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Ideologies of Communication
The Social Link Between Actors, Signs, and Practices

1 Introduction

Ideologies of Communication

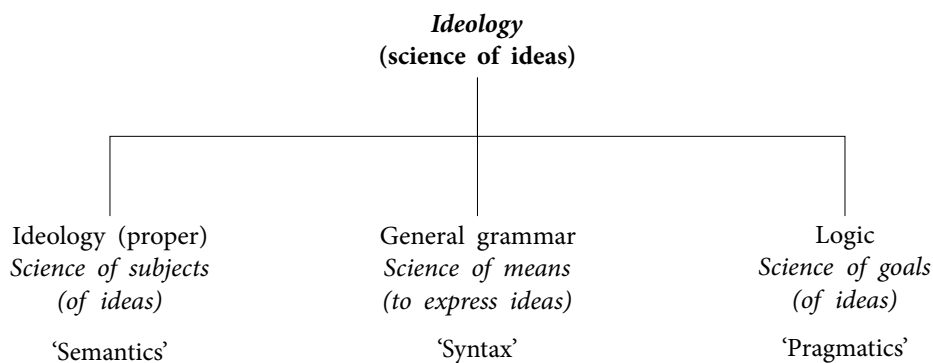|		
German is an awful language!	⟶	Language Ideologies
Her handwriting is so charming.	⟶	Scriptal/Graphic Ideologies
His constant frowning irritates me.	⟶	Gesture Ideologies
Can you believe it?! She broke up via Facebook!	⟶	Media/Genre Ideologies
Young people today are so witty.	⟶	Ideologies of Creativity

2 Ideology

Ideology in Daily Use[1]

"That charge is really not scientifically based. It's ideological in origin." (ABC_Nightline)

"I'm tired of the ideological positions. We don't even need to visit them." (ABC: This Week)

"I think it was kind of the triumph of ideology over common sense." (CBS_SunMorn)

"I share the anger of my fellow Democrats with George Bush and the wrong direction he has taken our nation, but the answer to his outdated extremist ideology is not to be found in outdate extremes of our own." (CNN_Insight)

Destutt De Tracy's *Idéologie* (cf. Destutt de Tracy [1801–1815] 1977: 19–20)

	Ideology **(science of ideas)**	
Ideology (proper) *Science of subjects* *(of ideas)*	General grammar *Science of means* *(to express ideas)*	Logic *Science of goals* *(of ideas)*
'Semantics'	'Syntax'	'Pragmatics'

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[1] Examples taken from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*, *https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/*

Napoleon and the *Idéologues*

"Windbags and ideologues […] have always fought the existing authority."

"They are dreamers and dangerous dreamers […]. Your ideologues destroy all illusions, and the age of illusions is for individuals as for peoples the age of happiness." (Quoted from Kennedy 1979: 358–359)

Marx and *The German Ideology*

"There is no specific difference between German idealism and the ideology of all other nations. The latter too regards the world as dominated by ideas, ideas and concepts as the determining principles, and certain notions as the mystery of the material world accessible to the philosophers." (Marx/Engels [1845–1846] 1976: 23)

Base-Superstructure-Dialectics
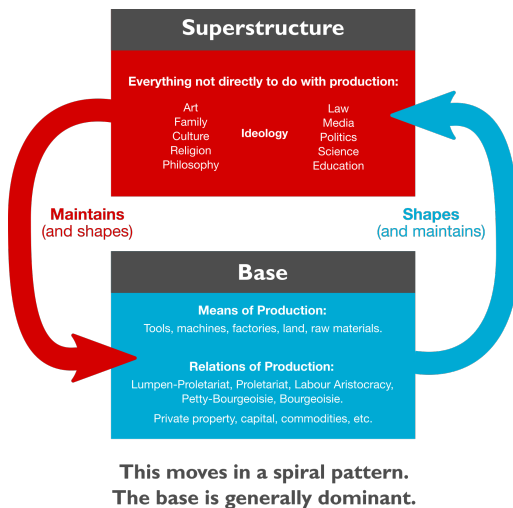
Source: *https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Base-superstructure_Dialectic.png*

Vološinov and the *Ideological Sign*

"*Without signs, there is no ideology.* […] Signs […] are particular, material things. […] A sign does not simply exist as a part of a reality – it reflects and refracts another reality. Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it, or it may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth. Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i. e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.). The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. *Everything ideological possesses semiotic value.*" (Vološinov [1929] 1986: pp. 9–10; orig. emph.)

Gramsci and the *Ideological Structure*

"The press is the most dynamic part of the ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything that directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture, the layout of streets and their names." (Gramsci [1929–1935] 2011: vol. 2, p. 53)

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Althusser and the *Ideological Apparatuses*

"I shall therefore say that, where only a single subject (such and such an individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that *his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject.*" (Althusser [1970] 1971: p. 169; orig. emph.)

Laclau and the Stabilizing Function of Ideology

"A discourse in which meaning cannot possibly be fixed is nothing else but the discourse of the psychotic." (Laclau 1990: 90)

"The ideological would consist of those discursive forms through which a society tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences. The ideological would be the will to 'totality' of any totalizing discourse. And insofar as the social is impossible without some fixation of meaning, without the discourse of closure, the ideological must be seen as constitutive of the social." (Laclau 1990: 92)

Consequences for *Ideologies of Communication*

1. Ideologies have a particular *social function* (cf. Laclau)
2. Ideologies are *connected to communication* (cf. Vološinov)
3. *Communication itself* is ideological (cf. Vološinov)
4. There is *no 'non-ideological'* social practice

Mannheim and the *Total Ideology*

"The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes that we are skeptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent." (Mannheim [1929] 1997: 49)

"[…] the total conception calls into question the opponent's total *Weltanschauung* (including his conceptual apparatus), and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he partakes." (Mannheim [1929] 1997: 57)

3 Language Ideologies

Language Ideologies

"[…] 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. If we compare such ideologies with what goes under the name of 'scientific' statements about language, we might find that in 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. We need have no conceit one way or the other, however, that automatically privileges so-called 'scientific' description, or automatically condemns native ideological rationalization." (Silverstein 1979: 193)

The Total Linguistic Fact

"the datum for a science of language" (Silverstein 1985: 220)

Language Structure

The "Total Linguistic Fact"

Language Use ———————— Language Evaluation

Reflexivity

Language

Language
use
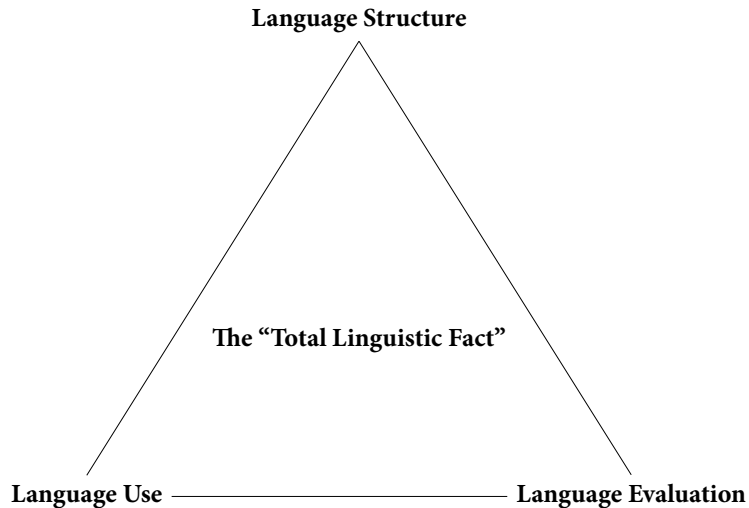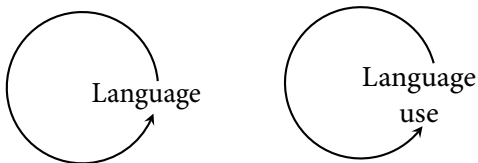
> "Signs functioning metapragmatically have pragmatic phenomena […] as their semiotic objects […]." (Silverstein 1993: 33)

4 Indexicality

Indexicality

> "Through indexicality, every utterance tells something about the person who utters it – man, woman, young, old, educated, from a particular region, or belonging to a particular group, etc. – and about the kind of person we encounter – we make character judgements all the time, and labels such as 'arrogant', 'serious', 'funny', 'self-conscious', or 'businesslike' are based almost exclusively on how people communicate with us. Every utterance also tells us something about the utterance itself. Is it serious or banter? Is this an anecdote, a joke, an order, a request? Is the speaker sure/sincere/ confident of what s/he says? What kind of relationship between the speaker and the hearer is articulated in this utterance – is this a friendly or a hostile utterance? And every utterance tells us something about the social context in which it is being produced: is this a formal or an informal occasion? Are things such as social class, gender, ethnicity, or professional status played out in the utterance? Are social roles reinforced or put up for negotiation? Are social rules being followed or broken? And so on. Indexical meaning is what anchors language usage firmly into social and cultural patterns." (Blommaert 2005: 11–12)

Bakhtin and the Social 'Taste' of Style

"[…] there are no 'neutral' words and forms […]. All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word." (Bakhtin [1975] 1981: 293)

Language Ideologies and *Indexicality*

"It has become a commonplace in sociolinguistics that linguistic forms, including whole languages, can index social groups. As part of everyday behavior, the use of a linguistic form can become a pointer to (index of) the social identities and the typical activities of speakers. But speakers (and hearers) often notice, rationalize, and justify such linguistic indices, thereby creating linguistic ideologies that purport to explain the source and meaning of the linguistic differences. To put this another way, linguistic features are seen as reflecting and expressing broader cultural images of people and activities. Participants' ideologies about language locate linguistic phenomena as part of, and evidence for, what they believe to be systematic behavioral, aesthetic, affective, and moral contrasts among the social groups indexed." (Irvine/Gal 2000: 37)

5 Actors, Signs, and Practices

Language Ideologies: The Connecting Principle
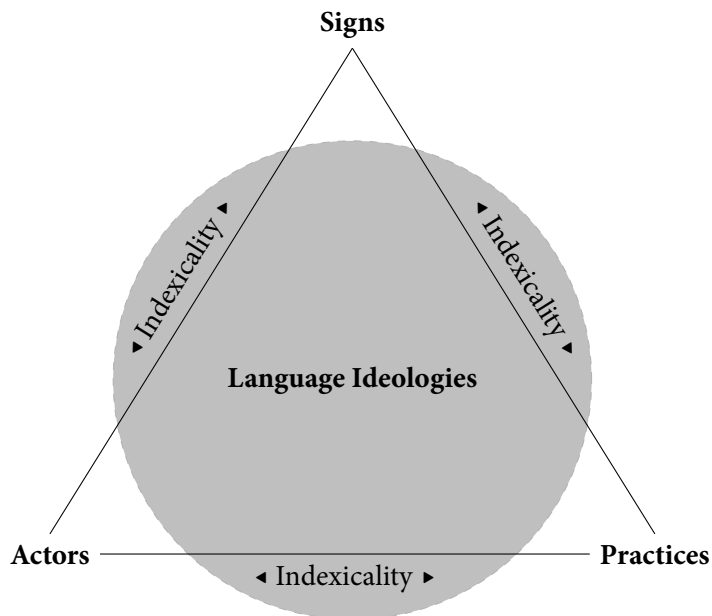
Register and *Enregisterment*

"registers [are] culture-internal models of personhood linked to speech forms" (Agha 2007: 135)

Social Emblems

> "An *emblem* is a thing to which a social persona is attached. It involves three elements; (1) a perceivable thing, or diacritic; (2) a social persona; (3) someone for whom it is an emblem (i. e., someone who can read that persona from that thing). When a thing/diacritic is widely recognized as an emblem – when many people view it as marking the same social persona – I will say that it is enregistered as an emblem, or is an *enregistered emblem*. 'Enregistered' just means 'widely recognized,' and there are degrees of it." (Agha 2007: 235)

Indexical Orders

enregisterment

- 1st-*order indexicality:* Linguistic forms that are linked to a specific sociodemographic context from the outside (e. g., by linguistic observation)

- 2nd-*order indexicality:* Linguistic forms that are linked to a specific sociodemographic context from the inside (i. e., by group members) and hence can be used as contextualization cues

- 3rd-*order indexicality:* Linguistic forms that are widely perceived as being 'emblematic' for a given sociodemographic context and that are thus often used in stylization (Silverstein 2003)

6 Ideologies of Communication

Forms:

- *scriptal/graphic ideologies* (Robertson 2017; Spitzmüller 2012, 2015)

- *media ideologies* (Gershon 2010, a; F. Busch 2018)

- *semiotic ideologies* (Keane 2003, 2018)

- *genre ideologies* (Beebee 1994; Briggs/Bauman 1992; Spitzmüller 2013)

- ideologies related to the alleged *agency* and *faculty* of actors (e. g., *ideologies of creativity*; Wilf 2014)

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The presentation slides are available at *http://www.spitzmueller.org/docs/pres-prague-ideologies_of_comm-2019.pdf*.