Introduction to the Third Edition

In the preface to the second edition, we noted that the genre of the second edition preface was necessarily self-congratulatory. Reaching a third edition speaks more of enduring serviceableness and quality. When, well over a decade ago, we set out to address the needs of the nonspecialists being trained in areas that required familiarity with linguistics, we were simply reacting to the needs of our students who were often at a loss with the more technical introductions to linguistics or who felt that their needs were not met by the emphasis on topics in other linguistics textbooks. Clearly the thousands of copies that have been sold over the years attest to the fact that those needs we had identified were the same that many other teachers of linguistics saw as well. But a subtler trend can be detected: Even those introductions that did not include sociolinguistics or segregated the "applied" part of the field to one, usually final, chapter, now dedicate much ampler space to those topics that were from the onset the larger part of *Understanding Language*. It pleases us to think that we might have had a small part in this.

This third edition is much streamlined, in response to the changing nature of our audience, but also responding to the "information-rich" environment in which our students live (think Google and Wikipedia), which lessens the need for an encyclopedic resource while at the same time increasing the need for clear, accessible, and uncluttered explanations of basic facts that are necessary to understand and discriminate in the endless flow of unchecked and therefore unreliable information that characterizes our era.

The most notable difference in this edition is that we have incorporated the workbook in the body of the text, so that students have only one book to buy and carry around. This also responds to the trend of emphasizing step-by-step verification of the learning outcomes of each section. Thus,

we have broken each chapter into a series of smaller sections, with exercises at the end of each section so that students may check their understanding before moving on.

Throughout, we have streamlined, revised for clarity, and updated information both in the text and the Further Readings. We have added or re-labeled some "task boxes," which usually serve as pre-reading tasks that connect students' experiences to the material. There are also, as in the second edition, boxed capsule biographies of famous linguists. The Educational Implications boxes in the second edition have been replaced with one Chapter Research Project in each chapter that directly addresses teachers and teachers in training. We have added new myth boxes, both for fun and as a link to the University of Michigan Press *Myths* series (*Listening Myths, Pronunciation Myths, Second Language Acquisition Myths, Vocabulary Myths, Writing Myths*).

These are the major changes to the third edition that teachers will need to know for planning purposes.

Third Edition Chapter	Second Edition Chapter
1	Chapter 1, plus Features of Language section from Chapter 16
2	Chapter 2
3	Chapter 3, plus Language and Thought from Chapter 16 and Face and Forms of Address from Chapter 4
4	Chapter 5, plus material on code-switching and enregisterment
5	Chapter 6, reordered, plus material on language, identity, and style
6	Chapters 7 and 9
7	Chapter 8, plus new section on Hip-Hop Linguistics
8	Chapter 10
9	Chapter 12
10	Chapter 13
11	Chapter 17, shortened (removal of material on language families)
12	Chapter 19