

## IAP Project Proposal

Baburhan Uzum

“One language, one soul; two languages, two...and so on” (Turkish proverb).

“I do not call the sod under my feet my country; but language, religion, government, blood -- identity in these makes men of one country” (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834, British poet)

For my IAP project, I would like study theories of language, identity and nationalism with James Madison College students. In the form of reading or discussion groups, we can explore how identities are enacted through discourse, what identities are revealed in a piece of language, how identities are constructed, negotiated and displayed/marketted in written and oral discourse. Using the theoretical and conceptual framework of James Paul Gee’s discourse analysis, we can read (a) scholarly articles on the proposed topics from Asian, European and American contexts, (b) transcriptions of public speeches of political and inspirational figures and analyze the identities and relationships negotiated in the discourse activity, and (c) newspaper and magazine articles with contrasting opinions on a given topic to explore how authors/speakers foreground one piece of information to increase its significance while backgrounding irrelevant or contradicting information. In these readings, we can look at the discourse used by the authors/speakers, and ask the questions: How are social goods (power, status, etc.) distributed in this piece of language? How is this piece of language used to make certain things significant or not? and what sort of relationships and connections does this piece of language aim to enact? The purpose of group discussions is to see how language can be a political (by political I mean the distribution of social goods) medium to perform certain identities and activities in various discourse communities and can be utilized, treasured, and even manipulated by speakers/authors.