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Analysis Essay: Looker Koenigs

**Introduction**

Postmodernism is credited with challenging the status quo and breaking the stereotypes throughout the world, post-structuralism is one of the prominent movements of postmodern era. Post-structuralism observes how language is constructed and how ideas are associated with it. Samantha Looker Koenigs writes in the introduction to Chapter 2 in her book *Language Diversity and Academic Writing: A Bedford Spotlight Reader*, “We notice when someone's language is different from ours, and many times we perceive that difference as indicating something about a person's identity, personality, or intelligence” (Looker, Samantha. P.p. 176). She argues that people living in diverse societies like American society also stereotype the other people on the basis of their dressing, behavior, and way of talking. American Whites have stereotypes regarding American Blacks and vice versa. Regional stereotypes among southerners and Ney Yorkers also exist. Moreover, she talks about some features that make a male sound like a *gay*. The article *Students Challenge Negative Perceptions of Spanglish* discusses Professor Meghann Peace who teaches his students who speak Spanglish not to stereotype their language inferior to the other Americans. [DS Bigham](https://slate.com/author/ds-bigham)’s article also gives an overview of the phenomenon that some people are stereotyped as sounding like gay, but now few people feel inferiority complex because of such stereotypes. A gay guy David made his video to share his experience of sounding gay, he interviewed many people and asked about his accent, but he got mixed replies from the interviewees. Koenigs claim appears true that many people are stereotyped on the basis of their accent, and their sexuality, social background, etc. are judged.

**Body**

Looker Koenigs’ introductory paragraphs shed light on a popularly unpopular issue of stereotyping or judging people on the basis of their accent in America. She says that New Yorker accent is associated with rudeness by the southerners whereas southern accent is termed as unintelligent and less sophisticated cum professional by the New Yorkers. According to her claim, if a well-educated and intelligent person would speak in typical southern dialect, he/she will not appeal a New Yorker as a wise and educated person. The reason of this factor is history, southern part of America is comparatively less developed than New York and literacy rate is also not very high there. A particular southern culture prevails there. The New Yorkers on the other side appear shrewd because they live in the epicenter of America having more refined education and civilization. The other argument of Koenigs is about stereotyping among Blacks and Whites. Again, Whites have an upper hand in looking or sounding like sophisticated and intelligent people. History is again best explainer of the phenomenon here. Blacks belong to Africa which is lagging behind world in civilization and Whites have European backgrounds who are still leading the world in civilization (Looker, Samantha. P.p.176). Additionally, they lived in America as masters and slaves for centuries, this opposite co-existence developed two or more different dialects. The final argument in the introduction indicates towards one other stereotype that is gender-based. She quotes Kathryn Campbell-Kibler who investigated how men are stereotyped as gay because they speak in a certain way.

# The provided articles and the video portray some practical experiences where people’s gender is judged when they speak particular words in a particular accent. The article Sounding Gay, Punk, or Jock: What Language Says About Your Social Group by DS Bigham notes that Stanford University linguist [Penny Eckert](https://web.stanford.edu/~eckert/index.html) was one of the first scholars who looked at the relationship between social groups and linguistic styles (Chung, Sheng Kuan. P.p). She argued that if people modify words like hot, bus and bed more like hat, boss, and bud they are stereotyped about their gender and they are asked “are you gay?” Bigham argues that the time is over when people used to care about being stereotyped rather now being gay or looking like gay or sounding like gay has become a fashion that people adopt such identity. Bigham’s argument reveals that people who adopt such appearance are sure that they would be stereotyped (Blashill, Aaron J., and Kimberly K. Powlishta. P.p. 783-793). David is a gay who felt uncomfortable with being stereotyped and he approached many people on public places and scholars at their homes to ask if he sound like a gay and if something is wrong in that. Some people acknowledged that he looks like gay, but some others denied. The answer of his second question was almost same from the majority of the audiences some of them were gay also. They said that there is nothing odd or wrong in being gay or sounding like gay. He also approached a doctor who said him to modify some of his words but she also said that there was nothing wrong in sounding like a gay.

# The article Students Challenge Negative Perceptions of Spanglish also endorses that people in America who speak English in Spanish accent are judged by their accent that they speak the language wrong. Professor Meghann Peace claims that different accents of a language do not and cannot determine the intelligence or intellect of a person, and Spanglish accent is as good as other refined accents of English in America.

# **Conclusion**

# Looker Koenigs’ introduction to the chapter 2 of her mentioned book looks upon the identities of the people from a linguistic perspective. She argues that although the world has become too smart that no one’s intellect or capabilities can be measured, but many people still stereotype others on the basis of their accents. Their regional backgrounds were judged and when it was not enough people started judging others’ gender terming someone gay if he speaks in an effeminate way.

# Works Cited

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