

## Preface

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This is a personal book: it reflects my own view of the field of language contact. It is not an attempt to provide an exhaustive account of the many different approaches that other scholars have adopted in studying the subject, and it is not a bland survey of all and only those points on which there is general agreement among specialists. (Taking this last approach to textbook writing would have made for a very short book, because controversies are found in every corner of the field of language-contact studies – a typical and probably desirable trait in a lively, fast-developing field.) I have tried to provide suggestions for readings that will enable interested students to explore some of the controversial topics, including of course other people's views. The focus of the book is on linguistic results of contact rather than on the sociolinguistics or psycholinguistics of languages in contact.

Much of the book should be accessible to readers with no training in linguistics, but the book is aimed at readers who have a basic knowledge of linguistics, so that they know what phonemes and morphemes and relative clauses and language families are. A glossary is provided to help readers with little or no background in linguistics to follow the text, and to provide summary information about the locations and genetic affiliations of languages and language families. Inevitably, given the focus on linguistic results, examples must often be discussed in technical terms; to avoid overloading the book with technical discussions, the intricacies of the examples are not described in great detail, but sources are given that will permit interested readers to find more detailed accounts.

Each chapter ends with a list of sources from which information in the chapter is drawn, together with suggestions for further reading on the various topics. Although no specific recommendations for term-paper topics are included, the suggested readings should help students find topics for research projects.

A number of colleagues and students have read all or parts of the book in manuscript. I am especially grateful to those who have provided corrections and comments for improvement: Jacques Arends, Nancy Dorian, Anna Fenyvesi, Anthony Grant, Beatriz Lorente, André Mather, Lesley Milroy,

Becky Moreton, Saskia Moraru-de Ruijter, Christina Paulston, and Mark Sicoli. Some other people have given me specific pieces of information and have checked data and analyses for me; they are mentioned individually in the relevant chapters. I am also very grateful to all the students who have attended various incarnations of my language-contact course – first at the Linguistic Institute at The Ohio State University in 1993, then in a week-long class at the Dutch Graduate School of Linguistics in Amsterdam in 1995, then in three different terms at the University of Pittsburgh, and most recently in a four-week course at the Linguistic Institute at the University of Illinois (1999). All of them have heard me explore the ideas incorporated in this book, and most have seen drafts ranging from a few to most chapters of it; and many of them have asked hard questions or offered useful comments that have led to improvements in the final version. It should (but won't) go without saying that none of these people is responsible for any errors and infelicities that remain.