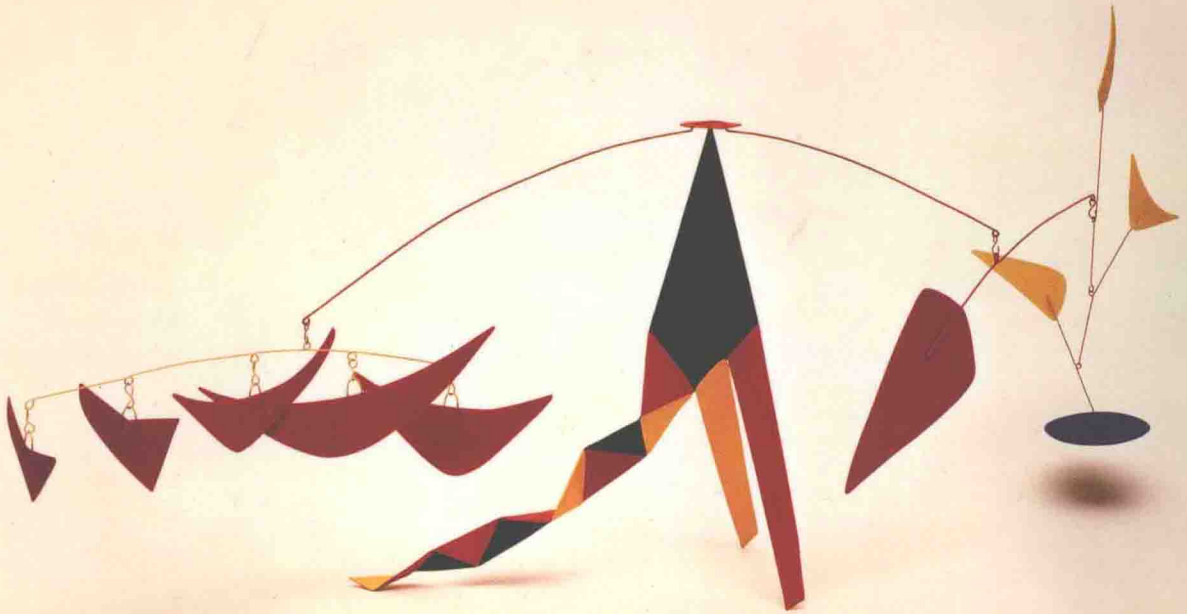


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An Introduction to Language

NINTH EDITION

An Introduction to Language

VICTORIA FROMKIN

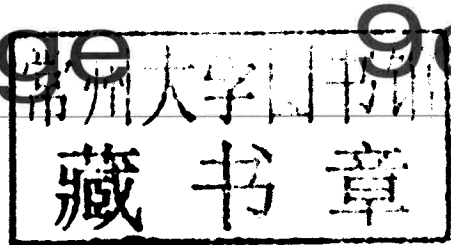
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Ninth Edition**

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Preface

Well, this bit which I am writing, called Introduction, is really the er-h'r'm of the book, and I have put it in, partly so as not to take you by surprise, and partly because I can't do without it now. There are some very clever writers who say that it is quite easy not to have an er-h'r'm, but I don't agree with them. I think it is much easier not to have all the rest of the book.

A. A. MILNE, *Now We Are Six*, 1927

The last thing we find in making a book is to know what we must put first.

BLAISE PASCAL (1623–1662)

The ninth edition of *An Introduction to Language* continues in the spirit of our friend, colleague, mentor, and coauthor, Victoria Fromkin. Vicki loved language, and she loved to tell people about it. She found linguistics fun and fascinating, and she wanted every student and every teacher to think so, too. Though this edition has been completely rewritten for improved clarity and currency, we have nevertheless preserved Vicki's lighthearted, personal approach to a complex topic, including witty quotations from noted authors (A. A. Milne was one of Vicki's favorites). We hope we have kept the spirit of Vicki's love for teaching about language alive in the pages of this book.

The first eight editions of *An Introduction to Language* succeeded, with the help of dedicated teachers, in introducing the nature of human language to tens of thousands of students. This is a book that students enjoy and understand and that professors find effective and thorough. Not only have majors in linguistics benefited from the book's easy-to-read yet comprehensive presentation, majors in fields as diverse as teaching English as a second language, foreign language studies, general education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology have enjoyed learning about language from this book.

Highlights of This Edition

This edition includes **new developments in linguistics and related fields** that will strengthen its appeal to a wider audience. Much of this information will enable students to gain insight and understanding about linguistic issues and debates appearing in the national media and will help professors and students stay current with important linguistic research. We hope that it may also dispel certain common misconceptions that people have about language and language use.

Many more **exercises** (240) are available in this edition than ever before, allowing students to test their comprehension of the material in the text. Many of the exercises are multipart, amounting to more than 300 opportunities for “homework” so that instructors can gauge their student's progress. Some exercises are marked as “challenge” questions if they go beyond the scope of what is

ordinarily expected in a first course in language study. An **answer key** is available to instructors to assist them in areas outside of their expertise.

Chapter 1 continues to be a concise introduction to the general study of language. It now contains many “hooks” for engaging students in language study, including “Language and Thought,” which takes up the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis; discussions of signed languages; a consideration of animal “languages”; and a treatment of language origins.

Chapter 2, “Brain and Language,” retains its forward placement in the book because we believe that one can learn about the brain through language, and about the nature of the human being through the brain. This chapter may be read and appreciated without technical knowledge of linguistics. When the centrality of language to human nature is appreciated, students will be motivated to learn more about human language, and about linguistics, because they will be learning more about themselves. As in the previous edition, highly detailed illustrations of MRI and PET scans of the brain are included, and this chapter highlights some of the new results and tremendous progress in the study of neurolinguistics over the past few years. The arguments for the autonomy of language in the human brain are carefully crafted so that the student sees how experimental evidence is applied to support scientific theories.

Chapters 3 and 4, on morphology and syntax, have been heavily rewritten for increased clarity, while weaving in new results that reflect current thinking on how words and sentences are structured and understood. In particular, the chapter on syntax continues to reflect the current views on binary branching, heads and complements, selection, and X-bar phrase structure. Non-English examples abound in these two chapters and throughout the entire book. The intention is to enhance the student’s understanding of the differences among languages as well as the universal aspects of grammar. Nevertheless, the introductory spirit of these chapters is not sacrificed, and students gain a deep understanding of word and phrase structure with a minimum of formalisms and a maximum of insightful examples and explanations, supplemented as always by quotes, poetry, and humor.

Chapter 5, on semantics or meaning, has been more highly structuralized so that the challenging topics of this complex subject can be digested in smaller pieces. Still based on the theme of “What do you know about meaning when you know a language?”, the chapter first introduces students to truth-conditional semantics and the principle of compositionality. Following that are discussions of what happens when compositionality fails, as with idioms, metaphors, and anomalous sentences. Lexical semantics takes up various approaches to word meaning, including the concepts of reference and sense, semantic features, argument structure, and thematic roles. Finally, the chapter concludes with pragmatic considerations, including the distinction between linguistic and situational context in discourse, deixis, maxims of conversation, implicatures, and speech acts, all newly rewritten for currency and clarity.

Chapter 6, on phonetics, retains its former organization with one significant change: We have totally embraced IPA (International Phonetics Association) notation for English in keeping with current tendencies, with the sole exception of using /r/ in place of the technically correct /ɹ/. We continue to mention alternative notations that students may encounter in other publications.

Chapter 7, on phonology, has been streamlined by relegating several complex examples (e.g., metathesis in Hebrew) to the exercises, where instructors can opt to include them if it is thought that students can handle such advanced material. The chapter continues to be presented with a greater emphasis on insights through linguistic data accompanied by small amounts of well-explicated formalisms, so that the student can appreciate the need for formal theories without experiencing the burdensome details.

The chapters comprising Part 3, “The Psychology of Language,” have been both rewritten and restructured for clarity. **Chapter 8**, “Language Acquisition,” is still rich in data from both English and other languages, and has been updated with newer examples from the ever expanding research in this vital topic. The arguments for innateness and Universal Grammar that language acquisition provides are exploited to show the student how scientific theories of great import are discovered and supported through observation, experiment, and reason. As in most chapters, American Sign Language (ASL) is discussed, and its important role in understanding the biological foundations of language is emphasized.

In **chapter 9**, the section on psycholinguistics has been updated to conform to recent discoveries. The section on computational linguistics has been substantially reorganized into two subsections: technicalities and applications. In the applications section is an entirely new presentation of forensic computational linguistics—the use of computers in solving crimes that involve language, and, similarly, resolving judicial matters such as trademark disputes.

Part 4 is concerned with language in society, including sociolinguistics (chapter 10) and historical linguistics (chapter 11). Readers of previous editions will scarcely recognize the much revised and rewritten **chapter 10**. The section “Languages in Contact” has been thoroughly researched and brought up to date, including insightful material on pidgins and creoles, their origins, interrelationship, and subtypes. An entirely new section, “Language and Education,” discusses some of the sociolinguistic issues facing the classroom teacher in our multicultural school systems. No sections have been omitted, but many have been streamlined and rewritten for clarity, such as the section on “Language in Use.”

Chapter 11, on language change, has undergone a few changes. The section “Extinct and Endangered Languages” has been completely rewritten and brought up to date to reflect the intense interest in this critical subject. The same is true of the section “Types of Languages,” which now reflects the latest research.

Chapter 12, on writing systems, is unchanged from the previous edition with the exception of a mild rewriting to further improve clarity, and the movement of the section on reading to chapter 10.

Terms that appear bold in the text are defined in the revised glossary at the end of the book. The **glossary** has been expanded and improved so that the ninth edition provides students with a linguistic lexicon of nearly 700 terms, making the book a worthy reference volume.

The **order of presentation of chapters 3 through 7** was once thought to be nontraditional. Our experience, backed by previous editions of the book and the recommendations of colleagues throughout the world, has convinced us that it is easier for the novice to approach the structural aspects of language by first looking at morphology (the structure of the most familiar linguistic unit, the word). This is followed by syntax (the structure of sentences), which is also familiar

to many students, as are numerous semantic concepts. We then proceed to the more novel (to students) phonetics and phonology, which students often find daunting. However, the book is written so that individual instructors can present material in the traditional order of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics (chapters 6, 7, 3, 4, and 5) without confusion, if they wish.

As in previous editions, the primary concern has been with basic ideas rather than detailed expositions. This book assumes no previous knowledge on the part of the reader. An updated list of references at the end of each chapter is included to accommodate any reader who wishes to pursue a subject in more depth. Each chapter concludes with a summary and exercises to enhance the student's interest in and comprehension of the textual material.

Acknowledgments

Our endeavor to maintain the currency of linguistic concepts in times of rapid progress has been invaluablely enhanced by the following colleagues, to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude:

Susan Curtiss	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>	brain and language
Jeff MacSwan	<i>Arizona State University</i>	bilingual education, bilingual communities
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Megha Sundara	<i>University of California, Los Angeles</i>	early speech perception
Maria Luisa Zubizarreta	<i>University of Southern California</i>	language contact

Brook Danielle Lillehaugen undertook the daunting task of writing the Answer Key to the ninth edition. Her thoroughness, accuracy, and insightfulness in construing solutions to problems and discussions of issues will be deeply appreciated by all who avail themselves of this useful document.

We also express deep appreciation for the incisive comments of eight reviewers of the eighth edition, known to us as R1–R8, whose frank assessment of the work, both critical and laudatory, heavily influenced this new edition:

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We continue to be deeply grateful to the individuals who have sent us suggestions, corrections, criticisms, cartoons, language data, and exercises over the course of many editions. Their influence is still strongly felt in this ninth edition. The list is long and reflects the global, communal collaboration that a book about language—the most global of topics—merits. To each of you, our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Know that in this ninth edition lives your contribution:¹

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Please forgive us if we have inadvertently omitted any names, and if we have spelled every name correctly, then we shall believe in miracles.

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The responsibility for errors in fact or judgment is, of course, ours alone. We continue to be indebted to the instructors who have used the earlier editions and to their students, without whom there would be no ninth edition.

Robert Rodman
Nina Hyams

About the Authors



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NINA HYAMS received her bachelor's degree in journalism from Boston University in 1973 and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in linguistics from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 1981 and 1983, respectively. She joined the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1983, where she is currently a professor of linguistics. Her main areas of research are childhood language development and syntax. She is author of the book *Language Acquisition and the Theory of Parameters* (D. Reidel Publishers, 1986), a milestone in language acquisition research. She has also published numerous articles on the

development of syntax, morphology, and semantics in children. She has been a visiting scholar at the University of Utrecht and the University of Leiden in the Netherlands and has given numerous lectures throughout Europe and Japan. Nina lives in Los Angeles with her pal Spot, a rescued border collie mutt.

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