

Ferdinand de Saussure

Quotes

Language, Different, Law, Study, Differences, Individual, Ideas, Psychology, Views, Speech, Independent, Connections, Initiative, Nebula, Greek, Organs, Branches, Sides, Firsts, Rely Upon

I'm almost never serious, and I'm always too serious. Too deep, too shallow. Too sensitive, too cold hearted. I'm like a collection of paradoxes.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

The connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

It is one of the aims of linguistics to define itself, to recognise what belongs within its domain. In those cases where it relies upon psychology, it will do so indirectly, remaining independent.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

The critical principle demanded an examination, for instance, of the contribution of different periods, thus to some extent embarking on historical linguistics.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Linguistics will have to recognise laws operating universally in language, and in a strictly rational manner, separating general phenomena from those restricted to one branch of languages or another.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Any psychology of sign systems will be part of social psychology - that is to say, will be exclusively social; it will involve the same psychology as is applicable in the case of languages.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Time changes all things; there is no reason why language should escape this universal law

~Ferdinand de Saussure

A linguistic system is a series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas...

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Speech has both an individual and a social side, and we cannot conceive of one without the other.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Language furnishes the best proof that a law accepted by a community is a thing that is tolerated and not a rule to which all freely consent.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Written forms obscure our view of language. They are not so much a garment as a disguise.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Psychologically our thought-apart from its expression in words-is only a shapeless and indistinct mass.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Within speech, words are subject to a kind of relation that is independent of the first and based on their linkage: these are syntagmatic relations, of which I have spoken.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

A language presupposes that all the individual users possess the organs.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Henceforth, language studies were no longer directed merely towards correcting grammar.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Nearly all institutions, it might be said, are based on signs, but these signs do not directly evoke things.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Of all social institutions language is least amenable to initiative. It blends with the life of society, and the latter, inert by nature, is a prime conservative force.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

Everyone, left to his own devices, forms an idea about what goes on in language which is very far from the truth.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

The first of these phases is that of grammar, invented by the Greeks and carried on unchanged by the French. It never had any philosophical view of a language as such.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

The very special place that a language occupies among institutions is undeniable, but there is much more to be said-, a comparison would tend rather to bring out the differences.

~Ferdinand de Saussure

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