

Unit 2 - The Variety of Languages

Lesson 2 - Your personal language history

Discuss

How many languages do you use?

Family background

Write the responses from the homework assignment on the board about family languages. See how many languages are represented by your class.

terms: *bilingual*, *trilingual*, *polyglot* (*lingua* = language or tongue in Latin; *glotta* = tongue in Greek)

Why are the words tongue and language so closely linked? Try to talk without using your tongue.

linguine was named for being the shape of a long, thin tongue

Dialects One language may have many different forms in the different regions in which it is spoken. The difference could be in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar.

Are there any dialects of English spoken in your family?

List English words that are from the Southern, New York, Midwest, or British dialects and the difference in prepositions/adverbs with idioms in different dialects.

e.g. *stand in line* vs. *stand on line*

fall down the stairs vs. *fall over the stairs*

slow up vs. *slow down*

put away the dishes vs. *put up the dishes*

go to the shore vs. *go down the shore*

Talk about some other languages that have many regional dialects, e.g. German, Chinese.

Peer languages Do you use words with your friends that your parents would not understand? Is slang a type of peer language that you would use with some groups of people but not with others. (There are some people around whom I am comfortable saying, "This is she," and other groups of friends I hang out with that I would only say, "It's me," to.)

Baby talk Does your family still use some words that originated with you when you were a baby. These would be words understood only by your family. My family calls all blankets "shoo-shoos" because that was my son's word for his blanket. Have students share their special family words.

For Next Class:

Students could prepare a dictionary of words or phrases in different dialects of English -or- a Personal Family Dictionary of special baby talk or family words

Activity

Have students read aloud a version of the Tower of Babel story from the Bible. Look at this as an historical document. Was there someone who was trying to make a theory about how languages were developing, someone who thought that there was an original language that was now developing into many?

Homework

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Terms

bilingual

trilingual

polyglot

Dialect

Vocabulary
lingua