Researching Language Ideologies: Theories and Methods

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Summary

A. Historical trends in the study of ideologies
   - descriptive (French *idéologues*)
   - critical (Marx – Engels)

B. Review of literature on language ideologies
   * Representational requirement
   * Correlation requirement
   - perceptual dialectology (D. Preston)
   - pragmatics of writing (D. Perrin)
   - conceptual maps (S. Moschonas)

C. Definition of language ideologies
   - language ideologies or ideologies *of* language
   - ideologies *in* language
   - *linguistic* ideologies
A. | Trends in the study of ideologies: Les idéologues

- reductive definitions: ideas are reduced to elementary ‘sense data’ (there are no innate ideas); complex ideas and faculties are traced back to elementary ideas
  - ideas = what we feel (objects of our sensation)
  - memory = internal sensation
  - volition = ability to feel our desires
  - judgement = ability to feel the relations between our sensations, etc.
Les idéologues: A linguistic philosophy

- *Eléments d’Idéologie* I.xvi-xvii: semiotics of ideas, II: *Grammaire*, III: *Logique*

1. reductionism :: Generative Semantics (!)
2. non-essentialism → relativism
   - names are not *substantifs*, they are *subjectifs*, mere signs of ideas
   - meaning is not defined by a name’s reference or a *substrum*; it is defined by its use in the sentence, the speaker and the circumstance; pronouns are prototypical names → *variety, polysemy, change*

**idéologues**: Destutt de Tracy, Cabanis, de Condorcet, Maine de Biran *et al.*

http://gallica.bnf.fr/
Trends in the study of ideologies: Marx - Engels

• *A Critique of the German Ideology* (written 1845-46, published 1932)
  
  “Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be.”
  
  (Preface)

• ideology is revealed as such through a critique of ideology

• the critique is addressed directly to post-hegelians (‘Saint Max’ = Max Stirner, ‘Saint Bruno’ = Bruno Bauer), indirectly to Hegel

• a critique of stereotypes
Chapter 3, “The logic of new wisdom”, critically examines discourse markers and structures, in an analysis reminiscent of CDA (!):

- *transitions* [drifting like bones in a beggar’s broth], *logical tricks*, *overgeneralizations* [seizing on one aspect of a concept and foisting this aspect as its sole characteristic], *trashy play with distinctions*, use of *ambiguous expressions*, *appositions* [establishing intermediate links between concepts: “the apposition is Saint Sancho’s ass”], *synonymy*, *translation* [a special branch of synonymy: ‘Staat’, ‘Status’, ‘Stand’, ‘Notstand’], *etymological synonymy* ['Gesellschaft’, ‘selig’, ‘heilig’, ‘das Heilige’], *conjuring tricks*, “episodically” inserting a passage, forcing conceptual equivalences, exploitation of words ['designation’, ‘vocation’, ‘task’], etc. etc.
A Critique of the German Ideology: A linguistic philosophy?

1. language as ‘practical consciousness’ [“the language of real life”]
2. language as belonging to the ‘superstructure’

“One of the most difficult tasks confronting philosophers is to descend from the world of thought to the actual world. Language is the immediate actuality of thought. Just as philosophers have given thought an independent existence, so they were bound to make language into an independent realm. This is a secret of philosophical language, in which thoughts in the form of words have their own content. The problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language to life. [...] The philosophers have only to dissolve their language into the ordinary language, from which it is abstracted, in order to recognize it as the distorted language of the actual world and to realize that neither thoughts nor language in themselves form a realm of their own, that they are only manifestations of actual life.”
Other Marxist approaches

- **German ideology** is an abandoned work [“We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice”]
- replaced by the theory of **commodity fetishism** in *Das Kapital*: a theory of **embodied ideology**
- **Louis Althusser**, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, 1969
  - **institutions**: Religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications, cultural ISAs
  - **representations**: Ideology is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence; méconnaissance
  - **practices**: Ideology has a material existence
Roland Barthes, *Eléments de sémiologie*, 1964

(α)

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\{ ideology – connotation \}

\{ language – denotation \}

(β)

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B. Bloomfield, “Secondary and tertiary responses to language”, 1944

- “Utterances about language may be called secondary responses to language”.
- “The ordinary speaker makes a response of the tertiary type only when some secondary response of his is questioned or contradicted; on a higher and semi-learned level, a tertiary response may be aroused in a speaker who merely hears or reads linguistic statements”.
  - significance of writing and standard dialects
  - use of mentalistic terms
  - animistic and teleological terminology
  - obscurantism
“But I do not address myself only to articulated beliefs that are incorrect or contemptible. I should clarify that ideologies about language, or linguistic ideologies, are any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use. [...] [I]n certain areas the ideological beliefs do in fact match the scientific ones, though the two will, in general, be part of divergent larger systems of discourse and enterprise”.
Linguistic and ‘folk linguistic’ ideologies

there are no real boundaries between linguistics and “folk linguistics” (Niedzielski & Preston, *Folk Linguistics*, 2000)

- function$_1$: potentially purposive use, or actually effective – goal-directed and goal-achieving
- metalinguistic function$_1$: function$_1$ externalized (“secondary and tertiary responses”)
- function$_2$: indexical mode of signification - forms serve as linguistic indicators differentially pointing to configurations of contextual features

“Metapragmatic discourse and metapragmatic function”, 1993; “Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life”, 2003

- whether and how language ideologies affect linguistic change

• metapragmatic characterization depends on certain general semiotic properties
  ‣ unavoidable referentiality: deferential vs. solidary use of pronouns [\textit{vous} vs. \textit{tu}], but not phonetic markers of socio-economic class
  ‣ continuous segmentability: sentences, phrases, words, but not progressive aspect (\textit{be} – \textit{ing})
  ‣ relative presupposition: \textit{this} vs. \textit{that}, but not phonetic socioeconomic or deference vs. politeness markers
  ‣ decontextualized deducibility: my \textit{brother} \textit{=>} \textit{I have a brother}
  ‣ metapragmatic transparency: \textit{I promise to stop talking soon} vs. \textit{Just a few more minutes} [direct vs. indirect]

• criticized by Niedzielski & Preston, \textit{Folk Linguistics}, 2000, pp. 10-16
Perceptual Dialectology: Analogies

The World According to Ronald Reagan
Perceptual Dialectology: Analogies
Perceptual Dialectology: Analogies

How Londoners see the North — at least, according to the Doncaster and District Development Council
Perceptual Dialectology (Weijnen, Rensink, Preston et al.)

- how folk respondents evaluate the linguistic difference of surrounding localities
- which linguistic facts are more salient to perception
- Preston: explores folk knowledge for its own sake (≠ dialectology / cultural geography)
  - asked U.S. respondents to rank areas on a scale of one to four (same ↔ unintelligibly different)
  - respondents were asked to outline speech areas on a blank map, label them with names of the dialect and/or area and of typical speakers, and jot down examples; computerized generalization of such maps
  - ratings of respondents for correct or pleasant speech
Perceptual Dialectology (Preston)

- satisfies representational requirement
- maps individual as well as collective perceptions
- satisfies correlation requirement: real–perceptual / literal–metaphorical can be easily contrasted

[presupposition: ideology as ‘false consciousness’]
• overt knowledge of and comment about language by nonlinguists
• ‘folk’ ≠ ‘trained professionals’
• discourse / conversation analysis, largely based on the analysis of presuppositions

• Metalanguage$_1$: overt, conscious comment about language (accurate or inaccurate)
• Metalanguage$_2$: mention of talk (automatic and unconscious)
• Metalanguage$_3$: shared folk knowledge, ‘folk philosophy’, presuppositions (ideology proper)
  ‣ cf. also Preston, “Folk metalanguage”, 2004
A folk vs. a ‘linguistic’ theory of LANGUAGE

A Folk Theory of Language

THE LANGUAGE

Good Language

Ordinary Language

Dialects  "Errors"

A “Linguistic” Theory of Language

THE LANGUAGE

Dialect #1

Dialect #2

Dialect #3

etc...

Idiolect #1

Idiolect #2

etc...
• **iconization**: linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence.

• **fractal recursivity**: projection of an opposition onto some other level (e.g., intragroup opposition onto intergroup relations); constructs contrasting identities, activities or roles.

• **erasure**: ideology renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away.

- Writing as both a product and a process, extending in both space and time
- Empirical, ethnographic approach ("ecological validity")
- Modular analysis
  - Objective / Linguistic ⇔ Subjective / Metalinguistic  
    - (what journalists do) ⇔ (what they want to do)
  - Variational: "writers’ profiles"
- Multi/Inter-disciplinary
- Pedagogical applications
  - Increase awareness at the workplace (media institutions)
  - Promote public understanding
Fig. 2. Progression diagrams: in the left diagram, a writer moves forward through the text in linear progression, without jumping. In contrast, the right diagram shows how KL switches back and forth when producing the sequence of text in example (a).
Perrin: Modules of metalinguistic analysis (A+B)

- Module A: external language policy
- Module B: actions, reactions, interpretations, adjustments
- Module C: experienced text production

management claims vs. management decisions vs. experienced journalists’ practice

| 1. | English as a “second official language” |
| 2. | “Romanization” of the alphabet |
| 3. | “Bulgarians” in Babiniotis’ Dictionary |
| 4. | “Macedonian” |
| 5. | The “five-language regime” in EU |
| 6. | “Word poverty” (“ευδοκίμηση” and “αρωγή”) |
| 7. | Post-diglossia issues [teaching Ancient Greek, “monotonic” orthography, the “Language Problem”] |
| 8. | Foreign words, influence of English, purism |
| 9. | “Monotonic” vs. “polytonic” orthography |
| 10. | “Greek abroad”, Greek as a second language |
| 11. | Censored [minorities, etc.] |
| 12. | Miscellaneous [usage columns, letters to the editor, etc.] |
Representation: A territorial conception of LANGUAGE

Greek abroad (10) in Cyprus (12)

an Interior within the Exterior

Greek spreads

Interior

an Exterior within the Interior

Greek threatened

Exterior

“Macedonian” (4) “five-language regime” (5)

bilingualism (1) diglossia (7) romanization (2,9) foreign words (8) “Bulgarians” (3) minorities (11)

post-diglossia issues (7) orthography (9) usage (12)
Representation: A coherent media narrative

- "Greek abroad"
- "five-language regime"
- "Macedonian"
- "monotonic" orthogr.
- teaching Ancient Greek
- the "Language Problem"
- "word poverty"
- minorities
- English official language
- "romanization"
- "Bulgarians"
- foreign words - English
Representation: A coherent media narrative

an Interior within the Exterior

Exterior

an Exterior within the Interior

Interior
Representation: Test cases

- an Interior within the Exterior
  - (Cyprus 12)

- Cypriot dialect

- an Exterior within the Interior
  - (Thrace 11)

- Pomak ‘language’
Representation: ‘Genres’

- Interior
  - an Interior within the Exterior

- Exterior
  - an Exterior within the Interior

- NEWS
  - OPINION
Representation: ‘Moral panics’

an Interior within the Exterior

Exterior Moral panic

Interior

an Exterior within the Interior
Correlation: A kind of mental causation?

- The regime ideology of the Modern Greek language is shown to affect the way seemingly disparate “language issues” are defined and covered in the press.

- The conceptual topology of the regime ideology offers a framework for the development of coherent communicative sequences.

- A similar territorial conception, it could be argued, underlies the way language issues are debated in countries other than Greece.
C. Just like all other ideologies ...

1. ... *language ideologies* are:

- partially conventional semiotic systems,
- whose semantic organization is based on *implicature* and underlying presuppositions.
- Ideologies evolve over time
- within a field of social oppositions
- through a structured communication network.
- By performing certain *discourse functions* (legitimation, rationalization, etc.),
- they exercise their normative power and
- they refer to reality in a partial and distorted manner.

2. Language ideologies are *metalinguistic* systems.
Implicature – connotation (Barthes et al.)

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Metalanguage

A language ideology cannot be at once an implicative and a metalinguistic system!
A semiotic mediation

(α)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>rhetoric</th>
<th>sr3</th>
<th>ideology</th>
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(β)

language

metalanguage

ideology

language
Correlation: Ideologies as mental entities and as practices

ideologies as ideologies (conceptual frameworks)
  • Linguistic representations of language representations (Preston: perceptual dialectology; Moschonas: conceptual topologies, etc.)
  • presuppositional / implicit

ideologies as linguistic practices
  • language policies – “ideologies in action” (Jaffe, Ideologies in action, 1999)
  • corrective / prescriptive practices, e.g. in standardization (purism), etc.
  • institutional / -ized discourse
  • writing routines / corrective repertoires / styles
  • interactive construction of identities
Correlation: Ideologies and/as Performatives

- “mental causation”
- “practical consciousness” (Kant, Marx & Engels)
- “non-descriptive”, “action-oriented” discourse (Eagleton Ideology, 1991, 19, 29, 47, 93);
- “performative contradiction” (ibid., 53; cf. Tsitsipis, Εισαγωγή στην ανθρωπολογία της γλώσσας, 1998 120 ff.)
- “the interpellation of ‘individuals’ as subjects” (Althusser, ibid.)
- “the performative magic of all acts of institution”; “the magical efficacy of these acts of institution” (Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, 1991, 122, 73)
- “having effects”, “consequential”, “active and effective”; “ideology creates and acts” (Woolard, “Language ideology as a field of inquiry”, 1998, 10-11)
- language awareness affects linguistic change (Silverstein, ibid.)
Correlation: Language Ideologies as Performatives

- language ideologies perform ‘speech acts’ at a *metalinguistic* level;
- their *illocutionary* force is that of a ‘directive’
- their ‘direction of fit’ (*J. Searle*) is from words to words: i.e., from *(meta-)*language to *language*
  - Directives: word $\rightarrow$ world
    - [facts about language are facts about the world]
- their *perlocutionary* effect is ultimately *locutionary*
- their felicity conditions are at the same time conditions of *linguistic change*
Correlation: Language Ideology and Corrective Practices

**metalanguage** → **language**

**Metalinguistic standards** → **Standardized language**

**Elite - followers** → **Literates**

- **Corrective instruction**: "One should neither say nor write X; one should say and write Y instead"
- **Corrective practice**: One neither says nor writes X; one does say and write Y

**Possible linguistic change**: X → Y
Ideologies of language vs. Ideologies in language

**Language ideologies**
- about language
- implicating something else
- metalanguage w implicature

**Ideologies-in-language**
- about something else
- implicating language
- implicature w/o metalanguage

Implication of
- status
- power
- sex
- etc.

(non-linguistic ideologies)

(I. sexism) (gender)
Linguistic ideologies

- ideologies in (and of) linguistics
- there are no important semiotic differences between language ideologies and linguistic ideologies
  - different types of discourse
  - different enterprises (Silverstein)
  - different groups (or “ideology brokers”, Preston, Blommaert)

- language ideologies are primarily *ideologies*
- linguistic ideologies are primarily *metalanguages*


