for a more general and gradual introduction to language: transitional texts which will ease people into an understanding of complex ideas. This series of introductions is designed to serve this need.

Their purpose, therefore, is not to supplant but to support the more academically oriented introductions to linguistics: to prepare the conceptual ground. They are based on the belief that it is an advantage to have a broad map of the terrain sketched out before one considers its more specific features on a smaller scale, a general context in reference to which the detail makes sense. It is sometimes the case that students are introduced to detail without it being made clear what it is a detail *of*. Clearly, a general understanding of ideas is not sufficient: there needs to be closer scrutiny. But equally, close scrutiny can be myopic and meaningless unless it is related to the larger view. Indeed it can be said that the precondition of more particular enquiry is an awareness of what, in general, the particulars are about. This series is designed to provide this large-scale view of different areas of language

study. As such it can serve as preliminary to (and precondition for) the more specific and specialized enquiry which students of linguistics are required to undertake.

But the series is not only intended to be helpful to such students. There are many people who take an interest in language without being academically engaged in linguistics *per se*. Such people may recognize the importance of understanding language for their own lines of enquiry, or for their own practical purposes, or quite simply for making them aware of something which figures so centrally in their everyday lives. If linguistics has revealing and relevant things to say about language, this should presumably not be a privileged revelation, but one accessible to people other than linguists. These books have been so designed as to accommodate these broader interests too: they are meant to be introductions to language more generally as well as to linguistics as a discipline.

Design

The books in the series are all cut to the same basic pattern. There are four parts: Survey, Readings, References, and Glossary.

Survey

This is a summary overview of the main features of the area of language study concerned: its scope and principles of enquiry, its basic concerns and key concepts. These are expressed and explained in ways which are intended to make them as accessible as possible to people who have no prior knowledge or expertise in the subject. The Survey is written to be readable and is uncluttered by the customary scholarly references. In this sense, it is simple. But it is not simplistic. Lack of specialist expertise does not imply an inability to understand or evaluate ideas. Ignorance means lack of knowledge, not lack of intelligence. The Survey, therefore, is meant to be challenging. It draws a map of the subject area in such a way as to stimulate thought and to invite a critical participation in the exploration of ideas. This kind of conceptual cartography has its dangers of course: the selection of what is significant, and the manner of its representation, will not be to the liking of everybody, particularly not, perhaps, to some of those inside the discipline. But these surveys are written in the belief that there

must be an alternative to a technical account on the one hand and an idiot's guide on the other if linguistics is to be made relevant to people in the wider world.

Readings

Some people will be content to read, and perhaps re-read, the summary Survey. Others will want to pursue the subject and so will use the Survey as the preliminary for more detailed study. The Readings provide the necessary transition. For here the reader is presented with texts extracted from the specialist literature. The purpose of these Readings is quite *different from the Survey*. It is to get readers to focus on the specifics of what is said, and how it is said, in these source texts. Questions are provided to further this purpose: they are designed to direct attention to points in each text, how they compare across texts, and how they deal with the issues discussed in the Survey. The idea is to give readers an initial familiarity with the more specialist idiom of the linguistics literature, where the issues might not be so readily accessible, and to encourage them into close critical reading.

References

One way of moving into more detailed study is through the Readings. Another is through the annotated References in the third section of each book. Here there is a selection of works (books and articles) for further reading. Accompanying comments indicate how these deal in more detail with the issues discussed in the different chapters of the Survey.

Glossary

Certain terms in the Survey appear in bold. These are terms used in a special or technical sense in the discipline. Their meanings are made clear in the discussion, but they are also explained in the Glossary at the end of each book. The Glossary is cross-referenced to the Survey, and therefore serves at the same time as an index. This enables readers to locate the term and what it signifies in the more general discussion, thereby, in effect, using the Survey as a summary work of reference.

Use

The series has been designed so as to be flexible in use. Each title is separate and self-contained, with only the basic format in common. The four sections of the format, as described here, can be drawn upon and combined in different ways, as required by the needs, or interests, of different readers. Some may be content with the Survey and the Glossary and may not want to follow up the suggested References. Some may not wish to venture into the Readings. Again, the Survey might be considered as appropriate preliminary reading for a course in applied linguistics or teacher education, and the Readings more appropriate for seminar discussion during the course. In short, the notion of an introduction will mean different things to different people, but in all cases the concern is to provide access to specialist knowledge and stimulate an awareness of its significance. This series as a whole has been designed to provide this access and promote this awareness in respect to different areas of language study.

H. G. WIDDOWSON

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This book is dedicated to my first grandson, born at the confluence of seven languages and cultures.

CLAIRE KRAMSCH

Contents

Preface	VII
SECTION I	
Survey	I
1 The relationship of language and culture	
Nature, culture, language	4
Communities of language users	6
Imagined communities	8
Insiders/outsideers	8
Linguistic relativity	11
The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis	11
Summary	14
2 Meaning as sign	
The linguistic sign	15
The meaning of signs	16
Cultural encodings	17
Semantic cohesion	19
The non-arbitrary nature of signs	20
Symbols	21
Summary	23
3 Meaning as action	
Context of situation, context of culture	25
Structures of expectation	26
Contextualization cues, situated inferences	27
Pragmatic coherence	28
The co-operative principle	31
Participants' roles and the co-construction of culture	32
Summary	35

4 Spoken language, oral culture	
Speech and writing	37
Indicating status	41
Social positionings	42
Protecting face	46
Conversational style	47
Narrative style	49
Summary	51
5 Print language, literate culture	
Written language, textual culture	53
Print and power	54
Social construction of literacy	55
Text and discourse	57
Literacy event, prior text, point of view	60
Genre	62
Summary	64
6 Language and cultural identity	
Cultural identity	65
Cultural stereotypes	67
Language crossing as act of identity	70
Linguistic nationalism	72
Standard language, cultural totem	74
Linguistic and cultural imperialism	76
Summary	77
7 Current issues	
Who is a native speaker?	79
Cultural authenticity	80
Cross-cultural, intercultural, multicultural	81
The politics of recognition	82
SECTION 2	
Readings	85
SECTION 3	
References	115
SECTION 4	
Glossary	125

SECTION I

Survey

1

The relationship of language and culture

Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.

To begin with, the words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their authors' attitudes and beliefs, their point of view, that are also those of others. In both cases, *language expresses cultural reality*.

But members of a community or social group do not only express experience; they also create experience through language. They give meaning to it through the medium they choose to communicate with one another, for example, speaking on the telephone or face-to-face, writing a letter or sending an e-mail message, reading the newspaper or interpreting a graph or a chart. The way in which people use the spoken, written, or visual medium itself creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to, for example, through a speaker's tone of voice, accent, conversational style, gestures and facial expressions. Through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, *language embodies cultural reality*.

Finally, language is a system of ~~signs~~ that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language; they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture. Thus we can say that *language symbolizes cultural reality*.

We shall be dealing with these three aspects of language and

culture throughout this book. But first we need to clarify what we mean by culture. We might do this by considering the following poem by Emily Dickinson.

Essential Oils – are wrung –
The Attar from the Rose
Be not expressed by Suns – alone –
It is the gift of Screws –

The General Rose – decay –
But this – in Lady's Drawer
Make Summer – When the Lady lie
In Ceaseless Rosemary –

Nature, culture, language

One way of thinking about culture is to contrast it with nature. Nature refers to what is born and grows organically (from the Latin *nascere*: to be born); **culture** refers to what has been grown and groomed (from the Latin *colere*: to cultivate). The word culture evokes the traditional nature/nurture debate: Are human beings mainly what nature determines them to be from birth or what culture enables them to become through socialization and schooling?

Emily Dickinson's poem expresses well, albeit in a stylized way, the relationship of nature, culture, and language. A rose in a flower bed, says the poem, a generic rose ('The General Rose'), is a phenomenon of nature. Beautiful, yes, but faceless and nameless among others of the same species. Perishable. Forgettable. Nature alone cannot reveal nor preserve the particular beauty of a particular rose at a chosen moment in time. Powerless to prevent the biological 'decay' and the ultimate death of roses and of ladies, nature can only make summer when the season is right. Culture, by contrast, is not bound by biological time. Like nature, it is a 'gift', but of a different kind. Through a sophisticated technological procedure, developed especially to extract the essence of roses, culture forces nature to reveal its 'essential' potentialities. The word 'Screws' suggests that this process is not without labor. By crushing the petals, a great deal of the rose must be lost in order to get at its essence. The technology of the screws constrains the