



Language Matters: A Guide to Everyday Questions About Language

By Donna Jo Napoli, Vera Lee-Schoenfeld



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Is Ebonics really a dialect or simply bad English? Do women and men speak differently? Will computers ever really learn human language? Does offensive language harm children? These are only a few of the issues surrounding language that crop up every day. Most of us have very definite opinions on these questions one way or another. Yet as linguists Donna Jo Napoli and Vera Lee-Schoenfeld point out in this short and thoroughly readable volume, many of our most deeply held ideas about the nature of language and its role in our lives are either misconceived or influenced by myths and stereotypes.

Language Matters provides a highly informative tour of the world of language, examining these and other vexing and controversial language-related questions. Throughout, Napoli and Lee-Schoenfeld encourage and lead the reader to use common-sense and everyday experience rather than preconceived notions or technical linguistic expertise. Both their questions and their conclusions are surprising, sometimes provocative, and always entertaining.

This thoroughly revised second edition updates the book with a new co-author, and includes new chapters on language and power, language extinction, and what it is linguists actually do. *Language Matters* is sure to engage both general readers and students of language and linguistics at any level.



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