Linguistics and Writing: Attitudes towards analysis of the written word over the history of linguistic thought

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The relationship between the discipline of linguistics and the phenomenon of written language is complex. In recent times many of those engaged in the study of language have denounced the written word as a mere shadow of speech, despite being forced to advance this thinking using the written word. Others have seen writing as a tool through which cognitive processes may investigated, whilst remaining relatively disinterested in writing as an object of linguistic interest itself. This talk will examine such attitudes using a historical perspective, arguing that linguistic inquiry into the phenomenon of the written word has been fruitful in the past, and could be fruitful again.