



LANGUAGE AND HUMAN FORMATION

Saint Luke Institute




What is language?

- Phonetics
- Phonology
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Pragmatics
- Style



Language as Social Action

- Language use is meaningful social action
- Speaker Consequences
- Listener Consequences
- Relationship Consequences



Who do you say that I am?
Mt. 16:15

Language and Impressions

Our language use impacts:

- Who we think we are
- Who we want other people to think we are
- Who we think other people are
- Who we think we are to other people and who they are to us



Language and Identity

"I'm having a sense of identity crisis (...) what I know to be David is not working here (...) I'm trying to force the David that I thought should be in a place that the David that I thought should be won't work."

Katie felt unable to express emotions in German and infantilized by her inability to portray herself as the creative, smart, funny, and caring adult person that she knew she was.

Faced with such challenges, she resisted finding a voice in German.



Janice McGregor: "Your mind says one thing but your emotions do another": Language, Emotion, and Developing Transculturality in Study Abroad, *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German*, 47, no. 2 (Fall 2014), 116-117.

Language Biases

Hearers of non-standard speech often make assumptions about:

- Intelligence
- Social Class
- Education
- Personality traits



Donald Rubin, "Nonlanguage Factors Affecting Undergraduates' Judgments Of Nonnative English-speaking Teaching Assistants" *Research in Higher Education* 33, No. 4, 1992.

Language and Emotion

- For example, **American** social phobics use the words **anxious, worried, or apprehensive** to describe how they feel when they interact with strangers. **Japanese** social phobics choose terms that, in English, are closer in meaning to **embarrassment and shame**.
- The **Chinese** have **five distinct terms for shame or guilt** that specify its origin and whether an agent's action injured another. The **English** terms shame and guilt, which emphasize only the **agent's mental state**, do not provide this extra information (124).

Tell me how you feel...



Jerome Kagan, *What Is Emotion?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.

Language and Emotion

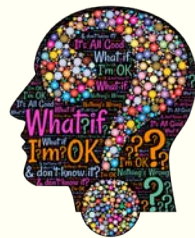
I've been with someone and they've been sad (...) I don't know what to say to them because I'm not familiar with the language enough to be able to say, "Oh it's okay, like, don't worry about it," or offer advice because I don't know what to say, so sometimes I feel like I come across as cold or maybe like a little bit insensitive because I don't respond, or I don't add any advice, or I don't console them.



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Implications for human formation

- Language shapes reality
- "Self" is a story that language helps to tell
- L2 difficulties in expressing and understanding "self"
- Formators may mistake linguistic variations for lack of effort, care, or initiative.
- Language fatigue and withdraw into L1.



Residual effects of L2 for formation

- Expectations for language use in US classrooms
 - Participation
 - Academic integrity
 - "Original thought"
 - Efficiency
- Time commitments and management
 - 2-3 times longer reading time
 - Formative assessments



Shawna Shapiro, Raichle Farrelly and Zuzana Tomáš, *Fostering International Student Success in Higher Education*. Alexandria, VA: Tesol Press, 2014.

Residual effects of L2 for formation

- Community building
 - Slang/idioms
 - Humor
 - Cultural References
- Faculty relationships
 - Titles
 - Office hours
 - Asking questions in class



Accommodations/Recommendations

- Language Awareness
 - Idioms
- Non-verbal Awareness
 - Context
 - Body language
 - Silence
- Language Brokers
 - Modeling
 - Explaining



Accommodations/Recommendations

- Promote Progress
 - not perfection
 - build confidence
- Affirm variation
 - Asset
 - Safety
- Use Stories
 - Not direct questions



Questions/Comments???



jeffjenkins25@yahoo.com
