

IMPRISONED IN ENGLISH

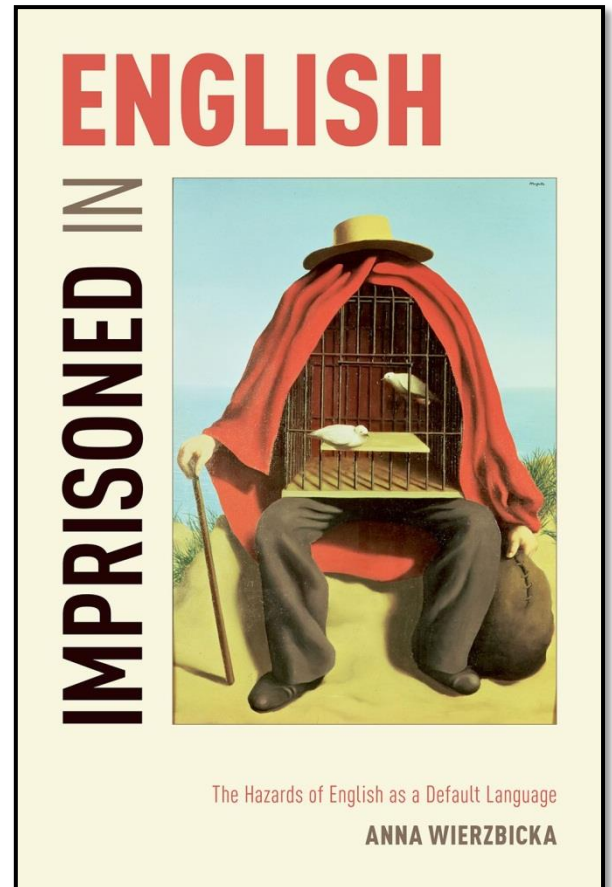
The Hazards of English as a Default Language

Anna Wierzbicka, Professor of Linguistics,
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Imprisoned in English argues that in the present English-dominated world, social sciences and the humanities are locked in a conceptual framework grounded in English and that most scholars in these fields are not aware of the need to break away from this framework to reach a more universal, culture-independent perspective on things human. Indeed they are typically not aware that any problem exists, and resistant to its being pointed out.

The book engages with current debates across a range of disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology, sociology, evolutionary science, psychology, and cognitive science, as well as linguistics. The topics include values, emotions, social cognition, intercultural communication, endangered languages, human universals vs. human diversity, the evolution of consciousness, and the mind of the chimpanzee.

It is a book dedicated to one central idea: the blind spot in contemporary social sciences and the prevailing global discourse on values, the human condition, human relations, and human culture, which results from the 'invisibility' of English as an increasingly globalised way of thinking, speaking and writing.



Readership: Academics and students in linguistics, sociology, communications, and psychology, and interested general readers.

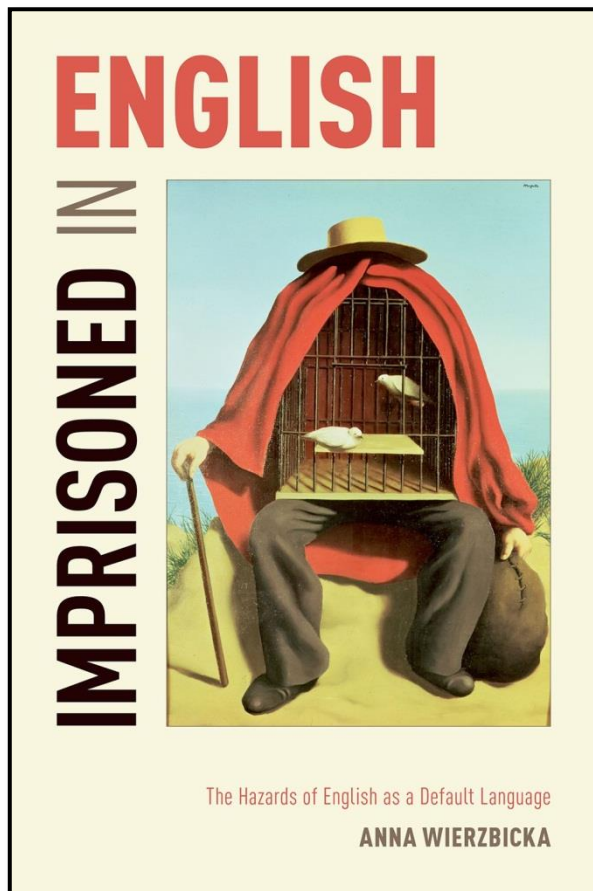
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- Argues that in the present English-dominated world, social sciences and the humanities are locked in a conceptual framework grounded in English and that scholars need to break away from this framework to reach a more universal, culture-independent perspective on things human.
- Proposes a new transnational and transcultural science of human cognition be built on a core metalanguage that avoids the cultural distortions of English.
- Engages with current debates across a range of disciplines, including philosophy, anthropology, sociology, evolutionary science, psychology, and cognitive science, as well as linguistics.

“Imprisoned in English is a heroic attempt to truly understand *others* as subjects rather than objects without assimilating their understanding to one’s own. The book summarises the author’s influential and monumental plan for a great escape from ethnocentrism and conceptual parochialism in the humanities and social sciences.”

- Richard A. Shweder, Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago

“This book is the latest outstanding product of Anna Wierzbicka’s research, driven by her cross-cultural approach and theory of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM). Wierzbicka is excellent in showing how much we are imprisoned in culture-specific English concepts. The book is powerful, and recommended for everyone who is interested in languages”

- Istvan Kecskes, Founding Editor, Intercultural Pragmatics

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