

The Hidden Side of Babel

Contents

Introduction: The Fabulous Mystery of Language; The World of Conferences;
A Little History

Part 1 Messages and Contents: What the Interpreter Says

- 1 Language as a Game: From Words to Acts; Stereotyping; Context; Point of View
- 2 This Side of Words and Beyond Them: An Out of the Ordinary Invitation;
The Physical Weight of Words
- 3 The Implied: The Implicature in the Utterance; The Implicature in Enunciation; The Melody
in Words; The Hidden Side of Words; The Slippery Notion of Truth in Language
- 4 The Motive: The Interpreter as a Bridge; Motivation
- 5 Divergent or Contradictory Signals: Contradictions; Manipulation
- 6 The Two Axes: Conscious and Unconscious Acts of Perception and Memory
- 7 Simultaneity of Operations: The Concept of the Whole

Part 2 The Functioning of the Interpreter: What the Interpreter Does

- 8 Recapitulation about our Working Method
- 9 Preliminary Conclusions
- 10 Strategies: Strategies in Conversation
- 11 Expectations and Social Anticipation: Anticipation and Foresight
- 12 Protocol and Ritual: The Ritual of Words; Manipulation of Words and Ritual;
The Wear and Tear of Rituals
- 13 Raising the Curtain: Cracks in Scenarios
- 14 The Standpoint of the Interpreter: Personal Responsibility and Ethics

Part 3 How Simultaneous Interpreting Works: Borrowing from other Disciplines to Explain its Functioning

- 15 Tying up Loose Ends: Words and Labels
- 16 Chain Reaction: Perception and Memory; Obverse and Reverse
- 17 Interference: Interference in Production and Reception; Changing our Viewpoint;
More Cases of Interference of Different Types; Comparing Examples
- 18 Misinterpreting
- 19 Words in Action
- 20 A Cross-Cultural Approach to the Sign: On Polisemy

Part 4 Looking Inside: The Inner Interpreter

- 21 The Inner Interpreter: Attention – Focus – The Scientific Orientation in Everyday Life
- 22 On Variance and Invariance: On Invariance; Looking for “Invariants” in Sciences
- 23 On Understanding
- 24 Delving into our Brain: Our “Three” Brains; Our Neocortex; Our Converging
Hypotheses

Part 5 Reconstructing Babel from Within: Synthesis and Conclusions

- 25 Babel Crumbling Down: A few Contemporary Instances of Disruption and Collapse
- 26 A New Horizon: Synthesis; Mental Organizers; The Sky is the Limit

A Final Word

Glossary

Bibliography

Out of an enormously rich variety of elements of all sorts that bombard us, the interpreter within will select and present some organized “units” which he will eventually translate again, if necessary. (p. 335)

She follows this with a discussion of abstracting; a section on use of the scientific orientation in everyday life; and dating and indexing.

Laura takes us into the theatrical world in Chapter 13, “Raising the Curtain.” She enrolled in acting courses, and experienced a variety of activities, including non-verbal ones, inspired by the method developed and applied by Stanislavski and his successor, Lee Strasberg. In a scene between two actors, she notes that the lack of any action, look, or word to justify Actor A’s tone and reaction may bewilder Actor B. As she says,

This shows that comprehension is not exclusively rooted in words, that it is not only linked to logic and reasoning as expressed through words but it is also related – perhaps even predominately so – to the logic and energy of actions... (p.221)

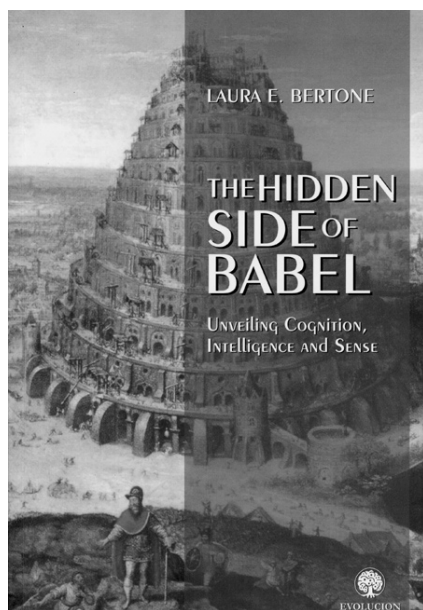
So perhaps others of us would do well to participate in acting classes to improve our silent-level abilities – and therefore our abilities to understand and be understood – when speaking in our individual versions of our common English language.

Laura provides a useful take on improving understanding by considering the things that block, prevent or delay it.

Either too much or too little information. Not knowing answers to the following: Who? To whom? Where? When? How? For what purpose? Erroneous attribution of motive and intent; lack of background information or failure to retrieve it; wrong or stereotyped scenarios; reversal of the natural orders of abstraction; taking the map for the territory; confusion, identification, jumping to conclusions; interference; contradictory signals; double binds; dispersion, fixation. (p. 365)

A flaw in *Babel* is the lack of an index, which would enable the reader to find material on specific topics. However, browsing through the cartoons, illustrations, and text, one can readily appreciate the richness of the material.

I, who usually don’t like to reread books, have an urge to dig in once again as soon as I have *The Hidden Side of Babel* in my hands. I find Laura’s excitement about language contagious, a contagion which I urge you to expose yourself to.



*Contact the
IGS office to
purchase.*
