



# Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries (Studies in Language, Gender, and Sexuality)

By Robin Tolmach Lakoff

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## Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries (Studies in Language, Gender, and Sexuality) By Robin Tolmach Lakoff

The 1975 publication of Robin Tolmach Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*, is widely recognized as having inaugurated feminist research on the relationship between language and gender, touching off a remarkable response among language scholars, feminists, and general readers. For the past thirty years, scholars of language and gender have been debating and developing Lakoff's initial observations.

Arguing that language is fundamental to gender inequality, Lakoff pointed to two areas in which inequalities can be found: Language used about women, such as the asymmetries between seemingly parallel terms like *master* and *mistress*, and language used by women, which places women in a double bind between being appropriately feminine and being fully human. Lakoff's central argument that "women's language" expresses powerlessness triggered a controversy that continues to this day.

The revised and expanded edition presents the full text of the original first edition, along with an introduction and annotations by Lakoff in which she reflects on the text a quarter century later and expands on some of the most widely discussed issues it raises. The volume also brings together commentaries from twenty-six leading scholars of language, gender, and sexuality, within linguistics, anthropology, modern languages, education, information sciences, and other disciplines. The commentaries discuss the book's contribution to feminist research on language and explore its ongoing relevance for scholarship in the field.

This new edition of *Language and Woman's Place* not only makes available once again the pioneering text of feminist linguistics; just as important, it places the text in the context of contemporary feminist and gender theory for a new generation of readers.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Lakoff, the scholar who inspired me to pursue a career in linguistics, was the first to show that the language used by women (who is more likely--or expected--to say, "Oh dear" and "My goodness"?) and *about* women (men pass out, but women faint) reflects the way that women are treated and the real-world possibilities open to them."--Deborah Tannen, author of *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk among Friends, Revised Edition* (OUP, 2005) and *You're Wearing That?: Understanding Mothers and Daughters in Conversation*

"In 1975, when first published, this watershed study was as unprecedented, controversial, and as influential as its basic thesis: that gender influenced vocabulary and usage and that both in turn reflected oppressive social structures. The present volume goes way beyond the category of "revised edition": Bucholtz created an entirely new entity that contains and surrounds the original...the reader feels privy to a lively conversation at a gathering of a very extended family, complete with its controversies. Highly recommended."--*Choice*

"[A] re-release of Lakoff's 1975 seminal work on gender and language...this book is a first-rate acquisition for a variety of audiences. ...an excellent introductory text for either a graduate or undergraduate class on language and gender. The commentaries are often partly the personal journey of the authors negotiating gender through their lives and their work. Because of this, linguistics is made personally relevant in a way which rarely happens in undergraduate texts."--Elizabeth Winkler, *Linguist List 16.521*

#### About the Author

Robin Tolmach Lakoff is Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. Widely regarded as the founder of language and gender studies, she writes extensively about gender and power and is the author or coauthor of seven books and nearly one hundred articles. Mary Bucholtz is Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has coedited several books on language and gender and is the author of numerous articles on race, class, and youth identities.

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