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# *Writer's Statement for "The Language Transition Process and Its Influence on Language Use"*

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While I have been reading and writing since I was very young, I only began using the English language a year before I started college at UCF. During my first day as a student in Professor Foley's ENC 1102 class, we were told that we would be writing a 15-page research paper by the end of the semester. Immediately, I was very intimidated and honestly did not think I would be successful in the class. I had almost no experience with academic writing, and even speaking English was a challenge to me at the time. I knew I would have to dedicate a lot of time towards the class, but I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and do the best I could to better myself as an American student.

Being an English language learner at a big university like UCF can be very challenging. I have been through situations where I felt underestimated because I was not able to pronounce certain words correctly or even complete tasks as fast as the students who were born here. When Professor Foley told us we would be working on a research project with the goal of presenting it to the entire class at the end of the semester, I thought it would be a good opportunity to provide the class some insight on what it feels like to be an English language student. I know I am not the only one going through this situation, and I wanted to dedicate myself to maybe change some student's perspectives of English language learners when presenting my research.

When choosing the specific topic of the paper I remembered that it is very common for me to combine Portuguese and English vocabulary and even make up "new words" in order to express exactly what I want when talking to someone who is also bilingual. During conversations with other Portuguese-English speakers, I have noticed that they also do the same thing. In addition to that, most of the bilinguals end up not even noticing when something like that happens. It happens naturally and both ends rarely notice when it does. This always caught my attention during conversations, but I never developed that thought until Professor Foley's ENC 1102 class. I began to look into the topic and I was surprised by the fact that I could not find specific research studies related to the language transition process and what it entails. I was still curious to see how that affects the way in which Portuguese-English bilinguals have a conversation, so I decided to focus the semester on learning more about something that happens to me on a daily basis.

When I started my research project, everything developed in a natural way. I was very surprised by how people would enthusiastically agree with me when I started talking about certain characteristics of the transition process I noticed. During the interviews, I noticed we all observed the same things, and it was comforting to know we were not the only ones. My interest in the topic continued to grow as I learned more about myself and the people close to me. Before this class, I never thought I could address such an important topic and touch the audience with my research. With the amazing support of my professor, Chris Foley, I was able to overcome myself and succeed

in the assigned tasks. The intimidating research paper was not overwhelming anymore. I was able to not only become a better writer, but also gain more insight on the situation I am going through.

I was very satisfied with the results of the research paper because after the presentation at the end of the year, a few students talked to me about how they didn't know what that process was like, or that they never thought about international students in that way. I am very glad that, with the support of my professor and peers, I was able to touch on a topic so dear to me, and that I was able to pass on at least a little bit about my experience and the experience of my family and friends to others. In addition, when talking about the research in general, my friends expressed a lot of interest in the topic and usually wanted to know more about it. I see this opportunity as a great way of sharing and providing awareness. International students learning the language can sometimes feel excluded, and addressing this important topic more often would be beneficial to English language learners, especially at universities with a large international community like UCF.