

Biolinguistics : exploring the biology of languages

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Abstrak

This book investigates the nature of human language and its importance for the study of the mind. In particular, it examines current work on the biology of language. Lyle Jenkins reviews the evidence that language is best characterized by a generative grammar of the kind introduced by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s and developed in various directions since that time. He then discusses research into the development of language which tries to capture both the underlying universality of human language, as well as the diversity found in individual languages (universal grammar). Finally, he discusses a variety of approaches to language design and the evolution of language. An important theme is the integration of biolinguistics into the natural sciences – the ‘unification problem’. Lyle also answers criticisms of the biolinguistics approach from a number of other perspectives, including evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, connectionism and ape language research, among others.