**ePortfolio Assignment**

Samantha Lloyd

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**An Overview**:

When I initially began my ePortfolio project, I was certain that I wanted to write about topic 1 – “Because Words Matter” and topic 6 – “Varieties of English.” It turns out, these were the two more difficult pieces of writing for me. In “Because Words Matter,” I thought that it would be simple to explain any item to a child; however it was more difficult than I thought. It was a struggle for me to essentially get inside the head of a 3 year old and know what words needed to be said. As for “Varieties of English,” I found it rather difficult to actually write about the different versions. I knew that all three translations meant the same thing, but I do believe it would be difficult to explain the meanings to someone who wasn’t familiar with the dialects or technology used.

In the initial process of selecting my topics, beyond 1 and 6, I had no clue which other topics I wanted to select. Topic 2 – “Language Awareness” was a simple assignment, but I knew I would have to think deeply. Once I began writing, I really enjoyed this topic. For me, it was fun to envision myself as an insect and to take a look at the world around me, metaphorically. My last topic I chose (topic 3 – Ruining a Poem) turned out to be my favorite! I had so much fun writing a poem with a country twang! I did think that this topic would be challenging, but it flowed almost naturally.

Each topic I chose led me to think about writing and language in a different way. In topic 1, it was very important to be able to write to my audience. I had to be extremely conscious of both the language and vocabulary I used. In topic 2, it was a unique experience to use language to describe myself in a unique situation. Topic 3 was a great chance to use poetry to explain the use and purpose of a specific drink, and topic 4 allowed the opportunity to explore language and how different people may perceive the same statement in a different way. I thoroughly enjoyed this ePortfolio assignment. It has given me the chance to explore several areas of writing that I wouldn’t typically explore on my own.

**Section 1 – Because the Form of Words Matter**

Grocery Store Item: Germ-X

A:

Here Katie, since all your friends at daycare have been sneezing this week, lets by this bottle of Germ-X! Germ-X is made to get rid of all the nasty, yucky germs that get on our hands and make us sick. It kills those bad germs when you squirt it in your hands and rub them together really, really fast, then all the germs go bye-bye and you won’t be a sick little girl who sneezes all the time!

B:

Oh little bottle of Germ-X,

Perched in the check-out line.

You make me want to buy you,

Your cleanliness divine.

The need to fight infections

And germs that make me ill

Make me want to take you home,

And healthy I will feel.

C:

The key difference in the prose explanation and the poetry explanation of Germ-X is the language that is used. Among these two differences also lies the difference in the audience. For the prose version, the description is geared toward a young child. While a person wouldn’t typically use poetry to explain or define an object to a small child, poetry can be used to convey a message with a lyrical intonation.

In my simple poetry version of Germ-X, I used an ABCB rhyming pattern. With this pattern, emphasis is placed on the words line, divine and ill, feel. If a person was truly trying to describe what Germ-X is and what it is used for, those four words wouldn’t be the best terms for explanation.

When considering which version actually *says* more, I believe that it truly depends on the information the reader is seeking. If the reader is looking for a simple definition (in the case of the small child), the prose has the ability to say more. However, if the reader is looking for a deeper meaning, then the poetry version would say more. Additionally, the poetry version has an “unsaid” message that it relays as well, by expressing the shoppers deep love of the germ fighting substance found in the check out aisle.

If considering the initial audience of a small child, then the prose description of Germ-X is the most effective piece. The prose is written in simple, easy to understand language and uses words that are understandable for most small children. It also relays the information needed to grasp an understanding of what Germ-X can be used for.

The most interesting piece would have to be the poem. I personally like poetry and the hidden and obvious messages that can be relayed within a poem. I also believe that poems have a great way of conveying emotions. In this particular poem, it is obvious that the writer loves Germ-X and finds it useful or even a necessity in life.

**Section 2 – Language Awareness**

If language is a web, are you a spider or a fly?

If language is a web, then I am most definitely the fly. Language is not my most comfortable content area; therefore I couldn’t be the spider-who is at home, at ease, and dominates the web. I don’t think it is a bad thing to be the fly though. You see, the fly has an intense interest in the web. She wants to know more about it and how to conquer the web without getting sucked in and letting the web ultimately be the death of her. This fly is a learner and she desperately wants to be able to look at the immense beauty and intricacy of the web, without becoming its victim.

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**Section 3 – Ruining a Poem**

Explaining Coffee to an Alien.

A:

That smell that yer a smellin’

So thick an stout

Is a drink that when you swig it,

It’ll make ya wanna shout!

It’s as hot a buttered biscuits

Stronger than the old oak tree

Git ya up and git ya movin

And we call it coffee!

B:

The smell that you smell,

So thick and stout.

It is a drink that when you take a sip of it,

It will make you want to raise your voice.

It is as hot as a dinner roll with butter (or margarine),

It is stronger than an old oak tree.

It will get you up and get you moving,

And we call it coffee!

C:

Not to toot my own horn, but I love the Appalachian version of this poem. I believe that it conveys a great deal of emotion, as opposed to the Standard English version! It flows better and for me, makes more sense. Of course, I speak with an Appalachian dialect and linguistic pattern; therefore it would make more sense to me.

All around, I believe that the poem written with the Appalachian dialect is the most effective piece. Given the fact that the “alien” comprehends Appalachian slang and the traditions of the Appalachian region, I believe that he or she would easily understand what this poem was describing and suggesting regarding coffee.

I do believe that the most interesting piece would have to be the Standard English version. Not because it is well written or because it is grammatically correct, but because it is a far fetch from what is expected. In the Standard English version, you lose the effect that is added by the Appalachian slang/dialect and it becomes rather dull, which wouldn’t typically be expected. I find it interesting because, in most cases, removing the errors that are prevalent due to a dialect would make a piece better, but in this case the opposite occurs. By removing the dialect it becomes bland and doesn’t make as much sense to me.

**Section 4 – Varieties of English**

Thou shalt not commit adultery’

1. Southern Hillbilly: Don’t be a messin around with any other fellers or gals - other than tha one ya done got.
2. Tweet: “@AllMarriedCouples: u best be faithful to the hubs or the wifey!!!” << IKR! :-)

Though the three versions are very different translations, I don’t believe that the actual meaning changes at all. In the original old English version, the words “thou” and “shalt” are basically versions of “you” and “should”, so essentially, the original version says: You should not commit adultery (adultery is considered sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her spouse.). The southern hillbilly version basically translates the same way. “Don’t be a messin around with any other fellers or gals – other than tha one ya done got.” If ya gotcha a feller or a gal, don’t be messing around with one that may not be yours! Lastly, thanks to modern technology, Twitter has opened up a whole new line of communications. The tweet “@AllMarriedCouples: u best be faithful to the hubs or the wifey!!!” (With a response of IKR! :-) meaning I know, right!) is a common way to say the same thing. If you’re married, be faithful to your spouse!

The meanings of each translation may change slightly according to the audience that is reading or hearing these statements. Someone who is not familiar with Old English language may not fully understand what message this statement is attempting to convey. Additionally, the same can be said for someone who is not familiar with southern dialects or technological abbreviations. When dealing with different audiences, it is important to use a translation that best suits their own individual needs.

Among the many socio-linguistic contexts these versions include: Thou and shalt, messin around, fellers, gals, done got, the tweet in general and the abbreviation IKR.