

Ling 5: Some possible topics for Essay 3

Chapter 10

- What are specific ways in which written registers vary from spoken ones?
- In what ways are casual written registers, like texts or emails, imitative of spoken language?
- Do you have experience with code-switching between two languages or dialects? What are speech situations that affect the linguistic variety that you use?
- You don't use the same register in every speech situation. What are some examples of how your phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc. might change between two different registers?
- Consider a register that you use often. In which situations do you use it? Have you experienced stigma associated with it? Are there registers that you've heard which are associated with a large degree of stigma (ex: Valley Girl).

Chapter 11

- Pick your favorite American English regional OR ethnic dialect, and discuss features of it based on information from the textbook, credible online resources, and your own experiences (if you have any).
- What are ways that socioeconomic class can affect someone's dialect? What might this have to do with identity?
- Discuss specific ways in which women's and men's speech differ in a specific language or dialect. How does this interact with cultural ideologies about gender differences?
- Think of two types of speech that are generally considered different languages, but which you believe are different dialects of the same language (ex: Hindi and Urdu). Provide evidence for why you believe that. OR Do the same with two types of speech that are generally considered dialects of the same language, but which you believe are different languages (ex: Chinese). Give evidence for why.

Chapter 12

- Nostratic is a family that has been proposed by various people, but is not seen as credible by most linguists. Based on research, do you think there is sufficient evidence to support Nostratic? Why or why not?
- Pick a creole language and discuss its history, and how that affected its grammar and lexicon.
- As the world becomes more connected through communication technology, what effect do you think this will have on change in different languages?
- Indo-European languages in the Americas (American English, Mexican Spanish, Peruvian Spanish, etc.) have lots of lexical borrowings from Indigenous American languages. Pick several borrowed words in one of these languages, and discuss their etymologies.

Chapter 13

- Find several words from Old or Middle English that have semantically shifted or been lost in Modern English. Discuss their histories, considering what might have resulted in their semantic shift or total loss. This is the Oxford English Dictionary question.
- Do you think Old English (or Middle English) is a different language from Modern English? There exists a good amount of literature from Old and Middle English, so you should be able to support your opinion with real language examples.
- Old English used to have a complex case-marking system, but Modern English has very little morphologically marked case. What are the vestiges of case-marking in Modern English, and why might they have been maintained for so long?
- English is a Germanic language, but it has lots of Latinate words in its lexicon. There are several reasons for this: discuss how various aspects of English history have affected its lexicon in this way.

Chapter 14

- Many people study more than one second language. If you did, which languages did you have more trouble with? With support from other sources, explain the reasons you had more trouble with some than with others. Consider grammatical, morphological, and phonological similarities with your native language. Consider also the age and order at which you studied them.
- Children born deaf often develop language later than hearing children. Consider the importance of aspects like language input, and using outside research, explain why this is a common trend.
- Finegan mentions sounds that are "dispreferred" in acquiring a language, or sounds that children start using later. With your understanding of how different sounds are articulated (and referencing other sources), explain why these sounds are dispreferred.
- Most people in our culture use Infant Directed Speech in talking to babies. However, other cultures are different in how they interact linguistically with babies. Discuss ways in which other people talk to (or don't talk to) infants. Looking at linguistic research, do you think any of these is better? How so? Why?