



Ideologies of Language (Politics of Language)

John Earl Joseph

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One of the most cherished assumptions of modern academic linguistics is that the study of language is, or should be, ideologically neutral. This professed ideological neutrality goes hand-in-hand with claims of scientific objectivity and explanatory autonomy. "Ideologies of Language" counters these claims and assumptions by demonstrating not only their descriptive inaccuracy but, more importantly, their conceptual incoherence. Each chapter in "Ideologies of Language" reveals a different descriptive, logical or rhetorical "crack" in the contemporary academic monument to the objectivity and neutrality of linguistic enquiry. In some cases, a given linguistic model, or critical interpretation of that model, is shown to have been determined by underlying political or cultural preconceptions; other chapters illustrate the ways in which linguistic models themselves can enforce and apparently justify particular ideological perspectives. The unifying theme of the volume is that, as an institutionalized discourse said to be "describing", "analyzing" and "explaining" the basis of verbal interaction between human agents, any linguistics - whether it acknowledges it or not - is by its very nature an ideology of language. It is only when linguistic enquiry finally realizes the inevitability of its ideological commitment that it will be able to become a responsible force on the cultural stage.

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