牛津
语言学入门丛书

丛书主编 H.G.Widdowson

Linguistics

语言学

H.G.Widdowson

(北京)
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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。

人们在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。

《语言学》为本丛书之一，出版于 1996 年，是一部介绍语言学基本知识的导论性著作。作者 H·G·威多森(H.G. Widdowson) 是著名的应用语言学家，英国伦敦大学教育学院的 TESOL 教授，并兼任埃塞克斯大学应用语言学教授。

本书的主体（概述部分）分为六章。第一章论述语言的性质，简述了语言的起源、语言的特征、人类语言与动物交流

的区别、语言与思想、语言与社会生活等方面的关系；第二章介绍语言学的研究范围和几个重要的语言学概念；第三章探讨语言研究的方法论，论述了语言分析的原则和层次；第四章从形式的角度描述语言研究的领域，介绍了语音学、音系学、形态学、句法学等方面的基本理论和基本知识；第五章从意义的角度描述语言研究的领域，将语义学称作对语言本体意义的研究，将语用学称作对语境中意义的研究，并分别简述了两大领域的基本概念和有关问题；第六章介绍当今语言学中的一些重要课题，如语言学的研究范围、语言学的各个分支、语言学中的语料、语料库语言学、语言学的相关性、语言在实际应用中的意义等。

本书对语言的定义、描述和探讨简明清晰，内容丰富，说理深入浅出，是语言学初学者的必读教程；对有意进一步进行独立研究的人员也具有积极的指导作用。

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。

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2000 年 1 月

Oxford Introductions to Language Study

Linguistics

H. G. Widdowson is Professor of English for Speakers of Other Languages at the University of London Institute of Education, and Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex.

Published in this series:

H. G. Widdowson: *Linguistics*
George Yule: *Pragmatics*

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 and 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 a 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, then 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

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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

Author's Preface

It is, of course, impossible to do justice to the range and complexity of linguistics as a discipline within the compass of a small book like this one. And no such claim is being made. But it should be possible to identify the central issues it is concerned with and present a coherent outline of the area as a whole. This is what I have tried to do. And I have tried to do it in a way which makes ideas in linguistics clear without compromising their intrinsic complexity, which makes them more readily understood without diminishing their intellectual interest. This is not linguistics made simple but made accessible.

Of course, what counts as a central issue depends on how you identify linguistics as a discipline. Over recent years this has been a matter of considerable dispute, and there are those who would call for a radical revision of its scope and terms of reference, and would deny the validity of traditional principles of enquiry. In this book I have taken a relatively conservative line. This is not

because I believe in conserving established principles of enquiry. On the contrary, I think their reappraisal is very much to be welcomed. But then one needs to know what they are. You can understand established ideas without accepting them, but it makes no sense to reject or revise them without understanding them.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contribution of colleagues and students over the years to my own understanding of linguistics, and the support I have received from Cristina Whitecross in writing this book. I have been greatly helped too by people who were kind enough to comment on earlier drafts: Nick Groom, Koo Yew Lie, Arthur Mettinger, Sonia Pokhodnia, Nahil Adel Uwaydah, Arnold Widdowson. I am most grateful to them. Anne Conybeare deserves a special mention: she subjected successive drafts to detailed critical analysis and pointed out all manner of defects and obscurities. Many, I am sure, remain, especially perhaps where I have stubbornly relied on my own judgement. But every book is inadequate in one way or another. And so it should be, for this then allows readers to get into the act, and piece out its imperfections with their thoughts.

My own imperfections are pieced out by the person to whom I owe the greatest debt, and to whom the book is dedicated. There is no more to say.

H.G.WIDDOWSON
Vienna, October 1995

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SECTION I

Survey

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