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Language Myths



Synopsis

A unique collection of original essays by 21 of the world's leading linguists. The topics discussed focus on some of the most popular myths about language: The Media Are Ruining English; Children Can't Speak or Write Properly Anymore; America is Ruining the English Language. The tone is lively and entertaining throughout and there are cartoons from Doonesbury and The Wizard of Id to illustrate some of the points. The book should have a wide readership not only amongst students who want to read leading linguists writing about popular misconceptions but also amongst the large number of people who enjoy reading about language in general.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Language is a part of us all and is tightly woven into human experience. Yet, although research into language has increased at a phenomenal rate over the last fifty years, misconceptions abound. This illuminating and highly readable collection of essays explores some of the myths, for example: standards of children's speech and writing have declined; women talk too much; the 'purity' of the English language is under threat; some languages are more attractive to the ear or are harder to learn than others; the media has a detrimental effect on language. These widely held views are questioned and shown to be based on inadequate or false information, or simply, not to be true. Other essays explore spelling problems, attitudes towards accents, controversies over changes in language, and the belief that some languages have no grammar. Written by a team of leading linguists, Language Myths contains many valuable insights and provides a fascinating introduction into the way language works. The contributors are: Jean Aitchison -- John Algeo -- Lars-Gunnar

Andersson -- Laurie Bauer -- Winifred Bauer -- Edward Carney -- J. K. Chambers -- Jenny Cheshire -- John H. Esling -- Nicholas Evans -- Howard Giles and Nancy Niedzielski -- Ray Harlow -- Janet Holmes -- Anthony Lodge -- James Milroy -- Lesley Milroy -- Michael Montgomery -- Dennis R. Preston -- Peter Roach -- Peter Trudgill -- Walt Wolfram

Peter Trudgill and Laurie Bauer are both respected linguists. Trudgill has written many books for Penguin (including Sociolinguistics which has sold 130,000 copies since it was first published in 1974). Other contributors include Jean Aitchison (Professor of Language at Oxford), Lars Gunnar-Andersson (co-author of Bad Language with Trudgill) and Janet Holmes (Women, Men and Politeness, 1995, Longman). Peter Trudgill lives in Lausanne (and sometimes Norwich.) Laurie Bauer lives in New Zealand.

It's probably because I have been told most of the myths already, but I can imagine this to be very educational reading for many.

This book provides a fun way of looking at human confusing looks at languages, human common stereotypes, misconceptions as well as misunderstandings. This book provides the ability to see languages as different forms of expression, maturity level, and how language, humans, and our opinions about one another are closely related through the use of our language.

Is it really wrong to end an English sentence with a preposition? Is it really an affront to the English language that the noun "party" has mutated into the verb "to party" or that business has introduced the verb "to finalize"? Is the British accent really superior to the American accent? Is Spanglish a real language or something to be resisted? What is the proper past tense of "to dive": "dove" or "dived"? The authors and editors of "Language Myths" have presented a cogent set of essays which set the record straight on a variety of language topics. They illustrate how social biases shape our perceptions of language use. They discuss the mechanisms that drive the change and evolution of language, how subtle distinctions are refined, and how the language is normalized and simplified through the introduction of new words. A fascinating read. A wonderful source of "trivia" for conversation. A set of thought provoking arguments that may help reshape your world view. A great defense for the next time some grammarian corrects your speech or writing -- it may just be that their prescribed usage is the deviant form, not yours.

I like this book, its required for one of my classes. It breaks down language myths in small chapters and then explains what makes the myth untrue in easy to understand terms.

Love this book loaded with great informationUsed in a class at university.

Interesting but not comprehensive.

Interesting ideas!!

Language is wonderful, I absolutely love this book!

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