Final Project Rough Draft

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**Intro**

For our group project we decided to gauge the type of response (formal or informal) to a gracious act such as holding the door open for someone then compare those responses to the geographical location they claimed to be from.. Furthermore, we wanted to conduct this experiment in two locations based on the perceived socio-economic status of its clientele. First, we had to decide what would be considered “formal” and “informal” responses. Taking a prescriptivist (text 8) stance, the group agreed on the following “rules”. “Formal” would include the following: “Thank you” and “Thanks, sir/ ma’am” based on address forms (text 233, Glossary) “Informal” would be a simple “Thanks” or any common slang, i.e “Thanks, bruh’.” Due to being located in the south, we decided to include standard language, including the word “appreciate” in our definitions of formal and informal. For that purpose, “Appreciate it, sir/ma’am” or “Appreciate it, thanks.” would be considered formal. You’ll notice that while “thanks” is considered informal in our experiment, “Appreciate it, thanks” is counted as formal. This irregularity is caused by the attempt to be extra polite in the repetitive use of words showing gratitude for the gesture. Minimal (text 119) responses such as a head nod, a smile, or “hmm” were considered as nonlinguistic responses and would be counted as if no response had been given.

**Research Description**

So, with our project, in a way, we were trying to find some evidence to the type of linguistic landscape that makes up Uptown Columbus. We were trying to see the politeness and see if people give any sort of response when the door is opened for them. Our research results will show the type of culture of the people of downtown. But not everyone is from Columbus who is downtown. So we had to find out where these people are from and see if there is any difference between people from Columbus or from other places.

**Methodology**

Our methodology was quite simple. We would take turns opening the door for those entering the coffeeshop, wait for a response, and quickly follow up with our one line script, “Excuse me sir, ma’am, but where are you from?” We understood that though some people would be coming in to sit down, the norm is for people to get in, get their coffee, then be on their way. We felt by keeping it to this short amount of time, people would not become suspicious of our intent nor feel as though we were intruding upon their day. We also took in further considerations as to how to get the best sampling of the populace as we could.

On Thursdays and Fridays, Fort Benning holds “family days” and graduations. This means we would have more visitors from out of town thereby getting a greater variation in responses to our gesture. It was agreed upon that we would use two locations, Iron Bank Coffee and Fountain City Coffee as these two locations draw their clientele from various socio-economic and age demographics. Other considerations such as appropriate times to conduct our field work factored into our gathered data. For the purpose of safety, we visited these locations only during morning or afternoon hours.

**Findings**

In our first hour of research, we had 37 people come through the door. 31 people gave us a response and 6 people gave us no response. Of those 31 responses we received, 17 responses were deemed informal and 14 people gave us formal responses. 12 of the people we had come through the door were from GA and the other 25 people were from out of state. There was one formal response from a person from GA and the other responses were from people from out of state. All of the people who did not respond were considered from either GA or AL.

**Conclusion**

Overall, it was much more likely to come across people who would be polite to those holding open a door for them by thanking the door holder(s) as they pass through. Also, considering the location of Columbus, chances were high of finding a mix of people residential to Georgia and Alabama, although it was unexpected that more people entering the restaurants we visited would be from outside of GA. Based on the responses we were given, there are significantly more whom would use informal language when exhibiting this form of politeness whether they are from inside or outside of Georgia. The strong preference for using informal yet polite forms of gratitude may have to do with where the residents came from, but it could also be due to the evolution of residents’ language usage from the time when a formal “thank you” was preferred.

**Works Cited**

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