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# *Linguistic Behaviour*

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## PREFACE

This book presents in some detail a view of language – that is, language in general, not any particular tongue – as essentially a matter of systematic communicative behaviour. Those last three words point to three major emphases in the book. A glance down the table of Contents will show something of what I regard as the main obstacles to my way of looking at language, and of how I try to remove them. The Select Bibliography might also help. It lists the thirty works I have found most helpfully relevant to what I am doing here, and so it provides a clue to what my book is like. Items in the Bibliography are referred to, in the text and footnotes, only by author's name and a date where necessary; but that use of the Bibliography is strictly secondary.

The spadework for the book was done in courses on the philosophy of language which I have taught at various times and places since 1965. I owe a great deal to students at the Universities of Cambridge, Michigan and British Columbia, and at Cornell and Simon Fraser Universities. My ideas were modified by stimulating discussions of talks which I gave during one-night stands at several campuses of the University of California and at Stanford University, and during longer visits to the Universities of London and Wisconsin.

The shift from lecture notes to the draft of a possible book occupied a year when I was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford. For that privilege, with all its attendant benefits – especially the freedom to think slowly about problems – I am immeasurably in the Center's debt.

Several friends have read the entire work, in one version or another, offering criticisms and suggestions which have led to many improvements. For this remarkable generosity I thank David M. Armstrong, Michael Beebe, Christopher Hookway, Sydney Shoemaker and, above all, Dorothy Edgington.

Secretarial expenses in connection with the last two versions of the book were covered by a grant from the Canada Council, which I gratefully acknowledge.

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## P R E F A C E

At a time when I planned to include an extensive treatment of animal communication, I was helped and welcomed by Peter Marler, David Premack, W. John Smith and Adrian Wenner. In the event, the help counteracted the welcome, for it showed me that I was far too ignorant to be able properly to carry out my plan; and §62 below is all that remains of it. Still, I recommend the borderlands between philosophy and ethology as fertile territory for any philosopher who thinks it important that men are animals.

*Vancouver, B.C.*  
*December 1975*

J.F.B.