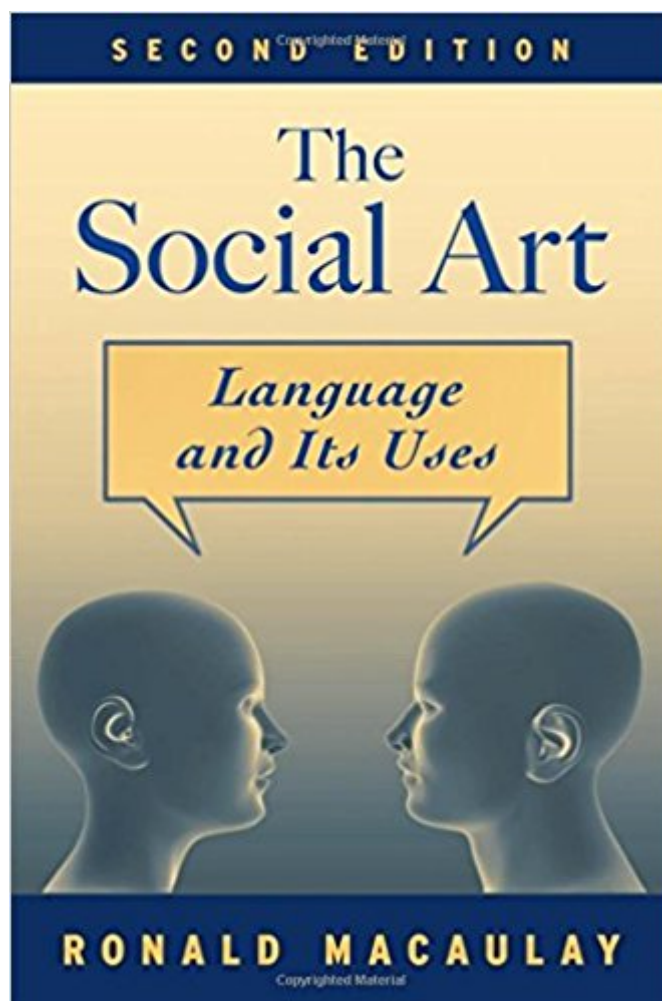


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The Social Art: Language And Its Uses



Synopsis

The Social Art is an engagingly written, highly accessible tour through the world of languages. Macaulay uses jokes, anecdotes, quotations, and examples to introduce readers to the full range of current linguistic knowledge, covering in 35 chapters, topics like language acquisition, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, dialects, conversation, narrative, swearing, and many others. In this revised and expanded second edition, Macaulay brings the book up to date with the last decade of progress in linguistics, adding more American examples, and updating bibliographies. Two new chapters have been added, on theories of language development and on the evolution of language. The Social Art is perfect for general readers and students who want to learn about what it is that linguists do.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Despite its academic flavor, this survey of language will entertain the general reader. Its 33 short chapters range from children's language acquisition to semantics, syntax, creoles and language around the world. Macaulay, a linguistics professor at Pitzer College in California, highlights unspoken rules of conversation, decodes the puffery of advertisements, considers the finer points of insults and swearing and explains how the interactive nature of language affects what we say and how we say it. Calling Standard English a "nonregional dialect" promulgated by an educated minority, he argues that it may not be superior to nonstandard dialects in its logic, regularity or beauty. He also disputes the popular "linguistic relativity theory," finding insufficient evidence for its proponents' claim that people's thought processes are molded by the particular language they

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As familiar and pedestrian as it seems, everyday speech conceals a world of mystery. Macaulay invites the reader to explore this world as he investigates the way children learn their native tongue, the way adults acquire a second language, the way Old English transformed itself into modern English, and the way words enchant, beguile, frustrate, or seduce us in various settings. How is it, for instance, that English, Russian, Pima, and Laguna children all use almost the same words to refer to their fathers and mothers? In search of an answer, Macaulay clarifies the nature of a child's preverbal babbling, in which stop consonants (m, p, d) occur with remarkable regularity. And how is it that a word (humor) originally meaning "water" or "liquid" now refers to one's sense of the laughable? Only a foray into medieval physiology can illuminate the matter. But whether the topic is nursery rhymes, literature, dialects, rhetoric, or profanity, Macaulay sweeps aside the obvious and uncovers riddles and surprises. Itself a delightful introduction to linguistics, the book concludes with helpful recommendations for further reading. Bryce Christensen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

good book for college course i had cheaper than bookstore

I'm not for sure about this book. I got it for my daughter for her college classes that she sent me a list of books she needs for the up coming semester in the Summer. I'm guessing she likes it. She got wonderful grades in all of her classes and hasn't said anything to me about any problems with the book.

I found this a decent, though not outstanding, survey of linguistics. I'd hand it to a monolingual English speaker who was curious about linguistics. I wouldn't hand it to a multilingual or to someone who already knows something about the subject. In fact, I'm far more satisfied with David Crystal's Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language as a survey both for browsing and the more serious lay reader. I suppose my real complaint *is* that the book is oriented toward monolingual English speakers, which I am not. I feel a more interesting introduction to linguistics would have included more on other languages. Not bad, mind you, but understand its limitations.

This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in language or linguistics at any level of

discipline. Macaulay's style is informative and approachable--how refreshing it is to read a book on the topic of language that utilizes an easily approachable one! The chapters are quite short but make their points and present their theories clearly and succinctly, never drudging out boring pedantry just to fill pages. His is a very down-to-earth style and approach to this often lofty topic.

I loved this book because it was easier to read than my other two Anthropology 104 textbooks, *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation* and *The workings of language*. The best feature of this book is the glossary, which gives you meanings to some of the most used terms in the book. It has 33 chapters and it reads quickly like an elementary school english textbook.

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