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Bruce L. Derwing

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*Transformational grammar as a theory of
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TRANSFORMATIONAL
GRAMMAR AS A THEORY OF
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

A STUDY IN THE EMPIRICAL,
CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL
FOUNDATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY
LINGUISTICS

BRUCE L. DERWING

*Assistant Professor of Linguistics
University of Alberta*

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To my parents

Henry C. and Clara L. Derwing

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Preface

This book is an extensively revised and enlarged version of my 1970 Indiana University Ph.D. dissertation, originally written between January 1969 and May 1970, while I served as Visiting Professor of Slavic Languages at the University of Alberta. As with most books, the main contribution of the fellow whose name appears on the title page is one of persistence in collating the ideas of others in some systematic way and in pounding out the text. Every author must build on the work of his predecessors; in this present work, however, the debt owed to numerous collaborators, both witting and unwitting, surely exceeds the average by a considerable margin. I have tried to acknowledge most of the unwitting ones in my bibliography. The witting ones deserve mention here.

My first and greatest debt of gratitude goes to Dr Carleton T. Hodge, Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology at Indiana University and my dissertation supervisor. Without his constant help and encouragement at each of several critical branch-points throughout my graduate career, I simply could never have made it through school; hence this work would never have been contemplated. My fondest wish is to be remembered by some of my own students with but a fraction of the affection, gratitude and esteem I hold for this man.

I also owe a special debt to Dr Fred W. Householder, Jr, Research Professor of Linguistics and Classics at Indiana University, for numerous helpful suggestions, both as a member of my original dissertation committee and afterwards on a purely voluntary basis. Scarcely a page of either version of this book escaped his all-seeing eye unscathed. I should never dare suggest that this book represents an accurate reflection of Dr Householder's philosophical position; nevertheless, whenever I think of the term 'mentor', it is always his name which comes first to mind. It was also at Dr Householder's suggestion that my manuscript was submitted to Cambridge University Press.

A third individual has also had a particularly important role to play in this whole affair. This is Dr Gary D. Prideaux, Associate Professor

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of Linguistics at the University of Alberta. He has taught me, by personal example, everything that the word 'colleague' ought to imply. Initially he provided me with much-needed moral support to get a lonesome work of this sort off the ground; thereafter he served, in effect, as a kind of one-man 'committee in absentia' while the original version of this book was being constructed, and he has continued to serve as my closest confidant and collaborator throughout the revision phase. I can no longer estimate how many ideas of his have become mingled with my own and made their way into these pages unacknowledged; I only know that there are many and that the role which they played in the development of this work has been a significant one.

Another colleague has made his influence very much felt as well. This is Dr William J. Baker, Associate Professor and our 'friendly neighborhood psychologist', who joined the Department with me in 1970. From him I received my first real inkling of the mysterious but fascinating world of the psychologist and learned the value of having an 'enemy' in the camp. There are few substantive improvements introduced in this revised version of my book which did not have their origin in one confrontation or another which I have had with Dr Baker. I hope he does not resent the fact that I gained far more from these exchanges than he did.

I am also grateful to Professor C. I. J. M. Stuart, Head of the Department, not only for many stimulating ideas and suggestions, but also for many practical favors which made the task of preparing the manuscript much easier for me. Among the many students who kept me well-supplied with both counterargument and encouragement, Mr Peter R. Harris was especially helpful as critic and discussant, as well as in providing much valuable bibliographic assistance, particularly in connection with chapters 1, 7 and 8. Special thanks are also due to Mrs Pearl Dahlberg for her cheerful, patient and efficient handling of the typing duties on several successive versions of the same old manuscript, and to Miss Barbara Hoey for her help with the proofs and index.

If this final version is at all comprehensible and reasonably compact, this is due far more to the superb and extensive editorial assistance provided by John Lyons and staff of the Cambridge University Press than it is to me. I also gratefully acknowledge the support provided me by the American Council of Learned Societies during my last year on the Indiana campus, when the ideas realized in this work were first beginning to take shape.

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Finally, I owe a very special thanks to my wife and family for long-suffering consideration and understanding throughout a 'crisis' situation which somehow managed to stretch out into three full years.

B.L.D.

Edmonton, Alberta,

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There can be asked respecting language no other question of a more elementary and at the same time of a more fundamentally important character than this: how is language obtained by us? how does each speaking individual become possessed of his speech? Its true answer involves and determines well-nigh the whole of linguistic philosophy

William Dwight Whitney

The Life and Growth of Language, 1876