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### Language & Literacy Narrative

Doing this narrative has made me reflect on how moving to the US and only speaking Spanish has influenced my language and literacy abilities. It made me express how those experiences influenced me to become who I am today. With the reading we did in class, "Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes. "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan. "Nobody Means More to Me Than You And the Future Life of Willie Jordan" by June Jordan. And "Why I Keep Speaking Up Even When People Mock My Accent" by Safwat Saleem. I understood more about the stereotypes related to culture, language, and literacy and how language and literacy impact someone's life. Also, we did different activities such as rhetorical reading, narrative writing, and self-reflection, which helped me improve my writing and comprehend what the author said more in-depth. The rhetorical situation worksheet helped me understand the readings better because we had to answer some questions based on the reading in which the answers were not obvious. Hence, I had to do some critical thinking, which made me understand the reading more in-depth.

What I'm most proud of in this essay is being able to narrate my story because I do not feel comfortable sharing that experience with others because it's too personal for me. My narrative is about when I moved to the US, how hard it was for me to learn English, and how it affected my language and literacy. Even though there are a lot of people who have similar stories about moving to the US and learning English, it impacts people differently. However, in this essay, I put the effort and wrote about my experience, and I wrote a little bit about how I felt,

which was out of my comfort zone because I wrote about my feelings in a writing that others would read. It made me feel good that I could write about how that experience affected me emotionally.

The audience is people who speak "broken English", standard English, black English, those who don't speak the language, or those who relate to my narrative. Because my narrative talks about my experience when moving to the US and learning English, it also talks about how those who speak "broken English", black English, or those who don't speak English are being judged or mistreated just by how they speak. It also talks about how English can be spoken differently and that the only form is not standard English. To make society understand that people should not mistreat or judge those who speak differently because everyone speaks differently, and it does not mean their opinions are not valuable, also for those who went through a similar experience as me.

The rhetorical technique I used in my essay is pathos, which I used to elicit feelings from the audience. I want the audience to resonate and relate with my narrative.

This essay connects me with the course objective because I improved my writing skills and learned how to use rhetorical strategies.

Have you noticed how society makes assumptions about others by their race, how they speak, or even how people dress? For example, Arab people are stereotyped as terrorists, black and Hispanic people as criminals, or people without a future. Stereotypes and judgment have a massive impact on how society sees people, interacts with them, and treats them; also, it makes people insecure about themselves, affecting their development.

I moved to the US when I was ten; when my mom told me we were moving to the US, I was sad and worried because I didn't want things to change, leave my family behind and start over. My first language is Spanish. When I moved here, it was hard because I didn't understand the language. On the first day of school here, I felt everything was crashing down. The first day, I felt nauseous and had a headache. I struggled to communicate with others because I didn't know what anyone was saying. At school, everyone was speaking English. I didn't understand anything, which made me feel worse; it made me feel dumb because I was an excellent student in my country of origin. I understood everything, but here it was different.

Every day at school, I was left to watch videos and do activities on a computer to help me learn English, and once a week, a counselor came to help me learn English. Which I felt wasn't useful at all. As time passed, I received help from a teacher to teach me English. He brought books and helped me with practice assignments to learn English, which was helpful because I had the basic information to communicate even a little with others in a different language. People say that when learning a new language, you must practice with others. Well, that was my mistake because I was a shy kid before, and at that time, I was self-conscious that I didn't know English. So, I just stayed quiet, listened to music, practiced my books, and watched movies in English. However, I didn't do any classwork apart from being on the computer learning English, which made me feel like a failure and useless because, thinking back on how things were back in my country, I did my classwork, and I worked hard to be a good student.

When I finished 5th grade and moved to the 6th grade, I went to an interview. I had to enter a new school, and at that time, I could form basic English conversation, so the interview was done by a woman who said to me "that they don't accept students who didn't speak English; that made me feel insecure and dump because even though I didn't spoke English fluently, I understand most things clearly. Also, it made me angry because that school wouldn't accept students who didn't speak English perfectly. Everyone deserves an education, no matter the language they speak. However, I knew I could not do well in school even though I wasn't fluent in English. In the end, I was accepted to the school. For the first week of school, they gave me a counselor so they could help me with classes, but the following week, she left. It's still a mystery why she left. But maybe it was because she saw I could do it without her help.

Later on, when I started group/partner work, presentations, reading a lot, and writing essays, I realized I didn't have an extensive vocabulary. I guess that was the consequence of not talking to people, to be more fluent in the language. It was hard for me to put my thoughts into words and write, which brought problems for me talking to others. There was this time when I was in History class, and I was reading something, and I wanted to know the meaning of a word. I asked the teacher what that word meant and how she knew Spanish. I think she thought I wanted to know the translation, which I didn't because I have a worse vocabulary in Spanish. Anyway, she translated the word, and I was still confused because I wanted the definition. It made me think that when I went to school in 5th grade, when I moved to the next school, almost all my classmates went to the same school, so I think they saw me as a kid who didn't speak English.

The poem "Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes, in which the author talks about a black student in a white college who has to write a paper about himself. I understood from this

that he was uncertain whether his skin color affected how people viewed his paper because he was the only black student there. The essay "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan talks about the social constraints that "broken English" can impose. Also, the video "Why I Keep Speaking Up Even When People Mock My Accent" by Safwat Saleem talks about his experience of having an accent, growing up with a stutter, and people judging and making fun of him. Based on my perspective, these three materials give the message of how society will judge you and make assumptions about you as a person just by the way you look, the way you speak, or even because you have an accent. This shows how society will stereotype you without knowing you just by the outside things.

I feel connected to these three materials because English is not my first language, and sometimes I feel that they think I don't know English because of my accent and because I have trouble expressing my thoughts. So, people would judge me or stereotype me because of these things. Speaking English and Spanish, I feel I'm two different people; I mostly use English to talk outside, like with my classmates, professors, and with my friends. But when I'm in my house, I speak Spanish with my family, which feels different because I speak my native language. However, now that I speak two languages, my words get messed up, and sometimes people judge me. So, I write in my journal, not worrying about what I say; I write down my feelings and thoughts, which has helped me a lot, mainly because I can be myself. It makes me feel free and has helped me express myself better with others.

Even though your language and literacy are part of who you are, I think that the way you speak doesn't represent your intellectual abilities because someone can speak "broken English." Still, it doesn't mean their opinions are not valuable, or if someone speaks standard English, it doesn't mean that they are better than those who don't speak standard English because there are different ways you can speak a language and the ways you speak it doesn't

make you more or less of a person. Also, people should have more empathy and respect for others who don't speak the language, have "broken English," or have an accent because it's hard to move to another country without knowing the language because it's hard to learn a new language.