

## LIGN177 MULTILINGUALISM

### Research Project due December 1, 2009

The research project for the class has two components.

#### **Part 1: select a bilingual or multilingual person to profile and interview.**

##### **Here are some important topics you should ask about:**

- their current age (approximate if they don't want to tell you)
- the language or languages they learned in childhood, what ages they started speaking them, with whom they spoke them.
- their parents' languages and/or their primary caregivers (babysitters, grandparents, aunts, etc..)
- where they learned the language or languages. What was the linguistic profile of the community/communities in which they were raised? Was their language also the community language or not? Is their language a written language?
- School and the language or languages they used in school. 'Used' can encompass languages they formally learned in a language classroom setting and languages they learned from friends in more informal settings. Was their native language(s) used in the school system?
- current language use – with whom do they speak which language and under what circumstances.
- proficiency in each of their languages – how would they rate themselves? Are they balanced bi or multilinguals?
- code-switching. Do they do it? If so, with whom and under what circumstances?
- attitudes towards their language and their competence in it
- their feelings about the future of their language(s)

#### **Part 2: profile of the language community in the country/region of your speaker**

This part of the project requires library research – compare what you found in scholarly books and articles with what your speaker told you. How do they match up?

- What are the official languages of the country that your speaker grew up in/learned their first language?
- What other languages are used in the community, particularly in the region/town that your speaker is from? Discuss use in the education system
- What are the general attitudes in the society towards multilingualism and other languages?

### **General guidelines:**

- Length: 8-10 pages, single or 1 ½ spacing, equivalent to Times 12 font (which is what this is)
- Your subject should be 18 or over
- Be respectful at all times with your research subject. Do not ask probing questions or push on topics that they are reluctant to talk about
- If you want to record the interview, be sure to obtain their permission. Have them sign a permission form that promises that the recording will be used only in the context of this class for the completion of this assignment.
- Keep their name confidential – report them only as male/female and their age and use only initials or a substitute name to refer to them in the report
- The questions above are a guide – you can add other questions to the list. Do not just report straight facts, but comment on the facts in terms of the topics we have discussed in class.
- The report should be written in a structured manner. You should have an introduction highlighting the goal of the project and the general findings of your project. Divide the report into sections focusing on different aspects of the profile. You do not have to organize the report into ‘Part 1 and Part 2’ as above, but you can intermingle the facts from articles with the personal profile. Be sure to have a conclusion.
- Scholarly articles and books should be given in a bibliography at the end of the paper.
- Grading will be based on the quality of the information presented, including discussion of the information, and the coherence of the presentation.