

牛津
语言学入门丛书

丛书主编 H.G.Widdowson

Psycholinguistics

心理语言学

Thomas Scovel



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。

《心理语言学》为本丛书之一,出版于1998年,是一部介绍心理语言学基本知识的导论性著作。作者T·斯科弗(Thomas Scovel)是美国旧金山州立大学英语系教授。

心理语言学是通过研究语言和言语从而进一步了解心智的本质和结构的科学。根据分析或合成、历时或共时四个不同的研究角度,可以将心理语言学划分为四个领域:语言习

得、语言产生、语言理解和语言丧失。

本书的主体(概述部分)正是按照上述四个领域而编排,共分为五章:第一章是导言,总体介绍研究领域和研究方法;第二章描述从第一声啼哭到孩童式创造性地使用语言的整个语言习得过程,揭示了语言的内在性;第三章描述语言产生需经历的四个阶段:概念形成、言语组合、发声和自控;第四章论述诸如口误等语言现象为我们理解语言产生提供的依据。然而这个复杂的过程基本上是无意识的。借助实验的方法,人们对语音、词汇、句子以及篇章理解都作了较为客观的研究,并得出结论,即语言的理解明显受到语境因素的影响;第五章介绍通过对失语症病人的观察研究,人们不仅掌握了大脑某些区域与语言的关系,还发现儿童大脑损伤的部位不同对语言能力所产生的影响也大不相同。

心理语言学是 20 世纪兴起的针对人类自身领域的研究。我们在对宇宙世界的了解不断深入的同时,对自己大脑的了解却十分肤浅。随着 21 世纪认知科学的发展,心理语言学这门学科将更显得充满魅力。

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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Psycholinguistics

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State University.

Published in this series:

Rod Ellis: *Second Language Acquisition*

Thomas Scovel: *Psycholinguistics*

Bernard Spolsky: *Sociolinguistics*

H.G. Widdowson: *Linguistics*

George Yule: *Pragmatics*

for Derick & Elizabeth

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 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

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

One of the briefest and most memorable prayers in the Bible is found at the conclusion of Psalm 19:

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart,
Be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

It may seem unusual to preface an introduction to a scientific discipline like psycholinguistics with this prayerful plea from the Book of Psalms, but words and thoughts (whether they are conceived in the heart, the mind, or even in the abdomen, as some cultures claim) are the central focus of this relatively new science. Further, their 'acceptability' depends very much on the norms and expectations of the language community in which they are conceived and shared. And because psycholinguistics is such a comprehensive discipline and embraces so many aspects of linguistic behavior, it then becomes obvious why I, as the author of this modest treatise on the topic, would begin with an invocation,

not only to my maker, but to my reader! So obviously, there will be some sins of omission and commission, and for these limitations, I take no pride but do accept full responsibility, despite the help of many people who have deepened my understanding of the relationship between language and thought.

For several decades, I have enjoyed introducing psycholinguistics to students in many classes, both in the United States and in several countries around the globe, and in all of these courses, I have learned much from my students and from the authors of the many different texts we have used. I also have appreciated the insights shared by many professional friends, on my home campus, at academic conferences, and in the exchange of paper and electrons which makes modern communication so miraculously efficient. While trying to squeeze the writing of this book into a tight teaching schedule, I am, as always, grateful to my wife for tolerating my many sojourns into the study and for realizing that even an afternoon run into the nearby hills was not only good for the heart, but ultimately for the evolution of my scholarship as well.

Finally, I want to thank the good people at Oxford University Press for enlisting me as one of the authors for the Oxford *Introductions to Language Study* series. I was honored to be asked to participate, and I am grateful for their guidance, support, and most of all, for their patience, throughout the writing and production of this volume. My ultimate gratitude is reserved for the Series Editor, Henry Widdowson, who carefully helped shape my ideas, who painstakingly edited every page I produced, and who wisely and generously made my words and my thoughts more acceptable.

THOMAS SCOVEL
San Francisco, May 1997

Contents

Preface	ix
Author's preface	xii
SECTION I	
Survey	I
1 Introduction	3
2 Acquisition: when I was a child, I spoke as a child	
'... no language but a cry'	8
First words	11
The birth of grammar	13
Evidence for innateness	17
Childish creativity	19
Stages of linguistic development	22
3 Production: putting words in one's mouth	
Conceptualization	27
Formulation	29
Articulation	41
Self-monitoring	45
4 Comprehension: understanding what we hear and read	
The comprehension of sounds	50
The comprehension of words	55
The comprehension of sentences	59
The comprehension of texts	66
Comprehension concluded	68

5 Dissolution: language loss	70
Neurolinguistics and language loss	70
Speech and language disorders	80
Concluding summary	87
SECTION 2	
Readings	91
SECTION 3	
References	115
SECTION 4	
Glossary	123