

Appendix to “Supporting Students’ Own Languages in the Writing Classroom: Adaptable Writing Assignments for Enacting Linguistic Justice in Local Contexts”

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- FYC Language diversity reflection activity
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FYC Language diversity reflection activity

In this assignment, you will write a short reflection (200-250 words) about the topics (i.e., multilingualism, translingualism, language variation) that we have covered in this class and in Reading Response #2. In the style of Anzaldúa, please experiment with incorporating multiple languages, varieties (dialects, sociolects, idiolects), and/or registers into your writing. While your audience (your peers and I) must be able to make sense of your text, you are encouraged to use as many languages, varieties, registers, and other semiotics (e.g., images, symbols, emoticons) as you can. Here is an example student text. [Example included for class].

Your reflection might be guided in response to the following questions:

1. What does language diversity mean to you? Why is it important?
2. What new terminology did you learn today? Does it help you to understand something about how language and/or society work that you did not know before?
3. Have you ever been "corrected" based on your language practices? Have you ever corrected anyone? What do those "corrections" and "language myths" tell you about people's language preferences and the ways society works? (from Sánchez-Martín, 2021).

Assessment: The short reflection is assessed on a 'complete' or 'incomplete' basis according to the grading contract.

SEQUENCE II - Linguistic Influencer Profile Essay

Context :

When we think of the term "influencer", our mind often goes to the people on our social media feed, someone who has a large following and gets sponsorships. But oftentimes, influencers are the every-day people right here at our own institution and town – the local bookstore owner, members of clubs, the guys down at the food truck, etc. These individuals have their own linguistic identities, personal struggles, and people who influence them, too.

Your Task :

Write a 1,000-1,500 word profile essay about someone in a community *different* from your own, incorporating quotes from an interview you will schedule with them.

For this assignment, you will interview someone in a community *different* from your own about the multiple facets of their identity, their influence on others, how they believe language has empowered them (or hindered them) in achieving their goals, and who has influenced them in their journey.

What do we mean by “community”?

We all belong to multiple communities – your family, for instance, is its own community, with their own customs, traditions, etc. Your ethnic/cultural background, friend groups, clubs/teams you belong to, religious organization, and even online circles you frequent are also considered “communities”, with certain characteristics, interests, etc. in common.

For our purposes, you should consider interviewing a person(s) who is *not* a part of the communities you consider yourself to be a part of. The goal here is to learn about others and their linguistic experiences. In other words, please refrain from interviewing parents, close friends, or people who you otherwise see on a regular basis or of whom you already have their contact info. You can certainly ask around these groups for potential people to interview, but there should be a minimum of 1 degree of separation (meaning, for example, you can't interview

your mom, but perhaps she knows someone who you haven't met before to put you in contact with).

How will this assignment come together?

Since your person will be from a community different from your own, this will require a bit of stepping out of your comfort zone. But the goal of this assignment is to get you thinking about the diverse communities around you, how language factors into people's stories, and the ongoing effects of someone's influence. You will turn that interview into an essay to encapsulate that person's background, linguistic identity, and their own inspirations.

Also remember that by conducting an interview with a person from a different community, you are entering into that community as an observer. Be respectful, ask careful questions (which I'll help you with), and be mindful of the person you're speaking with.

While this is a longer paper that will require additional information than your previous essay, do not panic! We will have Building Block assignments that will help you progress towards the final product, along with multiple in-class workshops and readings to guide you on your way.

Final Draft Expectations:

After completing the Building Block assignments throughout the sequence, you will write a 1000-1500 word paper about your subject of influence. This essay **MUST** include:

- At least **4 direct quotes** from the interview
 - Please keep the original language your influencer uses when you implement their quotes – let the person's words/language speak to the audience!
- A **summary** and analysis of your chosen influencer's background
- Moments of their language empowerment/hindrances and how they feel language has helped them influence others
 - You are more than welcome to codemesh/translanguage, as we learned in the previous unit, and again, keep moments of translanguaging from the interview as well.
- The person(s) who have influenced/affected them.
- Employment of all three rhetorical appeals: **ethos, pathos and logos**.

For your final draft, you will submit:

1. Profile essay (1,000-1,500 words) that fully accounts for all the information above.

2. Reflection (1-2 paragraphs)

Your reflection should account for the following:

- How did your interview go? Was it difficult to find and learn about someone from a different background than your own?
- How was the writing process for you? Did you feel as though you took risks in your writing? Are you happy with the final product? Why or why not (it's okay to be candid and honest)?
- If you were to go back and revise, what would you change? What would you keep the same?

You have a lot of information to incorporate into this essay. The challenge here is to present everything you have learned in as coherent and organized a way as possible. This kind of paper has the potential to be incredibly dry – work to avoid that trap.

If you need help at any point, please come talk to me! I'd rather help you brainstorm and guide you more than leave you with an essay you are not happy with.

Linguistic Observation and Analysis

In their article, “What Color is My Voice? Academic Writing and the Myth of Standard English,” Bailey, Ha, and Outlar argue that “language is acquired by interacting with others, it’s as diverse as the communities we’re part of...In each of our communities, the language we use is specific to those groups.” The authors also describe how language is used to create a sense of community and belonging; language separates people who are in the community from those who are outside of it. In this project, you will test these claims in order to identify and analyze the ways that language operates within the communities that you are part of. The research that we conduct will help us to determine what forms of language, or what Vershawn Ashanti Young refers to as “Englishes,” have power and authority and in which settings.

Learning Outcomes

This project engages the following course goals and learning outcomes:

- Write and revise purpose-driven texts
- Summarize, paraphrase, and quote sources to provide sufficient context for a reader who is unfamiliar with those sources
- Use concepts from one source to critically interpret concepts from another source
- Integrate material from sources into your writing ethically (attribution, in-text citations, etc.)

This project will be scaffolded into several phases over the next several weeks.

Data Collection

First, choose two communities that you belong to in which to perform observations. These communities might be place-based (like your church youth group, your volleyball team, or your chemistry study group) or digital (like an online book club, a group of friends that regularly meets to play online video games, or a neighborhood Facebook group). It is important that you choose communities where you regularly interact and would be comfortable being observed for the purposes of this project. We will discuss ethical considerations for primary research in class. Then choose a time that you would like to perform your observations. During this time (you should plan to spend at least an hour observing each community), take careful notes about how language is used. How would you describe the languages you are hearing/reading? What specific language choices do members of this community make? Do all members of the community use language in the same ways? You might note down specific words, phrases, quotes, or notes about tone. Remember that you are an observer-participant in these communities. You might choose to note and reflect on the ways that *you* use language in these communities and your levels of belongingness.

Data Analysis

Look at the data you collected by laying out your observation notes and reading them carefully, annotating as you go. Then ask yourself the following questions:

- How do the different communities you observed use language? What languages or Englishes can you observe within these communities?
- Do you see people switching back and forth between different versions of English? What are some examples?

- What forms of language seem to have power or authority, and in which situations? How do you know?
- How does language create belonging for the members of the community? How might language exclude outsiders from joining the community?

Drafting

Once you have analyzed the data you collected, you are ready to begin drafting. The written portion of this project will comprise a 4-5 page discussion of your findings, focusing on the ways that your data either supports or refutes Bailey, Ha, and Outlar's claims about language and community. You might decide to write a traditional academic research report in order to present your findings; however, you are free to choose other modes for sharing your research. You might write a narrative piece that explores your own experiences with language and community in order to shed light on Bailey, Ha, and Outlar's claims. You might even compose a multimodal piece like a video essay where you incorporate recorded portions of your observations into a larger discussion of this unit's concepts. Additionally, you should make critical choices about the language you use in your draft. While you should make choices that effectively address the rhetorical situation of this project, that does not mean you are expected to use standardized English. How might you employ the languages of your various communities (observed or otherwise) within your draft?

What Makes it Effective?

As successful project will do the following:

- Rely on data to support insights about the relationship between language and community
- Contextualize the research and the data for readers (describe the communities you studied, the language used in those communities, your methods of observation, and related course concepts)
- Place data in conversation with the sources that we read throughout this unit
- Address the claims made by Bailey, Ha, and Outlar (you might refute their claims, discuss evidence from your observations which support their claims, or present findings which complicate the relationship between language and community that the authors describe)

Language and Literacy Narrative

Length: 4-5 double-spaced pages

Sources: None required, but please cite any sources you do choose to refer to in either [MLA](#) or [APA](#) format

Assignment Description

A literacy narrative is an essay that explores the experiences that have shaped you as a reader and writer. Rather than simply describing that experience, the aim of a literacy narrative is to reflect on how it influenced your relationship with reading or writing, such as examples like Adichie's "The Danger of a Single Story" which illustrates how personal experiences shape broader understandings of literacy. For this assignment, you will select a meaningful moment from your own literacy journey, tell the story of that moment, and then critically analyze the significance of it by describing how it has impacted your growth as a writer. In doing so, your goal as a writer will be to come to some greater insight or understanding about how the experience has shaped who you are as a writer, your relationship with writing, or your perceptions on writing.

Because of the specific focus in our class on the power of our linguistic backgrounds in shaping our perspectives on writing, I would like you to specifically consider how your linguistic history has affected your literate practices and experiences with literacy when composing your literacy narrative. Remember that your linguistic history doesn't just impact your relationship with writing if you are multilingual: holding linguistic privileges can also impact your confidence as a writer, affect your relationship with writing, and shape what you perceive as effective, appropriate, and "correct" in others' writing. In considering connections between your language use and your literate practices, you will not only explore how your own identities shape who you are as a writer but also begin to develop a sense of empathy for and understanding of how the students you will tutor are also bringing a rich set of experiences and histories to their writing that might have shaped their relationships with writing in both positive and negative ways.

When choosing a topic, you will want to focus on one or two meaningful experiences to keep your narrative focused. Here are some potential ideas to spark your thinking:

- **Personal experiences:**
 - A moment when you felt proud of something you wrote, or a moment that challenged you as a writer
 - An instance when you received feedback that changed the way you approach writing

- A time when you discovered a new purpose for writing (e.g., for activism, or self-expression)
- **Influences and relationships:**
 - A teacher, mentor, author, or other formative figure in your development as a writer
 - The role of digital communities (through social media, gaming, etc.) in shaping how you write and communicate
 - A cultural or other tradition that has shaped the way you write
- **Artifacts:**
 - A piece of academic or personal writing that represents a significant moment or achievement in your life as a writer
 - A text that inspired you to think differently about writing
- **Other Moments of Insight:**
 - A writing experience that made you aware of issues of identity, power, or privilege
 - The role of writing in moments of transition (starting college, moving to a new place, making new friends, etc.)
 - A time when writing connected you to an audience beyond the classroom

In order to consider how your linguistic background might have shaped the experience you choose to write about, here are some questions you might consider:

- Where are you from, and where have you lived? What languages are commonly used in those regions?
- What language varieties do you know and use?
- What language(s) did you speak in your home? What differences or similarities have you noticed between the way you speak and the way others in your home or community speak?
- Who or what have been the most powerful influences on your language use (e.g., your family, peers, geographical areas where you have lived, schools you have attended, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other influences)?
- Can you recall any particular experiences where someone commented on your language usage (in your speech or your writing)? Has anyone ever told you to talk or write—or not talk or write—in a certain way? How did this feedback affect you?
- Can you recall any experiences where you have felt like an insider or an outsider of a linguistic community, or when you felt more or less connected to others as a result of the languages you use? How did those experiences affect you?
- In what ways has your use of language affected how others perceive or respond to you?

- Do you often think consciously about your use of language when writing? Why or why not?
- In what ways has your linguistic background had an impact (whether positive or negative) on your relationship with writing?
- In what ways has your language use contributed to your successes or challenges as a writer?

Examples to Guide You

Here are some example literacy narratives—many of which incorporate a discussion of the author’s linguistic background—that may serve as useful examples as you write.

- Min-Zhan Lu: [From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle](#)
- Kiki Petrosino: [Literacy Narrative](#)
- Gloria Anzaldúa: [How to Tame a Wild Tongue](#)
- Louise Erdrich: [Two Languages in Mind, but Just One in the Heart](#)

For additional support and ideas, you might read Ruth Li’s [Reflecting on Literacy Identities Through Writing Personal Narratives](#), which uses excerpts from student-written literacy narratives to show how these pieces can be enriched through critical reflection on one’s identities.

Depending on your linguistic background, you might also find it helpful to read Sana Syed’s piece [Writing Counterstories: Ways to Challenge Dominant Narratives in FYC](#), which articulates how you might use your Language and Literacy Narrative to challenge stock stories, defined by Syed as “stories told by the dominant group and reinforced through oral and written traditions and history” (p. 33).

Things to Keep in Mind as You Write

- In all work for this class, you are encouraged to use language in the way that feels most authentic to you and that reflects your personal voice and style. For each piece, consider your audience, purpose, and goals, and draw on the linguistic resources that help you most effectively communicate your ideas within that rhetorical context.
- I am open to different approaches to this assignment, but in the event that you would like to complete an alternate form of this assignment or meet its goals in a way that may differ from the expectations I have outlined, please reach out to me beforehand so we can come to a mutual agreement on your plan and I can offer guidance and support!
- Because this writing project will be peer reviewed, be sure to think carefully about the aspects of your identity you discuss and the stor(ies) you choose to tell—please don’t disclose anything that might make you uncomfortable! You are never required to share more than you feel comfortable sharing.

Assessment & Evaluation

While you will not receive a letter grade for your work on this assignment as per our grading contract, you will receive feedback from me that is aimed toward helping you grow as a writer. What I focus on in my feedback will be different for each of you but will reflect my authentic response to your piece as a reader, including the strengths I see in your work and aspects of your piece you might rethink to make it even stronger, as well as advice I have for you as you move into subsequent writing projects.

Reading List

Alvarez, S. P., Wan, A. J., & Lee, E. (2021). Workin' Languages: Who We Are Matters in Our Writing. *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, 4, 1-17.

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Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

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Cunningham, J. M. (2017). African American language is not good English. In C. E. Ball & D. M. Loewe (Eds.), *Bad ideas about writing* (pp. 88-92). Digital Publishing Institute.

Komska, Y., et al. (2019) *Linguistic Disobedience: Restoring Power to Civic Language*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Pattanayak, A. (2017). There is one correct way of writing and speaking. In C. E. Ball & D. M. Loewe (Eds.), *Bad ideas about writing* (pp. 82-87). Digital Publishing Institute.

Sánchez-Martín, C. (2021). Beyond language difference in writing: Investigating complex and equitable language practices. *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, 4, 269–280.

Tremain, L. (2023). What can I add to the discourse community? How writers use code meshing and translanguaging to negotiate discourse. *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, 5, 87-101.

Young, V. A. (2010). Should writers use they own English?. *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12(1).