

Low Stakes Assignment #5: Collecting Primary Data—24 hours of Language

For this assignment you will collect primary data about your own language use and the languages you encounter over a 24-hour period. This data will form the foundation of your Social Science Research Report, so it is imperative that you do this assignment fully and carefully.

To collect this data, observe and document your own language use as well as any language usage you encounter within a consecutive 24-hour period of time. I encourage you to do this during a typical day—not a holiday or weekend. Then, write down every instance of language use you encounter, no matter how small. For instance:

- When you wake up in the morning, do you hear music, talk-radio, your kids complaining about waking up early?
- Do you then talk with your family over breakfast? What language(s) do you speak? What tone do you use? Is your language informal?
- Do you also check your email or text messages during this time?
- How about your commute? What languages do you encounter then? Do you listen to music or a podcast? Do you hear other commuters or the train/bus operator?
- At work, who do you talk to? What do you hear? Is the language use here more formal? Does its tone shift between person to person?
- What happens if you go to a store—what do you encounter there?
- And what do you hear/see when you log into your SPS courses? What type of languages do you encounter there? Does your own language use shift when you respond to DB posts, draft assignments, emails your professor?

Requirements:

As you can see from the above questions, you need to document as much as you possibly can about your language use and the languages you encounter within this 24-hour period. As you are doing so, consider the tone, format, and structure of the language use. And, within your raw data, make sure you also identify these elements:

- the different kinds of languages you encounter (ex: formal Spanish, English slang);
- the locations where you came into contact with language (ex: at home, on the bus);
- who is using those languages (which discourse communities--professional, boss-to-subordinate; personal--child-to-adult);
- the language domains you witnessed (reading, writing, speaking, listening);
- the amount of time you spend using/experiencing each language.

Collect your data on your phone, in a physical notebook, or using whatever method works best for you. For the assignment itself, submit all the raw data that you collected. I encourage you to do this in a chart—since it will be easier to organize this way—but you are free to use whatever format works best for you. For an example of a portion of this raw data, see the Addendum in the *Sample* Social Science Research Report.