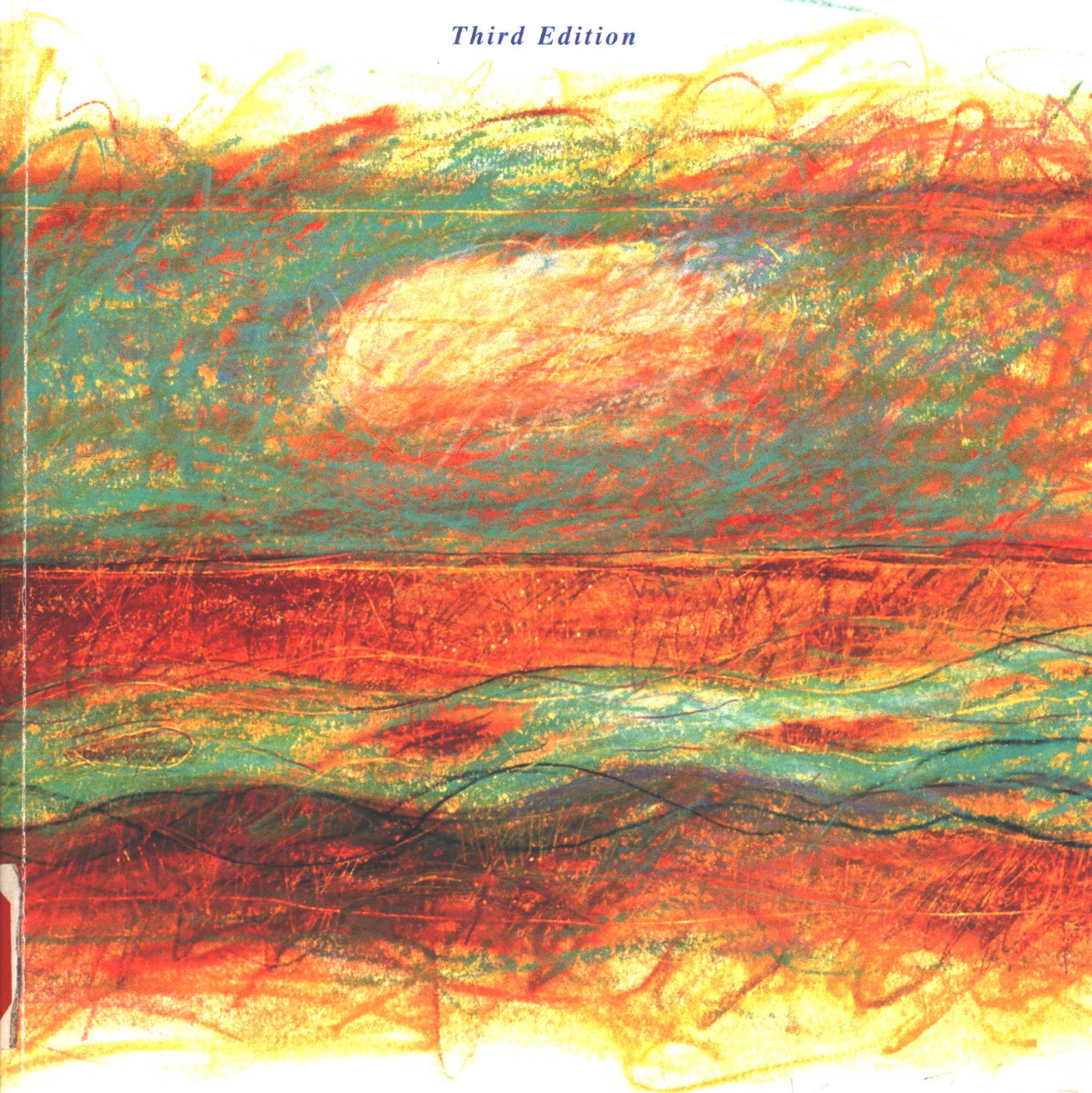
LANGUAGE

ITS STRUCTURE AND USE

Third Edition



EDWARD FINEGAN

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Its Structure and Use

Third Edition

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PREFACE

For more than two millennia, philosophers, rhetoricians, and grammarians have analyzed and described the structures of human languages and the uses to which those structures can be put in particular contexts. In the twentieth century, linguists and cognitive scientists have broadened and deepened our understanding of language, including knowledge of its mental representation and its use in the high and low affairs of women and men. In recent decades, as space explorers have revised our images of the satellites of Uranus and microbiologists have traveled further into the recesses of DNA, so linguists have contributed a burst of new insight into the nature of language. In *Language: Its Structure and Use,* you will uncover a glimpse of language as linguists understand it at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Despite the impressive pace at which investigators have gained insight into the nature and behavior of human language, many arenas are underexplored and many questions remain unanswered. As today's insights replace those of yesterday, we are reminded that tomorrow's will replace today's. There is far more yet to be discovered about language than is now known, and plenty of intellectually exciting and socially useful work remains for future generations—including student readers of this book. You are invited to participate in advancing knowledge of language, which is the single most powerful tool of human endeavor and one, remarkably, that is available to all human beings equally.

A WORD TO STUDENTS

Throughout this book you will find words in boldface type. When an important concept is first discussed (not necessarily when it is first mentioned), the term for it is set in boldface, thus highlighting its significance and indicating that it is defined in the Glossary (which begins on page 585 and is tabbed at the edge of the pages to make finding it easy). In the Glossary you can find terms defined or characterized whenever you need to refresh your memory. On the inside front cover you will find tables of English vowel and consonant symbols and on the inside back cover the consonant symbols used throughout the book. To learn more about a topic than you can find in this book, the Suggestions for Further Reading at the end of each chapter will steer you in useful directions. At the end of each chapter you'll also find a list of Internet and Other Resources—interesting and helpful videos and Internet addresses. Be sure to visit Harcourt Brace's Web site at http://english.harbrace.com/ling/ for additional support materials.

A WORD TO INSTRUCTORS

This book includes more topics than can normally be covered in a one-semester course. Typically, instructors cover the first six chapters and select from among the others according to their interests and the needs of their students. Students benefit from regular use of the Glossary, and you may wish to remind them of its availability from time to time. (I started reminding students about the Glossary after several told me at term's end that they hadn't realized the book contained one.)

The current edition differs from the previous one in several respects. Most apparent is the organization into three parts and the reordering of chapters, including the treatment of morphology before phonetics and phonology. This new organization accommodates most students because they find words more accessible to analysis than sounds and because morphology can be discussed without appeal to a phonetic alphabet, which can be daunting to students at the beginning of the term. The revised sequence invites instructors to teach morphology before phonology, but instructors who prefer the traditional order can still do that with this edition. To make the alternative orderings possible, the phonetics chapter and all but the morphophonology section of the phonology chapter are written in such a way that they can be studied without prior knowledge of morphology. To teach phonetics and phonology before morphology, instructors need only delay the section on "The Interaction of Morphology and Phonology" (pp. 125–131) until after they have taught the morphology chapter.

At the end of each chapter, you'll note some new features: a section on computers and language, a list of Internet and Other Resources, a division of references into Suggested Readings and Advanced Reading, and, for most chapters, separate sets of exercises for English and for other languages. Each chapter now opens with a section called What Do You Think?, which is designed to engage students prospectively in the contents of the chapter and to identify possible real world situations where the subject matter of the chapter may play a role. This edition also contains sidebars to supplement the text with points related to chapter topics.

A WORD ABOUT PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION

Settling on a particular phonetic transcription is tricky business because custom in the United States strongly favors a modified version of the International Phonetic Alphabet, at least for transcribing English. But throughout the world, many linguists strictly favor the IPA. In this edition, I have increased the number of IPA symbols used in the transcription of English but have kept a very few of the preferred American symbols for some sounds. In this fashion, the purposes for which phonetic transcription is introduced in an introductory textbook can be adequately met without burdening students with the entire IPA. And for instructors who prefer using the IPA especially for consonants, those symbols are given in tables and referenced throughout the book.

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WORKBOOK AND ANSWER KEYS

Like the second edition of LISU, this edition has an accompanying workbook (*Looking at Languages,* Second Edition by Paul Frommer and Edward Finegan), which is useful in helping students review, apply, and even extend basic concepts.

The textbook and workbook have answer keys, which contain a few suggestions for presenting the material to students.

I welcome comments and suggestions from instructors and students. Letters may be sent through the publisher or directly to me via the following e-mail address: finegan@usc.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have drawn on the work of many scholars whose analysis and writing provided a footing from which to address the issues taken up here. References at the end of chapters only hint at the range of scholarship I've relied on, and I am no less indebted to scholars whose work has influenced me but who are not cited. Many colleagues and not a few student readers have offered helpful comments about the third edition. To each of them (and to anyone whose name I may have inadvertently omitted) goes an expression of special appreciation. I am also grateful to the editors of Linguist List, which has proven a useful source of information and inquiry and whose readership offered many of the suggestions that have been incorporated into this revision. For helpful suggestions on particular matters, I am indebted to Dwight Atkinson, Robin Belvin, Betty Birner, Steve Chandler, Paul Fallon, Andreas Fischer, John Dienhart, William A. Kretzschmar, John Hedgcock, Peter Lazar, Gregory C. Richter, Deborah Schmidt, Robert Seward, and Gunnel Tottie.

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—Edward Finegan

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