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| 1. | Record Nr. | UNINA9910972258403321 |
| | Titolo | Cross-linguistic semantics / / edited by Cliff Goddard |
| | Pubbl/distr/stampa | Philadelphia ; ; Amsterdam, : John Benjamins Pub. Co., c2008 |
| | ISBN | 9786612152047 |
| | | 9781282152045 |
| | | 1282152041 |
| | | 9789027291370 |
| | | 9027291373 |
| | Edizione | [1st ed.] |
| | Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (376 p.) |
| | Collana | Studies in language companion series ; ; v. 102 |
| | Altri autori (Persone) | GoddardCliff |
| | Disciplina | 401/.43 |
| | Soggetti | Metalanguage |
| | | Semantics |
| | Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| | Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| | Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| | Note generali | Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph |
| | Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and indexes. |
| | Nota di contenuto | Cross-Linguistic Semantics -- Editorial page -- Title page -- LCC data -- Table of contents -- Acknowledgements -- List of contributors -- List of tables, figures and appendices -- CHAPTER 1. Natural Semantic Metalanguage: The state of the art -- CHAPTER 2. New semantic primes and new syntactic frames: "Specificational BE" and "abstract THIS/IT" -- CHAPTER 3. Towards a systematic table of semantic elements -- CHAPTER 4.  Semantic primes in Amharic -- CHAPTER 5. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage of Korean -- CHAPTER 6. Semantic primes and their grammar in a polysynthetic language: East Cree -- CHAPTER 7. Hyperpolysemy in Bunuba, a polysynthetic language of the Kimberley, Western Australia -- CHAPTER 8. Re-thinking THINK in contrastive perspective: Swedish vs. English -- CHAPTER 9. Identification and syntax of semantic prime MOMENT in Tarifyt Berber -- CHAPTER 10. The ethnogeometry of Makasai (East Timor) -- CHAPTER 11. The semantics of "inalienable possession" in Koromu (PNG) -- CHAPTER 12. Tolerance: New and traditional values in Russian in comparison with English -- CHAPTER 13. Two "virtuous emotions" in Japanese: Nasake/joo and jihi -- Author index -- Language and language families index -- Subject index -- The Studies in Language Companion |

Series.

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| Sommario/riassunto | Cross-linguistic semantics - investigating how languages package and express meanings differently - is central to the linguistic quest to understand the nature of human language. This set of studies explores and demonstrates cross-linguistic semantics as practised in the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM) framework, originated by Anna Wierzbicka. The opening chapters give a state-of-the-art overview of the NSM model, propose several theoretical innovations and advance a number of original analyses in connection with names and naming, clefts and other specificational sentences, and discourse anaphora. Subsequent chapters describe and analyse diverse phenomena in ten languages from multiple families, geographical locations, and cultural settings around the globe. Three substantial studies document how the metalanguage of NSM semantic primes can be realised in languages of widely differing types: Amharic (Ethiopia), Korean, and East Cree. Each constitutes a lexicogrammatical portrait in miniature of the language concerned. Other chapters probe topics such as inalienable possession in Koromu (Papua New Guinea), epistemic verbs in Swedish, hyperpolysemy in Bunuba (Australia), the expression of "momentariness" in Berber, ethnogeometry in Makasai (East Timor), value concepts in Russian, and "virtuous emotions" in Japanese. This book will be valuable for linguists working on language description, lexical semantics, or the semantics of grammar, for advanced students of linguistics, and for others interested in language universals and language diversity. |