

Linguistics essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Raph Udarbe Australian teenagers commonly complete secondary school without a firm grasp on how to construct a complex sentence, a Senate committee is believed to have found. (The Age, 13 September 2007) Nothing unites a country more than its common language because from a language comes a history and a culture. (John Howard quoted in Migrants to sit English test, ABC online. 11 December 2006) Linguistics suggest that some people deliberately choose a low status accent as a way of invoking prestige, although this is less common amongst women than men.

The Australian-born children of migrants from Europe, Asia and the Pacific Islands are asserting their respective cultural blends each time they open their mouths, leading to dozens of different ethnic dialects such as ‘wogspeak’, that much-parodied blend of Australian and various Mediterranean accents. (From Strine feels the strain with Austrayan twang on the wane’ by Peter Munro. The Age, 27 January 2008) Your use of language sends out lots of little messages, not just about your level of education and where you come from, but about how you would like to be perceived. Discuss with reference to at least two subsystems of language.

Despite the more obvious physical differences we share amongst society, it is often our use of language that separates us from each other. Our language can reveal many things about our identity and can disclose such aspects as our nationality, culture, age, gender and even our level of education. Often our nationality can become explicit through our accent but also through our lexical choices in which we choose to use and it may even become evident that English is not our primary language and that that we have actually grown up in another country and have spoken a different language in our past.

Our cultural heritage is a defining feature of our identity, contributing to how we see ourselves and how the groups we belong to identify us. Any individual can change their language use to portray a specific identity depending on how they wish to be perceived within a society. We constantly change our language based on how we see different contexts and what we think would be appropriate in it, however, how we perceive ourselves can change within our community, allowing us to portray multiple identities over years or even within a day.

Individuals can attempt to influence how others perceive them, but ultimately it is others who create the speaker's identity. If we are not allowed any influence on our own output, then the hearer is able to construct an identity for us which may be entirely different from the identity we are trying to portray. or interchangeably. It is often where individuals start speaking in one language, and then change to another however code-switching implies some degree of incompetence.

Often code switching is used to fill a lexical gap, or to establish an identity different from one of the languages. Where code-switching is considered to be the norm it is often perceived as fluid, unmarked, and uneventful, however in other areas where code-switching is that other than the norm, it is often thought of as strange and somewhat uneducated. Essentially, language can be a powerful means of exercising our social control.

If we belong to a particular group, we generally tend to adopt the lexical choices of that group as language can give a strong sense of belonging or being excluded within a community. Our lexical choices that include such

aspects as slang and Jargon and our unique accents are some of the key features of our language which denote our belonging to a certain group in society, our ethnicity and even our upbringing. Any individual who wishes to be seen as belonging to a certain social group may start using that slang to be included in the group and be identified as belonging to it.

As teenagers, we often create our own slang to form a distinct identity from others. The lexical choices that we make as teenagers are very distinct from what the older generations might use hence why teen speak is very good marker of identity for teenagers much in the way that adults and elderly people use words that teenagers wouldn't usually use, so they would be markers of identity for adults. This is how strongly lexemes can mark our identity and be purposely used to mark that identity.

Australian English is a dynamic and vital expression of the distinctiveness of Australian culture and one of the major elements of our national identity. Amongst our society, many people speak a language other than English as their first language within their families and communities. Most people are moving towards using a general accent in Australia and away from the broad accent, because it portrays a much more educated image whilst still retaining distinct features of Australian English.

Many people use accents to convey a specific identity that can be seen from various ethnolects present in Australia such as the way a migrant to Australia may choose to be identified from their own ethnicity by retaining features from their own language and accent as opposed to other migrants

who may choose to acquire an Australian accent in order to be perceived as Australians and create a sense of belonging amongst society.

Being able to adequately execute Australia English is critical for successful participation in Australian society and for exchanging information about the values and perspectives of different cultures. Similarly, proficiency in first language skills is essential for self-enrichment and expression of identity.