

# Acknowledgements

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**Language and Experience in 17th-Century British  
Philosophy**

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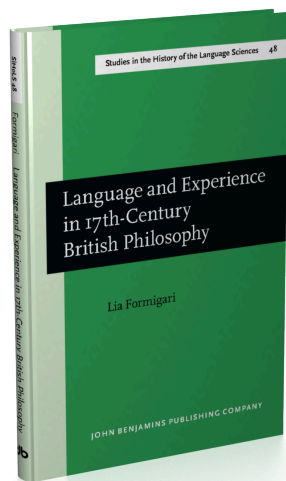
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## Acknowledgements

This book is a revised version of a volume originally published in 1970 under the title *Linguistica ed empirismo nel Seicento inglese* (Bari: Laterza). Written in the heyday of the reappraisal of Saussure's linguistic theory, which was given new impetus in Italy by Tullio De Mauro's edition of Saussure's *Cours* (1967), it was born out of the need to fill a gap that I felt existed in linguistic historiography between the tradition of philosophical semantics and contemporary theories of the sign. Since then, the history of linguistics has developed as a discipline in its own right and a great deal of material has appeared to fill that gap. In the present *embarras de richesse* two opposite trends can be distinguished in the available literature: one tends to emphasize continuity 'from Locke to Saussure', the other lumps all 17th- and 18th-century theories of language together under the heading of "representationalism" and thus stresses the breach that separates them from contemporary theories. An exploration of linguistic theories and their extra-linguistic basis in 17th-century Britain such as the one attempted in this book should still be useful today, at least as it would help avoid these two extremes.

In sending this book to press, I want to give my warmest thanks to Vivian Salmon of Keble College, Oxford, who has long encouraged the project of an English translation, and to Konrad Koerner, who has welcomed it in his series and has carefully read the prefinal version of the text and made a number of useful suggestions for its improvement. I am also deeply indebted to Maria Valentini, who assisted me in the translation of the book, and to William Dodd, who has read the manuscript. Both of them have helped me avoid the *idola* of my mother-tongue. All remaining shortcomings are mine.

Lia Formigari

Rome, December 1987

