LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

Kathryn A. Woolard

Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093

Bambi B. Schieffelin

Department of Anthropology, New York University, New York, New York 10003

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INTRODUCTION

The terms ideology and language have appeared together frequently in recent anthropology, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies, sometimes joined by and, sometimes by in, sometimes by a comma in a trinity of nouns. We have had analyses, some of them very influential, of cultural and political ideologies as constituted, encoded, or enacted in language (100, 239, 298). This review is differently, and (on the surface) more narrowly, conceived: our topic is ideologies of language, an area of scholarly inquiry just beginning to coalesce (185). There is as much cultural variation in ideas about speech as there is in speech forms themselves (158). Notions of how communication works as a social process, and to what purpose, are culturally variable and need to be discovered rather than simply assumed (22:16). We review here selected research on cultural conceptions of language—its nature, structure, and use—and on conceptions of communicative behavior as an enactment of a collective order (277:1–2). Although there are varying concerns behind the studies reviewed, we emphasize language ideology as a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk.

Ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language. Rather, such ideologies envision
and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology (41, 104, 186). Through such linkages, they often underpin fundamental social institutions. Inequality among groups of speakers, and colonial encounters *par excellence*, throw language ideology into high relief. As R. Williams observed, “a definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world” (320:21).

Not only linguistic forms but social institutions such as the nation-state, schooling, gender, dispute settlement, and law hinge on the ideologization of language use. Research on gender and legal institutions has contributed important and particularly pointed studies of language ideology, but they are reviewed elsewhere (see 81, 213).

Heath (135) observed that social scientists have resisted examining language ideology because it represents an indeterminate area of investigation with no apparent bounds, and as reviewers we note this with wry appreciation even as we find that the resistance has worn down. Although there have been recent efforts to delimit language ideology (138a, 327), there is no single core literature. Moreover, linguistic ideology, language ideology, and ideologies of language are all terms currently in play. Although different emphases are sometimes signaled by the different terms, with the first focusing more on formal linguistic structures and the last on representations of a collective order, the fit of terms to distinctive perspectives is not perfect, and we use them interchangeably here.

At least three scholarly discussions, by no means restricted to anthropology, explicitly invoke language or linguistic ideology, often in seeming mutual unawareness. One such group of studies concerns contact between languages or language varieties (118, 133, 135, 152, 219, 249, 285). The recently burgeoning historiography of linguistics and public discourses on language has produced a second explicit focus on language ideologies, including scientific ideologies (173, 256, 268). Finally, there is a significant, theoretically coherent body of work on linguistic ideology concentrating on its relation to linguistic structures (214, 237, 258, 275). Beyond research that explicitly invokes the term ideology are numerous studies that address cultural conceptions of language, in the guise of metalinguistics, attitudes, prestige, standards, aesthetics, hegemony, etc. There is an emerging consensus that what people think, or take for granted, about language and communication is a topic that rewards investigation, and the area of study is in need of some coordination.

We note a particularly acute irony in our task of delimiting this emerging field. One point of the comparative study of language ideology is to show the cultural and historical specificity of visions of language, yet as reviewers we

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1 See Silverstein (279:312, footnote) for an account of why this should be.
must decide what counts as language. We run the risk of excluding work in which language does not seem focal precisely because the group studied does not compartmentalize and reify social practices of communicating, does not turn Humboldt’s *energeia* (activity) of language into *ergon* (product) as does the European-American tradition (41, 155, 198, 203, 258). Our purpose is not to distinguish ideology of language from ideology in other domains of human activity. Rather, the point is to focus the attention of anthropological scholars of language on the ideological dimension, and to sharpen the understanding of linguistic issues among students of ideology, discourse, and social domination.

**WHAT IS LINGUISTIC IDEOLOGY?**

Linguistic/language ideologies have been defined as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (275:193); with a greater social emphasis as “self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group” (135:53) and “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (162:255); and most broadly as “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (258:346). Some of the differences among these definitions come from debates about the concept of ideology itself. Those debates have been well reviewed elsewhere (9, 31, 78, 100, 298, 327), but it is worthwhile to mention some of the key dimensions of difference.

The basic division in studies of ideology is between neutral and critical values of the term. The former usually encompasses all cultural systems of representation; the latter is reserved for only some aspects of representation and social cognition, with particular social origins or functional or formal characteristics. Rumsey’s definition of linguistic ideology is neutral (258). For Silverstein, rationalization marks linguistic ideology within the more general category of metalinguistics, pointing toward the secondary derivation of ideologies, their social-cognitive function, and thus the possibility of distortion (275). Ideological distortion in this view comes from inherent limitations on awareness of semiotic process and from the fact that speech is formulated by its users as purposive activity in the sphere of interested human social action. In critical studies of ideology, distortion is viewed as mystification and is further traced to the legitimation of social domination. This critical stance often characterizes studies of language politics and of language and social class.

A second division is the siting of ideology. Some researchers may read linguistic ideology from linguistic usage, but others insist that the two must be carefully differentiated (164). While metalinguistic discourse, as Silverstein
suggested, is a sufficient condition for identifying ideology, Rumsey’s “commonsense notions” (258) and Heath’s “self-evident ideas” (135) may well be unstated assumptions of cultural orthodoxy, difficult to elicit directly. Although ideology in general is often taken as explicitly discursive, influential theorists have seen it as behavioral, pre-reflective, or structural, that is, an organization of signifying practices not in consciousness but in lived relations (see 78 for a review). An alertness to the different sites of ideology may resolve some apparent controversies over its relevance to the explanation of social or linguistic phenomena.

The work we review here includes the full range of scholars’ notions of ideology: from seemingly neutral cultural conceptions of language to strategies for maintaining social power, from unconscious ideology read from speech practices by analysts to the most conscious native-speaker explanations of appropriate language behavior. What most researchers share, and what makes the term useful in spite of its problems, is a view of ideology as rooted in or responsive to the experience of a particular social position, a facet indicated by Heath’s (135) and Irvine’s (162) definitions. This recognition of the social derivation of representations does not simply invalidate them if we recognize that there is no privileged knowledge, including the scientific, that escapes grounding in social life (205). Nonetheless, the term ideology reminds us that the cultural conceptions we study are partial, contestable and contested, and interest-laden (151:382). A naturalizing move that drains the conceptual of its historical content, making it seem universally and/or timelessly true, is often seen as key to ideological process. The emphasis of ideological analysis on the social and experiential origins of systems of signification counters this naturalization of the cultural, in which anthropology ironically has participated (9). Some of the work reviewed here may seem to be simply what anthropology “has always been talking about anyway” as culture now in the guise of ideology (31:26), but the reconceptualization implies a methodological stance (279). The term ideology reminds analysts that cultural frames have social histories and it signals a commitment to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms and ask how essential meanings about language are socially produced as effective and powerful (9, 78, 241).

APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY

Language ideology has been received principally as an epiphenomenon, an overlay of secondary and tertiary responses (34, 36), possibly intriguing but relatively inconsequential for the fundamental questions of both anthropology and linguistics. But several methodological traditions and topical foci have encouraged attention to cultural conceptions of language. We review work in several areas: ethnography of speaking; politics of multilingualism; literacy
studies; historiography of linguistics and public discourse on language; and metapragmatics and linguistic structure. There are many connections among these, but the work tends to form different conversations, varying in the social and linguistic themes they foreground. Our bibliography is a representative sampling of the research done in these areas. To illustrate some of the social variation in conceptions of language, and in the institutions and interests to which they are tied, we reach back to earlier studies that were not conceived in the frame of ideological analysis, but which we believe can be rethought profitably in relation to the concerns outlined above.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING

The ethnography of speaking has long given attention to ideology as neutral, cultural conceptions of language, primarily through description of vernacular speech taxonomies and metalinguistics (24, 121, 242). The ethnography of speaking was chartered to study ways of speaking from the point of view of events, acts, and styles, but Hymes (158) suggested that an alternative focus on beliefs, values and attitudes, or on contexts and institutions would make a different contribution. This alternative enterprise has been taken up more recently. Language ideology has been made increasingly explicit as a force shaping the understanding of verbal practices (21, 46, 91, 138b, 210, 272, 303). Genres are now viewed not as sets of discourse features, but rather as “orienting frameworks, interpretive procedures, and sets of expectations” (128:670; see also 23, 42, 43). Local conceptions of talk as self-reflexive action have been explored for a variety of genres such as oratory (210), disputes (38, 116, 186, 188, 196), conflict management (253, 315), and also the foundation of aesthetics in such areas as music (90).

Ethnographers of speaking have studied the grounding of language beliefs in other cultural and social forms. For example, language socialization studies have demonstrated connections among folk theories of language acquisition, linguistic practices, and key cultural ideas about personhood (49, 63, 138, 187, 217, 231–234, 262, 267, 284).

The eventual critical response of the ethnography of speaking (158) to speech act theory (13, 270) stimulated thought about linguistic ideology. Speech act theory is grounded in an English linguistic ideology, a privatized view of language emphasizing the psychological state of the speaker while downplaying the social consequences of speech (308:22; cf 244, 255, 275). This recognition triggered taxonomic studies of conceptualizations of speech acts in specific linguistic communities (308, 318), research on metapragmatic universals (309, 310), and numerous ethnographic challenges to the key assumptions of speech act theory (74, 150, 178, 221). Ethnographers of Pacific
societies identified the centrality of intention to speech act theory as rooted in Western conceptions of the self, and argued that its application to other societies obscures local methods of producing meaning (75, 76, 230, 292a).

As is true of cultural anthropology in general, ethnographers of speaking have increasingly incorporated considerations of power in their analyses, again leading to a more explicit focus on linguistic ideology. Bauman's (22) historical ethnography of language and silence in Quaker ideology was an important development, because it addressed a more formal, conscious, and politically strategic form of ideology. Silence has been recognized as carrying a paradoxical potential for power that depends greatly on its varying ideologization within and across communities (103). Advocating a view of linguistic ideology as interactional resource rather than shared cultural background, Briggs finds social power achieved through the strategic use not just of particular discursive genres, but of talk about such genres and their appropriate use (41). Speakers in multilingual communities have marshaled purist language ideologies to similar interactional ends (146; see discussion of purism below.) Ethnographers have also seen the role of language ideology in creating power in other guises and moments: the display of gender and/or affect (26, 28, 143, 163, 175, 188, 232), the strategic deployment of honorifics (3), the regulation of marriage choices (167), and the display of powerful new social affiliations and identities introduced through missionization (187, 254, 314).

LANGUAGE CONTACT, COMPETITION, AND POLITICS

Research on self-conscious struggles over language in class-stratified and especially multilingual communities has treated language ideologies as socially, politically, and/or linguistically significant, even when the researcher's primary interest may be in debunking such ideologies (64, 84, 277).

The identification of a language with a people has been given the most attention (95, 160, 302). It is a truism that the equation of language and nation is a historical, ideological construct (61, 69, 118, 127, 201), conventionally dated to Herder and eighteenth century German romanticism, although the famous characterization of language as the genius of a people can be traced to the French Enlightenment and specifically Condillac (1, 179, 235). Exported through colonialism to become a dominant model around the world today, the nationalist ideology of language structures state politics, challenges multilingual states, and underpins ethnic struggles to such an extent that the absence of a distinct language can cast doubt on the legitimacy of claims to nationhood (33:359; 4, 32, 51, 61, 87, 95, 115, 140, 171, 176, 202, 238, 243, 299, 305, 307, 317, 319, 323, 325).

Ironically, movements to save minority languages are often structured around the same notions of language that have led to their oppression and/or
suppression (5, 6, 32, 80, 169, 206, 305), although traditional or emergent views that resist this hegemonic construction have been documented (10, 57, 105, 306). The equation of one language/one people, the Western insistence on the authenticity and moral significance of the mother tongue, and associated assumptions about the importance of purist language loyalty for the maintenance of minority languages have all been criticized as ideological red herrings, particularly in settings where multilingualism is more typical and where a fluid or complex linguistic repertoire is valued (10, 176, 194, 206, 238, 273, 282). Modern linguistic theory itself has been seen as framed and constrained by the one language/one people assumption (194).

Although the validity of the nationalist ideology of language has often been debated or debunked, less attention traditionally has been given to understanding how the view of language as symbolic of self and community has taken hold in so many different settings. Where linguistic variation appears to be simply a diagram of social differentiation, the analyst needs to identify the ideological production of that diagram (162). Recent studies of language politics have begun to examine specifically the content and signifying structure of nationalist language ideologies (127, 277, 285, 326).

Peirce’s semiotic categories have been used to analyze the processes by which chunks of linguistic material gain significance as representations of particular populations (104). Researchers have distinguished language as an index of group identity from language as a metalinguistically created symbol of identity, more explicitly ideologized in discourse (105, 168, 302). Irvine (162) finds that Wolof villagers construe linguistic differentiation as iconically related to social differentiation, distinguishing inter- and intra-lingual variation and devising a migration history for a particular caste to match their linguistic difference. Here we see how linguistic ideology can affect the interpretation of social relations.

Mannheim (204) also notes different cultural ideologies of different kinds of linguistic variation in southern Peru. Endogenous variation in Quechua, which is seen simply as natural human speech, is not socially evaluated by speakers. But in Spanish, which is regarded as pure artifice, phonological markers and stereotypes are common and lead to hypercorrection among second-language speakers. In this case, linguistic ideology drives linguistic change along different paths.

Language varieties that are regularly associated with (and thus index) particular speakers are often revalorized—or misrecognized (37)—not just as symbols of group identity, but as emblems of political allegiance or of social, intellectual, or moral worth (37, 72, 79, 101, 102, 120, 149, 195, 207, 277, 325). Although the extensive body of research on linguistic prestige and language attitudes grew up in a social psychological framework (109), the intrapersonal attitude can be recast as a socially-derived intellectualized or be-
behavioral ideology (Bourdieu’s *habitus*) (37, 107, 119, 144, 149, 153, 200, 251, 311, 324, 325, 328). Such meanings affect patterns of language acquisition, style-switching, shift, change, and policy (120, 251). Moreover, symbolic revalorization often makes discrimination on linguistic grounds publicly acceptable, whereas the corresponding ethnic or racial discrimination is not (156, 193, 197, 219, 326). However, simply asserting that struggles over language are really about racism does not constitute analysis. Such a tearing aside of the curtain of mystification in a “Wizard of Oz theory of ideology” (9) begs the question of how and why language comes to stand for social groups in a manner that is socially both comprehensible and acceptable. The current program of research is to address both the semiotic and the social process.

Communities not only evaluate but may appropriate some part of the linguistic resources of groups with whom they are in contact and in tension, refiguring and incorporating linguistic structures in ways that reveal linguistic and social ideologies (146). Linguistic borrowing might appear superficially to indicate speakers’ high regard for the donor language. But Hill (148) argues that socially-grounded linguistic analysis of Anglo-American borrowings and humorous misrenderings of Spanish reveals them as racist distancing strategies that reduce complex Latino experience to a subordinated, commodity identity. The commodification of ethnolinguistic stereotypes, ostensibly positive, is also seen in the use of foreign languages in Japanese television advertising (124). The appropriation of creole speech, music, and dress by white adolescents in South London, who see only matters of style (again, commodified), is in tension with black adolescent views of these codes as part of their distinctive identity (143). Basso (20) classically describes a Western Apache metalinguistic joking genre that uses English to parody “Whiteman” conversational pragmatics, in a representation of and comment on ethnolinguistic differences and their role in unequal relations. In the Javanese view, learning to translate (into high Javanese from low) is the essence of becoming a true adult and a real language speaker, and Siegel (273) argues that Javanese metaphorically incorporates foreign languages into itself by treating other languages as if they were low Javanese. Whether a code is a language or not depends on whether its speakers act like speakers of Javanese. Encounters with the languages of others may trigger recognition of the opacity of language and concern for delineating and characterizing a distinctive community language (259).

Linguistic ideology is not a predictable, automatic reflex of the social experience of multilingualism in which it is rooted; it makes its own contribution as an interpretive filter in the relationship of language and society (211). The failure to transmit vernaculars intergenerationally may be rationalized in various ways, depending on how speakers conceptualize the links of language, cognition, and social life. For example, Nova Scotian parents actively discour-
age children from acquiring a subordinated vernacular, because they believe it will somehow mark their English (211); Gapun parents blame their children's dissatisfaction and aggression as the roots of the loss of the vernacular (187); and Haitian parents in New York City believe their children will speak Kreyòl regardless of the input language (263; cf 329).

Beliefs about what is or is not a real language, and underlying these beliefs, the notion that there are distinctly identifiable languages that can be isolated, named, and counted, enter into strategies of social domination. Such beliefs, and related schemata for ranking languages as more or less evolved, have contributed to profound decisions about, for example, the civility or even the humanity of subjects of colonial domination (93, 166, 204, 216, 236). They also qualify or disqualify speech varieties from certain institutional uses and their speakers from access to domains of privilege (37, 57, 68, 120, 191, 288). Language mixing, codeswitching, and creoles are often evaluated as indicating less than full linguistic capabilities, revealing assumptions about the nature of language implicitly based in literate standards and a pervasive tenet that equates change with decay (25, 120, 127, 174, 224, 251, 265). Written form, lexical elaboration, rules for word formation, and historical derivation are often seized on in diagnosing real language and ranking the candidates (111, 165, 235, 287). Grammatical variability and the question of whether a variety has a grammar play an important part (80). The extension of the notion of grammar from the explicitly artifactual product of scholarly intervention to an abstract underlying system has done nothing to mute the polemics (222).

Language Policy

Macrosocial research on language planning and policy has traced distinctive ideological assumptions about the role of language in civic and human life (2, 18, 19, 33, 228, 285, 322, 326) and distinctive stances toward the state regulation of language, for example, between England and France (65, 118, 136, 139, 201). Cobarrubias has sketched a taxonomy of language ideologies underlying planning efforts: assimilation, pluralism, vernacularization, and internationalization (4, 51). At an even more fundamental level, Ruiz (257) distinguishes three fundamental orientations to language as resource, problem, or right (see also 152), and commentators on bilingual and immigrant education have noted such orientations conflated within these programs (117, 135). The model of development is pervasive in post-colonial language planning, with paradoxical ideological implications that condemn languages, like societies, to perennial status as underdeveloped (32, 87, 110).
DOCTRINES OF CORRECTNESS, STANDARDIZATION, AND PURISM

Since Dante's time, the selection and elaboration of a linguistic standard has stood for a complex of issues about language, politics, and power (289). The existence of a language is always a discursive project rather than an established fact (259). Standard languages and/or their formation had been studied earlier by philologists, Prague School functional linguists, and applied linguists (52, 96, 134), but the emphasis on the ideological dimension has given rise to new analyses of language standardization (172), with the concept of a standard treated more as ideological process than as empirical linguistic fact (16, 65, 112, 194, 219).

Notions of better and worse speech have been claimed to exist in every linguistic community (35), but this claim has been disputed (132). There is more agreement that codified, superposed standard languages are tied not only to writing and its associated hegemonic institutions, but to specifically European forms of these institutions (35, 131, 132, 172, 219, 277, 286). In the vernacular belief system of Western culture, language standards are not recognized as human artifacts, but are naturalized by metaphors such as that of the free market (172, 277). Ideological analysis addresses questions such as how doctrines of linguistic correctness and incorrectness are rationalized or how they are related to doctrines of the inherent representational power, beauty, and expressiveness of language as a valued mode of action (276:223; 18). Moral indignation over nonstandard forms derives from ideological associations of the standard with the qualities valued within the culture, such as clarity or truthfulness (70, 118, 145, 172, 276:241; 293).

Purist doctrines of linguistic correctness close off non-native sources of innovation, but usually selectively, targeting only languages construed as threats (316; cf 142, 297). The linguistic effects of purism are not predictable, and similarly, its social meaning and strategic use are not transparent (99, 171). An apparently purist linguistic conservatism among the Tewa may derive not from resistance to contact phenomena at all, but from the strength of theocratic institutions and of ritual linguistic forms as models for other domains of interaction (182, 183, 184). In contrast, an ideology of the sanctity of language in an ultraorthodox Jewish community leads to the restriction of the Hebrew language to sacred contexts (113). Mexicano vernacular purist ideologies are deployed paradoxically to enhance the authority of those who are least immersed in the vernacular and most enmeshed with the larger economy (146, 149). Some Spanish loanwords sound more authentic to non-elite members of the Gallego speech community in Spain, who dissociate themselves from the linguistically pure forms that smack of institutional minority politics (5, 6). Such complex relations among social position, linguistic practice, and purist
ideologies illustrate the importance of problematizing ideology rather than assuming that it can be read from one of the other two elements.

Orthography

In countries where identity and nationhood are under negotiation, every aspect of language, including its phonological description and forms of graphic representation can be contested (226, 265). Even where nationhood is as classically well-established as it is in France, orthographic battles flare. Thus, orthographic systems cannot be conceptualized simply as reducing speech to writing, but rather they are symbols that carry historical, cultural, and political meanings (62, 96, 154, 169, 300). In some creoles, for example, supporters of etymological orthographies appeal to an historical connection to the prestige of the colonizing language. Those favoring a phonemic approach argue that a more objective mode of representing the sounds allows wider access to literacy and helps establish the language as respectable in its own right (44, 141, 199, 265, 321).

LITERACY

Ideologies of literacy have complex relations to ideologies of speech and can play distinctive, crucial roles in social institutions. Even the conceptualization of the printed word can differ importantly from that of the written (7, 313). Derrida’s (71) deconstruction of a Western view of speech as natural, authentic, and prior to the mere lifeless inscriptions of alien, arbitrary writing, has brought considerable attention to ideas about the spoken and written word. Eighteenth century Japanese elite notions of language also included a phonocentric ideology stressing the primacy, immediacy, and transparency of speech over writing (259). Javanese do not share the view of the original voice as the authentic (273). Not all commentators on Western ideology find the oral bias Derrida describes. Harris (131) argues that a scriptism founded in European literate experience is smuggled into the apparent oral bias of contemporary linguistic concepts, from the sentence through the word to the phoneme. Mignolo (216) asserts that the supremacy of the oral in Plato’s Phaedrus was inverted and the ideology of the alphabetic letter was established in Renaissance Europe. Tyler (301) sees a Western visualist ideological emphasis on transparent, referential discourse as rooted in the primacy of text and the suppression of speech.

Anthropological studies of literacy (e.g. its introduction in oral societies or its use in schooling) recognized belatedly that it is not an autonomous, neutral technology, but rather is culturally organized, ideologically grounded, and historically contingent, shaped by political, social, and economic forces (53, 56, 58, 60, 97, 138, 161, 223, 266, 269, 290–292). Research now emphasizes
the diversity of ways in which communities “take up” literacy, sometimes altering local forms of communication or fundamental concepts of identity (15, 27, 29, 30, 37a, 77, 88, 114, 138, 214a, 252, 264). Considerations of power significantly affect literacy strategies. In Gapun, views of language as a powerful means to transform the world are extended to literacy in Tok Pisin, which is thought to enable acquisition of valuable cargo (189). In contrast, Yekuana do not extend their view of speech to literacy. Spoken words are transformative and magical, but inscription destroys their power (122). For Chambri (108) and Yekuana, “fixity” in writing is the source of danger; printed words are not responsive to social circumstances. Maori convictions that there is an authoritative oral text captured only weakly by a written treaty are an ironic Platonic counterpoint to European-origin New Zealanders’ search for a true text among multiple written translations of the treaty in which the government is rooted (208). Textual exegesis depends fundamentally on ideologies of language, or ideas about the ways texts are created and are to be understood. Contrasting approaches to locating scriptural truth can be found within the Judeo-Christian religious tradition (170).

The definition of what is and what is not literacy is always a profoundly political matter. Historical studies of the emergence of schooled literacy and school English show the association between symbolically valued literate traditions and mechanisms of social control (56, 60, 137). Analyses of classroom interaction further demonstrate how implicit expectations about written language shape discriminatory judgments about spoken language and student performance (37, 55, 215). The nineteenth century foundation of English as a university discipline created a distinction between reading as aristocratic and leisurely and writing as work. Composition as skill training for employment is the dirty work of English departments, with consequences for gender politics (58).

Transcription, or the written representation of speech, within academic disciplines and law, for example, relies on and reinforces ideological conceptions of language (73:71; 83, 120, 159, 262, 295). In studies of child language, for example, use of standard orthography forces a literal interpretation on utterances that might otherwise be seen as objects of phonological manipulation (229). On the other hand, folklorists and sociolinguists who have recorded dialects of English reveal their linguistic biases when they use non-standard orthography (sometimes called eye dialect) to represent the speech of blacks and Appalachians more than that of other groups. Given the ideology of the value of the letter, non-standard speakers thus appear less intelligent (82, 245, 246). In the American legal system the verbatim record is an idealist construction, prepared according to the court reporter’s model of English, against which incoming speech is filtered, evaluated, and interpreted. It is considered
information if a witness speaks ungrammatically, but not if lawyers do, and editing is applied accordingly (312).

HISTORICAL STUDIES

Although there has been a notable linguistic turn in historical studies in recent decades, Bauman noted that much of the work was linguistically naive and not grounded in an investigation of the social and ideological significance of language in people's own conceptions of the nature of language and its use (22:16). Since then, there has been a wave of historical examinations of ideologies of language, including dominant national ideologies, elite debates, and colonial expressions. Western states, and particularly France, England, and the United States, predominate in this literature, but there also has been some attention to Asia (16, 18, 65, 94, 98, 173, 180, 218, 219, 259, 281, 283). Closely linked are critical histories of linguistics and of the philosophy of language (8, 45, 106, 280), which join more traditional intellectual histories (1).

In the late eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century in Western Europe, language became the object of civil concern as new notions of public discourse and forms of participation (and exclusion) were formulated by new participants in the public sphere (17, 22, 65, 67, 69, 118, 126, 145, 192, 276, 313). Much of the historical research focuses on normative ideas about rhetoric rather than grammar, but demonstrates how closely linked these topics were. Political conceptualizations of language rather than meditations on an autonomous language dominated French and American debates in the seventeenth through the nineteenth century (8, 12). Hegemonic English ideology drew its political and social effectiveness from a presupposition that language revealed the mind, and civilization was largely a linguistic concept (283, 294). The nineteenth century debate over language in the United States essentially was a fight over what kind of personality was needed to sustain democracy (50). The emergence of a compartmentalized democratic personality corresponded to the acceptance of style-shifting and a range of linguistic registers (see also 14, 18, 94, 123, 180, 281).

Colonial Linguistics

"Language has always been the companion of empire," asserted the sixteenth century Spanish grammarian Nebrija (161, 225). Some of the most provocative recent work on linguistic ideology, clearly tracing the links among linguistic, ideological, and social forms, comes from studies of colonialism. Which language(s) to use in colonial administration was not always obvious, and each choice had its own ideological motivations and practical consequences. An
indigenous vernacular might be selected, for example, to protect the language of the colonizers from non-native versions considered distasteful (272).

European missionization and colonization of other continents entailed control of speakers and their vernaculars. Recent research on colonial linguistic description and translation has addressed the ideological dimension of dictionaries, grammars, and language guides, demonstrating that what was conceived as a neutral scientific endeavor was very much a political one (248).

In what Mignolo (216) calls the colonization of language, Europeans brought to their tasks ideas about language prevalent in the metropole, and these ideas, though themselves shifting in different historical moments, blinkered them to indigenous conceptualizations and sociolinguistic arrangements (165, 177, 216, 260). As with many other colonial phenomena, linguists constructed rather than discovered distinctive varieties (166), as Fabian (89) argues for Swahili and Harries (130) for Tsonga. Cohn argues that British grammars, dictionaries, and translations of the languages of India created the discourse of Orientalism and converted Indian forms of knowledge into European objects (54:282–283; cf 224).

Perceived linguistic structure can always have political meaning in the colonial encounter. Functional or formal inadequacy of indigenous languages and, therefore, of indigenous mind or civilization was often alleged to justify European tutelage (89). On the other hand, a sixteenth century grammar asserted that Quechua was so similar to Latin and Castilian that it was “like a prediction that the Spaniards will possess it” (216:305; see also 166, 248).

Because of the availability of documents, much of this historical research has explored the linguistic ideologies of colonizers rather than of indigenous populations. But some work seeks to capture the contradictions and interactions of the two (59, 128, 204, 216). Tongan metapragmatics of speech levels indicate a reanalysis of society that incorporates European-derived institutional complexes into Tongan constructions of social hierarchy (240). The structure and focus of a seventeenth century instructional manual on Castilian written by a Tagalog printer contrast sharply with Spanish missionaries’ grammars of Tagalog, showing the different political interests behind translation for the Spanish and indigenous Filipinos (247).

**Historiography of Linguistics**

The close intertwining of public and scholarly conceptualizations of language in the West and its colonies through the nineteenth century leads directly to critical studies of Western philosophy of language and of the emergence of professional linguistics (1, 45, 98). Contributors to Joseph & Taylor’s collection (173) examine intellectual as well as political prejudices that framed the growth of linguistic theory, from Locke through Saussure to Chomsky, and the role of linguistic ideas in specific social struggles (cf 227). Of particular
relevance to our topic, Attridge (11) deconstructs Saussure’s linguistics as hostile to and suppressing evidence that the language user and language community intervene, consciously or unconsciously, to alter the language system. Attridge suggests that Saussure sees language as open to external change by humanly uncontrollable forces, but rejects the influence of history as intellectual construct. A number of studies of the nineteenth century show how philology and emerging linguistics contributed to religious, class, and/or nationalist projects (65, 67, 235).

Professional, scientific linguistics in the twentieth century has nearly uniformly rejected prescriptive linguistics, but many authors argue that this rejection hides a smuggled dependence on and complicity with prescriptive institutions for the very subject matter of the field. Rather than registering a unitary language, linguists helped to form one (66:48; 131, 132). Sankoff (261) argues that contemporary positivist linguistic methodologies that invoke a scientific rationale are imposed ideologically by the same interests that propagate normativism and prescriptive language. The idealism of modern autonomous linguistics has come under concerted ideological scrutiny (37, 157, 173, 320; cf 68, 227).

More anthropologically-oriented linguistics also has been analyzed ideologically. For example, the concept of diglossia has been criticized as an ideological naturalization of sociolinguistic arrangements (205a). Rossi-Landi (256) critiques linguistic relativism as bourgeois ideology, seeing in the theory a manifestation of guilt for the savage destruction of American Indians. The idealism of linguistic relativity transforms linguistic producers into consumers, and enables the illusion that the theoretical exhibition of the structures of a language saves the world view of the extinct linguistic workers (cf 57, 151). Schultz (268) argues that contradictory strategies in Whorf’s writings arose in response to the constraint of the American folk ideology of free speech. Although his ideas paralleled those of Bakhtin, Whorf had to first convince his audience that linguistic censorship existed.

IDEOLOGY, LINGUISTIC STRUCTURE, AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

As noted earlier, modern linguistics has generally held that linguistic ideology and prescriptive norms have little significant—or, paradoxically, only pernicious—effect on speech forms (although they may have some less negligible effect on writing) (35; cf 84, 92, 125, 181). Prescriptive linguistics does not directly transform language, but it does have an effect. Silverstein argues that a grasp of language ideology is essential for understanding the evolution of linguistic structure (276:220). Important sociolinguistic changes can be set off by ideological interpretation of language use, although because they derive only from a larger social dialectic, such changes are likely to take an unintended direc-
tion, as in the historical case of second person pronoun shift in English. To the extent that speakers conceptualize language as socially purposive action, we must look at their ideas about the meaning, function, and value of language in order to understand the extent and degree of systematicity in empirically occurring linguistic forms (cf 47, 129, 209, 212).

In analyses of gender in English, T/V pronoun shift, and Javanese speech levels, Silverstein shows that rationalization not only explains but actually affects linguistic structure, or rationalizes it by making it more regular. To understand one’s own linguistic usage is potentially to change it (275:233). Imperfect, limited awareness of linguistic structures, some of which are more available to conscious reflection than are others, leads speakers to make generalizations that they then impose on a broader category of phenomena, changing those phenomena (see also 181). Structure conditions ideology, which then reinforces and expands the original structure, distorting language in the name of making it more like itself (37, 258).

Errington (86) observes that although it is standard in sociolinguistic analysis to look for relations between structural change and communicative function, it is more controversial to invoke a notion of native speaker awareness as an explanatory link. Labov differentiates mechanisms of change from below and above the level of speakers’ awareness. He argues that subconscious changes are extensive and systematic, while conscious self-correction, which he labels ideology, leads to sporadic and haphazard effects on linguistic forms (190:329). But several authors note that correlational sociolinguistic models gloss over the actual motivating force of linguistic change, which often lies in social evaluations of language (85, 162, 261).

Errington (86) argues that Labov’s generalization is most applicable to phonological variation, which may not be mediated by speakers’ understandings of their conscious communicative projects. More pragmatically salient classes of variables are recognized by speakers as crucial linguistic mediators of social relations, and speakers’ awareness makes these variables more susceptible to rationalization and strategic use (85, 240). Because such awareness and use drive linguistic change, these variables require a fundamentally different, participant-oriented analysis (86).

Irving (162) notes that the formal linguistic characteristics of Hallidayan anti-languages, such as inversion, are not arbitrary and that they suggest the mediation of ideological conceptualizations of linguistic structures. Similarly, subordinate languages in contact situations can acquire both functional and formal properties of anti-languages. Speakers of moribund varieties of Xinca, for example, go “hog-wild” with glottalized consonants, which are exotic from the point of view of the dominant Spanish language (48). This is a Silversteinian distortion that makes a code more like itself, in this case, importantly, a self that is most distinctive from its socially dominant counterpart.
Silverstein and others give examples from European languages, especially English, that reveal a tendency to see propositionality as the essence of language, to confuse the indexical function of language with the referential function, and to assume that the divisions and structures of language should—and in the best circumstances do—transparently fit the structures of the real world (39, 162, 181, 212, 237, 250, 274, 275, 278). A focus on the surface segmentable aspects of language, a conception of language focusing on words and expressions that denote, is widely attested (32, 57, 112, 220, 277). But Rumsey (258) argues that it is not characteristic of Australian aboriginal cultures, which do not dichotomize talk and action or words and things, and Rosaldo (255) similarly asserts that Ilongots think of language in terms of action rather than reference. Hill (147) describes a counter-hegemonic ideology of language among Mexicano women that emphasizes not reference but performance and the proper accomplishment of human relationships through dialogue. See reference 151 for further discussion.

VARIATION AND CONTESTATION IN IDEOLOGY

Therborn (296:viii) characterizes ideology as a social process, not a possession, more like “the cacaphony of sounds and signs of a big city street than...the text serenely communicating with the solitary reader or the teacher...addressing a quiet, domesticated audience.” The new direction in research on linguistic ideology has also moved away from seeing ideology as a homogeneous cultural template, now treating it as a process involving struggles among multiple conceptualizations and demanding the recognition of variation and contestation within a community as well as contradictions within individuals (104, 258, 279, 308). Warao strategically deploy conflicting models for language use as resources for interactional power (40, 41). German speakers in Hungary frame language and identity differently at different moments, to resist also-changing official state ideologies (105). English has an entirely different significance to New York Puerto Ricans depending on whether they think of it as spoken by white Americans, by black Americans, or by Puerto Ricans (304). Where casual generalization contrasts English and French linguistic attitudes as if they were uniform cultural attributes inhering at the state and individual level, historical studies show that such apparently characteristic national stances emerge conjuncturally from struggles among competing ideological positions (139, 201, 249).

CONCLUSION

It is paradoxical that at the same time that language and discourse have become central topics across the social sciences and humanities, linguistic
anthropologists have bemoaned the marginalization of the subdiscipline from the larger field of anthropology. The topic of language ideology is a much-needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior (P Kroskrity, personal communication). It is also a potential means of deepening a sometimes superficial understanding of linguistic form and its cultural variability in political economic studies of discourse.

Many populations around the world, in multifarious ways, posit fundamental linkages among such apparently diverse cultural categories as language, spelling, grammar, nation, gender, simplicity, intentionality, authenticity, knowledge, development, power, and tradition (104). But our professional attention has only begun to turn to understanding when and how those links are forged—whether by lay participants or their expert analysts—and what their consequences might be for linguistic and social life. A wealth of public problems hinge on language ideology. Examples from the headlines of United States newspapers include bilingual policy and the official English movement; questions of free speech and harassment; the meaning of multiculturalism in schools and texts; the exclusion of jurors who might rely on their own native-speaker understanding of non-English testimony; and the question of journalists’ responsibilities and the truthful representation of direct speech. Coming to grips with such public issues means coming to grips with the nature and working of language ideology.

Research on topics such as pronouns, politeness, and purism has begun the difficult program of considering whose interests are served by linguistic ideology taking the form that it does, relating notions of linguistic ideology as rooted in linguistic structure and cognitive limitations to understandings of ideology as rooted in social practices and interests (258:356). It is the attempt to link these two aspects of ideology, and to tie social and linguistic forms together through ideology, that is both most provocative and most challenging.

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