



In Other Words: A Language Lover's Guide to the Most Intriguing Words Around the World

By C. J. Moore

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In Other Words: A Language Lover's Guide to the Most Intriguing Words Around the World By C. J. Moore

Why do we say *bete noire* and not 'black beast', *doppelganger* and not 'double goer'? When is it that meanings become lost in translation and it is simply more satisfying to use the original? This wonderfully accessible book gives unique insights into different cultures and languages by looking at the distinctive words they use as well as giving you a whole new vocabulary for those elusive things you never had a word for. Where would we be without *saudade*, the Portuguese wistful nostalgia which makes their *fado* music unlike any other in the world? What other word is there for the barefaced gutsy presumption encapsulated by the Yiddish word *chutzpah*? And wouldn't you like to have a word for that irritating person who buttonholes you to tell you their long stories of woe? They are truly an *attaccabottoni* (lit. = a person who attacks your buttons). Or what about the Japanese *yokomeshi*, which means 'horizontal rice', in other words a meal eaten sideways, and describes the difficulty of learning a foreign language - particularly appropriate for Japanese learners, where mastering the written language involves the shift from 'vertical' to 'horizontal' writing. Meticulously researched with dozens of specialist language consultants, and accessibly written by a linguist in the field, this book will appeal to anyone interested in language and world cultures. Exploring the words of different languages by chapter, the volume is lavishly illustrated in colour and extremely browsable. The foreword is written by Simon Winchester. This book is for anyone who has ever travelled and been fascinated by the culture they were visiting. *In Other Words* is a guide to the linguistic gems that capture a notion, defy translation, and define the cultures of the world.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Translation is tricky, especially when the language belongs to a people whose culture is very different from one's own. In this short but enthusiastic book, Moore, a linguist, selects from languages across the world words and phrases that are impossible to translate neatly into English. In many cases, the difficulty arises because our culture simply doesn't share the same experiences as others. For instance, the Cantonese word *gagung* literally means "bare sticks," but represents the growing group of men who will not be able to find a wife because China's one-child policy, and desire for sons, has reduced the proportion of women. Other untranslatable words are those used for a feeling or situation that English only describes in a roundabout way, such as the indigenous word from Tierra del Fuego, *mamihlapinatapei*, which connotes "an expressive and meaningful silence," romantic or otherwise. Moore ranges through 10 different groups of languages (ancient and classical, indigenous, Nordic and African among them) and breaks a few into individual tongues. He introduces each with a few entertaining anecdotes and literary quotes to provide context, and his style in the definitions is equally witty and accessible. Strangely, the entries are not alphabetized, and some have meanings that are more familiar than he implies, particularly those found in the section on Sanskrit, which is made up entirely of words that have already entered the English vocabulary, such as *guru* and *mantra*. Overall, this book will fascinate anyone who loves linguistic oddities or has ever felt "lost in translation."

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Review

'A lexicon of words that capture a notion but defy translation' Arts Telegraph

About the Author

Christopher J. Moore is an advocate for literacy and English Language teaching. He was an author and editor with Heinemann Educational Books for over a decade and is also well known as the author of *Ishtar* and *Tammuz* (which won the UK Reading Association award), *Peter William Butterblow*, and *Wild Goose Lake*.

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