
Appalachian Englishes in the Twenty-First Century

Educational Materials

Chapter 11

Appalachian Englishes and the College Campus **Stephany Brett Dunstan and Audrey J. Jaeger**

Reflection questions:

1. The term *Standard Language Ideology* may be a new term for you, but if you have been part of any educational system, it has been part of your life. In what ways has Standard Language Ideology affected your life and influenced your thinking?
2. In what ways have you adjusted ways of doing language in college? Have you used different words or styles of sentences to make your language sound more “academic”?
3. What do you think it means to sound “academic” or “scholarly” or “professional”? Do you think that it differs by environment? In your opinion, what kind of language does *not* sound academic/scholarly/professional? Thinking broadly, who do you think gets to decide what is considered academic/scholarly/professional language, and what are the implications for diverse varieties of language that are excluded from what is considered “proper” academic/scholarly/professional language?
4. In what ways have you experienced linguistic hegemony? Can you think of examples of instances when teachers, books, the media, or friends supported the idea there is a single, correct variety of language? What groups of people are said to speak that “correct” variety of language?
5. As a college student, have you ever felt that the way you speak has had an influence on the way that your peers, instructors, or advisors perceive you? If so, how do you think it influenced them? Why do you think that is?
6. Do you think that the way you speak has had an impact (positive or negative, or both) on your own personal beliefs regarding your ability to succeed academically? In a future career? If yes, how so?
7. Do you think your academic experiences would be different if you spoke differently? If so, in what ways and why?

Exercise 1: You have been told about language for years. Gather together from both your own textbooks and other media sources 10 quotes about language or how to use language. What themes emerge from these quotes in relation to the topics of Chapter 11?

Exercise 2: Develop and distribute a survey where you ask respondents about where they feel most comfortable “speaking naturally”. Be sure to include questions about where the speaker is from, where they consider home, and the different scenarios in which they must speak and write for public audiences (including classrooms). From the survey, distill from the primary findings what factors trigger speakers to switch up how they talk.

Exercise 3: Imagine that you have been selected to participate in your institution’s peer mentoring program. This program connects students who have successfully completed at least one semester on campus with new students to help them adjust and learn strategies for academic success. You have been paired with a new student from a rural community. She is the first in her family to attend college and is very excited to have joined the campus community! As you continue to meet over the course of the semester, she confides in you that she, and other students, have noticed that her speech is “different”- for example, she has been told by a classmate that she has a “really strong accent” and she has been teased a few times for certain words or phrases that she uses. She shares with you concerns about fitting in and being taken seriously, similar to the stories of students you read about in Chapter 11. You want to do your best as a peer mentor to provide support, so you decide to sketch out some ideas to prepare for the next time the two of you chat. Create a draft of your initial ideas for how to discuss these concerns of the new student you are mentoring. What have you learned from this chapter and other chapters in this book that could help? What have you learned from your own experiences? What information or resources might you share with her? What additional information or resources do you think *you* would need to be best prepared to have this conversation?

Exercise 4: The dean of students of your campus is offering funding to support student-led initiatives that will help positively enhance students’ experiences on your campus. You and your classmates want to propose a program that will help create a greater sense of belonging for students. Thinking about what you have learned in this chapter and your own experiences with language diversity on your campus, what strategies do you think would be effective for leveraging the linguistic diversity on your campus to create a greater sense of belonging? As a group, design a program that you think will help build a sense of belonging and write a brief proposal for the dean. Be sure to explain how language can influence that sense of belonging and detail specific activities that you would like to implement to show how embracing language diversity can make campus community members feel comfortable and that they belong.