

Preface

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Aspect and Meaning in Slavic and Indic

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Preface

The features that set this work apart from numerous recent publications on aspect are chiefly two. Firstly, it looks closely at the language family, Slavic, that has been the original source of assumptions and data about aspect in linguistics. These assumptions and data have been re-examined here and fresh data introduced. Secondly, it looks upon the object of linguistic study, natural language, from an angle shared by thinkers on language whose prominence is still outside linguistics: Wittgenstein, Bakhtin and Derrida. Although direct reference has been made only to the first, the spirit of the other two is not absent. In the case of Wittgenstein the fascinating possibility exists that a significant feature of his work, his discussion of 'aspect-seeing' in the *Philosophical Investigations*, was inspired by his intensive study of Russian and his close friendship with Mikhail Bakhtin's brother Nicholas, who eventually founded the Department of Linguistics at the University of Birmingham, England. To the above two features may be added a third — lesser — one, the exploratory and contrastive account of aspect in Indic, chiefly Bengali, which will no doubt attract revisions and elaborations from experts in these languages. One work certain to have an impact is Colin P. Masica's forthcoming book *The Indo-Aryan Languages*.

In revising the dissertation which is the basis of this book, attention has been paid chiefly to removing egregious errors, and to better documentation of assumptions and proposed or hypothesized rules. The current intellectual relevance of the linguistic ideas I worked with some years ago has, I hope, been brought into focus.

I wish to express my warmest gratitude to Konrad Koerner for his friendship and continuing support, and to Paul Friedrich for seventeen years guidance and fruitful exchange. Prof. Zbigniew Gołąb, my kind teacher of Slavic linguistics, I would like to say: "*dziękuję bardzo*." I also wish to thank the two anonymous referees for their constructive criticisms of the manuscript.

Any errors and omissions that may be found in this work remain, of course, the sole responsibility of the author.

