




# LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

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# INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS **IDENTITY**?
  2. HOW WE **PRESENT** OUR IDENTITIES TO THE WORLD
  3. **TYPES** OF IDENTITIES
  4. IDENTITY **FORMATION**
  5. HOW **LANGUAGE** AND IDENTITY INTERSECT
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# 1. WHAT IS IDENTITY?

- WHAT WE CHOOSE TO **PORTRAY** TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES.
  - **ASPECTS OF IDENTITY:**
    - AGE
    - GENDER
    - SOCIAL CLASS
    - PROFESSION
    - LEVEL OF EDUCATION
    - RELIGION
    - GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION
    - VALUES AND BELIEFS
- 




# 1A. WHAT IS IDENTITY?

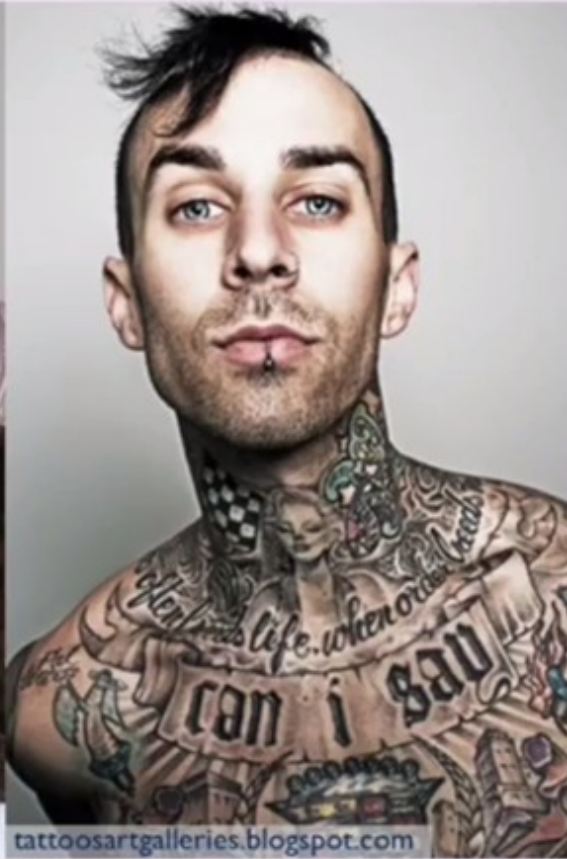
- WE CAN CHOOSE TO PORTRAY DIFFERENT IDENTITIES DEPENDING ON THE GROUP WE ARE WITH = “**IDENTITY SWITCHING**”
  - THE WHOLE SUM OF CHARACTERISTICS GIVEN BY PLACE, GENDER, AGE, RACE, HISTORY, NATIONALITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION, ETHNICITY AND, ABOVE ALL, THE BLANKS BETWEEN ALL THESE, ALLOWING PEOPLE TO BE PART OF ONE AND ANOTHER CULTURE AT THE SAME TIME, ALL DEPENDING ON CONTEXT OR SOMETIMES EVEN ON FREE CHOICE. (MEYER)
  - IDENTITY IS **FLUID** DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION
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## 2. HOW WE PRESENT OUR IDENTITIES TO THE WORLD

- THE WAY WE **DRESS** (CLOTHES, HAIR, ACCESSORIES, TATTOOS, PIERCINGS)
  - HOW WE **BEHAVE**
  - THE **MUSIC** WE LISTEN TO
  - THE **MOVIES** WE WATCH
  - THE **SPORTS** WE PLAY OR WATCH
  - THE **BOOKS** WE READ
  - OUR **HOBBIES**
  - OUR **HOUSES** AND **CARS**
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# How We Present Our Identities to the World



# How We Present Our Identities to the World





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[kidspot.co.nz](http://kidspot.co.nz)




[hercampus.com](http://hercampus.com)



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### 3. TYPES OF IDENTITIES

- **PSYCHOLOGICAL IDENTITIES:** HOW WE PERCEIVE OURSELVES, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.
  - **INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES:** WHO WE THINK WE ARE AT OUR CORE.
  - **SOCIAL IDENTITIES:** HOW WE PORTRAY OURSELVES IN A SOCIAL SITUATION.
  - **COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES:** GROUPS THAT WE FEEL WE BELONG TO.
  - **CULTURAL IDENTITIES:** CULTURAL GROUPS THAT WE FEEL WE BELONG TO.
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## 3A. TYPES OF IDENTITIES: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES


- PREVIOUS RESEARCH SAID: EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS A **SINGLE, STATIC** IDENTITY.
- CURRENT RESEARCH SAYS: EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS **MULTIPLE IDENTITIES** AND CHOOSES WHICH ONE TO USE DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT







## 3B. TYPES OF IDENTITIES: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

- OVER TIME, WE **ADD** IDENTITIES TO OUR COLLECTIVE GROUP OF IDENTITIES
  - WE TAP INTO DIFFERENT IDENTITIES DEPENDING ON THE **SITUATIONS** THAT WE'RE IN
  - WE HAVE IDENTITIES WITHIN US THAT ARE **CONTRADICTORY**
  - **NARRATIVE OF SELF**: A STORY THAT WE TELL OURSELVES, INTERNALLY THAT HELPS CONNECT AND HOLD OUR MULTIPLE IDENTITIES TOGETHER.
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## 3C. TYPES OF IDENTITIES: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

- **PRIMARY IDENTITY:** THE SET OF VALUES, BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES THAT WE FEEL DEFINES US AS AN INDIVIDUAL, THIS IDENTITY IN FACT DOESN'T CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY OVER TIME.
- **SITUATIONAL IDENTITIES:** IDENTITIES THAT WE USE DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT THAT WE'RE IN

### **FACTORS:**


COVERT AND OVERT PRESTIGE  
INGROUP AND OUTGROUP  
SAVING FACE








## 4. IDENTITY FORMATION

- RESEARCHERS USED TO BELIEVE: ONCE WE REACHED ADULTHOOD, OUR IDENTITY WAS **SET IN STONE**
  - RESEARCHERS NOW BELIEVE: IDENTITY IS A **DYNAMIC** ENTITY THAT **CHANGES** WITH NEW LIFE EXPERIENCES
  - IDENTITY FORMATION IS AN **ONGOING, LIFELONG** PROCESS
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## 4A. IDENTITY FORMATION: INDIVIDUAL CONTROL OVER IDENTITY

- **AGENCY:** THE DEGREE OF CONTROL THAT WE HAVE OVER HOW WE PRESENT OUR IDENTITIES TO THE WORLD
  - **AGENTIVE:** SOMETHING WE DO HAVE CONTROL OVER
  - **NON-AGENTIVE:** SOMETHING WE DON'T HAVE CONTROL OVER
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## 4B. IDENTITY FORMATION: INDIVIDUAL CONTROL OVER IDENTITY

- **SYMBOLIC CAPITAL:** THE PRESTIGE THAT INDIVIDUALS GET BASED ON HOW THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES
  - **SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE:** THE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS THAT INDIVIDUALS FACE BASED ON HOW THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES
  - EITHER MAY RESULT FROM **STRATEGIC** CHOICES OR **NON-AGENTIVE** MEANS
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## 4C. IDENTITY FORMATION: CULTURAL IDENTITY

- BASED UPON THE **CULTURAL GROUP** TO WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL BELONGS
  - MEMBERS OF THE GROUP **SHARE:**
    - A COMMON LANGUAGE
    - A COMMON SET OF VALUES/BELIEFS
  - MEMBERS OF THE GROUPS **MIGHT SHARE:**
    - A COMMON ETHNIC BACKGROUND
    - A COMMON GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN
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## 4D. IDENTITY FORMATION: MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES

- **ONE** CULTURAL GROUP = **ONE** CULTURAL IDENTITY
  - **MULTIPLE** CULTURAL GROUPS = **MULTIPLE** CULTURAL IDENTITIES
  - MORE PEOPLE ARE NOW **MOVING** FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER
  - MORE PEOPLE ARE **DEVELOPING** MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES
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## 4E. IDENTITY FORMATION: MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES

- OLD PERSPECTIVE: IF YOU HAD TWO CULTURAL IDENTITIES, YOU WERE “**TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS**”
  - NEW PERSPECTIVE: WE CAN **FLIP BACK AND FORTH** FROM ONE CULTURAL IDENTITY TO ANOTHER BASED ON OUR CULTURAL CONTEXT
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## 4F. IDENTITY FORMATION: MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES


- DON'T **ASSUME** THAT YOUR FIRST CULTURAL IDENTITY IS GOING TO BE YOUR PRIMARY CULTURAL IDENTITY
  - WHEN YOU **SHIFT** BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURAL IDENTITIES, YOU'RE ALSO SHIFTING IN TERMS OF **POWER** AND **PRESTIGE**
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## 5. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT

- LANGUAGE HELPS US **EXTERNALLY PROJECT** OUR IDENTITIES
  - LANGUAGE HELPS US **INTERNALLY SHAPE** OUR IDENTITIES
  - LANGUAGE USED TO **TALK ABOUT** IDENTITY
  - LANGUAGE USED TO **PROJECT** IDENTITY
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# 5A. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO TALK ABOUT IDENTITY


- **GROUP LABELLING:**

**INGROUP** (I, WE) VS. **OUTGROUP** (YOU, THEM)


THE TERMS USED TO LABEL VARIOUS GROUPS MAY CARRY **POSITIVE** OR  
**NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS**


**POLITICS AND POWER** – NATIVES: INDIAN, NATIVE PEOPLES, FIRST NATIONS,  
INDIGENOUS, ABORIGINAL





# 5B. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO TALK ABOUT IDENTITY

- **NAMING:** HOW WE CHOOSE TO IDENTIFY OUR CHILDREN, OURSELVES, OUR FAMILY AND OUR FRIENDS
    - GIVEN NAME, FAMILY NAME
    - FAMILY NAME, GIVEN NAME
    - SINGLE NAME
    - MANY NAMES TO CAPTURE THE ENTIRE FAMILY HISTORY
    - NAMING CHILDREN AFTER SOMEONE
    - NICKNAMES
    - PATRONOMICS: “THE SON OF...”, “THE DAUGHTER OF...”
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# 5C. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO TALK ABOUT IDENTITY

- **MAKING INTRODUCTIONS**

1. **SYMMETRICAL INTRODUCTION (EQUAL IN POWER):**

“BOB, THIS IS ALICE. ALICE, THIS IS BOB.”

2. **ASYMMETRICAL INTRODUCTION (POWER DIFFERENTIAL):**

“BOB, THIS IS DR. JONES. DR. JONES, THIS IS BOB.”


YOU CAN SIGNAL THE **POWER RELATIONSHIP** BETWEEN YOURSELF AND OTHER PEOPLE.

**FIRST NAMES:** EQUAL IN POWER

**TITLES AND LAST NAMES:** PUTS OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELF

**MIX OF BOTH:** ASYMMETRICAL POWER RELATIONSHIP





# 5D. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO TALK ABOUT IDENTITY

- **GRAMMATICAL FORMS**

**VOCATIVE FORMS:** USED TO CALL OUT TO SOMEONE:

**NO POWER DISTANCE** – FIRST NAME: “HEY BOB!”

**HIGH POWER DISTANCE** – LAST NAMES “MR. JONES!”



**LOW POWER DISTANCE** – (CHILD) “HEY KID!” “HEY YOU!”

**PRONOUNS:**

USE PRONOUNS TO SIGNAL **SOCIAL DISTANCE**

USE PRONOUNS TO INDICATE **GROUP MEMBERSHIP**







# 5E. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO PROJECT IDENTITY


- **STYLE AND STYLE SHIFTING**  
INFORMAL/CASUAL LANGUAGE  
FORMAL LANGUAGE  
SLANG  
LONG VS. SHORT WORDS

**STYLE SHIFTING:** CHOOSING TO SPEAK FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY BASED ON HOW YOU WANT TO BE PERCEIVED IN A PARTICULAR CONTEXT

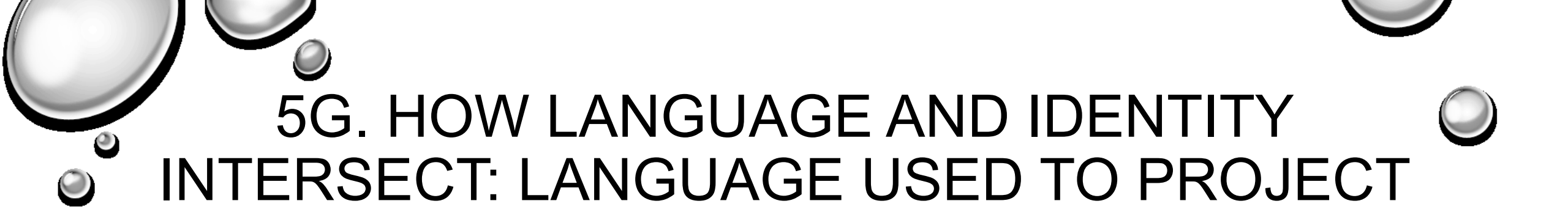




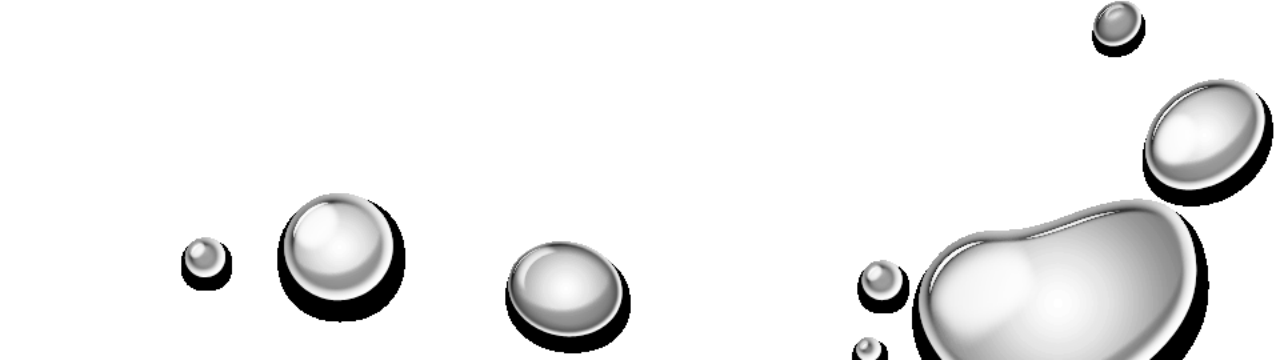
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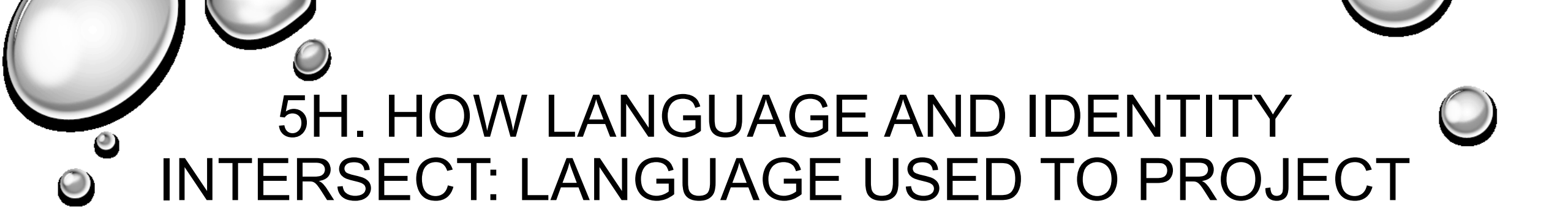
- **CONVERGENCE:** ATTUNING YOUR STYLE OF LANGUAGE USE TO A GROUP IN ORDER TO FIT IN
  - **LINGUISTIC MAINTENANCE:** MAINTAINING YOUR LANGUAGE STYLE IN ORDER TO REINFORCE LACK OF MEMBERSHIP IN A GROUP
  - **LINGUISTIC DIVERGENCE:** EXAGGERATING YOUR LANGUAGE STYLE IN ORDER TO STRONGLY REINFORCE LACK OF MEMBERSHIP IN A GROUP
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# 5G. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO PROJECT IDENTITY

- **DIALECT:** A VERSION OF A STANDARD LANGUAGE
  - **IDIOLECT:** YOUR OWN UNIQUE USE OF LANGUAGE THAT IS DEVELOPED OVER TIME
  - **DIALECT LEVELLING:** LEARNING THE STANDARD LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO FIT IN WITH A GROUP THAT USES THAT STANDARD LANGUAGE
  - **ACCENT REDUCTION:** LEARNING HOW TO USE A SPECIFIC LANGUAGE WITH NATIVE PRONUNCIATION
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# 5H. HOW LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY INTERSECT: LANGUAGE USED TO PROJECT IDENTITY

- **MULTIPLE LANGUAGE IDENTITIES:**

SPANISH LANGUAGE IDENTITY VS. ENGLISH LANGUAGE IDENTITY

DIALECT LANGUAGE IDENTITY VS. STANDARD LANGUAGE IDENTITY

- **LANGUAGE LOSS AND IDENTITY:**

WHEN WE LOSE A LANGUAGE, YOU LOSE THE IDENTITY THAT GOES WITH THAT LANGUAGE





# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- **1. WHICH IDENTITIES DO YOU HAVE?**

WHICH CULTURAL IDENTITIES?

WHICH LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES?

- **2. ANALYZE YOUR LANGUAGE USE.**

HOW DO YOU TALK ABOUT IDENTITY?

HOW DO YOU USE LANGUAGE TO PROJECT YOUR IDENTITY?

