



Language and Identity: Discourse in the World

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Language not only expresses identities but also constructs them. Starting from that point, *Language and Identity* examines the interrelationships between language and identities. It finds that they are so closely interwoven, that words themselves are inscribed with ideological meanings.

Words and language constitute meanings within discourses and discourses vary in power. The powerful ones reproduce more powerful meanings, colonize other discourses and marginalize or silence the least powerful languages and cultures. Language and culture death occur in extreme cases of marginalization.

This book also demonstrates the socio-economic opportunities offered by language choice and the cultural allegiances of language, where groups have been able to create new lives for themselves by embracing new languages in new countries. Language can be a 'double-edged sword' of opportunity and marginalization. *Language and Identity* argues that bilingualism and in some cases multilingualism can both promote socio-economic opportunity and combat culture death and marginalization.

With sound theoretical perspectives drawing upon the work of Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Gumperz, Foucault and others, this book provides readers with a rationale to redress social injustice in the world by supporting minority linguistic and cultural identities and an acknowledgement that access to language can provide opportunity.

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