

The Language of Language A Linguistics Course for Starters

(Third Edition)

**Madalena Cruz-Ferreira
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If you've ever wondered why we need concepts like *noun* and *verb* or *word* and *phrase* when discussing language, this book is for you. Deliberately selective in its approach and assuming no prior knowledge of linguistics, *The Language of Language* explores the nature of language and linguists' agreed-upon ways of talking about the object of their inquiry. Our focus is on modes of thinking rather than topic coverage. Our goal is to encourage informed thinking about (why) language matters, so that you can continue puzzling about language issues long after you've worked your way through this book and its companion website.

Now in its third edition, at just over 300 pages and priced to make you want to own it, the book is packed with over 100 commented activities, examples of language play, and fun food for thought, designed to whet your appetite for linguistics and language studies.

The companion workbook, *Lang101 Workbook. Linguistics Exercises & Activities for Starters*, contains 460 more activities for self-study or for the classroom.

Contents outline

1. Language and linguistics
2. Language and languages
3. The grammar of words: words and word parts
4. The grammar of words: word building
5. Speech sounds
6. The grammar of sounds
7. The grammar of sentences: slots and phrases
8. The grammar of sentences: slots and functions
9. The meaning of meaning
10. Meaning in action
11. Language in use
12. Language and speakers

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Reviews

The Language of Language *provides a careful selection of important topics in linguistic inquiry and gives a clear overview of each. And, what must have been a difficult feat indeed, the ideas are presented in a way that is always interesting and frequently amusing. ... It is the ideal course book to choose in countries where either one finds several varieties of English spoken or where students are learning English as a second or foreign language, as is true in much of Asia.*

Dr Gloria Poedjosoedarmo, Independent Scholar, Singapore

[My course] is given in the very first semester, aiming at giving the students a strong base in understanding how language works. Using this book through an active learning process for the second time, I found that the book could become a very strong foundation for them to learn other linguistics subjects. In the following semesters, the students could see clearly why they have to learn those materials [...]. The content of the book is enriched with examples that are familiar with our students' context. This makes it possible for me to explore the content and to relate it to their context. I have been teaching the subject to different groups of students at different institutions using different books. This is the first time I could make this theoretical subject grounded.

Dr Soepriyatna, Sampoerna School of Education, Indonesia

This text offers a clear explanation of the core concepts of linguistics and would be an appropriate choice as a text for an introductory linguistics class. The volume provides a solid base on which the student can build by taking more advanced courses in linguistics.

Dr Amy Thompson, Michigan State University

I find the approach taken by the authors quite refreshing. It is different from other introductory textbooks because the aim of the book, as stated in the preface, is not to be comprehensive but to encourage "informed thinking about issues relating to language and structure ... and the kinds of activities that linguists busy themselves with". The authors have presented the chapter on semantics, for instance, in an interesting and entertaining way that is at once quite challenging to the linguistics students.

Dr Hajar Abdul Rahim, Universiti Sains Malaya

Informative, current, thought-provoking, and reader-friendly. I would encourage my students to buy this book as the language is accessible, and difficult concepts are clearly explained and exemplified. The chapter on discourse is much more comprehensive than in other books as it takes into account current ideas in the study of discourse. It also attempts to establish the important link between real-world knowledge and linguistic knowledge."

Dr Shakila Manan, Universiti Sains Malaya

The book's main strengths are its attempts to avoid unnecessary detail and provide only what the authors consider essential, without filling up the book with more advanced information. I very much like the book's use of discovery as a method for teaching phonetics. It's what most of us try to do in class, but I've almost never seen an introductory linguistics book that makes the pedagogy explicit.

Associate Professor John M. Levis, Iowa State University

About the Authors

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira hails from Portugal, and received her PhD from the University of Manchester, UK. She is an independent scholar, with authored and edited publications on multilingualism, child language, phonology, intonation and the language of science. Her blog, *Being Multilingual*, is featured at AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics), ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association), The Linguist List, OEP (Observatoire Européen du Plurilinguisme), Teaching English (British Council-BBC), TES (Times Educational Supplement) and TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Sunita Anne Abraham was born in Penang, Malaysia, and holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK. She is an Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore, a Fellow of the NUS Teaching Academy, and the proud recipient of a dozen teaching awards, including two *Outstanding University Educator* awards. She serves on several international editorial boards, including the *Journal of Second Language Writing* and the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. Her research and teaching interests include genre analysis, discourse structure, the language of persuasion, and the relationship between reading, writing and thinking.