



# **Speak: A Short History of Languages**

Tore Janson

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#### Speak: A Short History of Languages Tore Janson

This book is a history of human speech from prehistory to the present. It charts the rise of some languages and the fall of others, explaining why some survive and others die. It shows how languages change their sounds and meanings, and how the history of languages is closely linked to the history of peoples.

Writing in a lively, readable style, distinguished Swedish scholar Tore Janson makes no assumptions about previous knowledge. He takes the reader on a voyage of exploration through the changing patterns of the world's languages, from ancient China to ancient Egypt, imperial Rome to imperial Britain, Sappho's Lesbos to contemporary Africa. He discovers the links between the histories of societies and their languages; he shows how language evolved from primitive calls; he considers the question

of whether one language can be more advanced than another. The author describes the history of writing and looks at the impact of changing technology. He ends by assessing the prospects for English world domination and predicting the languages of the distant future.

Five historical maps illustrate this fascinating history of our defining characteristic and most valuable asset.



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