Introduction

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These selected papers on a common topic of "Language in Power," from the spring 1989 seminar of the University of Washington's program in the Comparative Study of Ethnicity and Nationality (CSEN), take a distinct approach to the study of language and political economy. The papers complement recent interest in the interaction of language use and political behavior. In particular, these papers complement Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989) and its emphasis on the social effects of language in such areas as advertising, police interrogations, doctor–patient interaction, and political rhetoric. The papers here also complement *Language and Politics* (Otero 1989), a collection of interviews with Noam Chomsky, in which Chomsky discusses the inherent power in language as exercised, for example, in propaganda. Fairclough's book focuses on the way language affects what people do, while Otero's Chomsky interviews stress the relationship between linguistic and political analysis — both seen as ways to understand human nature and cognition. Where Fairclough proposes a manner of *critical language study* to understand discourse used in shaping social, economic, and political institutions and Chomsky similarly presents a critical approach to the world's hegemonic discourse, the present work is a survey of macro-level social science concerns with languages (as systems of communication) as they play a role in the way power is exercised within a political-economic entity.

A number of the papers in this volume look at issues of language in power from the perspective of the state or nation. Languages are seen, for example, by Laponce, Pool, Harrell, and Laitin as political linguistic (rather than sociolinguistic in a narrow sense) entities that can be manipulated by leaders in the interest of political power. Other papers (e.g. Schiffman, Lang, Tollefson, Myers-Scotton) take a case-study approach, examining language use from the perspective of society, be that the workplace, the home, or any of a number of possible domains of language use. The way people negotiate power and prestige using languages or