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The Study of Language

EIGHTH EDITION

This best–selling textbook provides an engaging and user-friendly introduction to the study of language. Assuming no prior knowledge of the subject, Yule presents information in bite-sized sections, clearly explaining the major concepts in linguistics and all the key elements of language.

This eighth edition has been revised and updated throughout, with major changes in the chapters on origins, phonetics, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, first and second language acquisition, and culture. There are 40 new study questions and over 60 new and updated additions to the Further Readings. To increase student engagement and to foster problem-solving and critical thinking skills, the book includes over 20 new tasks.

An expanded and revised website provides students with further resources. This is the most fundamental and easy-to-use introduction to the study of language.

GEORGE YULE has taught linguistics at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Hawai'i, the University of Minnesota and Louisiana State University. His popular textbook, *The Study of Language*, has been translated into 7 different languages.

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"A very engaging, easy-to-read book that appeals to both native and non-native speakers of English. It is great for both self-study and classroom use. Each chapter offers a unique opportunity to put linguistic concepts into practice with well-crafted study questions, as well as tasks and discussion projects."

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"I searched many years for a text to support my students – mostly K-12 teachers – in understanding and appreciating the intricacies of language; when I found Yule's book, my search was finally over. The book walks novices through the structure and function of language with a series of fascinating and engaging examples. With its clear organization, well-written explanations, and fun reinforcing exercises, the Yule text provides an entry point for all readers."

Professor Deborah Palmer, *University of Colorado Boulder*

"This new updated edition confirms its reputation as the ultimate introduction to the greatest puzzle of the human mind: what is language?"

Dr. Ruggiero Pergola, *University of Bari Aldo Moro*

"I have used *The Study of Language* for thirteen years as a course book for students new to linguistics. It covers most fields comprehensively, but in an interesting and easily assimilated way. The eighth edition includes new content, but there have been notable improvements in the structure. Yule's book remains my firm favorite as an introductory text."

Dr. Stuart Foster, *Halmstad University*

"With each subsequent edition, Yule has maintained his direct and scholarly, yet uncomplicated, manner of writing, consistently instructing students in developing insights about language and languages. His use of multiple languages to illustrate significant concepts about linguistics for students validates languages in a global sense, providing each language with requisite status. Yule's text is thorough but concise, thereby enabling students to steadily build knowledge that is essential for the effective and equitable teaching of students whose first language is not English."

Dr. Melinda Cowart, *Texas Woman's University*

"As a transnational scholar, teacher and, more recently, a mother raising a heritage speaker, the eighth edition with its new addition of heritage languages offers an excellent and all-inclusive guide to diverse and extremely pressing language matters."

Ms Reda Mohammed, *Ph.D. candidate, Linguistics & TESOL, Illinois State University*

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Preface

To the Student

In *The Study of Language*, I have tried to present a comprehensive survey of what is known about language and also of the methods used by linguists in arriving at that knowledge. My main goal has been to provide a broad yet concise treatment of a large number of topics, especially for those who may have had little previous experience with the vocabulary, symbols and descriptions employed in language analysis. I have also created tasks to accompany each chapter, providing opportunities for you to learn more about English and other languages and to explore additional topics in a way that involves problem solving and discovery learning.

There continue to be interesting developments in the study of language, but it is still the case that any mature speaker of a language has a more comprehensive "unconscious" knowledge of how language works than any linguist has yet been able to describe. Consequently, as you read each of the following chapters, take a critical view of the effectiveness of the descriptions, the analyses and the generalizations by measuring them against your own intuitions about how your language works. By the end of the book, you should feel that you do know quite a lot about both the internal structure of language (its form) and the varied uses of language in human life (its function).

At the end of each chapter, there is a section where you can test and apply what you have learned. This section contains:

- **Study questions** that you can use to check if you have understood some of the main points and important terms introduced during that chapter
- **Tasks** that extend the topics covered in the chapter, mostly through exercises in data analysis, with examples from English and a wide range of other languages
- **Discussion topics/projects** that offer opportunities to consider some of the more general, sometimes controversial, language-related topics and to develop your own opinions on issues involving language
- **Further reading** suggestions provided to help you find more detailed treatments of all the topics covered in that chapter

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To the Instructor

Thank you for including *The Study of Language* as part of your course. I originally wrote this book to meet the needs of students who arrived in my introductory courses with little experience of thinking about how language works, and unfamiliarity or confusion regarding the vocabulary used to describe language. I have rewritten the book several times based on feedback from other instructors in similar situations, and have continued to make improvements based on their constructive reviews and to add new topics, mainly in the form of additional tasks. The result is a very comprehensive treatment of a large number of topics, from which you can select those that meet the needs of the students in front of you. The chapters are designed to be self-contained and can be used in any order that fits your syllabus. The exercises that follow each chapter are designed as possible assignments to engage students in research and analysis beyond the basic information in the chapter.

With the benefit of a recent survey among instructors, I have made revisions and additions to Chapters 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 20. Additional material is included on a possible gestural source for language, phonetic analysis using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), movement in syntactic analysis, semantic features, the cooperative principle, hedges, conversational repair, L1 phonological development, later L1 developments, heritage languages, individual bilingualism and the cultural role of gender, particularly neutral gender.

In addition, there are forty new study questions and more than twenty new tasks and topics, with new language data from Greek, Kuku Yalanji, Papiamentu, Portuguese and Tok Pisin. Apart from Sumerian numbers, Koko the gorilla and the game of charades, most of the new topics involve English: associative plural markers, auditory perception in infants, conversational repair, the Danelaw, *do*-support, gesture development, Middle English, mondegreens, pleonasms, pragmatic markers, raciolinguistics, relative clauses, sibilants, strategic competence, and uptalk. Many of the tasks are data based and designed to help to develop analytic, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. More than sixty new and updated references have been added to the Further Reading sections. An expanded and revised study guide can be found on the book's website: www.cambridge.org/yule8.

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