

The Semantic Map of the Spatial Motion Domain and Related Functions

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Abstract

This thesis employs the Semantic Map Model, a new tool for typological research, to study multifunctional grams in the spatial motion and related domains. It takes a bottom-up approach to the construction of semantic maps, which starts with a limited number of genetically and areally related dialects spoken in a single Chinese province, and progressively moves on to include more Chinese data from all groups of its regional varieties, yielding a map that can account for polyfunctional patterns of relevant grams in the Chinese dataset. Subsequently, the scope of investigation is further extended to a considerable-size sample of world languages, resulting in a comprehensive semantic map that not only is highly compatible with the Chinese map but also claims a universal validity. One highlight of this study is the multi-layer representation of semantic maps, a methodological innovation to overcome the research challenge of domain interface and map dimensionality, which can also be used to accommodate conflicting cases caused by polygrammaticalization.