PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

PSYCHOLOGY, LINGUISTICS, AND THE STUDY OF NATURAL LANGUAGE

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Preface

This textbook is intended to serve as an introduction to the discipline of psycholinguistics for graduate students and undergraduate students at the senior levels. Ten chapters focus on the nature of psycholinguistic inquiry, its history, studies in phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, semantics, biological correlates, language and cognition, and first language acquisition by children. The text is directed at filling the reading needs of courses in both departments of linguistics and psychology, presenting an overview of how these two disciplines have converged at various points in a search for the answers as to how natural language works.

Inquiry into the psychology of language is an ongoing activity, with a stimulating history and an exciting future. The book presents an interdisciplinary view of psycholinguistics, suggesting that inquiry into pertinent questions is neither the exclusive prerogative nor the accomplishment of a single field or academic discipline. The book also assumes that a unified approach to research in the psychology of language and cognition is not only realistic but necessary. Thus, our approach is not based on one current model, but is an integrated history of the development of ideas, and their subsequent successes, in psycholinguistics. The presentation attempts to show where we came from and why we are where we are now. It is as important to know how and why science is done, as it is to know the facts that arise from some particular period of scientific endeavor.

The textbook charts the modern re-convergence of disciplines, particularly psychology and linguistics, as they search for satisfying answers to how natural language is learned, produced, comprehended, stored, and recalled. In general, the textbook presents a unified view of psycholinguistics, in a sense parallel to the convergence of research interests one now sees in the superordinate activity labelled **cognitive science**. The rise of cognitive science with its interdisciplinary commitments to understanding the structures and relationship of language and cognition simply continues many of the research interests and developments in the psycholinguistics of recent decades.

Psycholinguistics may be an inquiry into the psychology of language, but the facts of language are what generates theories about why human language is learned, produced, and processed the way it is. Thus, you can expect a wide array of examples from the languages of the world, intended to provide a feeling for what the nature and range of human languages are like. And you can also expect a broad, but fair, coverage of the **many** topics that have taken the interest of psycholinguists over the past few decades. I have attempted to integrate current topics of intense debate, such as modularity vs. interactionism, the role of parsing strategies in sentence comprehension, and accessing the mental lexicon in word recognition, as well as earlier topics, such as sound symbolism and linguistic relativity, that attracted considerable energy not so long ago.

The single greatest help in preparing this textbook has been Andrea Giles, whose industriousness and meticulous attention to detail

simply has no comparison. I am equally grateful to Paul Hopkins for his diligence and scholarly care in helping me put the finishing touches on this book. And I should also thank Konrad Koerner, for introducing this book to John Benjamins Publishers; without his unerring eye for detail and bold entrepreneurial style the *CILT* series would likely not exist. I have been particularly fortunate to have colleagues whose patience matches their expertise. Allow me to acknowledge those understanding scholars, psychologists and linguists alike, who have read and commented on part or all of the book: Pam Asquith, Craig Dickson, Steve Eady, John Esling, Bill Frawley, Ron Hoppe, Tom Hukari, Walter Kintsch, P. G. Patel, Gary Prideaux, Otfried Spreen, and Teun van Dijk. Thanks are due to Craig Dickson for producing the sound spectrographs in Chapter 3 in the phonetics laboratory in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria. Special thanks go to Mike Keating, in Computing and Systems Services at the University of Victoria, for cheerfully and effectively leading me through the world of font types and mainframe mysteries; it was he who turned the manuscript into a camera-ready art form. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the research grant (#3-48161) recently provided by SSHRCC, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which prompted me to consolidate my final thoughts on the developing history of Western psycholinguistics before attempting to survey the historical development of Japanese psycholinguistics.

The book is dedicated to my late father, Joseph Kess, *ta prav slovenec*, who knew the value of education in the New World, to his grandson Tony, who will carry on for him, and most especially to my wife Anita, who brings such joy to my life and makes it all worth doing.