

## Personal Reflective Statement

I began the program with Dr. Janet Bing's ENGL 671 Phonology. She encouraged me to stay in the class when I was unsure if it was too much for me. I had taken an undergraduate linguistics course, but it had been almost a decade. Luckily, I had been transcribing with IPA since high school, for both vocal performance and foreign language courses. It was still very difficult for me to get accustomed to the work of graduate school. I had to read the material twice before class, and I would read it again after to fully understand it. I had not read many scholarly articles in my undergraduate career, as most of my higher-level courses were not taught in English. The courses I had taken overseas also emphasized my own analysis rather than referring to outside sources. I had never even heard of APA, when I wrote my paper for this class. I didn't know there were other ways to do citations, and now I'm able to assist students with any and every citation style, from MLA, Chicago, and APA to IEEE and AMA.

My research for the paper in this class was interesting, but I had tried to frame my argument as more of a historical linguistics paper, which Dr. Bing pointed out to me. The argument of dialects predating modern Italian was not very strong for the particular dialect I had chosen based on the phonological data. Had I been more experienced, I would have chosen Sardo instead of Maddalenino or Gallurese to look at, although Sardo has already gained status as a separate language. Or I may have gone a completely different route and explored syntactic gemination in Italian.

The next research I did for a paper in Dr. Joanne Scheibman's *ENGL 672 Syntax* was better, but also not the best topic. I wrote on hypercorrection and the subjunctive in

English with *if* and *whether* phrases. Conducting this research did succeed in convincing me that the unrealistic use of the subjunctive is unnecessary in the English language. We accomplish this through adding extra information to our phrases. While neither of these papers were wonderful, they gave me invaluable experience in how to go about writing research. Though both aspects of linguistics are exciting, I might enjoy studying syntax a little bit more than phonology. The semester before *Syntax*, I took *General Linguistics* with Dr. Scheibman. I had already taken an introductory course, but it had been long enough since then that a refresher course was a good idea.

The very smallest fieldwork I did was in *General Linguistics*, where we just needed to listen to a speaker saying words to practice some phonology. At that time, it was terrifying asking someone to be my subject. I ended up working with a coworker from Ethiopia, who is also the student for my teaching project in *ENGL 670 Methods & Materials in TESOL*. She was lovely and very willing to assist me in projects. Other fieldwork I conducted was a conversation recording for Dr. Scheibman's *ENGL 673 Discourse Analysis* and an ethnographic interview for [Tidewater Voices](#) for Dr. Anderson's *ENGL 550 American English*. For both of these, my mother was the participant. She made me do a second recording for the Tidewater Voices assignment, because she didn't think she sounded good in the first one. I find the recording part rather nerve-wracking, but I absolutely love the transcription part! I got a chance to use DuBois et al. for *Discourse Analysis* and MICASE in *ENGL 550 & 670*.

Learning about discourse analysis was at first rather harrowing for me. I usually avoided uncomfortable topics and some classes were painful, such as when we looked at

a campus hearing of a sexual assault case. Through this program, first Dr. Scheibman's *Discourse Analysis* and then Dr. Anderson's *American English*, Dr. Defibaugh's *ENGL 705 Language and Rhetoric Across Cultures*, and Dr. DePew's *ENGL 664 Teaching Writing Composition*, I learned to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. In all of these classes, I learned about how language can be used in educational settings to oppress anyone who does not conform. I experienced this with some of the students I worked with in the Writing Center.

While I was aware of so much of this, studying it more in depth gave me the language to actually be able to discuss it. This was also the case with my research that I started in *Discourse Analysis* and continued in *Discourse and Rhetoric Across Cultures*, that I presented at the International Pragmatics conference over the summer. I can see glimmers of making connections to identity in my original paper, but I was not yet aware of scholarly work on identity that we explored in ENGL 705. In FOUN 611, I was able to get a good overview of research practices and statistics for research, though I would like to get more experience with it. In my research throughout the program, I was able to gain experience with using COCA, AntConc and a very small amount with Praat. I also learned about tools such as the VocabProfiler and the best kinds of dictionaries for language learners.

Dr. Zareva's ENGL 679 and 670 were invaluable in giving me background knowledge on the evolution of language acquisition and language teaching. Remembering dates and names has never been my strong suit, but looking at the process of advancements help us to understand the thinking behind our teaching

practices. In all of my pedagogy courses, the rationale behind decisions were always required. I was able to reflect on these reasons during my practicum at the ELC. My mentor really showed me ways to make learning more fun and engaging which I am also not that great at doing, but I am learning.

My professional goals are still teaching-related, but they have shifted somewhat. I am not sure of what I would want to focus on for doctoral study, though the possibility of pursuing a PhD is not yet completely ruled out. I hope to gain a little more experience in TESOL this spring semester at TCC and continue applying for director positions at Writing, Learning, and Multiliteracy Centers. In most of these positions, I would be able to teach at least one course a semester, but I would be involved in the administrative processes that interest me as well. I would also be able to conduct composition and SLA research.