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The 5 Minute Linguist: Bite-Sized Essays On Language And Languages



Synopsis

The Five-Minute Linguist has been a popular introduction to the subject of language because it is succinct, clear, accurate, -- and fun to read. Now in its second edition, updated and expanded, the book has been warmly received by readers across the globe because it offers quick and reliable answers to questions about language that most of us have, such as: How many languages are there? What was the first language? What causes foreign accents? Are dialects dying? The book is the work of experts, authoritative and full of facts, but not technical or aimed at an audience of scholars. It is used by beginning students of linguistics and anthropology, and has broad appeal for general readers, people who read for enjoyment as well as knowledge. It has a conversational style that feels more like a series of fireside chats than a college textbook, because it started life as a series of five-minute radio broadcasts. Its chapters are short, suitable for browsing or reading on the run. But although it is intentionally light in tone, the book is full of up-to-date information, written by a cross-section of leading linguists in the U.S. and abroad. The second edition of the book was produced under the sponsorship of the Linguistic Society of America and the (U.S.) National Museum of Language.

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Customer Reviews

I have been recommending this fantastic collection of brief essays, which started out as a National Public Radio series, to many fellow translators/interpreters/linguists around the world, including my translation students at UC-San Diego. It's a wonderful book with easy-to-read essays penned by some of the most influential people in their individual fields. Even though I've been in the languages

industry for a long time, I learned a tremendous amount from this book (ours is a very big field). In the early reading stages, I was marking my favorite essays with an asterisk in the table of contents, but I stopped because I realized I was marking every single one of them. Some of my absolute favorites are: * What does it mean to be bilingual? * How does the brain cope with multiple languages? * Where does grammar come from? * How many languages are there in the world? * What is Cajun and where does it come from? * Is Latin really dead? * What causes foreign accents? * Why do we need translators if we have dictionaries? Even though these essays are written by highly educated and widely published professionals, they have all made a great effort to make their texts accessible to those who do not have a background in linguistics. Some of the topics might sound a bit dry, but after reading just a few sentences, you will want to read more. In fact, as opposed to how I feel about many other works in this field, I thought some of the essays could have been much longer! I really enjoyed the newly acquired knowledge, and it's so easy to read and digest that this is one of the books I keep on my desk for easy reference. For instance, if I want to refresh my memory about creoles and pidgins, this is my go-to book.

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