The Language Myth

Language is central to our lives, the cultural tool that arguably sets us apart from other species. Some scientists have argued that language is innate, a type of unique human ‘instinct’ pre-programmed in us from birth. In this book, Vyvyan Evans argues that this received wisdom is, in fact, a myth.

Debunking the notion of a language ‘instinct’, Evans demonstrates that language is related to other animal forms of communication; that languages exhibit staggering diversity; that we learn our mother tongue drawing on general properties and abilities of the human mind, rather than an inborn ‘universal’ grammar; that language is not autonomous but is closely related to other aspects of our mental lives; and that, ultimately, language and the mind reflect and draw upon the way we interact with others in the world.

Compellingly written and drawing on cutting-edge research, The Language Myth sets out a forceful alternative to the received wisdom, showing how language and the mind really work.

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The Language Myth

Why Language Is Not an Instinct

VYVYAN EVANS
For Andrea Tyler
The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.

John F. Kennedy
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Acknowledgements

I have wanted to write this book since I was a graduate student. But some things are better for the time it takes to grow, experience and learn. The specific impetus for this book was a challenge made to me by Stéphanie Pourcel, on Brighton pier, of all places. Her challenge, a number of years ago now, was to explain why the language-as-instinct thesis, the thesis associated with Noam Chomsky and his followers, is wrong. This book is my response to that challenge. I hope it does that job. More than that, I hope it fulfils the greater task of explaining how I think language works, how language relates to the mind, and what this reveals about what it means to be human.

A large number of colleagues have supported the research and the writing that has gone into this book. For logistical support, specific advice or simply responding to queries, I gratefully acknowledge Ben Bergen, Andy Clark, Ewa Dąbrowska, Adele Goldberg, George Lakoff, Ineke Mennen, Thora Tenbrink, Mike Tomasello, Mark Turner and Mike Wheeler. For detailed feedback on chapters, I am extremely indebted to Ben Ambridge, Mihailo Antović, Bastien Boutonnet, Vivien Mast, Svetoslava Antonova-Baumann and Alan Wallington. I am particularly indebted to Paul Ibbotson: Paul went way beyond the call of duty, and fearlessly read quite literally an entire draft of the book. His very extensive comments have shaped my presentation of various aspects of the book’s content. I hope he approves of how I have responded to, and incorporated, his advice. I am also grateful for the immensely detailed and helpful advice provided by a number of anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the support and care I have received from my editor at Cambridge University Press, Andrew Winnard. Andrew is a paragon of sound judgement and
Acknowledgements

efficiency, and has provided extremely helpful advice on many aspects of the book. I hope to have done justice to the support he has afforded me.

This book is dedicated to my former Ph.D. supervisor, colleague, co-author and dear friend, Andrea Tyler. For a number of years, Ande and I have been intellectual co-conspirators in the language-as-use thesis – the thesis I present in the pages that follow. I hope she approves of what I have done in my part of the conspiracy.