



Language Universals and Linguistic Typology: Syntax and Morphology

Bernard Comrie

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This book is about one of the most exciting and rapidly developing areas of linguistics--the analysis, comparison and classification of the common features and forms of organization of languages--the analysis, comparison, and classification of the common features and forms of organization of languages. Professor Comrie argues for the use of data from a wide range of languages, contesting the transformational view that language universals can be derived from the abstract analysis of a single language. He provides full critical discussion of those areas currently producing the most promising results, and is particularly concerned with syntactico-semantic universals, devoting chapters to word order, case marking, relative clauses and causative constructions. The book is informed throughout by the conviction that an explanatory account of universal properties of human language cannot restrict itself to purely formal aspects. It must also take account of language in use and relate formal properties to testable claims about cognition and cognitive development. This book serves as an introduction to the field for advanced undergraduates and graduate students of theoretical and descriptive linguistics. It will also be of considerable interest to those working in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics.

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