

Anthropology 104 Winter 2016 Language Assignment

Language is an integral part of culture. As a result, different cultural groups or activities have their own language terms, known as jargon. In an effort to explore socio-linguistics as it applies to your own life, choose a social group that you are part of and create at least 1 page of jargon that is used in this group.

Examples include:

Internet gaming
Chat room language
Skateboarding language
Sports terminology
Workplace jargon

As part of your list of jargon, please define each term presented as you understand it to be used. Then write a 1-2 page (12 font, double-spaced) summary of the cultural context in which this language is used. Who uses this language (is it age specific, gender-specific, socio-economic, etc...) and where would you encounter it geographically? What are your thoughts about how or why this language may have developed in this group of people? Is it for efficiency, identity, the “cool” factor, or other reasons?

Here’s an example of what I’m looking for in the summary:

The construction site has its own brand of language that can be divided into 2 categories. The first category includes the specific terminology of wood, screws, nails, and tools. Rather than spending a long time trying to explain that special kind of gyprock that is water-resistant and great for putting in bathrooms, you can use the term “green board” and efficiently communicate the entire idea. For this category of words, efficiency is key, and often this is important for safety issues as well as saving time. The second category comprises words that are used when chatting with co-workers. In this instance, this language, which is informal and can be quite coarse, can be used amongst peers and with supervisors. In my limited exposure to this group, I think that this may be a reflection of the level of education and socio-economic status that is stereotypical (but not universal) of construction workers. However, it’s also interesting to note that this language is often derogatory towards women and laden with sexual context, which highlights the fact that the construction site is still largely a male domain. To fit in with the crowd, you use the language, which helps signal your “machoness” and participation in the group.

IMPORTANT: You do not need to do outside research to find THE definitive definition, but if you do venture onto the Net to look for jargon or background about its use, you have to have intext citations to source the information or it is plagiarism. If you have questions about how to do this, a style guide is on reserve in the library or can be purchased from the bookstore for \$3.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final mark in this course. It is due: _____

This is the most explicit assignment sheet in the history of assignment sheets, so there is no excuse for not understanding my expectations.