

“My English” – by Julia Alvarez

Directions: We read Alvarez’s autobiographical narrative about how she embraced the languages she came to know: English and Spanish, but she called them by another name other than Spanglish. She went into detail about how she spoke the languages, and what that all meant to her growing up, and what that all means now as an adult. We discussed this in class. Now, you will be doing the same. You will also come up with a name for the language you speak, and you will share with the whole class what that language means to you.



Steps that will help you complete this objective:

[Record all findings in the graphic organizers provided for you]

1. **Record-Keeping** : Sit for at least one-hour recording phrases that come out of your family’s mouth. Oftentimes we naturally speak in one language and another without much thought; in other words, we naturally *code-switch* according to our environment. This means that I want you to truly think about the words and phrases you use every day with family, and with friends.
*NOTE: You can break up this hour however you’d like; it can be in one sitting, or over the course of timed intervals i.e. 15 minutes, 15 minutes, 15 minutes, 15 minutes = 1 hour.
2. **Gathering Additional Information**: You will need to provide a description of how you and your family members speak at home, and how you speak with your closest friends. This includes verbal and non-verbal cues and mannersims.

You must also interview at least one family member about your roots- where you came from, how you got here, etc. Write down exactly how they answer the questions! Figure out how the history of your being and your language actually came to be. This should help you figure out how to describe your language. In fact, use the checklist below to help you form shape of the structure of your language a little better. Don’t be afraid to answer the same questions for your family members.

Student Checklist (Do I, or Don’t I?): [Circle or Highlight One]

I Do I Don’t	Stress certain letters or sounds? <u>Example: Tennessee</u> [stress at Ten or see?]
I Do I Don’t	Replace certain letters/sounds with others <u>Example: Erbody</u> for everybody
I Do I Don’t	Use clipped words <u>Example: copter</u> for helicopter, <u>fridge</u> for refrigerator
I Do I Don’t	Use Elongated words/Phrases <u>Example: cellular device, parental units</u>
I Do I Don’t	*Use slang= this varies. You describe how you use slang.
I Do I Don’t	Use double subjects <u>Example: Fish, Sardines</u> are delicious. [Wordy]
I Do I Don’t	Leave the ‘s’ off third person singular present tense verbs <u>Examples: He argue that ... instead he argues that...</u> <u>She wonder when... instead of she wonders when...</u>
I Do I Don’t	Use an accent when I speak
I Do I Don’t	Use of your hands, eyes, or other “body language”
I Do I Don’t	Use a special tone of voice in special situations
I Do I Don’t	‘Verbally’ speak

3. **Prepare to Present:** You will do an informal presentation to your peers about your home language, and really who you are. Show pride in this. Be prepared for it. You can choose your genre to get this message across, and you will need to provide a visual representation during your presentation.

Example Genres to choose from: Speech, Powerpoint Presentation, Video, Recording, Poem, Song, Rap, Monologue, Short Narrative, Memoir. Any others, talk to me for approval.

All written works cannot be longer than two pages, and recordings/videos cannot be longer than three minutes.

**In all cases, you will need to provide a hard copy of what will be said when it comes time to present. Even if it is a video, you will need to provide commentary; if it is a speech you will need to provide a transcript; everything done must have a hard copy to be submitted on presentation day, and you will need to actually 'present'.*

4. **Check the Criteria :**

Check the rubric. See what all needs to be handed in and when for presentation day.

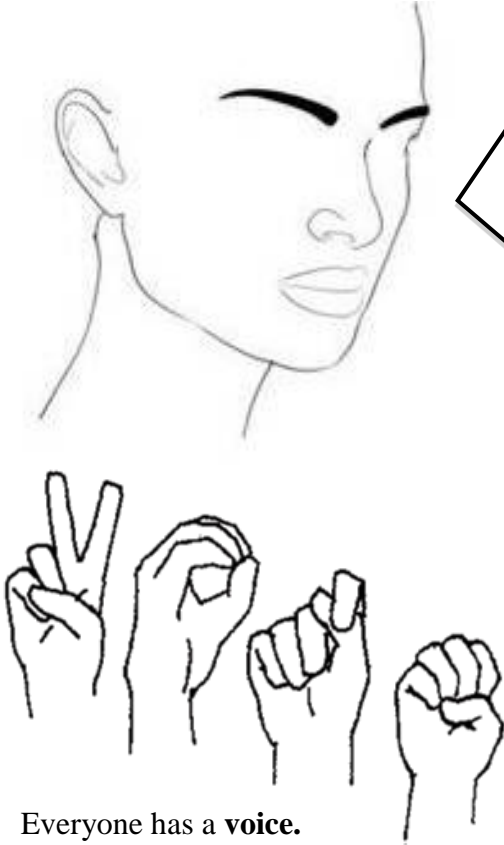
Attached is a model for you to look at and keep in mind when doing your own research and sharing. After you have viewed the model, or other models in class, and after we have discussed them, get started on yours!

Remember, we are all not the same; take pride in that fact.



Teacher Model: Record-Keeping

Directions: Record what you hear, see, and recognize within the hour. Time-stamp it too.



Everyone has a **voice**.

Phrases/Words Spoken & When:

5 a.m. : “Jammy Cai’na- yun’g Pancakes diba”
[Jamaica come eat now. The pancakes are ready]

Afternoon- “Cai’na?” [Have you eaten yet?]

Late Afternoon around 2p.m. : “Hoy! You gather your clothes so I can wash now.”

Late Afternoon around 3 p.m. : “Take out the Basura.”
[Take out the trash]

Late Afternoon around 5 p.m. : She is talking to her sister – My aunt. “Oo Oo... mabuteh... ..” and other words I can’t make out. [Uh-huh...of course...]

Night- bedtime – “Mahal Kita Jammy”
[I love you Jamaica]

Common Body Language & Gestures

- My mom likes to pick things up with her feet – like clothes, or things she drops
- She also likes to point with her lips when telling me to get something, or where something is
- She dances a lot in the kitchen
- She dances a lot with the dog
- She is always cooking
- She always straightens the shoes every two to three hours
- She cleans a lot, even after her regular work job.
- She always likes to stay busy. Maybe that’s where I get it from... I can’t stand staying still.
- In fact, I don’t think I’ve ever seen my mom still unless she’s asleep.
- She likes to read her Bible a lot. She prays a lot too before bed.

Teacher Model: Gathering Additional Information

Student Checklist (Do I, or Don't I?): [Circle or Highlight One]

I Do		I Don't	Stress certain letters or sounds? <i>Example: Tennessee [stress at Ten or see?]</i>
I Do		I Don't	Replace certain letters/sounds with others <i>Example: Erbody for everybody</i>
I Do		I Don't	Use clipped words <i>Example: copter for helicopter, fridge for refrigerator</i>
I Do		I Don't	Use Elongated words/Phrases <i>Example: cellular device, parental units</i>
I Do		I Don't	*Use slang= <i>this varies. You describe how you use slang.</i>
I Do		I Don't	Use double subjects <i>Example: Fish, Sardines are delicious. [Wordy]</i>
I Do		I Don't	Leave the 's' off third person singular present tense verbs <i>Examples: He argue that ... instead he argues that... She wonder when... instead of she wonders when...</i>
I Do		I Don't	Use an accent when I speak
I Do		I Don't	Use of your hands, eyes, or other "body language"
I Do		I Don't	Use a special tone of voice in special situations
I Do		I Don't	'Verbally' speak [<u>DEPENDS</u>]

Extra Notes / Things I've Noticed:

My mom points with her lips a lot... my aunt does too... do I do that? How often?

I like to leave the g's off of gerunds [-ing words]

I often have a special hand-shake with each of my friends. Depends on who it is.

My mom is seriously really loud when she talks... I tell her that she's yelling but she just says that "that's how we talk"

My mom and grandma always tryin' to feed whoever comes in through our door

My mom likes to use 'a' in front of a lot of other words and phrases.

Interview with at least one family member: Ask at least 5 questions
Interviewed Mom, Cousin, Friend, and Girlfriend

1. What languages can our family speak?

We speak a many dialects of Filipino. We majority speak Tagalog and Pangisinan. But we have how you say influence from our other roots. Your Nanay has Chinese and Japanese and your Tatay has African *{Nanay means “Mother” and Tatay means “Father” – we give these names to our head elders- the equivalent is Grandma and Grandfather}

2. How did we get to America?

Your real dad was military. Mt. Pinatubo erupted on your first birthday and he had your Titas, me, your Nanay, and their husbands come in the plane. We stopped a many places. Guam. Singapore. Puerto Rico. Before we landed in South Carolina where you grew up most of your life.

3. Cousin Interview: What things do you notice that our family members do when talking to us?

They yell a lot. It's funny how they give you a certain look too and that look says it all. Either that, or they start spoutin' off in Tagalog when they get mad, or are comin' to get us. You know we gotta run and hide then or else we gonna get whooped.

4. Friend Interview: What things do you notice that are different when you come to my house?

Well for one, your mom is always trying to feed me. If not that, I always got to take off my shoes when I come in. I get the Japanese thing and all, but it's not how we do it at my house bro. Um... I also notice how your mom or grandma will always talk to you in your native language, but you hardly speak back. Guess I kind of wonder why. You gotta know some since you be talkin' it sometimes. Oh, and yall love rice. You always have rice available and it's the best rice I've ever tasted. No way that stuff burn or cooked in a pot man.

5. Girlfriend Interview: What do you notice about how my family and me interact or talk?

Well... there's always somethin' cookin' in your house. It's always good food too. You and your mom joke around a lot, and she is always dancin' or somethin' crazy babe. She's cute love. And I notice a lot of pictures when I come into the house- shows me you got a really really really big family. What was it... like your grandmother had 12 kids right? So that's like 12 aunts/uncles who've also had kids. Your family is huge. Your mom likes to talk really loud at you too which is kind of funny to watch since you often point it out to her that you're in the same vicinity as her. You're also way different with your cousins than your mom, but that's expected.

***Further Explanation of categories/checklist and Observations:
[Two to three paragraphs; at least 8 sentences each]***

***NOTE:** Often what you write here can be your presentation as long as you prepare something to go along with it

When I speak with my family, I often do most of the listening depending on the age of the members of who I am speaking with. When I am in the presence of my elders, I often do most of the listening than the speaking as it is a custom of my pre-dominantly Filipino heritage. However, when I am with my cousins, I am then able to do more of the talking. It is here with my younger cousins that the other mixes of my roots follow me for they and I are multi-racial. For example, I often replace certain letters/sounds with others like when I say “erboby” for everybody. I also like to talk in a whimsical and often musical tone as if we were all speakin’ in a lyrical flow of jazz or hip-hop; maybe that’s what I get from my southern roots from when I grew up in South Carolina. Still, this all varies with my mother in that when she often speaks in her Tagalog dialect, she replaces the f’s in words with p’s – as this is often how one says Filipino {pronounced Peel-i-peno}. Such tone comes across direct and hard most days, where she will claim that she is not yelling at you, but merely talking in a regular voice. In any case, my accents come out whether it’s Tagalog, Spanish, African, Chinese, or Japanese.

Still no matter how my family and I talk, we do a lot of talking with our eyes and hands; my family is very animated. They use their hands for a lot of their talking, as well as odd gestures like picking things up with their feet, or pointing with their lips when telling you the location of something while shouting “Daoun!” [which means over there]. I catch myself doing a lot of these same gestures, but usually only at home. Every now and then it’ll slip though in class, and I’m sure someone has caught me doing it, and if not, will be watching to see. All in all, my family really likes to eat and will feed anybody that comes in. A common phrase that is said to all my friends when they come over is: “Cai’na” which means “You eat now.” It’s not a question of whether you are hungry, it’s more yeah you are going to eat and get full, and obviously rejecting food is like a slap to the face. As Filipinos, growing up poor – and coming from a background of farmers, servants, and the working class – we pride ourselves on still being able to share what little we have, and so when we open our home and share with you –let us be your host because according to my mom, that is what God would want us to do – and so religion plays a huge role in my house too because of that. We are taught to be servants of those who enter.

So in regards to my closest friends, with them slang is an art. I often clip my words, and love leaving the –g’s off of gerunds. I like to greet them with a handshake, and depending on the friend- each hand-shake is different. From beat-boxing fists, to glidin’ thumbs and forefingers as if we were *tuttin’ it*, they’re all unique. Sarcasm is also a fluency I use with them as my humor is often prone to such a superpower.

So I guess if I really had to give my *home language* a name it’d be: Lip-Feel-I-Pino

Hard-copy submittal of what is to be read/presented on presentation day + One Visual

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