Iversity In The English Language Essay, Research Paper

Diversity in the English Language

Any new coming freshman to West Virginia University is certain to hear a larger variety of accents and dialect in the English language than they have ever before encountered. West Virginia University has a diverse student body, which includes students from all fifty states and over one hundred different nations. West Virginia University?s webpage statistics show that approximately twenty-nine percent of the students are non-residents of West Virginia, and five percent of the students are from other countries. What makes West Virginia University?s speech so unique in character is the overwhelming variety in the English language to which its students contribute.

As students from different areas of the country communicate with one another for the first time, they begin to notice a significant amount of variation between their dialects. For instance, many people disagree about the proper term for carbonated beverages. A majority of students from states such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia believe ?pop? is the only correct expression, while students from New Jersey or New York claim it to be nothing else but a ?soda.? Words like ?grinder,? as they are dubbed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are referred to as ?hoagies? in Pittsburgh and ?subs? in Ohio. While the majority of the country adds the finishing touch of ?sprinkles? to their ice cream, people from Pittsburgh top it off with ?jimmies.? Pittsburgh natives have many strange words and phrases in their dialect. For example, while shopping in an office supply store, instead of searching for ?rubberbands,? which appears on the label, Pittsburghers are on a mission to come across ?gumbands.? Another odd phrase used throughout the surrounding Pittsburgh area is ?red up.? Anyone living outside of the vicinity will almost definitely question the expression. The term ?red up,? is used in place of ?tidying up.? A Pittsburgh student, Angela Peconi, stated ?when my mother wants me to clean up my room without doing a major cleaning job, she simply asks me to ?red up? my room.? Other students whom resided in Pittsburgh argue while washing their hands, the water comes out of the ?spicket,? opposed to a ?faucet,? which is used elsewhere. While grocery shopping in the city of Pittsburgh, your groceries are put into a ?buggy,? but in all other parts of the country a ?shopping cart? is pushed around the store. In some backyards, there are bushes that have little prickly thorns sticking out of them. Do these bushes actually have a name? In Pittsburgh they do and are termed ?jagger-bushes!? Most students that were asked that question replied there was no such name for the bush, and an Ohio student believed they were dubbed ?thorn-bushes.? Besides the citizens of Pittsburgh having an eccentric dialect, students from Boston also have out of the ordinary terminology. While walking down the hall to class, a Bostonian, freshman student, Pam, felt dreadfully dehydrated. She was in need of water and stopped at the ?bubbler? to get a drink. This was especially comical to her friends, who usually stop to get a drink at the ?water fountain.? A New York native was disappointed while searching for ?chicken wings? on the menu at the Texas Roadhouse because they did not carry them. Later on, she figured out in states outside of New York they are referred to as ?buffalo wings.? Even though students at West Virginia University speak the same English language, they all bring their unique dialects from their hometowns.

Besides dialect, many students at West Virginia University have strong accents, which make it easy to distinguish their different origins. For example, students coming from the Boston neighborhood, pronounce their homeland, Bahston. Most other areas of the country would pronounce the city as it is spelled. Pittsburgh natives also have a slight accent on a few words such as ?Carnegie? and ?downtown.? While pronouncing ?Carnegie,? Pittsburghers stress the middle syllable, thus saying Carnegie. Almost everyone outside of this section of Pennsylvania would enunciate the last syllable. The word now changes from Carnegie to Carnegee. Also, the word ?downtown? to most people is pronounced downtown ? other than in Pittsburgh. There, they declare the word is dahntahn. ?South? also is pronounced with a similar accent to ?downtown,? which sounds like sahth. Besides Pittsburgh and Boston accents, New York and New Jersey citizens also have their own twang. They pronounce their ?O?s? as ?aw.? For example, ?coffee? sounds like cawfee when said by a New York or New Jersey native. Also, they pronounce words such as ?talk,? tawk, and ?dog,? dawg. Southerners also carry potent accents. They tend to speak slower than people do from the North, and have a long ?drawl.? Jillian, a West Virginian with a strong southern accent, once asked ?Y?all waant to go aut (out) tonight?? Many other words sound very drawn out such as cooo, which means, ?cool,? and tawwwwk, or ?talk.? Each region of the country has its own accent which attributes to the variance in the English language brought to WVU by its students.

Because students from across the globe bring their different accents, dialects, and sayings to West Virginia University, linguistics borrowing is bound to occur. For example, a freshman student from Maryland had never heard the term ?flustered? before arriving at West Virginia University. Now, she uses the expression all of the time, borrowing it from her roommate. Another word Christina, the student from Maryland, borrows are the terms ?swest? and ?vetter.? Her roommate is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and in her high school they called sweater vests for guys, ?swests,? and sweater vests for girls, ?vetters.? Angela, from Pittsburgh, now has a slight Michigan accent because of her roommate. She also rejected the term ?buggy? from her vocabulary and adopted the word ?shopping cart.? West Virginia University has a very diverse student body, which causes the students to share some of their linguistic traits with others.

There are many differences between the students at West Virginia University and the way they speak the English language, which makes this campus very special. Because there is a variety in speech, students are able to experience situations that they would not encounter in their hometown. They are now able to learn from one another, and share their native languages. In addition, students now have skills to recognize another student from another area of the country by the way they speak. West Virginia University provides many great experiences and can be distinguished from other universities because of the diversity of students, which attend, and their different versions of the English language brought with them.