

ELIT 106-Linguistics II – Semester Projects

These semester projects were done as part of the requirements for ELIT 106 - Linguistics II, a required course for students in the Department of English Language and Literature. The course itself is a continuation of the students' introduction to the field of linguistics, and focused this semester on the interaction between language varieties and social factors (e.g. social class, ethnicity, geographical background, gender, age, etc.). In the course, we discussed issues ranging from why people from different parts of a country or from various social classes speak differently, to what makes someone 'sound polite' (or not). In order to help students engage more deeply with these theoretical issues, they were asked to conduct hands-on linguistics research on critical issues evolving around language and society. The decision to introduce this assignment into the course was also taken in line with ASBÜ's pedagogical mission of incorporating project-based education and a research mentality into our curricula at all levels, starting in the first year of undergraduate study.

For their semester projects, students were allowed to work individually or in small groups, on any topic as long as it made the connection between linguistics and social factors. The projects had to be actual empirical research studies involving original data collection. In other words, the students had to explore their topics by gathering information through interviewing or surveying people, observing something, or analyzing texts/speeches/recordings. In order to help students who generally had not had any experience with research design or conduct, they were asked to first select an existing published study on a topic of interest to them, which they had to read and understand carefully so that they could use them as methodological models for their own studies. Over the course of the semester, they were then guided on conducting their own research—collecting and analyzing data and then writing up the results. To complete their projects students had to write a conclusion that described the main findings, speculated on what those findings meant, compared their findings with those of the original study, and reflected on new questions that their findings raised for them.

The projects highlighted here were chosen because they exemplify the wide range of topics selected and research methods implemented. I'm very proud of the work done by all the students in the class, particularly under the complex conditions we faced in Spring 2020.

Prof. Dr. Julie Aydınlı