

abstract:

Empiricizing metagrammaticography: some ideas about tools and methods
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In this presentation, I explore the potential of research in the field of metagrammaticography. Coined by Lehmann and Maslova (2004: 1858), the term, which describes the activity of "tak[ing] stock of successful grammars and distill[ing] from them the grammaticographic principles that they follow", has not been picked up by descriptive linguists, typologists or by historians of linguistics, the three main constituencies for whom the concepts are likely to be most significant.

I propose that metagrammaticography, especially if it is provided with tools to render it empirical, has much to contribute to these three groups, making it possible to consider a large number of questions, both recurring and new, about the shape and content of descriptive grammars. These questions include the following:

-What is the range of organizational schemes underlying grammatical descriptions?

-How does the organizational scheme of a grammar correlate with bibliographical and biographical metadata such as date of publication, size, number of pages, metalanguage, nationality, language area, institutional affiliation, etc.?

-When do certain features of contemporary descriptive grammars first emerge, such as tables of contents, abbreviations, interlinear glossed examples, the inclusion of texts/word lists, metadata on consultants and sources, etc.?

I will present a project currently underway to develop a relational database in order to provide answers to questions such as the above.

Lehmann, Christian & Elena Maslova. 2004. Grammaticography. In Geert Booij, Christian Lehmann, Joachim Mugdan & Stavros Skopeteas (eds.), *Morphologie. Ein Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung* (Handbücher Des Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft 17/2), 1857–1882. Berlin & New York: W. de Gruyter.