

Wasin Shihab

English 110

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Self Assessment Essay

“I hate writing.” That’s what I have been telling myself ever since 8th grade, when I first immigrated to the United States. In my country, we are accommodated and encouraged to learn English in classrooms. They teach us grammar, tense, speech, pronunciations, and basically have us memorize paragraphs on cows or birds. It used to be about the characteristics of a cow or the features of a bird and never anything different. I knew how to read, write, and understand English and yet I didn’t understand anything I memorized about the cow. English just felt so foreign. So, when I came here I was doing horrible English. I was told a paragraph had an introduction, body, and conclusion and I was still confused. Unlike math and science which is universal, the learning material transfers over when you immigrate, but not English. I was so bad at writing essays that every time I got an essay I would want to quit school right then and go home. I suffered similarly in High School and since college would be tougher I had expectations in my class that I would be given an essay every week and I didn’t know what to feel. I was scared more because it was going to be an Honors class as well. However, contrary to my thought it turned out to be completely different. I not only learned a lot about my background and my identity but also learned how to like writing. The course assignments and materials were absolutely crucial in helping me relay my opinion on topics that matter to me and also learn to embrace my peers' diversity. As a result, this course allowed me achieve multiple course

learning outcomes by exploring the topic that recognizing the “American accent” as the only speakable accent creates discrimination and racism in society.

The way this course helped me is by “examining how attitudes towards linguistic standards empower and oppress language users.” Linguistic Standards are very common in the U.S and it exists in every form. Whether it be writing or speaking. These standards alienate any outside non-standard way of speaking, marking them as irrelevant or inferior. In our class we explored various authors who have experienced such oppression due to linguistic standards that are placed upon them. In my SAR #3 I talk about Brianna Atkins where she faced comments such as “You sound so white” or “You’re smart for a Black person,”(Atkins, 2016). These comments assert Standard American English (SAE) as the superior language and discriminate against any other forms of speaking. As a result, when such biases towards SAE are shown, Black English (BE: An English dialect) which is Atkins language, gets labeled as inferior. This is exactly why Atkins felt that speaking Black English made her unintelligent. This is a form of linguistic oppression based on social bias towards languages. The belief that English must be spoken in only one way oppresses those who don’t speak the standard like BE and this false attitude against BE speakers is also a form of linguistic discrimination. Exploring the linguistic standards helped me also realize that I was a victim of oppression based on linguistic standards. My native “Bengali accent” is also an outcast of linguistic standards. I believed that my accent sounded horrible and I should not speak it. This was due to the fact that people around me had a bad view on my accent because it wasn’t the standard. They weren’t used to it and so I started changing it. However, this was an oppression on my accent based on the views of people on the

linguistic standard of an American accent. It uses the same logic that there is only one way to speak English and that if I didn't speak the standard accent I was inferior. Thus, exploring this course learning outcome not only helped me understand that linguistic standards can oppress people but also that you can oppress yourself due to the linguistic standards of others around you.

Another course learning outcome that I believe I have definitely acquired is “explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations.” Over the course of the semester, I have read numerous articles and watched multiple videos related to our topics. For each one of the articles I had to identify the author's audience, their way of grabbing the audience's attention, their purpose, and the multiple ways the author uses rhetorical tools. For example, in Safwat Saleem's TEDTalk, “Why I keep speaking up even when people mock my accent,” his audience were people who had speech impediments and faced accent discrimination. He used various multimedia to connect to his audience such as comedy and personal anecdotes. Thus, by analyzing how Saleem uses rhetorical strategies I was able to incorporate those strategies into my own writing. It also helped me understand who my audience were and how I should mold my essay to feed that audience. As a result I was able to better connect with my audience in my previous essays. I learned to “recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations.” My Written Literacy Narrative is a perfect example of that. I use various exigence, purpose, context, and identify my audience in order to find the best way to reach them. In my essay, I use a lot of hyperlinks as I know my audience will include individuals who are not familiar with my language and how it sounds. So those hyperlinks will elaborate and give deep audience immersion into my topic. I also use pictures as

a source of multimedia to illustrate the context and setting. As such, I believe I also learned to “understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.” I used multimedia to help those audiences who might be unfamiliar with what I am talking about. I did that by using digital technologies such as Google Translate and Google Images.

I want to be scolded in my Mother Tongue

It was the night before my math exam. Crickets buzzing, windows creaking, a slow wind of the hand held fan, *Haat Pakha* in Bangla, and the once dimming and once brightly glowing light from the oil lantern, sitting on the floor by my side. Just the slight noise of a fly was enough to distract my six year old self. I would take a whiff of the kerosene that’s inside the lantern in the middle of every addition and subtraction thought. It would distract me for a brief moment from the horrifying reality that I have a test tomorrow. But my mother was not letting me have that. She says in her feisty tone, *Tui tor kaaj korchis na keno?* or in



Using these rhetorical strategies also helped me understand how to go about my essay before writing about it. It gave me an idea on what to write and how to focus my writing. This was an excellent way for me to get started.

Lastly, I think I somewhat grasped the course learning outcome “Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.” I took my professor’s feedback on my WLLN draft and revised it to make it better. However, I do not think I used many strategies outside of my instructor and peer feedback. I have learned a few strategies on reading and identifying key

ideas. The way to do that is to break down each body paragraph of a reading and highlight the main idea, then at the end look at all the ideas together to help you identify the thesis and the author's exigence. Below are some examples of the feedback I received from my professor which I then used to further improve my WLLN.

From a young age we are taught about the history of our language. The Bengali Language Movement, war of 1952, in which many students gave their lives protesting for their mother language. Our language connects us with emotions from our birth and so every word we say, every tone we use, every dialect we speak, has connotations to it. For example, we have names for every relative you can think of. For every person you can imagine even if it is a stranger they

This, instead, can be placed in quotation marks.

Jennifer Buno
7:44 PM Oct 16

I have some suggestions for this being clearer: you should tell your readers what this movement was; which languages were involved; some historical context, perhaps. I would even consider adding a hyperlink to more information so your readers can do their own research.

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Ok

I agree



society where they would use these words on you and with you every moment of your life then you would understand. I think the most important part about language is that it doesn't just convey what we feel but also conveys what we have felt as society as a whole. You find the emotions in each word by living with them and in them. I was intimidated when my mom used that voice because with her words and her tone, my mother was expressing not just her own emotions, but all the emotions a whole society has associated with those words. However, for an uncertain reason, I can't feel any emotion that comes with any words I speak in English because

Jennifer Buno
7:51 PM Oct 16

What's wonderful about a narrative like this one is that you have the chance to provide your readers with that perspective; if they are unfamiliar, they can gain a real sense of importance by learning about it from your POV. I would say just be mindful of trying to keep the essay in a narrative story-telling format to keep your readers engaged and keeping them focused on the moment you're zooming in on.

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I didn't like writing because I always had strong restrictions on myself on how I should write placed upon me by the academic system. Looking back at my high school self, this

restriction was what limited me in a lot of assignments. I didn't connect with the assignments as I was expected to use this standardized format of writing and this class broke through that standard. Our classroom nourishes the talents of individuals without putting a hold on their ability to write in the standard style. This freedom allowed me to go outside the box and bring more connections and emotions to the writing process which made me enjoy it. I was able to write about something I wanted to talk about and as long as I can do that I think I will continue to like writing.