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Ping Ke

Contrastive Linguistics



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Preface

The first edition of this book was published under the heading of *Contrastive Linguistics* in 1999 and has since then been used by many colleges and universities in China as a coursebook or listed as a major reading item for graduate students of English who took the course Contrastive Linguistics. This new edition was revised and slightly enlarged to accommodate the needs of students studying languages or other subjects in the humanities or social sciences. It may be used as an introductory reader of contrastive linguistics for learners who have little knowledge of linguistics but are interested in such disciplines as Contrastive Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Translation Studies, Second Language Teaching, Chinese as a Foreign Language, Communication, or other subjects of study which involve the use of a second language.

The work grew out of an attempt to rethink my introductory course offered for years to graduate students enrolled in programs of Linguistics, Translation Studies, or Bilingual Lexicography at Nanjing University and, in the past academic year, to the undergraduate students of Translation at the University of Macau as well. It is written with a one-semester course in mind although, with the addition of some supplementary materials, it could be used for two semesters.

Although many tertiary institutions in China and other countries or areas of the world have included Contrastive Linguistics in their postgraduate or undergraduate curricula for a long time, the subject of the course remains indeterminate to some extent and many explorations made in this field are still somewhat tentative. While researching and writing this book, I kept reminding myself that a work providing merely a general survey of the “state of the art” of this particular branch of linguistics and its general, “standard” theories would not be of much help to the students: contrast and comparison are not ends in themselves; they should serve some meaningful purposes. The important point is that the contrastive analysis made should lend us useful insights into some real problems in areas of language use and study. In my opinion, these areas should include, among others, the theory and practice of translation, second language teaching and learning, bilingual lexicography, and general linguistics. Based on this understanding, this work places somewhat greater emphasis on what contrastive linguistics has to offer to related

fields of linguistic studies and practice than on the discipline of contrastive linguistics itself.

For the convenience of readers, key terms are usually printed in boldface type, especially when they are newly introduced into the text. Each chapter concludes with a “Questions for Discussion and Research” section, in which are presented some questions and issues related to what is dealt with in the chapter. By trying to respond to them, students can not only test their understanding of the content of the chapter but also learn to apply what they have learned in the course to the analysis of interlingual problems in the real world.

A book of this kind no doubt draws on a wide variety of sources. I owe a lot to the authors of the sources as listed in the References and wish to express my deep appreciation to all of them for the valuable information and inspiration their work has benefited me with. I am also very grateful to my students at Nanjing University and the University of Macau, whose questions, comments, suggestions, and keen interest in the book itself have been the chief driving force behind the revision of this work one decade after the publication of its first edition.

Macau, China
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