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English Language and Linguistics: A Simplified Approach

D.S. Paul

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As English has evolved from Latin, Greek, Roman, French and many other languages over centuries, and not made by a computer, there are many asymmetries, inconsistencies and paradoxes, which are very interesting to read:

(i) We drive in a parkway and park in a driveway. (ii) When we transport something by car, it is called a *shipment,* but when we transport something by ship, it is called *cargo.* (iii) We call it *newsprint* when it contains no printing but when we put print on it, we call it a *newspaper*.

The book presents a large number of such interesting incongruities about English language. There are many striking facts about English:

(i) *Rhythm* is the only word in English made without using any vowel. (ii) *Dreamt* is the only word in English that ends in *mt.* (iii) Only two words in English have all the vowels in order—*facetiously* and *abstemiously.* (iv) There is a sentence that uses seven identical words in a row and still makes sense:
It is true for all that that that that 'that' that that refers to is not the same that that that refers to.

The book presents a number of such interesting facts about English.

Some prefixes like *dis, non,* and *im* are so integrated with words that those words seem to be non-existent without the respective prefix or at least the use is grossly curtailed without them. For example, we always use the words *disgruntled nonchalant, nondescript, immaculate,* etc. The words *gruntled, chalant, descript,* and *maculate,* are nowhere to be seen in texts.

Some opposite words convey the same meaning. For example *loosen* and *unloosen* mean the same, and so do, a *slim chance* and a *fat chance,* and *flammable* and *inflammable.* But, the same word may convey two opposite meanings. For example *left* may mean what/who has departed, or what/who has remained.

Some words though incongruous or contradictory are yoked together in our expression by way of oxymoron such as *found missing, almost complete, exact estimate, small crowd, original copy,* etc. The book explains a large number of such words and expressions, which will instruct as well as entertain the readers.

There are many proverbs that contradict each other, like (i) "Ignorance is a bliss"—"Knowledge is power". (ii) "Actions speak louder than words".—"Pen is mightier than the sword", making us wonder which one to follow! The book contains many contradictory proverbs and their humorous explanations.

Important expressions like anagrams, malapropisms, mondegreens, contronyms, homonyms, heteronyms, palindromes and figures of speech have also been explained.

The text is rich with examples from English writers like Shakespeare, Spenser, Twain, Lawrence, Shaw, Wordsworth, Keats, Marvell, Frost, Eliot, Donne and Dickinson, among many others. There are examples from Twain's wit and Churchill's repartee.

The book is an influential text, both rigorous and accessible but highly focused, designed to help the readers develop an in-depth understanding of various aspects of English language and linguistics.

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