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The Impact of Language

Throughout this entire semester, I have learned more about myself than I thought. Whether it is where my priorities lie when it comes to writing or how I felt about myself as a writer. Through these assignments, I really had to learn to write for myself instead of just writing to satisfy my professor. Ranging from understanding attitudes toward languages from the first course learning outcome to the last, I truly can see how I used all of them in my writing throughout the semester.

Although, we reviewed all the learning outcomes, recognizing “the role of language attitudes and standards in empowering, oppressing, and hierarchizing languages and their users, and be open to communicating across different languages and cultures.” which is the first one, definitely felt like the main focus of this class. It was included in all the essays even the rhetorical essay has some aspect of researching attitudes toward languages. The first essay was no doubt a large part of this outcome. I really had to think about different experiences I went through to complete this essay especially when I was doing rhetorical situation worksheets. In those worksheets we were asked questions like “What features of this argument contribute most to making it rhetorically interesting, memorable... or problematic for its target audience and for you yourself?” I tried to think about questions like “How did this text affect me?” or “What do I feel when I read this?” This brings me to course learning six, understanding and using “print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.” Before this class, the only audiences I tried

to write for was the professor. I did not consider that people outside of faculty would read my work. However, after we answered so many questions on the audiences of the authors of what we read, I started to question myself when I was writing. I started targeting a specific group of people when I wrote these essays. For example, I had to change my usual audience for my rhetorical essay where I wrote in a perspective opposite of mine. My audience was people who were on both sides of the topic concerning conforming and learning Standard English. This was why the third outcome – “develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing” - was also needed for my rhetorical essay. I could not go into this essay blindly and I needed to draft and edit. Helping other students edit was also a large part of the last two essays as I learned some of my own mistakes from editing theirs.

After writing the rhetorical essay, I realized how many of us use these appeals instinctively, but I did not realize how hard it would be to purposely limit yourself to some and try to use them in a similar way of another author. The easiest appeal to use was logos since it is so straight forward. For example, in my rhetorical essay I said, “As we know, majority of Americans speak English, more specifically 78.4%; of course, that does not mean that they all speak the Standardized version.” I clearly used logos here because of the statistic but pathos was a little more difficult to use especially since the perspective I wrote in was not my own. However, the second and fourth outcome which are “Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations,” “Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations” respectively did help me learn to correctly use pathos. Seeing how different authors used this device and realizing that pathos was not just emotion but also values and beliefs played a huge role in my writing. Even in my research paper, I used sources that I ever thought I would use in an essay ranging from YouTube

videos to academic papers. Having the course outcome, “locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library’s databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias” this as a course outcome encouraged me to use different sources that I never considered before. In a research paper, the seventh learning outcome is the base of any essay and especially a research paper. In times like this where we cannot really go to libraries, using the internet for articles is our main source of information. Knowing I could only use online databases helped me understand them more as I was using them more frequently.

I believe we could have worked on the course learning outcome nine more because we just learned it as we went along. We did review the website that helped us cite but we did not spend as much time on it as we did the others. It was also difficult for me to separate the 5th outcome with the 3rd one because they are similar. I wanted to be able to differentiate them at the end of the semester, but I was not. They both had to do with collaborating with others through editing and drafting. This was something we did throughout the whole class especially in breakout rooms but I really did not know how to differentiate them.