

Linguistic Diversity Lesson Plan

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Also included: “Hot Moments” handout for teachers from the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching . Included within the materials; also available at <https://kaneb.nd.edu/assets/181616/>

1: Introduction

Warm Up!

Slide #:3

Objective: Students will reflect on their own history with language.

Objective: Students will begin to understand language as personal.

Preparation: Write your own 2-3 sentence answer.

Materials: Notecards for each student

Writing exercise: “Think about the language or languages in your life. What do you like about these languages? Why is language important to you? What other feelings do you have about language?”

Pass out notecards.

Give students a short amount of time to think about the prompt, and then a short time to write down a few sentences. Remind students to write YES or NO according to their preference.

Collect notecards. Share your own 2-3 sentence answer, and then share a few notecards’ worth of writing, as time allows, or explain that no one was willing to share and invite the class to think about why.

How Many Languages?

Slide#: 4,5

Objective: Students will understand that there is a wide variety of languages in the world, of which we are only exposed to a few.

Objective: Students will understand that there is inequality in language size and that the world is dominated by a small group of languages with a large number of speakers.

Solicit student guesses for number of languages in the world, and write some up on a board.

Ask students to get into small groups and try to come up with as many of those languages as they can in a short amount of time, perhaps 5-15 minutes.

Ask each group to say the number of languages they were able to come up with.

Then, either write up, or have the students say aloud the name of each language that they came up with. Although you can accomplish this however you like, we suggest that you have one group list all their languages, and then have each subsequent group list any new languages they have that haven't already been said. It might make sense to go from the group with the fewest languages to the group with the most.

Alternatively, if the students have laptops out and ready to be used, create a google doc where each group can type their languages into a list.

[When our college class of around 20 did a similar activity, we came up with around 85 languages in approximately 10 minutes, but depending on the makeup of your class, there might be significantly more or fewer.]

Finally, ask students if they are comfortable to name any languages they speak, and write up this list, noting the number. It may be only one, if no students in the class speak a second language. Think about how to respond, if this is the case.

Move to the next slide, and explain the graphic to students. The majority of the world's languages have a small number of speakers, while a small minority of 83 languages have the vast majority of the world's speakers (almost 80%).

Ask students to contemplate where on this chart the languages they were able to name fall (i.e., whether they are large or small) as well as where the languages they themselves speak fall.

Looking Ahead

Slide #:6

Objective: Students will begin to understand the role of language classes in the perpetuation of the dominance of certain languages.

This slide presents a few questions that lead students to question why certain languages are taught, and what effect that has.

These can be presented however you like. We suggest a think-pair-share, or a whole group discussion.

Pitfalls to avoid: The idea that certain languages are taught just because they have more speakers, and therefore are more useful. Push students to question what effect only teaching “popular” languages has, and, if necessary, complicate that idea by mentioning some languages with large numbers of speakers that are not often taught in schools (such as arabic and mandarin chinese), or a language that is sometimes taught in schools despite having no speakers (Latin).

2: Grammar

Sentence Sort:

Objective: Students will reflect on their own understanding of grammar

Objective: Students will understand the definitions of prescriptivism and descriptivism

Materials: Printed Handouts 1 & 2

Slide #: 8-10

Distribute handout one to the class, and explain that students are meant to indicate that a sentence is either grammatically correct or grammatically incorrect. You may also want to mention that the exercise is meant to get them thinking about what is “correct.”

This is a sample script:

“I want us to think about the ways that we think about language. You have here a bunch of sentences in English. Please try and sort these into two categories, sentences that you think are “grammatically correct” and sentences that you think are “grammatically incorrect” This is not any kind of test, but instead is meant to make you think about why we say some sentences are “wrong” and some are “right.” I’ll warn you that it’s kind of a trick question. So, instead of worrying too much about whether you put the right sentence in the right box, take some time to think about *why* you put each sentence in each box.”

Once the students have sorted the sentences, they should discuss with a partner or a small group whether they have the same judgements, and why they chose to make the judgements that they did.

Once the students have finished talking, distribute the second handout. In the second handout, sentences are sorted into four categories. The first category are sentences that are prescriptively

correct, the second are sentences that are not prescriptively correct but are grammatical (for us, feel free to change the handout if necessary), and the third is sentences that are ungrammatical. The fourth category is a sentence that *might* be grammatical.

Either lead the students through questioning and discussion to come to their own conclusions about why the sentences are sorted that way, or give a quick explanation of the categories in layman's terms, such as "Sentences that are supposedly correct, sentences that are supposedly incorrect but that someone would say, sentences that no one would ever say, and sentences that I'm not sure if someone would say."

Then, use the next slides to explain the concept of a sentence that is grammatical versus a sentence that is ungrammatical.

The "You Rate" exercise simply asks students to make their own judgements about whether a sentence is grammatical. You could use thumbs up/thumbs down, or a scale of 1-3 where the options are things like "no one would ever say it," "I might not say it, but I think someone else would" and "I would say this." Based on the reactions of the classroom, mark any sentences found to be ungrammatical with an asterisk, the formal linguistic marker for an ungrammatical utterance.

The final slide explains the differences between prescriptive and descriptive grammar, with descriptive being the preferred, academic approach. With regard to the helpful tip, you could explain that descriptive rules are ones that native speakers naturally know, and never have to be taught. Whereas a teacher had to explain not to end a sentence with a preposition, if you are a native speaker of English, no one ever had to tell you to (generally) put the adjective before the noun and not after, even though other languages do that.

Optionally, go back to the categorized handout and try to describe the three main categories more formally, using and clarifying the terms we've just learned.

3: Community Agreements

NOTE: We spent a long time considering the placement of this section within the order of the presentation. We encourage you to consider whether it is necessary earlier on, and to move it around, if so.

Objective: students will come up with a set of guidelines for discussions about language
Objective: students will continue to think about the role language plays in their own life

Slide 12: This slide is intended to encourage students to consider their own language experiences, and to begin thinking about how they may or may not have experienced prejudice

or discrimination around their language, dialect, or accent. Or, if they haven't had a negative experience it presents an opportunity to reflect on the privilege of speaking a majority dialect (like Standard American English). Though this can be made into a discussion, we envision this as a writing exercise, giving students a few minutes to reflect in their own notebooks without having to share with the class.

Slide 13: These are a few guidelines we felt were important to the discussions surrounding language that will come later in the lesson plan. Feel free to adjust these to fit the needs of your own class, based on the guidelines you collectively construct.

Slide 14: We hope that you and your class will work together to come up with a list of community agreements so that everyone feels comfortable, safe, acknowledged, and respected during the lessons and conversations to come. Discussions about language can be personal, difficult, complex, and potentially harmful, so it's important to consider how best to create a classroom culture of respect and support during this lesson.

4. What is a Language?

Discuss Dialect:

Objective: students will understand the definition of a dialect

Objective: students will discuss the naming of dialects, and the idea of a "standard" dialect

Slides: 16-19

The first slide provides a prompt for classroom discussion, and an opportunity for those with prior knowledge to share with the class.

The second slide provides a simple definition of a dialect, and more explanation can be provided if necessary. The word in parenthesis is the more formal, linguistic definition of the feature. In speaking about pronunciation, it should be mentioned that there is a difference between a dialect accent that a native speaker has, and a second language accent.

Pitfall to avoid: Students might want to imitate dialects/accents other than their own in order to provide an example. This can often be inaccurate and/or stereotypical, and a gentle reminder of how class rules apply in this situation is warranted.

The third slide is optional, and presents an example of a dialect, Southern American English.

The fourth slide presents a few talking point for discussing dialects, and looks ahead to our discussion of linguistic ideologies and linguistic discrimination. Important here is the fact that

dialects other than those used by dominant groups in society, typically rich, white groups, are often stigmatized, and said to be breaking the “rules of English”, when really the “rules of English” just differ between dialects. The idea that one group’s dialect is “normal” or “standard” suggests that other dialects are just that: other, different, weird.

Students can discuss in pairs or small groups what they think about this phenomenon, and share out what dialect they think they speak.

Dialect vs. Language

Slide #: 20-22

Objective: Students will understand the complexity of defining dialect, and understand that even seemingly simple concepts around language can be nuanced.

The first slide has a basic definition of *mutually intelligible*, and describes how the line between language and dialect is typically drawn. It might be useful to solicit ideas for dialects that are mutually intelligible, and/or for languages that are not, or to provide examples and ask of the class if they are or are not mutually intelligible.

The next slide states that it is more complicated. Ask the class if they can think of any problems with this model, or situations where it wouldn’t fit.

The third slide provides examples, which can either confirm or add to the instances the class came up with, if they came up with any.

A dialect continuum challenges the idea that you can split dialects up into languages. “This is a situation where, in a large number of geographically contiguous dialects, each dialect is closely related to the next, but the dialects at either end of the continuum (scale) are mutually unintelligible. Thus, dialect A is intelligible to dialect B, which is intelligible to dialect C, which is intelligible to dialect D; but A and D are not mutually intelligible.” (Language Files, 2016) An example given by this textbook is that of Holland and Germany, where dialects near the border are mutually intelligible, but dialects further from the border are not.

Examples of the idea that one nation, or politically united group of people, should have one language are given as the Papago and Pima, two native American tribes who speak in ways that are mutually intelligible, but they consider to be two different languages because they are two distinct tribes (ibid). This is only one example, there are others, including the four languages Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian (ibid).

The opposite example is found in China, where Mandarin and Cantonese, as well as other speech varieties, are often considered to be dialects of one language, “Chinese,” even though they are not mutually intelligible (ibid).

American Dialect Exploration

Slide: 23-24

Objective: Students will recognize what features can vary across dialect

Objective: Students will confront different dialects, and think about their reactions.

Materials: Computer for each students or group of students.

Preparation: Familiarize yourself with the Project, and select which features you would like groups to investigate.

Students should be split in small groups, and asked to choose from a list of syntactic features as found on the Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America website. The homepage of the website shows a map of speakers, and allows you to click through sentences and see grammaticality judgements, like students did earlier in class.

To the side are certain features, beginning with *A*-prefixing. Clicking on any given feature will take you to a short article about that feature, including which dialects have it, and examples of how it looks in speech. At least one group should investigate a feature that is in the English used in the classroom, or the students' own dialect, so that they can experience having a feature of their dialect recognized and analyzed. If the English used in the classroom is not what is characterized as "Widespread American English," then a feature from that dialect should also be chosen.

It could be useful to provide an example of analysis of an article about a feature here, by picking a feature, especially one of Widespread American English, and narrating your process of picking the example, finding the list of dialects where it is used, and making meaning from the Academic English to come out with one "fun fact" about the feature.

Students should be reminded that asterisks mark a sentence that is ungrammatical, in order to contrast what is allowed in a given dialect with what is not allowed, and they should be reminded that "allowed" in this context refers to what sounds natural and acceptable to speakers, not what prescriptive grammar rules demand. Optionally, model how to talk about sentences that they find ungrammatical by saying "That is not grammatical in my dialect."

It may also be interesting to consider what names the Yale project uses for dialects. For example, instead of Standard American English, in many places they use the term "Widespread American English." These two names carry different value judgements.

Students should then work together to interpret the articles about each feature. The language on the Yale website is often technical and specific to the field of linguistics, so students should not necessarily expect to understand everything they read.

Each group can then present on the feature they examined. After all groups have presented on their three elements, students should have some time to reflect on the experience, as detailed on slide two. This reflection can be written, or can be done in small groups.

5. Language Ideologies

Objective: students will begin to understand how we unfairly associate different aspects of language with character judgements, how these associations are made, and why they are wrong.

Slide 26: This is a simple definition of Linguistic Ideology. Students should feel comfortable with *Linguistic Ideology* as it is a term that will be discussed in depth during the course of the lesson. It's important that they understand that language ideologies are more than just conscious beliefs and ideas about language, but often unconscious judgements we make based on the language or dialect a person uses, and the way they sound while speaking it. Most of the time we are not aware that we're making these judgements because they are so deeply embedded.

Slide 27: Here is the opportunity for a group brainstorm about examples of language ideologies our society holds. Organize the discussion however you see fit. Some examples of popular American language ideologies are 1) that British accents are fancy, 2) that Southern accents are "redneck", or 3) that African American English is "bad English". These beliefs shape the way we perceive people, yet none of them are true. Speaking one dialect versus another does not make someone inherently fancier, smarter, or anything else. If students are having a hard time understanding what this question is asking, the next slide offers a little more guidance. Feel free to come back to this question after slide 28.

IMPORTANT: We are heading into sensitive and potentially harmful territory. It is very important here to enforce the community agreements and make sure that the discussions are a space where we can explore the prejudice and discrimination that exists in our society without validating or reinforcing ideas about language that are harmful and prejudicial. Any time a problematic language ideology is brought up it's important to take the time to examine it and invalidate it. One of the most common examples of a harmful linguistic ideology is the idea that African American English (AAE) is "bad English". A common side effect of this ideology is the judgement that its speakers are stupid or uneducated. In reality this ideology is racist. Just because AAE is a different dialect of English than Standard American English, does not mean that it is less proper or less intelligent. One example that highlights the racism behind this ideology is that British English is another dialect of English which, like AAE, sometimes follows a separate set of rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation. So why do we make different associations

with British English than we do AAE? It's because of the intersection of race and language. This will be discussed further in Section 6 of the lesson.

Slide 28: This slide could be a Think, Pair, Share activity, or simply a class exercise. The purpose of the slide is for students to put a little more thought into what type of language-associated judgements we make, and hopefully realise that such judgements are discriminatory and untrue. Some examples of possible answers (based on mainstream language ideologies in American society) are below. If students are feeling stuck it also helps to list what these things *don't* sound like. Make sure to be clear that students are being asked to list ideas that society perpetuates and not ideas that they necessarily endorse themselves. Don't forget that **no** language ideology that paints groups of people as having inherently different qualities because of their language is ever good. Even ideologies that pair languages with "good" qualities (like intelligence) are harmful because they perpetuate the idea that speakers of other languages or dialects do not have that quality.

Fancy: French accent, British accent

Smart: British accent, Standard American English, French Accent

American: Standard American English (without a second language accent)

Slides 29-31: Here are a few poems that explore themes and ideas behind language ideologies. Both poems explore language and its context in and intersection with race, politics, history, colonialism, representation, and more.

The poem on slide 29 explores the ideas of the importance of representation (and the lessons children learn about what a hero sounds like when their cartoons all speak with a white American accent), and of the pressure to sound a certain way to fit in (in school, in America, in ethnicity, and in race) .

The poem on slide 31 may not be appropriate for a highschool classroom due to its explicit content, but we included it in the hopes that it may be able to be shared because of how deeply important and relevant its themes are. If you or your school is not comfortable with the full video, perhaps you can play the first 20 seconds which address the relationship between colonialism and language, as well as the hypocrisy of language ideologies which label speakers of indigenous languages as "stupid", when often indigenous people have been forced into bilingualism while colonists were only monolingual. The poem goes on to explore the hypocrisy of other racial ideologies prevalent in modern America. Though the first 20 seconds of this powerful and moving poem are the most relevant to the topic of this lesson plan, we hope you will consider sharing the content of the rest of the poem as issues of race, colonialism, and hypocrisy are deeply relevant to linguistic discrimination.

Slide 32: This slide can be used either as an opportunity for discussion, or as simply a thought for students to keep in mind as they watch *The Danger of a Single Story* on slide 33.

Slide 33: This is a TED talk that discusses language and ethnic ideologies, and the power of representation (and conversely the danger of misrepresentation). The objective here is for students to begin to understand how language ideologies are often created and perpetuated through misrepresentation.

Slide 34: Organize this class discussion as you see fit. Some examples of single stories on language that exist in modern American (and sometimes global) society are below. Feel free to draw on these examples to give students an idea of what a single language story may look like.

- 1) A single story we see a lot of in the academic world is that most professors, scholars, and academic speakers all use Standard American English. It is extremely unusual to find an academic talk delivered in American Sign Language (for example) or in African American English. When we only see one dialect represented in academic settings, we internalize a language ideology about one dialect being “smart” and others being “unintelligent” or even “unprofessional”.
- 2) In many movies, particularly animated movies like Disney’s *Aladdin*, only the villains (e.g. Jafar, and the guards who chase Aladin on the street) have foreign accents. This inspires a language ideology of Standard American English being associated with goodness, and foreign dialects of English being associated with evil.

6. Linguistic Discrimination

Objective: students gain an understanding of some of the ways linguistic discrimination occurs in daily life, and begin to consider where they may witness it in their own lives

Slide 36: Before discussing Linguistic Discrimination, it’s important to understand what discrimination itself is. Students should keep this definition in mind throughout the rest of this section.

Slide 37: The previous section discussed language ideologies. While language ideologies are simply ideas we have about language, linguistic discrimination is the actions that occur as a result of those ideas.

Slide 38: This slide is intended simply to transition to the following real world examples, but it could potentially be a discussion question for students to brainstorm and share before learning about the few real world examples we have included in this lesson.

The Zimmerman Trial

Slide 39-43: In this section students will learn a little bit about the linguistic discrimination that occurred during the trial of George Zimmerman (the shooter of Trayvon Martin) when the jury

disregarded the testimony of Rachel Jeantel because of her use of African American English. Rachel Jeantel was a very close friend of Trayvon Martin, and was even on the phone with Trayvon at the time that George Zimmerman followed, attacked, and shot Trayvon. However, because of her use of African American English, the jury found her “hard to understand” and “hostile”, and after 16+ hours of deliberation found George Zimmerman not guilty. Despite Rachel’s testimony (that she heard George attack Trayvon first), the jury ruled that Zimmerman acted in self defense. When Rachel was visibly upset, angry, or frustrated during the trial, the jury judged Rachel’s character as not credible, instead of understanding her position as a 19 year old being asked to testify for more than 6 hours, discussing the murder of her best friend in the same room as the man who shot him.

Slide 44: During the discussion students should attempt to identify what language ideologies the jury might have held about Rachel’s dialect (African American English), and the discrimination that occurred. Sample answers are below.

Language ideologies:

African American English is improper English.
Rachel is poorly educated.
Rachel is not reliable.

Linguistic Discrimination:

Poor treatment from the Judge.
Not taking her testimony into account.

Slide 45: These discussion questions are intended to encourage students to explore the hypocrisy behind language ideologies such as the ones which may have affected the result of the Zimmerman trial. Both of the questions should hopefully highlight the role that racism can play in language ideologies and discrimination.

Slide 46: Students should brainstorm ways to prevent the linguistic discrimination of the Zimmerman trial from occurring again. One possible solution is to place professional Linguists in the courtroom who can help translate between dialects. For example, when the jury found Rachel’s language confusing because they do not have experience with African American English, a Linguist might be able to recognize points of confusion, and mediate. Another solution could be to increase national understanding and respect for African American English so that future members of the jury are more familiar with it and may hold fewer language ideologies.

Duke University Email Scandal

Slides 47-49: In this section students will learn about an email scandal from January 2019 in which the head of a master's program at Duke University urged international students to speak only English, as several professors had become angry that several students were speaking Chinese in a student lounge, and asked for help identifying them so that they could refuse these students jobs or other opportunities in the future. Some possible answers to the questions on slide 49 are below.

Language ideologies:

Speaking a non-English language is rude

Speaking a native language means you're not working hard enough to learn English

Linguistic Discrimination:

Not offering these students jobs because they spoke in their native language

Asking students not to speak their native language

Slide 50: This discussion question is aimed at exploring the complexity of the situation. While Megan Neely's goal was to "help" the international students by warning them, her email only furthered the discrimination by asking international students to modify their behavior instead of confronting the professors who acted in a discriminatory and prejudiced way.

Deaf People and Police Brutality

Slides 51-55: These slides cover police brutality against Deaf people. Deaf people are a group that is particularly vulnerable to police brutality because when Deaf people do not follow verbal directions, or use Sign Language to communicate they may be perceived as non-compliant or menacing to a police officer. In the video on slide 53, Marlee Matlin (a famous Deaf actress) describes some of the problems with the ways police officers interact with Deaf people, and provides some tips to Deaf people for interacting with police.

Slide 55: Students should draw from the examples of news story headlines on slide 54 to answer these questions. The goal is for the students to consider how linguistic discrimination can intersect with discrimination against people with disabilities, just as in the case of Rachel Jeantel linguistic discrimination intersects with racial discrimination. One assumption that the officers make is that they are not interacting with someone who is Deaf and a user of ASL. This could flow from the basic assumption that everyone they will encounter speaks English, and/or is capable of understanding spoken language. Students may consider whether it is more appropriate to consider this a form of ableism, linguistic discrimination, or both. One example of a way that police brutality against Deaf people can be avoided is to require officers to be trained in ASL, or on interacting with Deaf people.

Slide 56: The purpose of these discussion questions are to bring the concepts of linguistic discrimination back into the student's own lives and experiences. Hopefully students will be able to reflect on the linguistic discrimination they see around them every day. One example of linguistic discrimination that tends to occur in schools is a lack of representation. Schools who only hire educators or invite speakers that sound a certain way (usually Standard American English) send a message about what dialects are "appropriate" for academia or are "professional". Another example of linguistic discrimination typical of schools might be the strict enforcement of the use of Standard American English over other dialects. Often students who use other dialects in class (such as African American English) will be graded poorly or even verbally reprimanded for their language use. This idea will come back later on slide 65 with a discussion question that addresses the ethics and practicality of the approach schools take which is to prepare students for a world which frowns upon African American English, rather than to eliminate false ideologies about African American English from the world.

7. Resistance

Mind Our Historical Roots

Slide: 58

Objective: Students will understand the context of language revitalization, and discuss the history of suppressing language.

Preparation: If necessary, read up on Native American boarding schools in the Americas, Oralism in schools for the deaf, and other historical movements to restrict the language use of minority/marginalized groups.

This is a quick introduction to language revitalization. Many language are considered to be "endangered," because they have few speakers, and those speakers are often elderly. Language revitalization efforts seek to reverse the trend towards language extinction (a language is considered to be extinct when it has no more speakers).

Students should break down the quote to make sure they understand its meaning, and see if they understand, briefly, how and why language endangerment might work. If no one brings up colonialism, and specifically boarding schools, it should be mentioned and brought into the discussion. If possible, also discuss less directly violent ways of discouraging native language use, like the effect of discriminatory language stereotypes and the desire of parents to avoid that fate for their children.

Then, talk about the fact that many languages are dying today, as many have only elderly native speakers, and the children of their community are not learning the language. You may want to

flip all the way back to the slide on language sizes. If you would like, you can also invoke globalization as a potential reason that languages are dying.

Our Language Ideologies!

Slide: 59

Objectives: Students will explore their own ideologies around indigenous languages, and see how language ideologies might come up in the discussion of endangered languages.

Provide the explanation of the tweets, and ask students to pair up and discuss whether they were surprised to see an indigenous language on the internet. If necessary, prompt them with further questions, such as “why wouldn’t indigenous language be on the internet?” or “what languages or kinds of language would you expect to see on the internet?”

Then, ask students to come back to a group setting, and share what they have been talking about. Carefully and deliberately guide them through to the idea that mainstream culture has propagated the idea that indigenous people and their languages belong to the past, and that is why seeing indigenous language on the internet, a space that is associated with being very modern, may be surprising to some. You may want to mention that having associations like this does not make someone an inherently bad person; we are all taught these things by society, as we discussed in the section on ling. ideologies and discrimination. It simply means that we have to work hard to recognize our biases.

Mixteco Es Un Lenguaje

Objectives: Students will analyze an example of an artist advocating for his language and culture. In the song, he is combating stigma against the language that he speaks, and is trying to get viewers to understand the idea that speaking an indigenous language is powerful and valuable. His imagery suggests some of the

Materials: Handout 3¹

Slide: 60

Distribute the handout, play the youtube video (it can be made large by clicking on the label “youtube” in the bottom right hand corner of the screen) and discuss the questions provided with the class. The artist is fighting against the language ideologies that suggest that indigenous languages are not valuable, and that they are merely substandard versions of another language. The images suggest the experiences of the people who speak that language, in Mexico, and in the U.S., e.g. working as agricultural laborers.

¹ Handout 3 was not created by the authors of this lesson plan but was included as a part of the materials for Brook Danielle Lillehaugen’s *Linguistic Diversity, Threats to Diversity and Resistance* course at Haverford college (2019).

This video is also a place where you might want to present the idea that language ideologies are not inherently negative or “bad.” The line “[Mixteco] [e]s oro que guardo en un paño/ [Mixteco] is gold I keep in a protective cloth,” for example, is arguably articulating an ideology about the singer’s own language; He believes that his language is valuable and precious, and he later expresses the idea that it should be used and learned by the community.

Language Documentation and Revitalization

Objective: Students will understand these two terms, and the ways that they might be accomplished.

Context: The tweets from the previous slide are part of a project where activists, in collaboration with Zapotec speakers, helped create a platform for tweets in Zapotec. They retweeted and commented on Zapotec speakers’ Zapotec tweets, which led to the creation of a community of Zapotec user interacting with each other on twitter using this language. (Lillehagen, 2019)

It is also important to mention that language documentation is often useful for revitalization efforts, in terms of preserving community knowledge to pass on through teaching. However, another main reason linguists document endangered languages is to seek understanding about the nature of language as a whole. If an endangered language has a new way of talking about something, for example, that expands our understanding of what human language is capable of.

You may want to engage with the question: “Who is the language preserved or documented for?” There is a difference between a young community member learning a heritage language (see website for definition of heritage language), and an unconnected college student learning the language.

The next slide provides two sites for students to explore by themselves, or for the teacher to click through to provide other examples of language documentation/revitalization work. One is site of talking dictionaries, which allow students to hear a variety of languages, and one is a site that documents some existing efforts to revitalize languages.

The final slide provides an idea of some of the dangers of documentation without revitalization efforts. The image of a language graveyard is used to suggest that linguists will preserve only the records of languages while the actual languages themselves die out, and the world will be left only with records and not the living languages, something that can feel highly unethical. The idea of a “data midden” comes from a presentation by Peter K. Austin, and it suggests that linguists, in trying to preserve records, can do significant harm, because they often fail at important parts of documentation, like the actual recording process (Austin, 2009, slides 33-42). Linguists may use the wrong equipment, or fail to label data properly. A midden is a site where what is essentially the ancient version of garbage heap, and archeologists can use clues to

figure out what ancient daily life was like, and documented languages can be similar because they are also disorganized, yet some understanding can be gleaned from them (ibid) . Similar to the idea of the language graveyard, a concern with preserved data in a “midden” is the idea that language is not static, and it is connected to the context in which is it spoken (ibid).

In Our School

Objective: Students will create a plan for fighting linguistic discrimination on a classroom level.

Objective: Students will consider the perspective of a teacher on issues of linguistic discrimination.

Slides:

The two questions on this slide are meant to jump-start a longer discussion. They could also be used as prompts for a longer piece of writing. The issues to explore here are the way linguistic discrimination is present in schools, which should have already been explored in an earlier section, and what students can personally do about it. The second question is meant to spark debate over questions like “Should a teacher teach the prescriptive rules of English and require them for assignments?” If they do, they are upholding the traditional order. If they don’t, they are denying their students the tools that they might need for success. To what extent should we be putting energy into molding ourselves to be most successful in the world the way it is, versus changing the way things are in the world to better fit (and more justly fit) the way people are?

(This question, in slightly different form, appears on the second slide)

The third question asks a similar questions about language teaching, but also invites students to consider what languages they might like to learn, and why.

8. Language Project

The language project is an opportunity to provide a capstone experience that allows students to draw in what they learned in this lesson, their own experiences with linguistic discrimination and language ideologies, and their creative problem solving skills to work on a project that aims to address and break down linguistic discrimination in the world around them. We outline below one possible idea for a Language Project, but it can be anything. Feel free to have the students brainstorm their own ideas for a project they feel would employ their new knowledge about linguistics in a way that is productive to their community. If this course is taught as a part of an English class the project could be a poetry or short story project that explores some of the themes from this lesson. If this course is used for a social studies course, students could work

together to interview their friends and family on their experiences with language and create a video project.

One model for a language project is the following, which roughly follows the model used during the *Our Languages* project for Haverford College's *Linguistic Diversity, Threats to Diversity and Resistance* course.

Our Languages Project

Objective: students design and distribute a survey in order to collect information about the languages spoken in their school community, and the types of language experiences people are having within the school. Students will use this data to create a video or other visual representation which aims to inform the community about linguistic discrimination, and the range of linguistic diversity which exists in the community.

Step 1: Design a survey

Brainstorm with your class what information you are hoping to collect from the participants of your survey, and what questions might be most appropriate to collect this information. Some examples of questions you may want to ask during this brainstorm are:

What are our project goals?

What will we a class do to make sure we are helping, and not being harmful?

What will we do with the info we collect?

Will this survey be online, or in-person/physical? Why?

For an example survey, visit <http://ds-wordpress.haverford.edu/wp/linguistic-diversity/> to check out the one used by Haverford College's *Our Languages* project.

Step 2: Distribute the survey

Decide who your participants will be. Are you collecting data about your school, or are you trying to collect information from a larger community? Find the best way to distribute your survey. This might mean distributing fliers with a link to your survey, sending it out via email, or asking people to complete the survey on paper.

Step 3: Analyze the data

Decide with your class what kind of data visualizations to create with your data. Ask yourselves what information is the most important? Which graphs and charts will be the most effective way to get your point across? Some examples for data visualizations may be: a pie chart showing which percentages of survey participants speak which languages, a list of all the languages

spoken by participants of the survey, a bar graph showing the number of monolingual vs bilingual vs multilingual students.

Step 4: What will you do?

Finally, with your class decide how best to share this information with the world (if you choose to). Don't forget to think about the privacy of your survey participants when you consider this next step. Haverford College's *Linguistic Diversity, Threats to Diversity and Resistance* class decided to create a website on which to share our findings, and other resources such as this lesson plan! What will your class come up with?

Sources

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