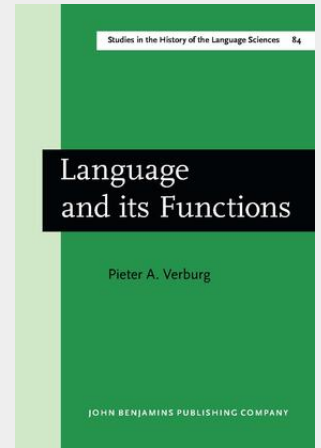


Verburg

Language and its Functions

A historico-critical study of views concerning the functions of language from the pre-humanistic philology of Orleans to the rationalistic philology of Bopp. Translated by Paul Salmon in consultation with Anthony J. Klijnsmit

When Pieter Verburg (1905-1989) published *Taal en Functionaliteit* in 1952, the work was received with admiration by linguistic scholars, though the number of those who could read the Dutch text for themselves remained limited. The title alludes to the theories of linguistic function set out in 1936 by Karl Bühler, but Verburg regards the three functions of discourse — focussing respectively on the speaker, the person addressed and the matter discussed — as no more than sub-functions of the human function of speech. His central concern is to explore the relationships between thought and language, and language and reality; and the work sets out to provide a historical analysis of views on these relationships in the period 1100 to 1800. The great strength of the work lies in the way in which the views of language are related to contemporaneous moves in philosophy and science, contrasting essentially the mediaeval acceptance of authority, the beginnings of induction in the Renaissance, the dependence of early rationalism on calculation based on axiomatic truths, and the further development of independent observation. All these trends are reflected in the way men thought about language, as well as in the way they used it. Much has been written on the history of linguistics since this book was written, but it still offers a unique view of the development of thinking about language.



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