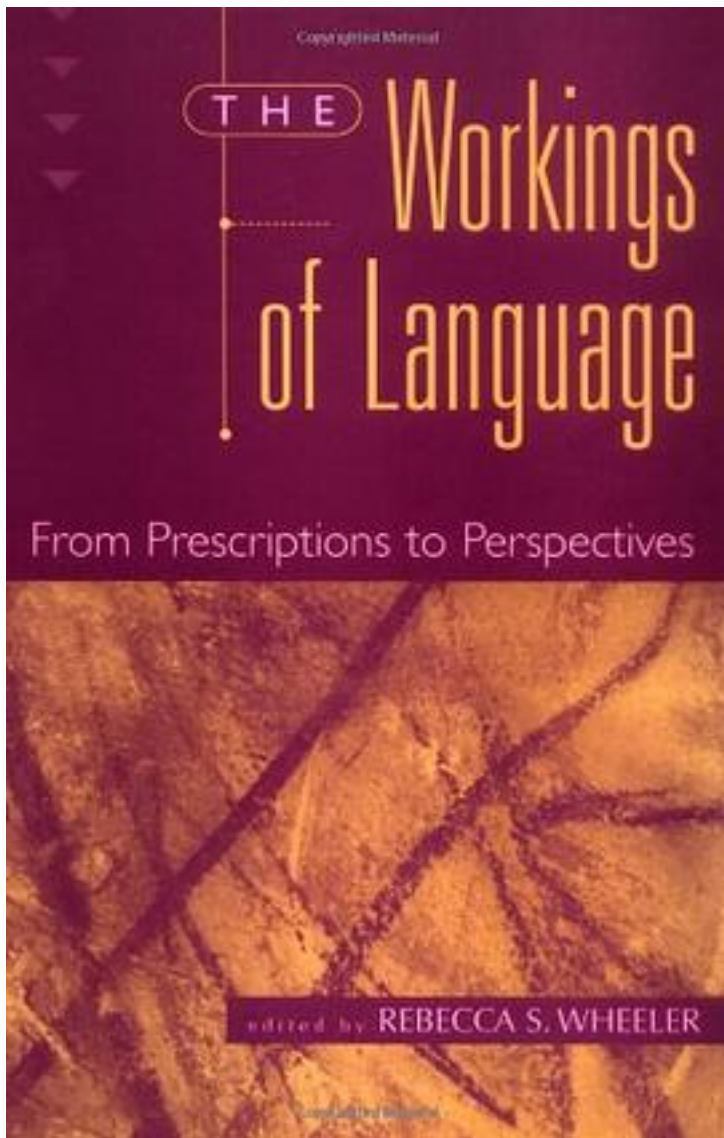


The Workings of Language



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The essays in this book help to make sense of the workings of language in our everyday world--on the personal, local, national, and international levels. The authors are all linguists, seeking to help readers free themselves of language prejudices, thus opening the way to better informed views on the function of language in society, a more balanced treatment in schools, and more linguistically-sound public policies. Defusing Chicken-Little prognostications about English, this volume suggests that dark claims about language are not to be taken at face value. Instead, these claims function as a signal: time to step back. Offering just such a time-out, eminent linguists explore the fuller picture underlying language in our society, examining prescriptivism, Black English, Ozark English, American Sign Language, English-Only, and Endangered Languages. After helping stomp out such linguistic fires, the linguists showcase the potent workings of language: world englishes, language and politics, media, prejudice, creativity, gender, and humor, thus opening the way to better informed views on the function of language in schools, and more linguistically sound public policies.

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