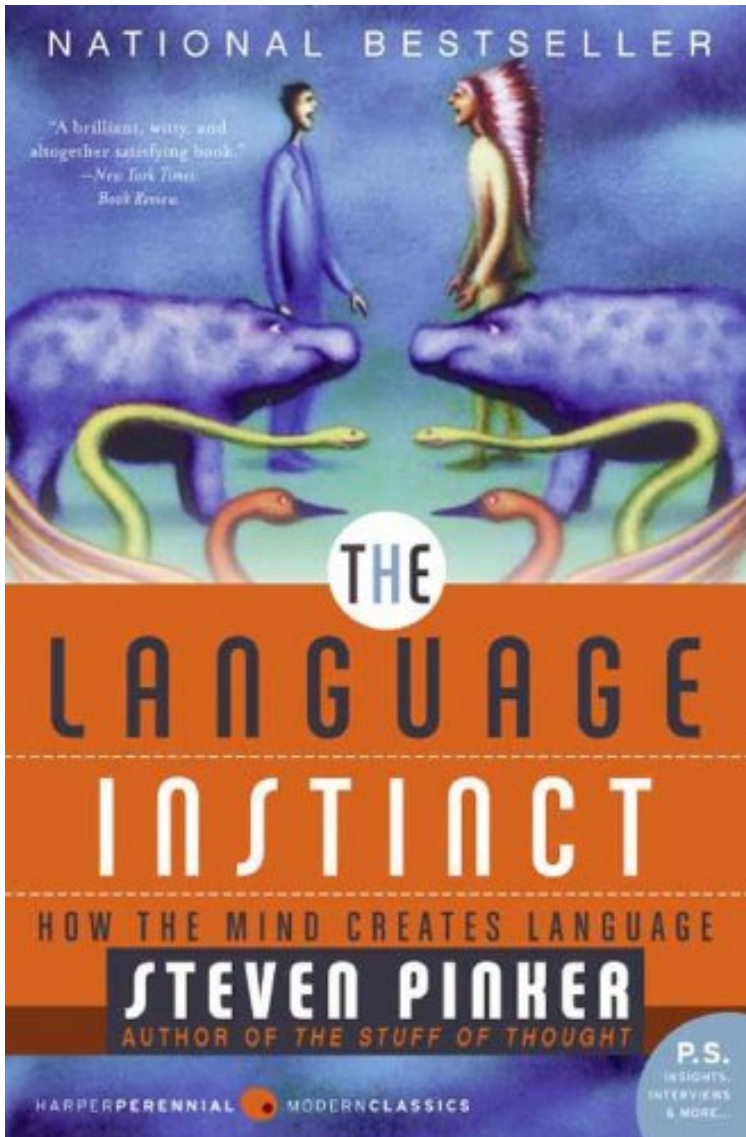


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The Language Instinct: How The Mind Creates Language



Par Steven Pinker
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[Download] The Language Instinct: How The Mind Creates Language

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe classic book on the development of human language by the worlds leading expert on language and the mind.In this classic, the world's expert on language and mind lucidly explains everything you always wanted to know about language: how it works, how children learn it, how it changes, how the brain computes it, and how it evolved. With deft use of examples of humor and wordplay, Steven Pinker weaves our vast knowledge of language into a compelling story: language is a human instinct, wired into our brains by evolution.The Language Instinctreceived the William James Book Prize from the

American Psychological Association and the Public Interest Award from the Linguistics Society of America. This edition includes an update on advances in the science of language since *The Language Instinct* was first published. From Publishers Weekly: A three-year-old toddler is "a grammatical genius"--master of most constructions, obeying adult rules of language. To Pinker, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology psycholinguist, the explanation for this miracle is that language is an instinct, an evolutionary adaptation that is partly "hard-wired" into the brain and partly learned. In this exciting synthesis--an entertaining, totally accessible study that will regale language lovers and challenge professionals in many disciplines--Pinker builds a bridge between "innatists" like MIT linguist Noam Chomsky, who hold that infants are biologically programmed for language, and "social interactionists" who contend that they acquire it largely from the environment. If Pinker is right, the origins of language go much further back than 30,000 years ago (the date most commonly given in textbooks)--perhaps to *Homo habilis*, who lived 2.5 million years ago, or even eons earlier. Peppared with mind-stretching language exercises, the narrative first unravels how babies learn to talk and how people make sense of speech. Professor and co-director of MIT's Center for Cognitive Science, Pinker demolishes linguistic determinism, which holds that differences among languages cause marked differences in the thoughts of their speakers. He then follows neurolinguists in their quest for language centers in the brain and for genes that might help build brain circuits controlling grammar and speech. Pinker also argues that claims for chimpanzees' acquisition of language (via symbols or American Sign Language) are vastly exaggerated and rest on skimpy data. Finally, he takes delightful swipes at "language mavens" like William Safire and Richard Lederer, accusing them of rigidity and of grossly underestimating the average person's language skills. Pinker's book is a beautiful hymn to the infinite creative potential of language. Newbridge Book Clubs main selection; BOMC and QPB alternates.

Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal: Following fast on the heels of Joel Davis's *Mother Tongue* (LJ 12/93) is another provocative and skillfully written book by an MIT professor who specializes in the language development of children. While Pinker covers some of the same ground as did Davis, he argues that an "innate grammatical machinery of the brain" exists, which allows children to "reinvent" language on their own. Basing his ideas on Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar theory, Pinker describes language as a "discrete combinatorial system" that might easily have evolved via natural selection.

Pinker steps on a few toes (language mavens beware!), but his work, while controversial, is well argued, challenging, often humorous, and always fascinating. Most public and academic libraries will want to add this title to their collections. - Laurie Bartolini, Lincoln Lib., Springfield, Ill. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.