

Is the publishing for books on teaching languages serious enough?

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Certainly, it is possible (and legitimate) to produce books that deal (deeply) with the pronunciation, morphology, syntax, semantics, etymology, evolution of a given language.

That is clearly the task of (serious) specialists, provided they respect sufficiently the language dealt with, showing adequate and sufficient examples.

But people wanting to produce grammars or conversation handbooks designed to (seriously) teach a language should keep in mind (quite well) that they can not 'ignore' phonotactics, which is the very basic part of any language. Of course, if they are not able to do so, they should necessarily pledge themselves to get somebody who actually may take good care of the part about pronunciation. Otherwise, they would simply (and guiltily) be nothing than 'semi-authors'.

Of course, this same 'accusation' will, inevitably, be brought against the too many 'publishers' who accept to sell such 'semi-books'. Unfortunately, too many, indeed.

Happily, for some languages, there are decisively complete handbooks of pronunciation. Also for other languages, there are somewhat less ample handbooks or chapters, but always rigorous, reliable, and sufficient. However, the best thing would certainly be to find 'real' and complete books for every part of a language, without practically ignoring pronunciation, generally confused with spelling.

To be true, often, good pronunciation handbooks are far from being sufficiently well-known, or appreciated, even by other 'specialists', who may consider them to be too complicated, or presumptuous. Sadly, the same is true of pronouncing dictionaries, while common dictionaries (as bilingual ones with transcriptions) are not always completely reliable (apart from the unbelievable and unhappy fact that some readers do not even realize that transcriptions might be quite useful to anyone of them).

Let us end with another sad consideration on many publishers who accept to sell 'semi-books', convinced that real 'books' would cause unwanted drops in sales. Certainly, they do not value their buyers at all: true simpletons to be exploited. In addition, too many such publishers are 'reverse', because the writings on the spines of their books rise from the bottom to the top, instead of going down from the top to the bottom. Of course, this implies that, with library shelves, people have to behave like silly clowns, continuously moving their necks to the right and to the left (with possible problems)!

Thus, ideal grammars or conversation books ought not to be written by single specialists, unless they do know everything quite well.