

Whose language?

Inclusive teaching of academic
communication across disciplines

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Workshop objectives

1. To explore key sociolinguistic concepts
2. To relate sociolinguistic concepts to your personal experiences as a language users
3. To relate sociolinguistic concepts to your teaching
4. To explore how you might apply sociolinguistics in your classroom

Opening exercise

Raise your hand or react in the chat box if any of these phrases connect with you....

- not having to worry about a ‘non-native’ accent
- never having to worry about not being able to communicate in public spaces
- having more time because you don’t need forms, announcements, etc. explained to you
- taking for granted everyone understands—if they don’t, they should
- your efforts to learn a new language are always applauded and never seen as ‘not good enough’

(Schwartz & Boovy, 2017)

Guiding assumptions

What are **guiding assumptions**?

Why do we need them today?

Shout out to the students in *Language, Race & Racism: An Introduction!*

1. We live in a racist society

- Racism exists in overt and covert ways.
- It is interpersonal.
- It is structural. It is institutional. It is academic.
- Racism harms ALL people in different ways.
- “Race is the child of racism, not the father.” -Ta-Nehisi Coates

2. Privilege exists and White privilege exists

- We benefit from privilege of all sorts. We (likely) didn't ask for it, but we use it to maintain power and control.

3. Language matters

- A way of speaking/communicating can create/sustain privilege
- Appropriation matters
- Language is contextual and subjective
- Language impacts different people differently
- “Language ideologies are people ideologies” -Norma Mendoza-

Denton

Chat activity

After hearing about (how) **language matters...**

How might these ideologies affect different types of student groups?

(e.g. White // minoritized // “internationalized” students, etc)

4. We are all skilled multilingual beings

Bilingualism and multilingualism evaluated in problematic, contradictory ways in U.S.

- Monolingualism in standard (white) English indicative of acceptable social order

However, we ALL alternate all the time between various registers, dialects, styles, manners of communication...

This alternation is often unconscious and regularly goes unacknowledged, but it is skillful, creative, and a valuable literacy practice.

- It is how we navigate our complex, power-laden, and inequitable social worlds

Chat activity

Think about the many ways that you are be multilingual

- What personal experiences have shaped your language abilities?
- In which situations and with whom do you “language” in different ways?

4. We are all skilled multilingual beings (pt. II)

We situate and “do” our identities in and through these linguistic practices, and so do our students.

“I’m not interested in how “good” one’s [language] is. Because how good someone’s [language] is is connected to the social status of that person. Whenever we begin to sort people into good [language] speakers versus bad [language] speakers, it’s always the most marginalized that are going to be most victimized and receive remediation for it.” –Nelson Flores

**PAUSE and ask to reflect on how YOU have witnessed these concepts.
Tell a story about a student (or yourself)**

5. We are all educators but we are still students

- We never stop studying. And, we never stop *using* and *suppressing* our languages in order to do so.
- In order to be the best educators we can be, we must be a student of our students. We must meet them in conversation.
- We cannot educate if we can't show up for our learning communities as good language listeners.
- We must seek feedback from our students often: In what ways are they being heard? Seen? In what ways do they feel they can express their voice?
- In what ways are you acknowledging the racist architecture of the classroom spaces that you share? In what ways are you facilitating dialogue with and through student multilingualisms in order to tear it down?

Final activity

Discuss/name one specific practice in your teaching that you can change/adjust according to these 5 principles.

1. WE LIVE IN A RACIST SOCIETY.
2. PRIVILEGE EXISTS and WHITE PRIVILEGE EXISTS.
3. LANGUAGE MATTERS.
4. WE ARE ALL SKILLED MULTILINGUAL BEINGS.
5. WE ARE ALL EDUCATORS, BUT WE'RE STILL STUDENTS.

Thank you!

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