

Gramsci's Politics of Language



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Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony have permeated social and political theory, cultural studies, education studies, literary criticism, international relations, and post-colonial theory. The centrality of language and linguistics to Gramsci's thought, however, has been wholly neglected. In *Gramsci's Politics of Language*, Peter Ives argues that a university education in linguistics and a preoccupation with Italian language politics were integral to the theorist's thought. Ives explores how the combination of Marxism and linguistics produced a unique and intellectually powerful approach to social and political analysis. To explicate Gramsci's writings on language, Ives compares them with other Marxist approaches to language, including those of the Bakhtin Circle, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt School, including Jurgen Habermas. From these comparisons, Ives elucidates the implications of Gramsci's writings, which, he argues, retained the explanatory power of the semiotic and dialogic insights of Bakhtin and the critical perspective of the Frankfurt School, while at the same time foreshadowing the key problems with both approaches that post-structuralist critiques would later reveal. *Gramsci's Politics of Language* fills a crucial gap in scholarship,

linking Gramsci's writings to current debates in social theory and providing a framework for a thoroughly historical-materialist approach to language.

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