Preface to the Fifth Edition

When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority.

Samuel Johnson, 'Preface' to *A Dictionary of the English Language*

One sign of immaturity [in a science] is the endless flow of terminology. The critical reader begins to wonder if some strange naming taboo attaches to the terms that a linguist uses, whereby when he dies they must be buried with him.

Dwight Bolinger, *Aspects of Language*, p. 554

It is nearly twenty-five years since the first edition of this book, and the plaint with which I began the preface to that edition remains as valid as ever. What is needed, I said then, is a comprehensive lexicographical survey, on historical principles, of twentieth-century terminology in linguistics and phonetics. And I continued, in that and the subsequent three prefaces, in the following way.

We could use the techniques, well established, which have provided dictionaries of excellence, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The painstaking scrutiny of texts from a range of contexts, the recording of new words and senses on slips, and the systematic correlation of these as a preliminary to representing patterns of usage: such steps are routine for major surveys of general vocabulary and could as readily be applied for a specialized vocabulary, such as the present undertaking. Needless to say, it would be a massive task – and one which, for linguistics and phonetics, has frequently been initiated, though without much progress. I am aware of several attempts to work along these lines, in Canada, Great Britain, Japan and the United States, sometimes by individuals, sometimes by committees. All seem to have foundered, presumably for a mixture of organizational and financial reasons. I tried to initiate such a project myself, twice, but failed both times, for the same reasons. The need for a proper linguistics

dictionary is thus as urgent now as it ever was; but to be fulfilled it requires a combination of academic expertise, time, physical resources and finance which so far have proved impossible to attain.

But how to cope, in the meantime, with the apparently 'endless flow of terminology' which Bolinger, among many others, laments? And how to deal with the enquiries from the *two* kinds of consumer of linguistic and phonetic terms? For this surely is the peculiar difficulty which linguists nowadays have to face – that their subject, despite its relative immaturity, carries immense popular as well as academic appeal. Not only, therefore, is terminology a problem for the academic linguist and phonetician; these days, such people are far outnumbered by those who, for private or professional reasons, have developed more than an incidental interest in the subject. It is of little use intimating that the interest of the outside world is premature, as has sometimes been suggested. The interest exists, in a genuine, responsible and critical form, and requires a comparably responsible academic reaction. The present dictionary is, in the first instance, an attempt to meet that popular demand for information about linguistic terms, pending the fuller, academic evaluation of the subject's terminology which one day may come.

The demand has come mainly from those for whom a conscious awareness of language is an integral part of the exercise of a profession, and upon whom the influence of linguistics has been making itself increasingly felt in recent years. This characterization includes two main groups: the range of teaching and remedial language professions, such as foreign-language teaching or speech and language therapy; and the range of academic fields which study language as part of their concerns, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism and philosophy. It also includes an increasing number of students of linguistics – especially those who are taking introductory courses in the subject at postgraduate or in-service levels. In addition, there are the many categories of first-year undergraduate students of linguistics and phonetics, and (especially since the early 1990s) a corresponding growth in the numbers studying the subject abroad. My aim, accordingly, is to provide a tool which will assist these groups in their initial coming to grips with linguistic terminology, and it is this which motivated the original title of the book in 1980: *A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. The publisher dropped the word *First* from later editions, on the grounds that it had little force, given that there was no 'advanced' dictionary for students to move on to; but, though my book has doubled in size during the intervening period, it still seems as far away from a comprehensive account as it did at the outset. Bolinger's comment still very much obtains.

Coverage

Once a decision about readership had been made, the problem of selecting items and senses for inclusion simplified considerably. It is not the case that the whole of linguistic terminology, and all schools of thought, have proved equally attractive or useful to the above groups. Some terms have been used (and abused) far more than others. For example, COMPETENCE, LEXIS, GENERATE, STRUCTURALISM, MORPHOLOGY and PROSODY are a handful which turn up so often in a student's early experience of the subject that their exclusion would have been unthinkable. The terminology of phonetics, also, is so pervasive that it is a priority for special

attention. On the other hand, there are many highly specialized terms which are unlikely to cause any problems for my intended readership, as they will not encounter them in their initial contact with linguistic ideas. The detailed terminology of, say, glossematics or stratificational grammar has not made so direct an impact on the general consciousness of the above groups. While I have included several of the more important theoretical terms from these less widely encountered approaches, therefore, I have not presented their terminology in any detail. Likewise, some linguistic theories and descriptions have achieved far greater popularity than others – generative grammar, in all its incarnations, most obviously, and (in Great Britain) Hallidayan linguistics and the Quirk reference grammar, for example.

The biases of this dictionary, I hope, will be seen to be those already present in the applied and introductory literature – with a certain amount of systematization and filling-out in places, to avoid gaps in the presentation of a topic; for example, whereas many introductory texts selectively illustrate DISTINCTIVE FEATURES, this topic has been systematically covered in the present book. I devote a great deal of space to the many 'harmless-looking' terms which are used by linguists, where an apparently everyday word has developed a special sense, often after years of linguistic debate, such as FORM, FUNCTION, FEATURE, ACCENT, WORD and SENTENCE. These are terms which, perhaps on account of their less technical appearance, cause especial difficulty at an introductory level. Particular attention is paid to them in this dictionary, therefore, alongside the more obvious technical terms, such as PHONEME, BILABIAL, ADJUNCTION and HYPONYMY.

Bearing in mind the background of my primary readership has helped to simplify the selection of material for inclusion in a second way: the focus was primarily on those terms and senses which have arisen because of the influence of twentieth-century linguistics and phonetics. This dictionary is therefore in contrast with several others, where the aim seems to have been to cover the whole field of language, languages and communication, as well as linguistics and phonetics. My attitude here is readily summarized: I do not include terms whose sense any good general dictionary would routinely handle, such as *alphabet* and *aphorism*. As terms, they owe nothing to the development of ideas in linguistics. Similarly, while such terms as *runic* and *rhyme-scheme* are more obviously technical, their special ranges of application derive from conceptual frameworks other than linguistics. I have therefore not attempted to take on board the huge terminological apparatus of classical rhetoric and literary criticism (in its focus on language), or the similarly vast terminology of speech and language disorders. Nor have I gone down the encyclopedia road, adding names of people, languages and other 'proper names', apart from in the few cases where schools of thought have developed (CHOMSKYAN, BLOOMFIELDIAN, PRAGUE SCHOOL, etc.). Many of these terms form the subject-matter of my companion volume, *The Penguin Dictionary of Language* (1999), which is the second edition of a work that originally appeared as *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Languages* (Blackwell/Penguin, 1992).

In the first edition, to keep the focus sharp on the contemporary subject, I was quite rigorous about excluding several types of term, unless they had edged their way into modern linguistics: the terminology of traditional (pre-twentieth-century) language study, comparative philology, applied language studies (such

as language teaching and speech pathology) and related domains such as acoustics, information theory, audiology, logic and philosophy. However, reader feedback over the years has made it clear that a broader coverage is desirable. Although the definition of, say, *bandwidth*, properly belongs outside of linguistics and phonetics, the frequency with which students encounter the term in their phonetics reading has motivated its inclusion now. A similar broadening of interest has taken place with reference to psychology (especially speech perception), computing and logic (especially in formal semantics). The first edition had already included the first tranche of terms arising out of the formalization of ideas initiated by Chomsky (such as AXIOM, ALGORITHM, PROPOSITION), and the fifth edition has greatly increased its coverage in this area. Recent decades have also brought renewed interest in nineteenth-century philological studies and traditional grammar. The various editions of the book have steadily increased their coverage of these domains, accordingly (though falling well short of a comprehensive account), and this is a particular feature of the fifth edition.

The new edition is now not far short of a quarter of a million words. It contains just over 5,000 terms, identified by items in boldface typography, grouped into over 3,000 entries. Several other locutions, derived from these headwords, are identified through the use of inverted commas.

Treatment

I remain doubtful even now whether the most appropriate title for this book is 'dictionary'. The definitional parts of the entries, by themselves, were less illuminating than one might have expected; consequently it proved necessary to introduce in addition a more discursive approach, with several illustrations, to capture the significance of a term. Most entries accordingly contain an element of encyclopedic information, often about such matters as the historical context in which a term was used, or the relationship between a term and others from associated fields. At times, owing to the absence of authoritative studies of terminological development in linguistics, I have had to introduce a personal interpretation in discussing a term; but usually I have obtained my information from standard expositions or (see below) specialists. A number of general reference works were listed as secondary sources for further reading in the early editions of this book, but this convention proved unwieldy to introduce for all entries, as the size of the database grew, and was dropped in the fourth edition.

My focus throughout has been on standard usage. Generative grammar, in particular, is full of idiosyncratic terminology devised by individual scholars to draw attention to particular problems; one could fill a whole dictionary with the hundreds of conditions and constraints that have been proposed over the years, many of which are now only of historical interest. If they attracted a great deal of attention in their day, they have been included; but I have not tried to maintain a historical record of origins, identifying the originators of terms, except in those cases where a whole class of terms had a single point of origin (as in the different distinctive-feature sets).

I have tried to make the entries as self-contained as possible, and not relied on obligatory cross-references to other entries to complete the exposition of a sense. I have preferred to work on the principle that, as most dictionary-users open a

dictionary with a *single* problematic term in mind, they should be given a satis-factory account of that term as immediately as possible. I therefore explain *com-petence* under COMPETENCE, *performance* under PERFORMANCE, and so on. As a consequence of the interdependence of these terms, however, this procedure means that there must be some repetition: at least the salient characteristics of the term *performance* must be incorporated into the entry for COMPETENCE, and vice versa. This repetition would be a weakness if the book were read from cover to cover; but a dictionary should not be used as a textbook.

As the book has grown in size, over its various editions, it has proved increas-ingly essential to identify major lexical variants as separate headwords, rather than leaving them 'buried' within an entry, so that readers can find the location of a term quickly. One of the problems with discursive encyclopedic treatments is that terms can get lost; and a difficulty in tracking terms down, especially within my larger entries, has been a persistent criticism of the book. I have lost count of the number of times someone has written to say that I should include X in the next edition, when X was already there – in a place which seemed a logical location to me, but evidently not to my correspondent. The biggest change be-tween the fifth and earlier editions has been to bite this bullet. The new edition increased the number of 'X see Y' entries. All 'buried' terminology has been extracted from within entries and introduced into the headword list.

Within an entry, the following conventions should be noted:

The main terms being defined are printed in boldface. In the fifth edition, I have dropped the convention (which some readers found confusing) of including inflectional variants immediately after the headword; these are now included in bold within an entry, on their first mention.

I have also increased the amount of guidance about usage, especially relevant to readers for whom English is not a first language, by adding word-class identi-fiers for single-word headwords, and incorporating an illustration of usage into the body of an entry: for example, the entry on INESSIVE contains a sentence beginning 'The inessive case ('the inessive') is found in Finnish . . .' – a conven-tion which illustrates that *inessive* can be used adjectivally as well as nominally.

Terms defined elsewhere in this dictionary are printed in SMALL CAPITALS within an entry (disregarding inflectional endings) – but only on their *first* appearance within an entry, and only where their technical status is important for an appreciation of the sense of the entry.

In this edition, all abbreviations have been included in a separate table (see pp. xiii–xxi) and – in response to repeated reader requests – a separate table of symbols has been added (see pp. xxii–xxiv).