



The Written World: Studies in Literate Thought and Action (Springer Series in Language and Communication)

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The written word has taught a way of being. Since the written version of language is visible and permanent, many of our attitudes to and normative assumptions about language - and human communication in general - derive from our experiences of written language. In recent years, scholars from such disciplines as history, anthropology, education and linguistics have joined forces to readdress issues surrounding the problems of the relationship between oral and written language. The lessons to be learnt are fascinating and imply that many of the assumptions we hold concerning language and the human condition are neither "natural" nor universal; rather, they build on highly specific norms and attitudes introduced through a certain literate tradition. Furthermore, these norms have come to dominate many modern social institutions such as schools, the legal system and bureaucracies of various kinds that influence and determine our lives. The present volume analyzes in detail the impact of written language on a broad range of issues that relate to human development in both an ontogenetic and a phylogenetic perspective, together with the relationship of written language to oral and literate practices. The articles cover empirical studies as well as theoretical analyses of literate practices in diverse settings.

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