

Supplementary materials for developing students' critical thinking & creativity

Prejudice about languages – and how it reflects wider biases

1. Lexical challenge

- Below are phrases often used in discussions of *language prejudice*. Match each term (1–8) with the word (A–H) it commonly collocates with. Then, choose one of the collocations often used in discussions of *language prejudice* and explain its meaning or implications:

1. linguistic	A. profiling
2. accent	B. shift
3. code	C. insecurity
4. sociolinguistic	D. prejudice
5. language	E. accommodation
6. dialect	F. hierarchy
7. speech	G. variety
8. linguistic	H. repertoire

- Suggest a possible definition for each term. Verify your definitions by selecting the appropriate ones:

A. The full range of language varieties, registers, or styles a person can use depending on the social context
B. A feeling of self-consciousness or anxiety about one's accent, usually because it is considered "non-standard" or socially marked
C. The practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties within a single conversation or interaction
D. The process of adjusting one's speech patterns (pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar) to converge with or diverge from another speaker's style, often to express solidarity or social distance
E. Negative attitudes or discriminatory beliefs about people based on the language or variety they use
F. A particular form of a language associated with a region or social group, encompassing differences in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation

G. Judging or making assumptions about a person's social background, ethnicity, or intelligence based solely on how they sound
H. A social ranking of languages or varieties in which some are considered more prestigious, correct, or valuable than others

- **Discuss the questions**

1. How does your own *linguistic repertoire* change depending on the social context or the people you interact with?
2. Why do you think some speakers feel *accent insecurity* even when their speech is perfectly intelligible?
3. In what situations might *code-switching* serve as a tool for inclusion – or, conversely, lead to social exclusion?
4. Do people consciously adjust their speech when interacting with others, or is *sociolinguistic accommodation* mostly unconscious? Have you ever observed linguistic accommodation in real life?
5. Should *dialect varieties* be represented more visibly in formal settings like media or education? Why or why not?
6. How does the *linguistic hierarchy* in your country affect the way different languages or dialects are valued?

TED TALKS ON LANGUAGE PREJUDICE AND POWER

Jamila Lyiscott – 3 Ways to Speak English

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc

In a powerful spoken-word performance, Jamila Lyiscott showcases the richness of her linguistic repertoire — shifting between academic, Caribbean, and African-American English. She argues that all her ‘Englishes’ are equally valid. Aspect: Challenging the idea of a single ‘correct’ English and celebrating linguistic diversity.

Discussion and Reflection:

- How does Lyiscott use *code shift* in her performance?
- How does it describe her experience of *linguistic double consciousness*?
- What message does Lyiscott convey about “standard English” and power?
- How does her spoken-word style itself challenge linguistic prejudice?
- What emotions and identities coexist in her three “ways” of speaking English?

Safia Jaleel – Underscoring accents

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBCCsO3J1jk>

Discussion and Reflection:

- In what ways does Safia Jaleel describe the pressure to “*neutralize*” or change one’s accent as a form of *assimilation*?
- What challenges does a first-generation speaker face?
- How does a first-generation speaker’s experience illustrate hidden biases in education or media?
- What solutions are suggested for overcoming prejudice toward accents?
- What does her talk reveal about identity and belonging?