

# The bias of language

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Running head: The Bias of Language, The Bias of Pictures The Bias of Language, The Bias of Pictures

1. The differences between stationary pictures, moving pictures and language are claimed to be rooted in the roles they perform. As for language, its use is threefold: to describe, evaluate, as well as infer something about events. Its basic function is to give ideas. This differs from stationary pictures that “ give us the world as object” (Postman & Powers, 1992, p. 105). Stationary pictures are believed to represent the world/events in a fragmentary way or “ in particularities” (p. 104). Additionally, stationary pictures cannot represent concepts or abstract notions like love, trust, etc, they may just offer some fixed moments that serve the basis for inferring about the event. Moreover, pictures have limited possibilities since they cannot provide commentaries, which is the role of language. Unlike stationary pictures, moving pictures thanks to combinations of video and sound have a better potential of representation. Specifically, images are juxtaposed with music, sound and symbols, which allows conveying emotions and “ rudimentary ideas” (p. 105). For example, moving pictures can represent a panoramic view of nature which enables a viewer understand the concept/abstract idea. This contrasts with stationary pictures whose potential is restricted to showing a part of something – a cliff, a wave, etc. To add, stationary pictures cannot represent the process while moving pictures show how something is changing, e. g. a house burning to ashes, etc.

2. This point about the differences between language, moving and stationary pictures provides the basis for preparing readers for deep understanding of the moving pictures essence. As further in the essay Postman and Powers

discuss the nature and technology of newscasts production, the function and power of moving pictures is clearly stated.

3. The writers' main claim about today's newscasts is they represent the world in a biased and dramatized manner, which makes it hard to grasp the reality of an event. I totally agree with this view. Newscasts are produced by television companies that are always someone's property or under someone's power. Therefore, they show the things the way that does not damage the image of the owner and serves his interests.

#### References

Postman, N., Powers, S. T. (1992) *The Bias of Language, The Bias of Pictures. How to Watch TV news.* New York, Penguin Books, 1992. 91-114. Retrieved September 15, 2011 from the World Wide Web: [http://www.qcounty.com/SCC/Fall06/Eng1\\_0561/TheBiasOfLanguagePictures.pdf](http://www.qcounty.com/SCC/Fall06/Eng1_0561/TheBiasOfLanguagePictures.pdf)