

Mid-term Project –Speech

Due: 18 June 2015

Language Myths

Common ideas about language are pervasive in society. You can read them in blogs or in talking with friends. You are to find one of those myths and give a persuasive speech 2:30 minutes arguing against a common (popular) myth of language.

You should pitch the presentation to a non-linguist while being professional (e.g. not reading, speaking clearly without fillers, making eye contact with the audience). The presentation should include appropriate examples. You should not use the handout or make reference to it while giving your speech. One should be able to close one's eyes and still be able to follow the talk.

You need to use anecdotal evidence as well as cite at least one scholarly article from the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database (LLBA) accessed through the Queens College Library website. You need to have a strong thesis that you should be able to state in terms of a frame: “*Although many people say/believe _____; this is false because: 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.*” You need to have three main points that support your thesis.

Be sure to state the myth, where you heard it, and research proving it is wrong. You will need to make an outline of the speech and bring to class on Monday 8 June 2015. You may and I encourage you to do the speech in your L1 (e.g. Spanish, Kreyòl Ayisyen, Guyanese) as it will be an interesting experience for the class.

Example language myths:

- *Kids these days are ruining the language*
- *Youth have limited vocabularies because they can't speak proper*
- *The standard/proper variety is more logical and can convey more information*
- *Language constrains the things you can talk about*
- *Animals have language*
- *Bilinguals (who are claimed to speak two languages just like a native monolingual) don't really command both languages as well as someone who only speaks one language.*
- *Bilinguals don't speak both languages well.*
- *Their system of communication that animals use is just as complex and rich as human language. The only reason why “linguists” don't refer to animal communication systems as language is because they are human centric. The “linguists” want to treat humans as being different or special but we are just like other animals so if we have language, so do other animals*
- *Standard English is the only proper way to talk in professional settings in America.*

- *Standard English is the best language for business, critical thinking, education, law, etc for a number of reasons.*
- *African-American vernacular English (AAVE) is not a fully developed language and is incomplete.*
- *AAVE is a degenerate version of English. Any distinct features of AAVE are merely incomplete or not correct attempts as speaking proper English.*