

### Short Assignment 1: Personal Linguistic Reflection

We all are highly aware of how the people around us use language, but we more rarely step back and think about our own language use, the relationship of language to our identities, and the power of language more generally. Traveling to or living in different parts of the country can heighten our awareness of dialect; mastering or teaching traditional grammatical rules can highlight the difference between our spoken and written language. But we are rarely asked to articulate our observations. As an example, I am from Michigan, and when I lived in California, people commented on the nasality of my “a,” particularly in the pronunciation of my name, but no one seemed to think less of me. A colleague of mine, however, commented to me that she feels self-conscious of her southern accent, particularly in the realm of academia. Why is it okay for me to sound like I’m from Michigan, but my colleague worries about sounding like she is from the South?

We all speak a dialect, and we all have an accent. While all dialects and accents are considered equal linguistically, they are not equal socially: speakers often have biases for and against particular varieties of English (e.g., which varieties are “good” and which are “bad”; which are “ugly sounding” and which are “cool sounding”). Some speakers also have strong beliefs about other languages and/or bilingualism. The theme of this course is about language and identity: how beliefs about language work, how language effects the stereotypes we have about how people, and how intertwined language is with our identities. To get us ready for our major paper, we need to begin thinking critically and reflectively about language, the stereotypes we hold about language, and where those stereotypes may have come from. This assignment helps us practice metacognition, which is a crucial skill for effective writing, and allows us to establish the personal stakes (or in other words, why this matters).

**Format:** 2-3 Pages, MLA format. **I encourage you to employ any linguistic choices that you think will help illustrate the claim that you are trying to make given the audience you choose for this paper.**

This is a personal reflection, and one of the ways that you can choose to demonstrate your argument is through your language choices (i.e. tone, style, code-switching, etc.). We will talk about this in class.

**Audience:** Your choice (but be sure to have an audience in mind).

#### Task:

- Write a personal linguistic **reflection** that presents a claim about the relationship of language to identity and/or about the power of language based on your personal experiences with language—be that your own language use or the language use of others you know. (*outcome 1*)
- Examine, carefully and critically, the role of language in your life and what you have witnessed or experienced about the relationship of language to aspects of identity. Include specific, detailed **examples** (2 to 3) of spoken or written language use to support and/or explain your points. (*outcome 2*)

**Guided questions:** You may already have ideas about what you want to talk about in this paper. If you do not, here are some areas to think about. This should NOT be used as a “check list” for writing the paper; it is designed to help you generate ideas that will lead to larger questions you can explore.

- Your control of dialect(s) and/or language(s): Do you control more than one dialect? How would you describe your dialect(s)? Are you multilingual? How do others respond to your dialect(s) and/or language(s)?
- When did you become aware of dialect and/or accent differences? Have you witnessed or experienced discrimination based on language? What is your response?

Jacki Fiscus

FYC Assignment

- Your control of different spoken registers and styles: Do you find that you speak differently in different circumstances? If so, what effects does this have as you navigate your social worlds? Are you aware of changing your speech style? How do you feel about your spoken language?
- Your control of different written registers: Do you find that you write differently in different circumstances? How does your e-mail compare to your academic work? How would you characterize your “written style”? How do you feel about your written language?
- Your language education: What have teachers told you about language? What have teachers told you about your use of language (written and spoken)? What is your response?
- Your early formative years: What dialect(s) or language(s) do/did your parents speak? Was language ever discussed in your house when you were growing up and if so, how? What other circumstances and considerations may have affected your language development?
- Your pet peeves: Are there examples of language use that really bother you? Do you ever find yourself correcting others, or yourself? If so, how do they respond? And what do you make of your desire to “fix” the language of others?
- Power of language: Are there words you will not use? If so, why not? Are there words that you find particularly jarring or offensive if you hear others use them? If so, why?

Short Assignment 1 Rubric	Outstanding	Strong	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Presents a claim about the relationship of language to identity and/or about the power of language based on your personal experiences with language—be that your own language use or the language use of others you know. <i>(outcome 1, outcome 2)</i>					
Makes language choices that reflect the genre of this piece and work to strengthen the claim given the audience chosen. <i>(outcome 1)</i>					
Includes specific, detailed <b>examples</b> (2 to 3) of spoken or written language. <i>(outcome 2)</i>					
The examples used help support the claim. <i>(outcome 2)</i>					

**SA2: Genre Re-Mix**

Background: For SA2, you will “remix” your SA1. What do I mean by “re-mix”? A “re-mix” is when you use one text as inspiration to create a new multimodal creation. You may choose to have the same or a different purpose and/or audience as the original artifact. After you re-mix your SA1, you will write a brief (minimum 500 word) writer’s memo explaining your composing process and experience with re-mixing your text. Remember, this is a short assignment, so that means that you should limit the scope of your project.

Format/Audience: Your choice!

Tasks:

- Re-read your SA1 for the purpose of finding inspiration for your re-mix. (outcome 2)
- Pick an intended purpose, way of composing (must be different than original!), and audience – and tell me what those choices are – in the writer’s memo. Explain your composing process and what you did to achieve your purpose given your audience and design goals. Also, consider if you decided to create an easily recognizable genre, and if so, if you adhered to all genre conventions (or not) given your purpose/audience. (outcome 1).
- Use modal affordances in your re-mixed multimodal creation to achieve your purpose to your audience. (outcome 1)

Guided Questions:

- What was my argument in SA1? What is its purpose, genre, audience, and rhetorical strategies used?
- How else can I imagine this projects purpose being represented? Do I want to focus my remix on a particular moment or a piece of evidence from my reflection? Or am I going to try to have the same argument but with potentially different evidence?
- What is the piece of this project that I want of focus on? In other words, how can I create an artifact that is inspired by the original but potentially narrows the scope of what it is trying to do? What about the content do I leave out and what do I be sure to incorporate?
- How does the new representation modify the purpose, genre, audience, and rhetorical strategies used?

Short Assignment 2 Rubric	Outstanding	Strong	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Put your own rubric categories here:					
Pick an intended purpose, project design, and audience – and tell me what those choices are – in the writer’s memo. Then, explain why you made the choices you did and what you did purposefully to achieve your purpose given your audience/multimodal project. Also, consider if you decided to use a recognizable genre, and if so, if you adhered to all genre conventions (or not) given your purpose/audience. (outcome 1)					
Use modal affordances in your re-mixed multimodal project creation to achieve your purpose to your audience. (outcome 1)					

---

As a follow up to this assignment, I ask students to re-cast their writer’s memos as comics. Students spend class time doing this and then share them with a partner. This leads to a conversation about reflective texts, what they can capture, and modal/genere affordances.