

Language at the center of DEI

- Language cross-cuts all aspects of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- While a focus on language is typically relegated to a laundry list of words and expressions we should or should not say, such a move drastically undermines the importance of language in DFI discussions.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

· Diversity

- Is "expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status and political perspective." (from the University of Michigan https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/)
- Includes "all aspects of human difference, social identities, and social group differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religion/spirituality, age, (dis)ability, and military/veteran status, political perspective, and associational preferences" (from the University of Iowa https://diversity.uiowa.edu/resources/dei-definitions)

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

· Equity

- Means actively working to "challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination" and "not discriminating
 on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender
 expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status." (from the University of Michigan
 https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/) (no mention of language here!)
- Means ensuring that "access, resources, and opportunities are provided for all to succeed and grow, especially for those
 who are underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged" (from the University of Washington
 https://www.washington.edu/research/or/office-of-research-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/dei-definitions/)

Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity

· Inclusion

- Means creating a place where "differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where
 every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion." (from the University of Michigan
 https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/)
- Means ensuring that "all members are and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and achieve to their potential. While diversity is essential, it is not sufficient. An institution can be both diverse and non-inclusive at the same time, thus a sustained practice of creating inclusive environments is necessary for success" (from the University of Iowa https://diversity.uiowa.edu/resources/dei-definitions)
- "Refers to the kind of active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity that cultivates an environment where any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued" (from Stony Brook University https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/cdo/toolkit/1-why-work-on-dei/defining-dei)

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Why Language is fundamental to DEI

What we say	Pronoun usage Words and expressions we use
How we say	Speech patterns The languages and dialects we speak and value
Who says it	The developmental 'default' Language and pedagogy Experts, citations, and references





What we say

- Pronoun usage
 - Even seemingly small functional elements of language, like the pronouns and titles we choose to refer to ourselves and others, send messages about how we establish our own identity and acknowledge that of others.
- Words and expressions we use
 - Phrases such as 'grandfather clause' 'manning/-man' still abound, with the consequence that vestiges of practices that have led to the
 discrimination and marginalization of members of our population seep into our language in a way conveys implicit bias against race and
 gender. Ableist language has the potential to ostracize those with mental or physical disabilities.

What we say: Pronouns



Singular they

The singular "they" is a **generic third-person singular pronoun** in English. Use of the singular "they" is endorsed as part of APA Style because **it is inclusive of all people and helps writers avoid making assumptions about gender**. Although usage of the singular "they" was once discouraged in academic writing, many advocacy groups and publishers have accepted and endorsed it, including <u>Merriam-Webster's Dictionary</u>.

- Always use a person's self-identified pronoun, including when a person uses the singular "they" as their pronoun.
- Also use "they" as a generic third-person singular pronoun to refer to a
 person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant to the context of the usage.
- Do not use "he" or "she" alone as generic third-person singular pronouns. Use combination forms such as "he or she" and "she or he" only if you know that these pronouns match the people being described.
- Do not use combination forms such as "(s)he" and "s/he.'
- If you do not know the pronouns of the person being described, reword the sentence to avoid a pronoun or use the pronoun "they."

https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-quidelines/grammar/singular-they



Specific Use

The MLA advises writers to always follow the personal pronouns of individuals they write about. Thus, if a person's pronoun is *they*, the following sentences are correct:

Jules is writing their research paper on Jane Austen's *Persuasion*.

Ari read the instructions to themselves (*or* themself) before beginning the test

This use of singular *they* is widely accepted **Generic Use**

They is also used "as a generic third-person singular pronoun to refer to a person whose gender is unknown or irrelevant to the context," as the seventh edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association attests (120). This use of singular they, until very recently discouraged in academic writing and other formal contexts, allows writers to omit gendered pronouns from a sentence like the following:

Each taxpayer must file his or her tax return before 15 April.

Instead, writers may substitute singular they:

Each taxpayer must file their tax return before 15 April.

MLA encourages writers to accept its use to avoid making or enabling assumptions about gender.

https://style.mla.org/using-singular-they/

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What we say: Words matter

"Words in and of themselves are impotent. It is the socially structured practices and historically situated circumstances constituting our social lives that pour content into words, endow them with meaning and power."

Sally McConnell-Ginet, Words Matter: Meaning and Power (2020)



What we say: Words matter

"'She is very ambitious' is not a compliment in our culture. Aggressive and hard-charging women violate unwritten rules about acceptable social conduct. Men are continually applauded for being ambitious and powerful and successful, but women who display these same traits often pay a social penalty."

Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In* (2013)









How we say it

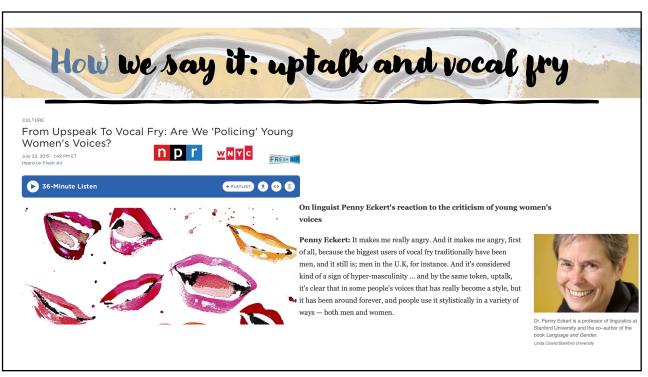


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How we say it

- Speech patterns
 - Statements that certain speech patterns, such as vocal fry or uptalk, which have been impressionistically (and empirically inaccurately) attributed to young women in particular, are undesirable and should be avoided, as they reify a prescriptivist notion of what counts as valid.
- Dialectal variation and grammar
 - Lack of knowledge of dialectal variation results in marginalization of those whose speech does not conform to a normative standard, and in some cases, has significant educational or legal repercussions.
- The language(s) we speak and learn
 - Policies and practices that suppress the use of indigenous or non-English languages, or prohibit adapting instruction to allow for bilingualism and non-standard dialects, reinforce the notion of a prescriptive, homogenous norm, shame, and further marginalize speakers, thereby widening the gap between students of different backgrounds.





How we say it: AAVE



Rachel Jeantel during her testimony

Jurors couldn't understand Jeantel, didn't believe her

Asked by Anderson Cooper on CNN if she found it hard to understand Rachel Jeantel, juror B37 said, "A LOT of . . . times! Because she . . . was using phrases I had never heard before."



The judge admonishes the prosecutor for asking questions, and continuing to talk over Rachel Jeantel's answers



John Rickford, PH.D. Stanford University

How we say it: AAVE

LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS ON TRIAL: HEARING RACHEL JEANTEL (AND OTHER VERNACULAR SPEAKERS) IN THE COURTROOM AND BEYOND

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Rachel Jeantel was the leading prosecution witness when Goorge Zimmeman was tried for killing Trayvon Martin, but she spoke in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and her crucial testimony was dismissed as incomprehensible and not credible. The disregard for her speech in court and the media is familiar to vernacular speakers and puts Linguistics itself on trial: following Saussure, how do we dispel such 'prejudices' and 'fictions'? We show that Jeantel speaks a highly systematic AAVE, with possible Caribbean influence. We also discuss voice quality and other factors that bedeviled her testimony, including dialect unfamiliarity and institutionalized racism. Finally, we suggest strategies for linguists to help vernacular speakers be better heard in courtrooms and beyond.*

Keywords: AAVE, vernacular dialects, forensic linguistics, language attitudes, sociolinguistics, of what use is linguistics?

'Da's how I speak. He cannot hear me that well.'—Rachel Jeantel, in courtroom testimony, State of Florida v. George Zimmerman trial, June 27, 2013, pp. 229–30 of court reporter's transcript

Jeantel has many of the classic AAVE grammatical features*

- Multiple Negation: "I ain't hear nothin'"
- Remote past BIN: "I BIN knew I was the last person to talk to T." "I was **BIN** paying attention
- Preterite had: "then I had call him back"; "the next day I had got a text from my brother"
- Aspectual be: "That's where his headset be at"; "sometimes he **be** calling them 'niggaz'
- · Existential it: "Monday it was a rumor going around his school"

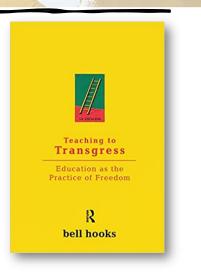
nter alia, Rickford 1975; Rickford and Theberge Rafal 1996; Green 2002



John Rickford, PH.D. Stanford University

How we say it: AAVE

"To heal the splitting of mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language. We seek to make a place for intimacy. Unable to find such a place in standard English, we create the ruptured, broken, unruly speech of the vernacular. When I need to say words that do more than simply mirror or address the dominant reality, I speak black vernacular. There, in that location, we make English do what we want it to do"



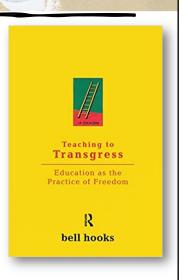
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How we say it: Dialectal variation

- We all choose a way to speak in any given context, no matter how many languages we speak.
 - How we choose to present ourselves
 - Who our addressees are and who our audience is
- African American English: a dialect with rules like any other dialect
 - https://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/langnet/definitions/aave.html
 - Even SLP students show differential perception of Mainstream English and AAE: https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/2021_AJSLP-20-00339
- Code Switching: 'toggling' between two languages, dialects, or even registers
 - https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/04/13/177126294/five-reasons-why-people-code-switch

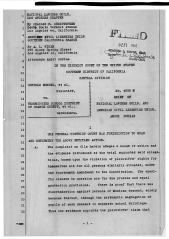
How we say it: language in schools

"As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence."



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How we say it: language in schools



Mendez v. Westminster School District 1944 Orange County, CA Segregating of children of Mexican descent

Arizona Proposition 203 "the English Language Education for Children in Public Schools Act" was approved by election ballot in 2000 63% to 27% Proposition 203 would repeal the existing bilingual education laws and change the law to require that all classes be taught in English except that pupils who are classified as "English Learners" will be educated through sheltered English immersion programs during a temporary transition period.

Carlisle Indian Boarding School, PA



Opened in 1879 in Pennsylvania, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School was the first governmentrun boarding school for Native Americans...Students were forced to cut their hair, change their names, stop speaking their Native languages, convert to Christianity, and endure harsh discipline including corporal punishment and solitary confinement.

How we say it: language in schools



Indigenous Languages

At present, 96 per cent of the world's approximately 6,700 languages are spoken by only 3 per cent of the world's population. Although indigenous peoples make up less than 6% of the global population, they speak more than 4,000 of the world's languages.

Language rights of indigenous peoples

Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their languages, oral traditions, writing systems and literatures. Further, it provides that States shall take effective measures to protect this right, including through interpretation in political, legal and administrative proceedings. Articles 14 and 16 state indigenous peoples' rights to establish their educational systems and media in their own languages and to have access to an education in their own languages.

Indigenous peoples' language rights are also guaranteed under the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization. Other relevant international instruments are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/04/Indigenous-Languages.pdf



Laura Zingg

https://www.teachforamerica.org/one-day/top-issues/preserving-native-languages-in-the-classroom

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Who says it



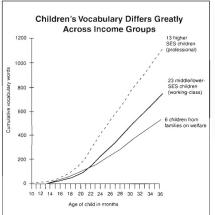
Who says it

- The developmental 'default'
 - Treating monolinguals from middle class families as the baseline against which language development and clinical diagnoses are assessed,
 carries consequences for diagnoses of developmental disorders, language delays, and interventions, and makes it inevitable that children
 from lower socioeconomic statuses and/or multilingual backgrounds will always be seen as facing a deficit that they can never overcome.
- Experts, citations, reference lists
 - Ostensibly uncontroversial elements of practices such as words cited in a reference lists or the books we consult indicates who 'counts' as an expert and conveys who can enter the pipeline to professional success.
- Inclusive pedagogy
 - Being an intentional educator who practices inclusive pedagogy sends a message that all students belong and are valued.

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Who says it: the word gap

Hart & Rislev (1995, 2003): 42 families observed for 1-hour a week, findings linking vocabulary size to SES (deficit)



See also Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder (2013), Hoff (2003, 2013),

Huttenlocher, Waterfall, Vasilyeva, Vevea, & Hedges (2010), Pan, Rowe,
Singer, & Snow (2005), Rowe (2012), Song, Spier, & Tamis–LeMonda
(2014), Weisleder, Otero, Marchman, & Fernald, 2015]

Bety Hart & Todd R. Risso

But rich verbal engagement is a better predictor than SES, and that varies within groups and languages!

https://www.karger.com/Article/Fulltext/3/5515

And the QUANTITY of words is not all that matters! https://vocalfriespod.com/2019/10/31/dont-mind-the-gap-transcript/

Who says it: citation bias

• Reference lists, speaker panels, cited experts

ARTICLES

nature neuroscience

(B) Check for update

The extent and drivers of gender imbalance in neuroscience reference lists

Jordan D. Dworkin®, Kristin A. Linn®, Erin G. Teich®, Perry Zurn³, Russell T. Shinohara¹ and Danielle S. Bassett® 4456,78명

Using data from five top neuroscience journals, we find that reference lists tend to include more papers with men as first and last author than would be expected if gender were unrelated to referencing. Importantly, we show that this imbalance is driven largely by the citation practices of men and is increasing over time as the field diversifies. We assess and discuss possible mechanisms and consider how researchers might approach these issues in their own work.

Gendered Citation Patterns across Political Science and Social Science Methodology Fields



Michelle L. Dion¹, Jane Lawrence Sumner² and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell³

Analysing all articles published from 2007–2016 in several journals, we find that female scholars are significantly more likely than mixed gender or male author teams to cite research by their female peers, but that these citation rates vary depending on the overall distribution of women in their field. More gender diverse subfields and disciplines produce smaller gender citation gaps, consistent with a reduction in the "Matthew effect". However, we also observe undercitation of work by women, even in journals that publish mostly female authors. While improvements in gender diversity in academia increase the visibility and impact of scholarly work by women, implicit biases in citation practices in the social sciences persist.

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Who says it: citation bias

Cite Black Women.

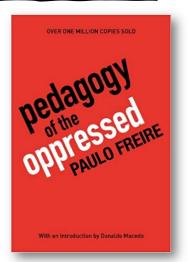
- https://www.citeblackwomencollective.org/
- Started by Christen Smith in 2017
- 5 Guiding Principles in a praxis of citation
 - #1 Read Black women's work
 - #2 Integrate Black women into the CORE of your syllabus (in life & in the classroom).
 - #3 Acknowledge Black women's intellectual production.
 - #4 Make space for Black women to speak.
 - #5 Give Black women the space and time to breathe.



Who says it: inclusive pedagogy

"There's no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom."

"The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What an educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves"



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Language at the center of DEI

- Language is a means of communication that is <u>always</u> situated in a context.
- It not only reflects who we are, it <u>defines</u> us as individuals and as a community.
- It gives us a voice.
- It allows us to participate, to advocate, to situate.
- It is not static. It is dynamic.
- It is the means by which we position ourselves, establish and erode relationships, break down and create barriers, and send messages about who is included and who is not.
- Language is and always must be at the heart of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

