

A Glance at Language and Linguistics

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PREFACE

Linguists, as admitted by some related scholars, are strange animals. They get very excited about things that the rest of the species seem almost blind to and fail to see what all the fuss is about. This wouldn't be so bad if linguists were an isolated group. But they are not, and what's more they have to teach non-linguists about their subject. One mistake that linguists often make is to assume that to teach linguistics, students should be instilled with the kind of enthusiasm for the subject that linguists themselves have. But not everybody wants to be a linguist and, as a friend of mine once said, not everybody *can* be a linguist. What the dedicated language student wants, however, is not the ability to analyze complex data from languages in exotic regions of the world, or to produce coherent theories that explain why you can't say *his being running* in a more elegant way than anyone else can. What they want from linguistics is to see what the subject can offer them in coming to some understanding of how the language that they are studying

works. It is for these students that this book has been written. This is not to say that this is not a linguistics text. It is, and linguistics permeates every single page. But the difference is that it is not trying to tell you how to become a linguist – and what things to get excited about – but what linguistic theory has to offer for the understanding of the English language. And that's why we have attempted to write such a book.

In compiling the present volume it has been attempted, as far as possible, to explain the basic concepts of language, linguistics, and everything somehow related to them in a very simple and easy-to-understand way. In other words, in writing the present book it has been tried to avoid any unnecessary formalism. The reason is obvious. Because all students need is an understanding of how the linguistics principles work and what they predict

about the language and this can be put over in a less formal way and without going deeply into every ins and outs of linguistic theories. It is deeply hoped that this volume will be great help to everyone who is interested in linguistics, as the basis of language studies, in understanding its fundamental concepts.

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