THE IMPACT OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT STUDENT

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON GRADING PRACTICES

by

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Dedication

For Andrea, Melodey, Kadence, Justice, Debbie, and my extended family.

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ABSTRACT

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The current study investigated if teachers' perceptions of student socioeconomic status

(SES) resulted in higher grades for high-SES students compared to low-SES students.

Sixty-nine participants read one of two nearly identical information sheets that included

the student's parents' occupations as an indicator of SES. Participants then read one of

two essays that had been previously graded as a "B," and provided an overall rating of

the essay, a numeric and letter grade, and ratings of the introduction and conclusion,

strength of the thesis, structure of body paragraphs and sentences, and approximate

number of grammatical errors. It was hypothesized that essays from low-SES students

would receive lower ratings than essays from high-SES students; however, statistical

analyses resulted in nonsignificant findings for all dependent variables. Additional

analyses to determine if significant differences in the essays or in the essays per condition

existed yielded nonsignificant findings. While the current research failed to find significant results in the grades assigned to low- and high-SES students, a discussion of how even non-significant differences may impact various academic outcomes for low-SES students is included.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic status (SES) is commonly defined by an individual's level of education, occupation, income, wealth, power, and prestige (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2017; Kraus & Mendes, 2014; Kraus & Park, 2014; Kraus et al., 2017; Moya & Fiske, 2017). SES is partly derived from one's ability to participate in capitalism—that is, those who procure higher-paying positions are able to purchase more expensive items, such as clothing and housing, which become indicators of one's place within the economic stratification of society (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, 1996; Kraus & Park, 2014), and the SES of children and adolescents is typically derived from parental accumulation of the aforementioned attributes (Sirin, 2005). Parents who possess higher levels of educational attainment generally procure higher-paying employment, which enables parents to provide additional educational resources to their children (e.g., laptop computers, tablets, and tutors; Mistry et al., 2008; Rindermann & Baumeister, 2015). Similar to their parents, students equipped with resources unavailable to low-SES families experience higher levels of educational attainment and, thus, higher-paying employment as adults (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Mistry et al., 2008; Rindermann & Baumeister, 2015). Given the existing stereotypes related to SES, including perceived lower academic achievement by low-SES students, it is possible that teachers evaluate similar quality work differently based on the perceived SES of a student.

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

SES has been associated with a myriad of outcomes for students, including being a predictor of educational achievement (Batruch et al., 2017). Research has consistently demonstrated that low-SES students perform worse than their high-SES peers on standardized measures of academic ability, such as the SAT or intelligence tests, receive lower grades, and are more frequently disciplined for disruptive behaviors, resulting in the creation of widespread stereotypes concerning academic ability and SES (Desert et al., 2009; Durante & Fiske, 2017; Glass, 2014; Heberle & Carter, 2015; Lott, 2012; Spencer & Castano, 2007). Explanations as to why low-SES students generally perform worse than their high-SES counterparts range from the dominance of middle-class (i.e., high-SES) values, such as using more complex/formal language and modest/respectable behavior (Bourdieu, 1996; Rist, 1970) to an emphasis on mutuality versus directives (i.e., framing directives as requests). In the educational setting, explanations for this student achievement gap between high- and low-SES students include stereotype threat, poor self-evaluation (resulting in low self-esteem and diminished belief in one's abilities) by low-SES students, and practices within the educational setting that systematically disadvantage low-SES students (Batruch et al., 2017; Croizet & Millet, 2011; Desert et al., 2009; Durante & Fiske, 2017; Glock & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2014; Gorski, 2012; Heberle & Carter, 2015; Jury et al., 2017; Whitford et al., 2016).

The activation of stereotypes through teacher inferences of a student's SES leads to teacher-generated expectations concerning student performance and behavior

(Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Glass, 2014; Speybroeck et al., 2012). These expectations correspond with established stereotypes of low-SES students as being less-capable academically and exhibiting increased problem behaviors relative to their high-SES counterparts (Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Desert et al., 2009; Durante & Fiske, 2017; Glass, 2014; Heberle & Carter, 2015; Lott, 2012; Spencer & Castano, 2007). According to Glass (2014), students of different SES received differential discipline for similar behaviors, with low-SES students more frequently referred to school administrators. Deseret and colleagues (2009) stated that low-SES students consistently receive lower grades than higher-SES students. Furthermore, Jerome and colleagues (2009) suggested that low-SES students are consistently placed in less positive classrooms (e.g. a teacher-directed classroom versus a student-centered classroom) and experience fewer positive relationships with teachers compared to higher-SES students. Teacher-student relationships were also observed by Streib (2011), who found that high-SES four-year-old children engaged their teachers as equals, interrupted more frequently, and garnered more attention compared to lower-SES students. In contrast, low-SES children were observed as engaging in speech less often, with fewer words, and were more reluctant to utilize language as a means of calling attention to themselves (Streib, 2011). This is reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1996) contention that the educational system, which has been theorized to reflect higher-SES values (e.g., more complex language, equality between adults and children, and linguistic differences) rewards those who display indicators of high-SES (as cited in Andersen & Hansen, 2012; Glass, 2014). Together, individual-

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level and classroom-level indicators of SES may produce a disadvantageous environment for low-SES students.

SES is a pervasive component of nearly all social interactions. Related to the stereotype determination of students by teachers, Kraus and Mendes (2014) stated that participants adorned in sartorial symbols that indicate higher-SES experienced increased attention during a dyadic interaction and obtained higher profits while giving fewer concessions during an economic game. Therefore, in the classroom setting, higher-SES students, having been inculcated into a higher-class culture, may devote more cognitive resources to the teacher compared to lower-SES students and may be attended to more frequently than lower-SES students (Krause & Mendes, 2014). Rheinschmidt and Mendoza-Denton (2014) stated a wide range of SES indicators, such as material, social, and cultural cues, can be easily discerned by an observer (e.g., a teacher). Based on a student's clothing and other possessions, which have been established as indicating SES (Bourideu, 1979; Kraus & Mendes, 2014), teachers may unconsciously associate the student with more- or less-positive attributes, which then lead to differential grading practices (Batruch et al., 2017). In the academic setting, the perception of a student's SES, as determined by the student's appearance (e.g., clothing, jewelry, and other visible items), may activate stereotypes concerning the academic competence of the student.

While cultural capital (i.e. the acquisition of competence in higher social classes as indicated by the possession of books, art, and clothing) and sartorial symbols are significant indicators of a child's SES, the occupation of the child's parents is also a salient factor in the identification of the child's SES (Bourdieu, 1979; Glass, 2014; Kraus

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& Mendes, 2014; Throsby, 1999). In describing the Erickson and Goldthorpe schema, in which SES is associated with occupational status, d'Errico and colleagues (2017) state that an individual's relation to their employer, either as a service employee, which requires higher levels of education and skill, and provides higher remuneration, or as a labor employee, which requires higher levels of physical labor and receives a much lower salary, is also a salient and significant factor in determining one's SES. Similarly, Moreno-Maldonado and colleagues (2018) stated that parental occupation is a valid proxy for estimating a child's SES in the absence of other confirmatory information. Based on this research, the current study utilizes parental occupation as the sole indicator of the student's SES.

Previous research has provided inconclusive results concerning the effect of perceived SES on grading practices. Batruch and colleagues (2017) found that low-SES, high-achieving students were graded more severely than high-SES, low-achieving students. These researchers postulated the results were an attempt by teachers, who are generally considered as higher-SES than low-SES students, to maintain the current social order and, thus, to maintain the validity of the stereotypes associated with low-SES students (Batruch et al., 2017). Jonnson and Beach (2015) found that high-SES students were more frequently described as having more intellectual attributes compared to low-SES students. In contrast to these findings, Glock and Krolak-Schwerdt (2013) found that the activation of stereotypes of low-SES students (i.e. low-SES students perform more poorly than high-SES students) in teachers did not necessarily influence the grading process. Rather, the stereotype of high-SES students as being more academically capable

was a more salient factor in the grading process (Glock & Krolak-Schwerdt, 2013).

While this research provides conflicting evidence of the way stereotype activation of low- and high-SES students may affect grading, it does not discount the effect of SES stereotypes on the grading process. Therefore, further research is needed to determine if stereotypes of low-SES students as being less capable in the academic environment are being perpetuated through grading practices. The current study investigated the relation between teacher perceptions of a student's SES and the grades received on a writing exercise. Given the pernicious and ubiquitous effects of stereotyping within society and the educational setting, it was hypothesized that teachers would grade equivalent submissions from low-SES students as being lower in quality compared to high-SES students.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

Methods

Participants

Eighty participants, with an occupation in the education field, (60 cisgender women, 19 cisgender men, and 1 transgender woman) were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk service and offered $0.50 for their participation. A manipulation check, in which participants were asked to recall the parents' occupations, the student's gender, and the student's extracurricular activities, was conducted to determine if participants attended to the information provided in the information sheet (i.e., the experimental manipulation). Ten participants were excluded from the analyses due to providing incorrect responses for parents' occupation (i.e., provided occupations inconsistent with the SES of the student) or responding "I don't remember" for parents' occupation. One participant was excluded due to stating, "I am not a teacher" in response to the demographic item "Which grade level do you teach?" This left a total of 69 participants. Participants identified primarily as women (75.36%) and White (84.06%), with an average age of 40.36 years ($SD = 12.83$ years) See Table 3.1 for more information.

Table 3.1

Participant Gender and Race

	White/ European (non-Hispanic)	Black/ African American/ African	Hispanic/ Latino/ Chicano	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Arab American/ Middle Eastern	Bi-Racial/ Multi-Racial
Men (*n* = 17)	15	1		1		
Women (*n* = 52)	43	4	2	1	1	1

Participants identified primarily as politically moderate (30.88%), not at all religious (24.64%), having obtained a master's degree (55.07%), having obtained a higher educational level than their parents (86.96% of participants had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 50% and 39.13% of primary and secondary parental figures, respectively, having obtained a bachelor's degree or higher), having a greater income than their parents (65.22% of participants reported an adult annual income of greater than $75,000 compared to 47.83% of participants reporting a childhood income of greater than $75,000), as middle-class (60.87%), and having more than 10 years of teaching experience (44.93%; see Table 3.2 for response frequencies and Appendix D for questions and response options).

Table 3.2

Frequency of Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Political Orientation (*n* = 68)	6	15	21	14	12			
Religiosity (*n* = 67)	17	10	6	9	8	8	9	
Education	0	5	4	19	38	0	3	
Primary Parental Figure Education Level (*n* = 68)	2	22	10	17	14	2	1	
Secondary Parental Figure Education Level	6	28	8	13	12	0	2	
Childhood Income Level	2	7	15	12	18	6	6	3
Adult Income Level	0	4	8	12	16	12	13	4
SES Class	3	20	42	4	0			
Teaching Experience	12	12	14	31				

Note. Unless otherwise noted *n* = 69.

Materials

To indicate student-SES, a hand-written information sheet (see Appendix A) was constructed by the researcher. The information sheet was similar to that which may be received from students on the first day of fall classes (e.g., a "Get to Know Me" assignment) and included the following information about the student: birthdate, other family members in the household, whether the student is new to the district, extracurricular activities, parents' occupations, favorite book, favorite movie, and favorite type of music or musical artist. The information was designated as high- or low-SES through the parents' occupation following the methods of Auwarter and Aruguete (2008). Except for the parents' occupations, all information was identical. In the high-SES condition, the student's father was a doctor and the mother a lawyer. In the low-SES condition, the student's father was employed at a gas station and the mother a waitress. These occupations were chosen due to the likelihood they would influence the participants' perceptions of the student as high- or low-SES (i.e., doctor/lawyer would

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activate high-SES stereotypes, gas station employee/waitress would activate low-SES stereotypes) and result in grading differences based on the perceptions of the student's SES. Utilizing gender-neutral language in the information sheet allowed for the elimination of possible interactions between perceptions of SES and expectations based on gender identity.

To determine the impact of perceived student-SES on the grading practices of teachers, 12 essays were obtained from the University of Houston-Clear Lake first-year student developmental writing classes (WRIT 1301). Essays from this class are comparable to essays written by average high school students. The essays were approximately 2 double-spaced pages in length (approximately 450-500 words), previously graded as a B (i.e., numeric grade of 80-90) by a professor of the course, and de-identified. Essays previously graded in the aforementioned manner (i.e., B) were selected to allow for variability in participant grading so that essays could be more easily graded higher or lower (e.g., as an A or C). These essays were reviewed for grammatical errors, adherence to assignment instructions, and other relevant factors, such as strength of thesis statement, sentence structure, and a clear introduction and conclusion. Ten essays were eliminated from consideration based on these criteria. Two essays (see Appendix B) were selected for inclusion. The randomization feature of Amazon's Mechanical Turk was utilized to randomly assign participants into either a high-SES or low-SES condition, to randomly assign one of the two essays, and created equivalent groups based on participant gender and race.

Measures

Participants evaluated the essay on a total of eight dependent variables in the following order, which were numerically coded to allow for statistical analyses (see Appendix C): overall rating of the essay (5-point scale: 1=terrible, 2=poor, 3=average, 4=good, 5=excellent), numeric grade (sliding scale from 0-100), letter grade (12-point scale: 1=A, 2=A-, 3=B+, 4=B, 5=B-, 6=C+, 7=C, 8=C-, 9=D+,10=D, 11=D-, 12=F), clarity of the introduction/conclusion (6-point scale: 1=extremely unclear, 2=moderately unclear, 3=slightly unclear, 4=slightly clear, 5=moderately clear, 6=extremely clear), strength of the thesis (6-point scale: 1=extremely weak, 2=moderately weak, 3=slightly weak, 4=slightly strong, 5=moderately strong, 6=extremely strong), structure of body paragraphs (6-point scale: 1=extremely poorly structured, 2=moderately poorly structured, 3=slightly poorly structured, 4=slightly well structured, 5=moderately well-structured, 6=extremely well-structured) , adequacy of sentence structure (6-point scale: 1=extremely inadequate, 2=moderately inadequate, 3=slightly inadequate, 4=slightly adequate, 5=moderately adequate, 6=extremely adequate), and the amount of grammar/spelling errors (5-point scale: 1=no errors at all, 2=one or two errors, 3=a few errors, 4=a moderate amount of errors, 5=a great deal of errors).

Asking for numeric and letter grades, and ratings of writing competence are similar to the shifting standards procedure developed by Beirnat and colleagues (1991) in which objective judgements (e.g., grading scale) are influenced by the stereotype of the target within a specific social group (e.g., high- or low-SES) but subjective judgements (e.g., rating of clarity) conceal the usage of stereotypes as the standard for the same

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subjective evaluation and will shift depending on social group membership. For example, Biernat and Manis (1994) found that objective judgements of verbal ability supported the stereotypes of women possessing higher verbal ability than men, but little to no differences emerge on subjective judgements.

Procedures

After providing informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two information sheets (i.e. high-SES vs. low-SES condition) and one of the two essays. After reading the essay, participants were asked to provide their overall impression of the essay and respond to five questions (scored on a Likert-type scale) concerning the essay (see Appendix C): introduction and conclusion, thesis statement, structure of body paragraphs, sentences structure, and grammatical errors. Participants were also asked to provide any comments they would include if the paper was an assignment in their own classroom. Allowing participants to include comments made the grading tasks more closely resemble the real-world classroom environment, thus providing a more realistic simulation. Upon completion of the grading measures, participants were asked for demographic information (see Appendix D), including current SES, for additional statistical analyses. As a manipulation check, participants were also asked to provide their perceptions of the student-author's gender, as well as recall the extracurricular activities and parents' occupations included in the manipulation (see Appendix E).

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

Results

Data were analyzed utilizing IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS). Participant responses were numerically coded to allow for statistical analyses

(see Appendices C, D, and E for response choices and codes).

A total of four questions were included to determine if participants attended to the

information sheet and to determine if the provided information sheet was sufficiently

gender neutral as to eliminate the potential influence of academic stereotypes of females

being of higher skill than males in non-scientific subjects (e.g., English/Language Arts).

Participant responses are provided in Table 4.1. The majority (60.87%) of participants

indicated the author was female, 30.43% believed the author was male, and 8.70% were

unable to determine the gender of the author. A chi-square analysis excluding those who

were unable to determine the gender of the author was conducted to determine if the

selection of male or female for the student author was significant. The chi-square

analysis ($\chi^2(1) = 7.00$, $p < .05$) revealed a significant difference among the selection of

male or female authors, such that participants identified the student as female more

frequently than would have been expected due to chance.

Participants also sufficiently attended to other information in the information

sheet: nearly 80% of respondents correctly identified the author's father's occupation, the

extracurricular activity in which the author participated, and the author's mother's

occupation (see Table 4.1). Based on these results, participants adequately attended to

the information sheet provided prior to reading the essay, thus allowing perceptions of SES to possibly influence the grade assigned. Furthermore, when participant responses for father's/mother's occupation are examined for high-/low-SES occupations, all participants correctly identified at least one parent's occupation, as indicated on the provided information sheet, and did not provide a response for the other parent that was inconsistent with the SES occupations provided on the information sheet.

Table 4.1

Manipulation Check Responses

	Student Gender	Father's Occupation	Extracurricular Activities	Mother's Occupation
Male	21 (30.43%)			
Female	42 (60.87%)			
Don't Know	6 (8.70%)			
Correct		57 (82.61%)	55 (79.71%)	55 (79.71%)
Incorrect/Don't Know		12 (17.39%)	14 (20.29%)	14 (20.29%)

Participants rated the essays as average-to-good ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.79$), assigned a mean numeric grade of 84.30 ($SD = 13.29$), most frequently assigned a letter grade of "A" (30%), rated the introduction/conclusion as moderately clear ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 0.95$), rated the thesis as moderately strong ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.01$), rated the body paragraphs as moderately well-structured ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.98$), rated the sentence structure as moderately well-structured ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.86$), and rated the essay as having a few grammar/spelling errors ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.01$) (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Participant Ratings of Essays

Dependent Variable	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD)*
Overall Rating	3.86	0.79
Numeric Grade	84.30	13.29
Letter Grade	3.29	2.31
Clarity of Introduction/Conclusion	4.96	0.95
Strength of Thesis	4.46	1.01
Structure of Body Paragraphs (*n*=67)	4.70	0.98
Sentence Structure (*n*=67)	4.75	0.86
Grammar/Spelling Errors	3.58	1.01

Note. Unless otherwise noted *n* = 69.

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to determine if significant differences between the two essays existed. None of the ratings for the two essays were significantly different; therefore, subsequent analyses collapsed across the essay variable (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Means of Essays and t-Test Results

Dependent Variable	Essay 1 (SD)	Essay 2 (SD)	*t*-test (*df*)	*p*-value
Overall Rating	3.88 (*0.78*)	3.83 (*0.81*)	0.237 (*67*)	0.814
Numeric Grade	85.40 (*8.05*)	83.31 (*16.79*)	0.649 (*67*)	0.518
Letter Grade	3.33 (*2.17*)	3.25 (*2.47*)	0.148 (*67*)	0.883
Clarity of Introduction/Conclusion	5.00 (*1.00*)	4.92 (*0.91*)	0.363 (*67*)	0.718
Strength of Thesis	4.36 (*1.08*)	4.56 (*0.94*)	-0.787 (*67*)	0.434
Structure of Body Paragraphs ($n_{Essay\ 1}$ = 31)	4.65 (*0.98*)	4.75 (*1.00*)	-0.432 (*65*)	0.667
Sentence Structure ($n_{Essay\ 1}$ = 32, $n_{Essay\ 2}$ = 35)	4.84 (*0.81*)	4.66 (*0.91*)	0.887 (*65*)	0.378
Number of Errors	3.70 (*1.01*)	3.47 (*1.00*)	0.926 (*67*)	0.358

Note. Unless otherwise noted, Essay 1: *n* = 33; Essay 2: *n* = 36.

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted for all dependent variables to determine if participants rated the essays attributed to the low- and high-SES students differently. Although there were descriptive differences in the evaluation of the essays based on SES, these differences were not statistically significant (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Means of Dependent Variables and t-Test Results

Dependent Variables	Low-SES (SD)	High-SES (SD)	t-test (df)	p-value
Overall Rating	3.81 (0.69)	3.89 (0.88)	-0.413 (67)	0.681
Numeric Grade	82.81 (16.62)	85.60 (9.60)	-0.865 (67)	0.390
Letter Grade	3.16 (2.33)	3.41 (2.33)	-0.443 (67)	0.659
Clarity of Introduction/Conclusion	5.06 (0.80)	4.87 (1.06)	0.864 (67)	0.391
Strength of Thesis	4.50 (0.95)	4.43 (1.07)	0.276 (67)	0.784
Structure of Body Paragraphs ($n_{High\text{-}SES}$ = 35)	4.75 (0.92)	4.66 (1.06)	0.383 (65)	0.703
Sentence Structure ($n_{Low\text{-}SES}$ = 31, $n_{High\text{-}SES}$ = 36)	4.61 (0.84)	4.86 (0.87)	-1.183 (65)	0.241
Number of Errors	3.44 (1.01)	3.70 (1.00)	-1.094 (67)	0.278

Note. Unless otherwise noted, $n_{Low\text{-}SES}$ = 32, $n_{High\text{-}SES}$ = 37.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

Discussion

The current research investigated if a teacher's perception of a student's SES resulted in higher grades for students perceived as high-SES compared to students perceived as low-SES. Results indicate that a student's SES, as perceived by the teacher through the provided information sheet, did not result in higher grades on similar work for high-SES students compared to low-SES students. Surprisingly, participants assumed the student's gender to be female more frequently than expected despite the absence of gender information.

Participants provided similar ratings for the dependent variables regardless of condition. These findings represent a more egalitarian approach on the part of participants when grading student assignments—that is, participants may be more cognizant of, and take precautions against, the influence of academic stereotypes. These findings may also be indicative of research by Rauschenberg (2014) in which congruence between a student's and teacher's race and gender resulted in higher grades. Participants in the current study identified primarily as White and female, indicated at a rate greater than chance the author of the essay was female, and may have assumed the students was White due to the musical artist mentioned in the information sheet (i.e. Panic! At the Disco). In light of Rauschenberg's (2014) findings that gender- and race-agreement between teachers and students resulted in higher grades, a perception by participants (who were overwhelmingly White women) that the author of the essay was a White

female may have discounted the effects of the SES manipulations. The influence of stereotypes of low-SES students (i.e., performing at a lower level compared to high-SES students) based on the perception of student SES did not appear to affect the grading practices of participants.

Limitations

A strength of the study was the isolation of SES on the student information sheet. The information sheet was a handwritten sample that contained identical information except for the parents' occupations, thus isolating SES as the independent variable and removing explicit confounders. An additional strength of the study was the inclusion of parental occupations that clearly indicated SES (i.e., doctor/lawyer for high-SES and gas station employee/waitress for low-SES). As SES is not only associated with income level, but also with occupational prestige, the use of occupations that are vastly different in both domains and are frequently associated with high- and low-SES should have been sufficient to activate the academic stereotypes generally related to SES. However, it is possible that the information sheet, in which the student's parents' occupations were included, did not activate academic stereotypes. As Bourdieu (1979), Throsby (1999), and Andersen and Hansen (2012), noted, cultural capital, as an indicator of SES, frequently involves tangible possessions (e.g., clothing) or other personal attributes (e.g., linguistic differences) that require the person to be present. In the current research, only a written indication of the parents' occupations signaled the student's SES. Future research investigating the role of SES on grading practices may need to utilize more tangible signals of SES to test these hypotheses.

This study asked participants to read only one of two essays. A more robust study in which participants read several essays assigned to a high-SES, low-SES, and control condition may provide additional support for the effects of student-SES on grading practices. Using essays written by first-year college students may also have affected the grading. Three participants (two in the low-SES condition, one in the high-SES condition) provided comments indicating the essay they read was quite sophisticated for a high school student, and one participant (high-SES condition) specifically remarked that the grade level of the student affected their grading practices. If other participants also interpreted the author as being more capable than what would be expected from a high school student, grades in both conditions may have been artificially inflated.

Implications

While a small difference in grading due to perceived SES may have little impact on a student's grade for an individual assignment, these differences in grading could compound over a student's high school career, which could result in significant impacts in several domains specific to the student. For example, the Texas Education Code (1997) provides an automatic admissions process for state-funded universities (e.g., the University of Texas and Texas A&M University) based on a student's class rank. Indeed, Vickers (2000) and Sadler and Tai (2007) stated that grade point average and class rank, derived from grade point average, can affect automatic admissions processes, eligibility for financial aid credits, and could be the difference from being accepted into different colleges. To be eligible for automatic admission, a student must graduate high school within a set percentile, such as in the top 10% of the student's graduating high school

class. The loss of a single point on every assignment throughout the student's high school career could jeopardize their class ranking and/or grade point average, prevent automatic admission to a public university, and subject the student to additional requirements for admission to a public university (Sadler & Tai, 2007). Additionally, as secondary schools now provide instruction to an intellectually diverse population (e.g., gifted and talented students, advanced placement classes), districts must use numeric grades to award grade points for calculations of class rank, valedictorian, and salutatorian (Sadler & Tai, 2007). The Alvin Independent School District (2019), for example, awards grade points on a 6-point to 8-point scale depending on the academic level in which the student participates (i.e., advanced, accelerated, or academic levels), with each decrease of one-tenth of a grade point corresponding to a one-point reduction in numeric grade (e.g. a numeric grade of 98 in an advanced-level class is awarded 7.8-grade points, a 97 is awarded 7.7-grade points, etc.). The practical implications of even slight grading discrepancies based on perceived SES may not only be pernicious but may also assist in perpetuating academic stereotypes of high-SES students being more academically competent than their low-SES counterparts.

Conclusion

A student's SES is a readily identifiable attribute that teachers can ascribe through their observations of cultural capital, sartorial symbols, and participation in free/reduced meal program (Bourdieu, 1979; Glass, 2014; Kraus & Mendes, 2014). Ascribing these attributes may then activate stereotypes of the academic performance of low- and high-SES students, with high-SES students receiving higher grades for equivalent work

(Auwarter & Aruguete, 2008; Glass, 2014; Speybroeck et al., 2012). While the current research may have failed to find a statistically significant difference in teachers' grading practices concerning perceived high- and low-SES students, the findings of a difference, albeit quite small, could be significant for some student populations, such as being denied admission to a desired university, achieving a lower class rank, and being ineligible for automatic admission to state universities. Research has consistently demonstrated that low-SES students encounter numerous obstacles concerning their academic performance (Batruch et al., 2017; Croizet & Millet, 2011; Desert et al., 2009) and, as a result, may encounter difficulties in gaining admission to post-secondary institutions (Vickers, 2000; Sadler and Tai, 2007). Given these findings, caution should be exercised to ensure that low-SES students are provided sufficient protective interventions to either improve or maintain their performance, and teachers should be cognizant of the possibility that their grading practices are affected by their perceptions of their students and that these perceptions, if allowed to influence grading, can have far-reaching implications for low-SES learners.

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About Me

What is your birthday? November 4, 2004

Who else lives in your household?
        Both parents, one sister + one brother

Are you new to this school District? NO

Which extracurricular activities do you participate in? I'm in band

What do your parents do for a living?
        My father works at a gas station
        My mother is a waitress

What is your favorite book? Manga books

What is your favorite movie? Avengers: Endgame

What is your favorite type of Music/band?
        Panic! At the Disco

About Me

What is your birthday? November 4, 2004
Who else lives in your household?
          Both parents, one sister, + one brother
Are you new to this School District? NO
Which extracurricular activities do you participate
  in? I'm in band
What do your parents do for a living?
      My father is a doctor.
      My mother is a lawyer.
What is your favorite book? Manga books
What is your favorite movie? Avengers: Endgame
What is your favorite type of music/band?
      Panic! At The Disco

APPENDIX B:

ESSAYS

(Minor formatting changes have been executed to comply with APA standards.)

ESSAY 1

The Future and Writing with Emoji's and its Rhetoric

Rhetorical Analysis

Introduction

Emoji's have become common place in almost all writing: emails, text messages, and social media. Learning emoji is like learning a new language, there is no guide and a lot of it is figuring it out on your own. There can be many different meanings for a bunch of characters strewn in a line, and it's our job to try to figure out the meaning. A piece published in the Wall Street Journal on May 19, 2015 by Joanna Stern titled "How I Learned to Love Writing with Emoji's" gives us insight on this new phenomenon. She uses code switching from emoji to modern English language to show us how we're moving into a new language and how her target audience needs to learn it to survive in the business world. I will explore what I feel her purpose is in writing this article and its rhetoric.

Body

Joanna Stern is a personal technology columnist for the Wall Street Journal and has years of experience reviewing laptops, netbooks, and phones. Everyone writes with their target audience in mind. According to the Wall Street Journal online in their media kit it states, "WSJ.com reaches a global audience of 42.4 million digital readers per

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month who seek the news and information critical to their business and personal lives."
Stern believes that her subject of emoji's is a hot topic to reach such a large audience.

Emoji's should be used as an added supplement to your text to help make up the things we can't express through quick text messages like gestures and facial expressions. Code switching comes into play here. As stated by Payal Kullar's article, "Difference between Code Mixing and Code Switching" she defines code switching as, "nothing but switching from one language to another to create a special effect." This is exactly what switching from emoji to modern English is doing. You switch from written language to symbols to express what you're thinking or feeling. Stern (2015) says that emoji's that are just strung together in line can be confusing. Emoji lacks grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and the semantics of a true language. Emoji's are just picture characters that can have multiple meanings. But by supplementing your text with written and emoji language your message can have more emotion.

But why is it important to her audience, I had to really think about that. In the beginning of Stern's (2015) article she states, "my text messages and social media feeds are increasingly full of emoji's. Instagram, specifically, states that 40% of its text posts on its app contain emoji's. Domino's even lets you order a pie now with just a tweet with the pizza emoji." For business people reading this article this could be a significant piece of information. If you own a world-renowned eating establishment you may want to make a marketing campaign where you can order food with emoji's. It could be a great marketing strategy.

Conclusion

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In order to use emoji, you must understand it and it's not like any language we are used to. By learning it you can reach millions of users who can order things at the push of a button. That has to be enticing for people in big business. But while it's all fun and games on social media, when it comes to professional business communication, be sure to use your best judgement.

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ESSAY 2

I Saw the Sign and it Opened Up My Eyes: Dissecting The Slam Poem 'Exes'

Being in an unhealthy relationship seems to be a common occurrence among youth these days. Young girls especially seem to always wind up falling into them, but they never know how to get themselves out. There are two poets who have created a piece to shed some light on this subject and offer some hope for these young girls. Jessica Romoff and Mila Cuda preform the poem "Exes" to bring awareness to teenage girls that recognizing certain codes in a relationship can help address whether the relationship is unhealthy. Through the recognition of codes such as manipulation, self-sacrifice, and realization these girls can control whether they enter an unhealthy relationship.

Manipulation

The common code amidst this poem is the use of manipulation coming from the boyfriend's role. He uses three different codes of manipulation to coerce the girl into staying with him and doing as he says. The codes of manipulation he uses are Jealousy, Guilt, and Fake Affection to appeal to the girl. He states things such as, "'Sunshine, I need you, you're the only person I care about! ! '"(line 48, Romoff and Cuda 2017) or "'YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME.'"(line 50, Romoff and Cuda 2017) to make her submit to him and give up everything. He manipulates her in a way that makes her feel safe, but also has her feeling obligated to give up herself to him.

Fake Affection

Fake Affection is our first introduction to the use of codes in the text. The affection he shows to her is being used to appease her and show her a caring side of him

to reassure her. He uses phrases such as, "'I couldn't stop thinking about you.'"(line 3, Romoff and Cuda 2017) and "'Better if it was with you. How was school? '"(line 10, Romoff and Cuda 2017) demonstrating that he cares about her life and what she has to say to make her open up to him. His affection is just a façade he uses so he can exploit her.

Jealousy

The first use of the code Jealousy appears towards the beginning of the text after Fake Affection. Jealousy is a wicked code which brings out the worst in us, but he utilizes it as a weapon to attack her. The boyfriend says things like, "'I bet you'll have more fun with him.'" (line 25, Romoff and Cuda 2017) or even, "'Are you with Jake? ? ? '" (line 30, Romoff and Cuda 2017) to try and get her attention, but when he states, "'I STILL HAVE THE PILLS, YOU TOLD ME TO GET RID OF THEM, I'M GONNA DO IT. '" (line 36, Romoff and Cuda 2017) he deliberately uses his life to threaten her. By him getting jealous it gains her attention and makes her think that her actions were wrong, which makes her feel responsible.

Guilt

Guilt is a code used a lot as the piece progresses and eventually becomes a tool for the boyfriend. The boyfriend begins to utilize the fact that she feels responsible and guilty about making him upset, by trying to extort sexual pictures from her. His intentions are clearly stated when he says, "'If you're sorry, why don't you send me a picture that'll cheer me up? '" (line 40, Romoff and Cuda 2017) and when she tries telling him she cannot he retaliates, "'Not now? You owe it to me! '" (line 44, Romoff and Cuda 2017)

trying to make her feel even more guilty for upsetting him and as soon as she tries to break things off with him he threatens her by saying, "'IF YOU BREAK UP WITH ME I'LL KILL MYSELF.'" (line 52, Romoff and Cuda 2017). Her guilt and sense of responsibility have become his new way to pleasure himself, not to mention now she has the possibility of his death being on her hands.

Self-Sacrifice

The authors describe the sacrifices as code to acknowledge how much she has given up for her boyfriend. All the things she had to endure because she thought that she could fix him. Meanwhile she is broken from the trauma of being together with him, "I THOUGHT MY SPREAD LEGS COULD HEAL HIS BROKEN." (line 64, Romoff and Cuda 2017) and "EVEN AFTER HE BEGGED ME TO GET HIM OFF IN A PARKING LOT." (line 66, Romoff and Cuda 2017) or even, "WHENEVER MY PHONE RINGS AT NIGHT, I STILL THINK IT'S HIS 2AM SUICIDE CALLS." (line 76, Romoff and Cuda 2017). These out cries are the scars of what she had to go through while under his oppression. The authors address her self-sacrifice to grab the attention of the reader and show them the pain that comes from this code and inform the audience that this is not right.

Realization

As the poem begins to close the sense of Realization begins to show within the text. The authors enter and begin to explain to the audience that these codes are what make unhealthy relationships and that they need to recognize them to gain back freedom and power from the oppressors. They address this when they say, " IF HIS FISTS EVER

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MEET YOUR FACE. DO NOT CONFUSE IT FOR SPARKS FLYING. OR YOUR

BODY WILL BLOOM IN BRUISES." (lines 92,93, & 94, Romoff and Cuda 2017) and

"WE ARE TIRED OF THIS 89GUILT. THIS GUILT THAT MUST MEAN GIRLS."

(lines 88 & 89, Romoff and Cuda 2017). The text that the authors use invokes a strong

emotion to make the audience understand the immense power of just acknowledging and

recognizing that these codes are not part of a healthy relationship.

Conclusion

The poem 'Exes' created a way for young girls to recognize when they are in an

unhealthy relationship. By dissecting the texts and explaining all the codes within the

text, teenage girls can get a better understanding of how these events can become a reality

if they do not pick up on the codes sooner. The authors even state within the text, "WE

FELL IN LOVE WITH A WARNING SIGN." (line 91, Romoff and Cuda 2017)

indicating that the signs, or codes, were there all along, they were just too blind by

infatuation to see. To summarize, through the recognition of codes such as manipulation,

self-sacrifice, and realization these girls can control whether they enter an unhealthy

relationship, and if they are already in one, if they will regain the freedom and power that

they have lost.

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APPENDIX C:

ESSAY QUESTIONS

What is your overall rating of the essay?

Terrible (1)   Poor (2)   Average (3)   Good (4)   Excellent (5)

Please assign a numeric grade to the essay:

[Sliding scale: 0-100]

Please assign a letter grade to the essay:

A (1)   A- (2)   B+ (3)   B (4)   B- (5)   C+ (6)   C (7)   C- (8)   D+ (9)

D (10)   D- (11)   F (12)

What is you rating of the introduction and conclusion?

Extremely unclear (1)   Moderately unclear (2)   Slightly unclear (3)

Slightly clear (4)   Moderately clear (5)   (Extremely clear (6)

What is you rating of the thesis?

Extremely weak (1)   Moderately weak (2)   Slightly weak (4)   Slightly strong

(4)   Moderately weak (5)   Extremely strong (6)

What is your rating of the structure of the body paragraphs?

Extremely poorly structured (1)   Moderately poorly structured (2)

Slightly poorly structured (3)   Slightly well-structured (4)

Moderately well-structured (5)   Extremely well-structured (6)

What is your rating of the sentence structure?

Extremely inadequate (1)   Moderately inadequate (2)   Slightly inadequate (3)

Slightly adequate (4)   Moderately adequate (5)   Extremely adequate

(6)

What is your rating of the grammar and spelling?

No errors at (1)   One or two errors (2)   A few errors (3)

A moderate amount of errors (4)   A great deal of errors (5)

Please provide any feedback you would include on the essay.

[Textbox provided for entry]

APPENDIX D:

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONAIRRE

Gender

Cisgender man (1)   Cisgender woman (2)   Transgender man (3)

Transgender woman (4)   Other, please specify (5) [Textbox provided for entry]

Age

[Textbox provided for entry]

How do you classify yourself? (You may choose more than one.)

White/European (non-Hispanic) (1)   Black/African-American/African (2)

Hispanic/Latino/Chicano (3)   Asian/Pacific Islander (4)   Native

American/American Indian (5)   Arab American/Middle Eastern (6)   Bi-

Racial/Multi-Racial (7)

Other, please specify (8) [Textbox provided for entry]

What is your political orientation?

Very conservative (1)   Somewhat conservative (2)   Moderate (3)

Somewhat liberal (4)   Very liberal (5)

How religious are you?

1 = not at all religious (1)   2 (2)   3 (3)   4 (4)   5 (5)   6 (6)

7 = extremely religious (7)

What is the highest level of education you completed?

Did not finish high school (1)   High school or equivalent (2)

Associate degree (2-year) (3)   Bachelor's degree (4-year) (4)

Master's degree (5)   Professional degree (e.g., J. D., D.D.S., M.D.) (6)

Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.) (7)

What is the highest level of education your primary parental figure completed?

Did not finish high school (1)   High school or equivalent (2)

Associate degree (2-year) (3)   Bachelor's degree (4-year) (4)

Master's degree (5)   Professional degree (e.g., J. D., D.D.S., M.D.) (6)

Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.) (7)

What is the highest level of education your secondary parental figure completed?

Did not finish high school (1)   High school or equivalent (2)

Associate degree (2-year) (3)   Bachelor's degree (4-year) (4)

Master's degree (5)   Professional degree (e.g., J. D., D.D.S., M.D.) (6)

Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.) (7)

What was your annual household income during childhood? (in U.S. dollars)

less than $15,000 (1) $15,000 - $25,000 (2) $25,001 - $35,000 (3)

$35,001 - $50,000 (4) $50,001 - $75,000 (5) $75,001 - $100,000 (6)

$100,000 - $150,000 (7)   greater than $150,000 (8)

What is your current annual household income? (in U.S. dollars)

less than $15,000 (1) $15,000 - $25,000 (2) $25,001 - $35,000 (3)

$35,001 - $50,000 (4) $50,001 - $75,000 (5) $75,001 - $100,000 (6)

$100,000 - $150,000 (7)   greater than $150,000 (8)

Considering your current economic status, how do you classify yourself?

Lower-class (1)   Lower-middle class (2)   Middle-class (3)

Upper-middle class (4)   Upper-class (5)

Which grade level do you currently teach?

Kindergarten (1)   1st (2)   2nd (3)   3rd (4)   4th (5)   5th (6)   6th (7)

7th (8)   8th (9)   9th (10)   10th (11)   11th (12)   12th (13)

other not listed (14)   not currently teaching (15)

How long have you been teaching in the school system?

0-2 years (1)   3-5 years (2)   6-10 years (3)   more than 10 years (4)

What are the primary subjects (e.g. writing, math) you teach?

[Textbox provided for entry]

APPENDIX E:

MANIPULATION CHECK QUESTIONS

What was the gender of the student?

[Textbox provided for entry]

What was the occupation of the student's father?

[Textbox provided for entry]

In which extracurricular activities did the student participate?

[Textbox provided for entry]

What was the occupation of the student's mother?

[Textbox provided for entry]