ERWC: Language, Gender, and Culture: You Are What You Speak

(BLUE means group work or work that a member completes for the group; RED means whole class activities.)


Reading #1 “His Politeness is Her Powerlessness” by Deborah Tannen

in class: We 10/7

PREREADING

Activity 1: Introducing Key Concepts:

1. Take the following survey: jot down an honest yes or no response next to each one.

   1. ____ I prefer it when people whisper around me.
   2. ____ I prefer it when people look me in the eye when we talk.
   3. ____ I like it most when I am taller than the person with whom I am speaking.
   4. ____ I like to be the one people are listening to.
   5. ____ I appreciate it when someone is at least a foot from me during a conversation.
   6. ____ I have a soft voice.
   7. ____ I sometimes raise my voice in order to be heard in a group of people talking.
   8. ____ I often wish I was more outspoken.
   9. ____ I consider myself a good communicator.
   10. ____ I always know when someone is angry with me—even if they don’t say it.
   11. ____ I can tell when someone is being dishonest.
   12. ____ My facial expressions come across loud and clear to people.
   13. ____ I find myself telling secrets to my friends a lot.
   14. ____ I do not like to be in a crowd of people.
   15. ____ I prefer not to look at people’s faces when I talk.
   16. ____ I seem to stand close to people when we talk.
   17. ____ In my family, everyone talks a lot and loudly in order to be heard.
   18. ____ I am more comfortable talking to someone of my own gender.
   19. ____ I am more comfortable talking to someone of a different gender from my own gender.
   20. ____ I have more friends of one gender than another.
   21. ____ I spend a lot of time on the phone with my friends.
   22. ____ My mom or dad say I am too loud/enthusiastic.
   23. ____ My parents are affectionate with each other.
   24. ____ I find myself with my hand on my hips when I talk to someone.
   25. ____ I usually cross my arms when I talk to someone who is not a close friend/family.
   26. ____ I never participate in group discussions, not even at lunch or with friends.

2. Discuss with your group members what some of the statements might suggest about the respondent (pick 10).
3. Reflect on and write down your own preferred pattern of communicating with others in your journal. Consider whether your answers show that you are an introvert or extrovert, shy or socially awkward, male or female, young (teenaged) or adult, a good listener, asocial, friendly, aggressive, or other traits. Come up with some (NON-judgmental) “communication categories” of types of people.

4. The speaker of your group will report your insights to the class.

Activity 2: Getting Ready to Read

Choose ONE of the topics that follow and write your response in your journal:

Quickwrite 1: Although tennis fans seem to find it normal that male tennis players grunt when they swing the racket forcefully, many sports journalists have complained that when female tennis players grunt during a hard swing, it is distracting from the game. Similarly, female athletes have been subjected to hormone testing to determine whether they are actually “female,” but no male athletes have ever been subjected to the same treatment. What is going on here? Explain your reasoning.

Quickwrite 2: How do American women typically speak in their conversations? Consider volume and pitch of voice, choice of words, body posture, closeness of speakers, eye contact, use of hands while speaking, and so on. Now consider the way American men typically speak. Write down the differences you can think of and the contexts in which these differences occur.

Volunteers from each group will report out.

(Conversation demonstrations: male to male, male to female, female to female.)

PREREADING  (cont’d)

Activity 3: Key Vocabulary

1. What does the term “communication” mean? Do a search of the word’s origin/history and write down what you find in your journal. Then list in your journal what forms of communication you consider effective and what forms ineffective under these headings:

   Effective means of communication  Ineffective means of communication

2. Copy the words underlined in “His Politeness is Her Powerlessness” into your journal. Look up the definitions of any you don’t know and copy them into your journal. There will be a quiz on all the words later in the unit.

READING

Activity 4: First Reading

1. Before you start, look at Tannen’s title: “His Politeness Is Her Powerlessness.” What do you think her writing will be about? Write down your inferences in your journal:

2. Read the first paragraph. Looking closely at the last sentence (“Often, the labeling of ‘women’s language’ as ‘powerless language’ reflects the view of women’s behavior through the lens of men’s,”) what do you think Tannen means? Write the answer in your journal:

3. Read the rest of the text. Look for Tannen’s thesis as you read; highlight it and label it “thesis” in the margin.

REREADING:

Activity 5: Looking Closely at Language (Before you read the article again):
1. **Indirect Communication:** Find some of Tannen’s vocabulary expressing this concept. Identify at least five indirect forms of communication in the margins of your text.

2. **Direct Communication:** Find some of Tannen’s vocabulary expressing this concept. Identify at least five direct forms of communication in the margins of your text.

3. Think of some words from your own experience that relate to the idea of “directness” and “indirectness”, and write them down in your journal, labeling them one or the other:
   - **Directness**
   - **Indirectness**

4. Finally, can you think of any film characters that embody one or the other of these characteristics? Write them down in your journal and explain why you selected them:

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**Activity 6: REREAD**

While you are rereading the text, highlight the parts of the text that answer these questions and write down the answers in your journal.

1. In paragraphs 3 and 4, how does Tannen explain women’s tendencies to use “covert” communication strategies? Write down at least two reasons that the author provides.

2. Sometimes an author will debunk a myth (examine an assumption that many people have about an issue). Where do you see Tannen doing this? Highlight it and write **MYTH** in the margin.

3. Find, highlight, and label the following:
   a. the general **issue or problem** Tannen is writing about
   b. Tannen’s **thesis** (arguable main claim about the issue or problem)
   c. the focus **topic** (claim) of each of her body paragraphs
   d. the **examples** Tannen gives to support each claim
   e. her **conclusion** (“therefore” or “so what” statement)

4. Consider why Tannen devotes the majority of her article to analyzing women’s speech. Does this rhetorical choice strengthen or undermine the persuasiveness of her argument? Explain in your journal. In class on Monday, compare with your group and discuss.

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**POSTREADING**

**Activity 7: Summarizing and Responding**

1. Write a one-page response to one of the following prompts in your journal:
   A. Linguistic researchers, such as Tannen, have shown that male and female communication styles are different. Some have gone so far as to suggest that women could benefit themselves by learning a “male” style of communication, for example, giving direct orders as Tannen describes. Such behaviors, these researchers argue, could help women to win the respect of men in the business world and thus advance women’s careers. How would you respond to this suggestion? How does your gender determine your answer?
   B. People often say one thing and do another. What does Tannen mean when she says, “Only modern Western societies place a priority on direct communication, and even for us it is more a value than a practice” (par. 8)? What does it mean to say that direct communication is more valued than it is practiced? Do you agree that we claim to value direct speech but often act otherwise? Give specific examples to support your point of view based on your
personal experience or on your observations of others.

2. Write a précis of the article. (see Appendix below). 

HW: Fr 10/16

Activity 8: Analyzing Stylistic Choices
Complete the multiple texts chart (see end of unit below) for this article. 

In-class: Mo 10/12

Reading #2 “About Men” by Gretel Ehrlich

PREREADING

Getting Ready to Read
Activity 1 Quickwrite: When you think of the phrase “American cowboy,” what associations, personal traits, and images come to mind? Write them down in your journal.

READING

Activity 2: Looking Closely at Language
1. Listen as your teacher reads the first paragraph of Ehrlich’s text, paying attention to the author’s use of rhythmic phrasing and repetition. Write down any repetition in the margin of the text (= ANNOTATE).
2. Note the contrasts the author used to discredit common stereotypes. As a group, find all of the contrasts; the writer will write them down. The speaker will report out to the class.
3. Ehrlich puts some phrases in quotation marks in this excerpt (e.g., “strong and silent,” “rides away into the sunset,” “rugged individualist”). Why are these phrases in quotes? Discuss as a group. Your speaker will report out to the class.

Activity 3: First Reading
Read Ehrlich’s essay and consider the main point she seems to be making. Write down what you think it is in the margin of her essay. Compare with your group members. Do you all agree? Your speaker will report out to the class.

REREADING

Activity 4: Rereading the Text and Analyzing Stylistic Choices
Read the article again. ANNOTATE those passages where Ehrlich uses strategies to make herself appear to be an insider in the cowboy world. Make notes in the margins whenever she is portraying herself as the “expert.” Here are several questions to help you consider this assignment: (write your answers in your journal).
1. Why might she talk about being in New York but missing Wyoming? What does this tell us about her?
2. How does Ehrlich seem to want to represent herself to readers? What evidence in the text supports this view?
3. Who are her sources? (Whom does she quote?)
4. How does she use these sources to build authority and gain credibility?
5. What is her THESIS? Write THESIS in the margin next to it.

Discuss your findings with your group and record your insights in your journal.
POSTREADING

Activity 5: Summarizing and Responding

1. Using Ehrlich’s text as a dictionary, make two lists of words in your journal. The first list might be titled “Traditional words used to describe cowboys,” and the second list might be titled “Unlikely words used to describe cowboys.” As you comb through Ehrlich’s text, collect words and phrases that fall into these two categories and fill out your lists.

2. Review each list as a group and discuss the kind of portrait each list paints of the American cowboy (write down a summary). What happens when you put the two lists together, as Ehrlich has done throughout her piece? How is this reflective of Ehrlich’s larger rhetorical goals? Respond in your journal.

3. You can do this part individually or as a group: Now think of someone you know well. Before you begin writing, develop two lists of vocabulary about that person in your journal: use “Words that describe how this person is commonly perceived by others,” and “Words that reveal this person as a more multidimensional human being.” Use similar phrasing and style to Ehrlich’s, write one full paragraph using the word lists you have developed to introduce readers to this person as he or she is commonly perceived by others who may not know the person well. Use oppositional vocabulary and phrasing that offer a more nuanced representation. (For example, you may know someone who has a very gruff exterior but is a “softy” once you get to know him or her, or vice versa). Write up your “portrait” in a style as close to Ehrlich’s as possible in your journal.

4. Write a précis of the article in your journal (see Appendix below).

Activity 6: Making Comparisons
Complete the multiple texts chart (see end of unit below) for this article.

PREREADING

Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read

Normally, people rather than words go “on trial”. What associations might the author want you to make before you start to read? Quickwrite: Write down your ideas about why the author might want you to associate “words” with “trials” in your journal. What might he be getting at?

READING

Activity 2: First Reading: As you read:

1. Highlight and label on the article the following: thesis, facts (evidence), details, dates, names (= ANNOTATE).

2. Make a list of the author’s examples of how language/linguistics has been used to solve crimes/mysteries. in your journal. Include the type of language, the crime/mystery, and the outcome.

REREADING

Activity 3: Rereading the Text and Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Read the article again. This time, find the answers to these questions and write them in your journal:

1. What does Hitt mean by words are “on trial”—what are they “on trial” for?

2. Do the words win their own trial? Do they help the lawyers win the murder trial? Explain.
3. What scientific evidence does Hitt cite to show how unique language patterns in individuals have become a legitimate form of trial evidence?
4. How does he use these sources to build authority and gain credibility for his claims?

DISCUSS your findings. Summarize the discussion in your journal.

POSTREADING
Activity 4: Making Comparisons
Complete the multiple texts chart (see Appendix below) for this article.

Activity 5: Summarizing and Responding
Write a précis of the article in your JOURNAL (see Appendix below).

Reading #4 (TWO articles) “A Roshanda by Any Other Name” by Levitt and Dubner and “Doomed by Your Name?” by Meghan Daum

PREREADING
Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read:
Do you know anyone with an unusual first name—or an unusual spelling of a common first name? How does that person feel about his/her name? How do you feel about it? How do names affect our assumptions about people we know? Quickwrite: Write down your ideas about why the authors might want you to consider the importance of names in your JOURNAL. What might they be getting at? Do you think they are right?

READING
Activity 2: Looking Closely at Language: As you read:
Highlight and label the following: thesis, facts (evidence), details, dates, names (other than example names) (= ANNOTATE).

1. Make a list of the names the authors use as examples, the socio/ethnic groups that use the names, and the expected outcome for each person with those names in your journal:

POSTREADING
Activity 3: Making Comparisons
Complete the multiple texts chart (see Appendix below) for this article.

Activity 4: Summarizing and Responding
Write a précis of the article in your JOURNAL (I).

Reading #5: “Languages: Why We Must Save Dying Languages” by Rachel Nuwer

PREREADING
Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read
Write a response to these questions in your journal:
1. Why should we care about languages dying out?
2. What else dies when a language dies?
3. What would it be like if you could never hear, see, speak English again? How would that change your life?

Activity 2:
Quickwrite: Consider the advantages and disadvantages of the entire population of the world speaking the same language. What would we gain? Lose? Write your thoughts in your journal.

READING
Activity 3: Looking Closely at Language
AS YOU READ:
1. Highlight and label the following: thesis, facts (evidence), details, dates, names (= ANNOTATE).
2. Make a list of the endangered languages the author uses as examples, the socio/ethnic groups that use the languages, and the unique elements of the language and culture of each group in your journal:

POSTREADING
Activity 4: Rereading the Text and Analyzing Stylistic Choices
Complete reading comparison chart (see Appendix below).

Activity 5: Summarizing and Responding
HW:
Write a précis of the article in your JOURNAL (see Appendix below).

Reading #6 Taming of the Shrew by William Shakespeare
PREREADING
Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read
In this play, Shakespeare explores the power of language and how it impacts men and women in 16th Century European society. Write a response to ONE of the following quickwrites in your JOURNAL:
Quickwrite 1: Based on your own experience, how do loud girls get treated by other students? How are loud boys treated? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being loud? How about stubborn girls? Assertive girls?
Quickwrite 2: People who frequently and emphatically express their opinion are often considered bossy, obnoxious, or powerful. What other common reactions do people have to such personality traits? How do those reactions change when it is a woman expressing her opinion? when it is a man?

Activity 2: Making Predictions and Asking Questions
1. What is a “shrew”?
2. What can you infer from the title?
3. Why might it need to be tamed?
4. Is that good or bad?
Write your responses **in your journal.**

**Activity 3: Introducing Key Concepts: Understanding Historical References** (in class):

On the attached “Shakespeare Review” handout, write down as many of the details about Shakespeare as you can in the squares provided **without consulting anyone else**; then, **share** what is on your sheet with others and find out what is on theirs. Write down any new information you gain from your classmates in a **different-colored pen**. Once you have given and received information, discuss as a class the information you have compiled. If you gain any additional information from the class discussion, you can add that **in a third color**.

***See other T ot S handout for reading timeline, journals, and performance assignments.***
I. How To Annotate News/Magazine Articles
adapted from eHow:
http://www.ehow.com/how_7730073_annotate-newspaper-article.html

1. Read the newspaper article carefully and with an analytical mind. Copy down in class: Fr 10/11
   a) who wrote the article,
   b) when the newspaper printed it, and
   c) the title and type of publication in which it appeared. For example, the author of an article published in a specialized trade paper might have a markedly different outlook from a writer for a general-interest daily newspaper.

2. Determine whether the article's author is on the newspaper's staff or works for a larger organization that the newspaper buys articles from.

3. Determine why the author wrote the piece (what did the writer intend the article to do).

4. Identify the main ideas (THESIS and TOPICS) and the overall message the article's author is trying to communicate.

5. Notice the article's level of reading difficulty and whether it contains any jargon, scientific terminology or arcane language aimed at readers in a specific business or industry. Ask yourself what the article adds to the existing body of knowledge on the subject.

6. Write a concise one-paragraph annotation summary of the article, using the ideas you noted in the margins while reading and analyzing the piece:
   a) Begin your annotation by citing the author's name, the article's title, the name of the publication in which it appeared, and the date it was published.
   b) Explain the primary idea of the article and whether the author succeeded in conveying his message. Note any areas in which the article's author fell short of his goal and how those parts of the article could have been improved.
   c) Keep your annotation short and remain on topic. Write at least three or four sentences in your annotation of a newspaper article, but do not exceed a length of approximately 150 words. Write your annotation in the third person, refraining from the use of "you" or "I."

Read more: How to Annotate a Newspaper Article | eHow.com
http://www.ehow.com/how_7730073_annotate-newspaper-article.html#ixzz24yp8ktHP
**PRÉCIS: A Concise Summary of Essential Points**

**Definition:** A Précis is a concise summary of a larger piece of writing. You will be writing précises on the articles you read in preparation for your term paper. A précis simplifies and gets to the essential meaning of the article. It is a concise summary that does not allow for any commentary or interpretation on your part. Before you can write a precis, you must read the entire article, then re-phrase the main ideas. Before finalizing your précis, go through it and combine sentences using transition words to make it as concise as possible.

**Directions:** Using the school or public library hard-copy collections or electronic databases (either from home or the library), locate and read a minimum of five articles on your term paper topic. Then, follow the guidelines below to **write a précis on each one**:

- copy down the **full, correct citation** of the article
- **print out or photocopy the first page** of each article
- **actively read the entire article** using a pen/pencil to annotate the text
- as you read, look for **organizational signals** (transition words, topic sentences, wrap-up sentences)
- go back and **rephrase the main ideas** of the article (hint: look to the topic sentences of the article’s paragraphs) using the following system:
  1) First Sentence: **name of author, genre, and title of work**; a **rhetorically accurate verb** (see below) and a “THAT” clause containing the thesis of the work
  2) Second Sentence: a chronological explanation of **how the author supports** the thesis
  3) Third Sentence: summary of specific supporting examples that you found compelling
  4) Fourth Sentence: a **statement of the author's apparent purpose**, followed by an “IN ORDER TO” phrase
  5) **CITATION:** a short **works cited**

**Sample Précis**

(1) In his article **“Do We Care More about Animals than Humans?”**, Michael Holmes reports that people often appear to have greater sympathy for animals who are suffering than humans who are enduring similar or worse agony. (2) While he acknowledges that his news stories on human suffering from around the world are usually met with sincere sorrow, he also admits that on several occasions, wounded or helpless animals have generated more of a response from the public. (3) When he reported on a pet market in Iraq that was bombed, CNN viewers sent him far more emails concerned about the state of the animals than the well-being of the innocent civilians who endured mortar attacks and bombs there every day. (4) Holmes questions our overzealous response to animal suffering in order to encourage us to reconsider the value we place on animal lives in light of human misery.

**Works Cited**


**Rhetorically Accurate Verbs:**

- adds
- analyzes
- argues
states
suggests
summarizes
supports
synthesizes
traces
uses
**HOW TO WRITE A PRÉCIS**

1. Find the author:______________________________________________________________________________

2. Find the title and genre of the work:
   a) title: ________________________________________________________________________________
   b) genre:__________________________________________________________________________________

3. Find the thesis: ____________________________________________________________________________

4. List the arguments and the examples the author uses to prove the thesis

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<th>arguments (claims)</th>
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5. Identify the author’s reason(s) (purpose) for writing the article:______________________________________________________________________________
6. Identify what the author wants us to do/believe.
II. Charting Multiple Texts

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<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>PURPOSE of article</th>
<th>THESIS of article</th>
<th>Agree/Disagree with thesis?</th>
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