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The Emancipating Potential of Linguistic Justice: Standardized Language and Writing Practices in Higher Education and the Reproduction of Oppressive Structures

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Abstract

Linguistic injustice, defined as the coercive and unjust pressure for language shifts and linguistic assimilation following colonialist standards, has been cited as a significant issue in academia. Considering the discriminatory history of the United States' education system and in light of the significant relationship between language and identity, this thesis explores how linguistic injustice in higher education supports the reproduction of oppressive systems, such as capitalism, White supremacy, and Western Imperialism. Using ethnographic materials collected via interviews with current multilingual international students, international student alumni, and current faculty members, my work at the Writing and Language Center, and my experiences as a multilingual international student, this thesis outlines how linguistic injustice manifests at Bates College. Analysis of students' experiences with linguistic injustice highlights how the discriminatory linguistic practices and dominant writing pedagogy at Bates College contribute to the marginalization of minority identities in academia and force students to give up parts of their identities in the process. This thesis additionally offers some recommendations for possible changes to the current pedagogy and proposes new practices to counteract this linguistic injustice.

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Introduction

My interest in linguistic justice began towards the end of my freshman year at Bates College, in a course called “Theory and Practice of Writing and Tutoring.” I came into Bates College thinking I wanted to be an English major with a concentration in creative writing. Ever since I was young, I loved writing as a way of self-expression. I joined that class in the hopes of refreshing my proper English because I saw myself struggling during my first year at Bates College as an international student. My experiences in class, the feedback I was receiving from faculty, and the way I saw my writing stand out when we’d go around reading our work aloud in my First-Year Seminar indicated to me that I needed to work harder to improve my English further. I hoped for this class to help me in doing so by reviewing the basics; things like grammar, syntax, organization, and whatnot. Luckily, this class sparked a change in my relationship with writing, and it highlighted to me important problems that had been affecting my relationship with both my languages, Arabic and English. Throughout that course, my professors focused on exposing us to a wide variety of writing styles, identities, and linguistic repertoires that I had not seen in my previous classes that year. They encouraged us to communicate in all of our languages and dialects and hoped to show us the significance of giving those languages the space they require to thrive and communicate the knowledge they possessed within them. I learned in that class the concept of linguistic racism, code-switching and code-meshing, the documented relationship between language and identity, and the idea of a standard academic English language that dominates academic spaces. Up until that point, I had believed standard academic English was a natural part of my academic career, and that my experience with that language was mainly driven by my level of hard work and commitment.

Most importantly, that course highlighted to me the ways in which I had been driven to neglect my native tongue and how I had lost my ability to communicate effectively and authentically using it. I indeed felt disconnected from my voice in Arabic, and I felt as though I did not have the tools or spaces necessary to recultivate that relationship again. I saw myself in sections, each speaking with a different perspective and pulling me in an opposite direction. My Arabic voice reminded me of home; of family weddings and sunny Friday mornings, a *finjan gahwa* with my dad, and a *nafas argeeleh* with my mom. My Arabic voice cared for love, laughter, and memories. My English voice is concerned with politics, the economy, theories and histories, and the objective truth. It does not care about how I feel, sad or happy, and it rarely lets me think on my own without wondering what old, White men before me thought. My English voice cared for academic success, financial gain, and personal development.

After my experience in that class, I dedicated my time to helping spread awareness about linguistic injustice on campus. I assisted in planning workshops, presenting on panels, and thinking about faculty and student outreach to advance the conversation throughout campus. What I learned through those experiences is that I was certainly not the only one plagued with these issues and the fracture that they caused to the relationship I have with my language and identity. Many others had felt how their language was being stripped from them, how they have been losing command over their languages and struggling to appropriately express themselves using them. Many have felt inadequate in their classes and slowly learned to hate writing in general or at least dislike their own. This project is an accumulation of three years' worth of investment in this work. It benefits from countless conversations with people, students, faculty, and staff, and it pulls from the knowledge I had been granted by virtue of misreading a course description and taking a class for the wrong reasons. It is influenced by the number of times I

have seen students cry at the Writing and Language Center because of some feedback they had received from their professors and by the overwhelming desire to produce perfect work to reaffirm their place at this institution. It is motivated by a desire to never let another student feel lost in their own language. My project is a result of my own hope to one day regain my connection to my language, to feel so empowered by it, to appreciate its nuance and difference, and to acknowledge the wealth of knowledge passed down to me by my ancestors enough to let it guide how I see the world. Until then, I wrote this thesis to question the conditions that have made this the case, to begin with.

My project will examine the language and writing culture at Bates College, and provide an analysis of the relationship between academic linguistic norms found in traditional Western academia and the marginalization of multilingual students by destabilizing their relationship to their languages. It aims to understand how the current traditional model of writing and language education, as historically constructed around a colonialist, eurocentric theory of knowledge and learning, is responsible for harming and disenfranchising minoritized students in academia and beyond. It will build upon scholarship surrounding education and decolonization, and evaluate language use in academia to understand how standardized language teaching practices perpetuate the exclusion of certain identities from academic spaces, and at Bates College specifically, which in turn supports an assimilation project that maintains established power hierarchies. Throughout this work, I will attempt to answer the following:

- Why is language an important lens to use? What unique insight into theorizing identity does it bring?
    - To what extent, if at all, does linguistic injustice manifest itself at Bates College?

    - How are language and writing taught at Bates College? What shapes these methods and how are they commonly used within this particular academic context?
    - How are those methods perceived by the students at Bates College and why?
- How are these methods shaped by the larger colonial and racist context of the institution? What political agenda do these barriers work to accomplish or support? What does it mean for the learning process to be shaped by these forces?
- How, if at all, do these traditional structures of academia, primarily the emphasis on Standard Academic English writing and speaking, maintain hegemonic social structures such as White supremacy, colonialism, and imperialism? How can these methods be changed to dismantle these oppressive structures?

Method

For my work, I specifically chose to focus on the experiences of international students at Bates College. This population is chosen specifically for two reasons: firstly, I am an international student. This provides me with at least a basic level of understanding of the "international experience" at Bates and a starting place for the sorts of questions I would ask. Secondly, the international student population is positioned as outsiders to this academic space. I believed that the international student population would provide a particularly unique perspective that connects to larger global structures, as well as provides intersecting views concerning class, race, and ethnicity. Especially since the international student population is vastly diverse across those identity lines, working with them allowed for a wider conclusion that touches upon multiple issues. Nonetheless, these issues are also important to multilingual American students, and especially BIPOC Americans, and the findings of this project can similarly be applied to

highlight how these groups are affected by the standardization of language and writing at academic institutions.

To answer my questions, I collected ethnographic materials in a few different ways:

1. Interviews

I conducted interviews with 9 current students at Bates, 4 international student alumni, and 5 Bates College faculty members from various departments. Some of the questions that I asked during these interviews included:

- What languages do you speak? How long have you been using these languages? How did you learn them?
    - Where do you use these languages? Are there places where you avoid using some? Are there places where you feel encouraged to use them?
    - Which of these languages do you use at home? In class? With friends?
    - Do you find that you have different voices in each of those languages? What has been your experience navigating those different voices?
- **For current students and alumni only:** What has been your experience with writing at Bates?
    - Can you think of any particularly bad experiences? Can you think of any particularly good ones? What made them either good or bad?
    - What type of feedback did you receive on your writing at Bates? What do you think of that feedback?
    - Has that feedback changed the type of relationship you have with writing? Did you find that feedback helpful?

- **For faculty only:** What role does writing and language play in your classes? What types of writing assignments do you use in your classes?
    - How do you approach those assignments with your class?
    - What standards do you use to assess students' writing?
    - How do you grade those assignments? What are your expectations? How do you communicate them to your students?
    - What types of feedback do you give your students?
    - What do you believe makes effective or good writing? Why?
- **For alumni students only:** How have you navigated language and writing since you graduated from Bates? Do you think your experience at Bates had a great impact on you?
    - Do you think your writing experience at Bates helped you in some ways? How?
    - Do you think your writing experience at Bates harmed you in some ways? How?

Almost all conversations ended up moving in their unique direction, influenced by each individual's experiences. Throughout this thesis, all students are referred to by random pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. Also, since some students are the only ones from their countries at Bates, I avoided using specific country or language names, and often referred to them only as "home country" or "native language."

2. Autoethnography

As an international student, part of this work was autoethnographic and it examined my personal experiences with language, scholarship, and academia at Bates College. Autoethnography has different definitions, but one way to describe it is a method of conducting research that looks to connect the larger social context to the personal and intimate (Ellis, 2004). Much of my interest in this subject developed because of how my identity is positioned within

Western academia and some of the hardships that I went through during that transition and assimilation process. I believed it to be important to not only acknowledge that connection in my work but also try to understand it more deeply as it relates to other students in an effort to create a larger, more broad analysis of those experiences. Additionally, I found that the inclusion of autoethnography is helpful because it deconstructs many of the labels traditionally placed on knowledge production and writing within traditional academia, which methodologically aligned with my project's goals very well. Often labeled as subjective and therefore "unacademic" due to the objectivity-focused nature of Western academia, self-reflection provides the necessary understanding and inclusion of a unique positionality to the work. It inhabits more progressive anthropological methods that recognize objectivity is both impossible and unnecessary in the traditional sense. I am not only someone who seeks to understand students' experiences with the Bates academic system and its larger social and political contexts but also a student who is consistently experiencing this system and is impacted by it.

3. The Writing and Language Center.

A portion of my ethnographic materials is a result of my work on campus as a Writing & Language Center student manager and general drop-in writing tutor. This is my third year as a writing tutor at Bates College and my second year as a student manager. My work has exposed me to a wealth of knowledge about the way writing and language are treated at Bates, both through students' work and my engagement with the professional staff at the center. These experiences are particularly important in constructing and communicating the condition of writing and language culture at Bates and it speaks to its issues and needs. I used those experiences to supplement my work throughout this project and pulled from them knowledge that was crucial in building this project. Very importantly, this knowledge was always alluded to

implicitly, without compromising the identity of anyone in particular, but rather used to put any specific findings within the context of students' experiences that congregate in the Writing and Language Center space.

Why Writing?

My thesis is specifically looking into the process of writing because of the connection it has to identity and self-expression. I intentionally choose to examine the process of writing because it has long been considered a significant, and powerful action. Especially for marginalized people in the United States, writing has been one way for people to affirm their experiences, stories, and needs, and to communicate themselves as capable of producing significant and valuable knowledge. Gloria Anzaldua argues for the importance of writing by stating, "Why am I compelled to write? Because the writing saves me from this complacency I fear. Because I have no choice. Because I must keep the spirit of my revolt and myself alive. Because the world I create in the writing compensates for what the real world does not give me. By writing I put order in the world, give it a handle so I can grasp it. I write because life does not appease my appetites and hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you" (Anzaldua 1981, 168-169). This is one powerful, personal, and political message made in blatant resistance to largely accepted and stereotypical perception of what constitutes proper writing and the way that writing has been manipulated in our academic environments into a policed, standard, and practical medium. In our modern perception of writing, and considering the history of the dominant practice of academic knowledge production, academic writing has been reduced to simply describing "the ability to understand and command the specialized language practices of the academic disciplines in order to learn, communicate, and participate in these disciplines" (Neal 2015, 12). Academic writing

standards, with their distinctive formats, tones, or structures, have been established as common languages assigned to separate specializations to allow for communication among scholars within their prospective fields. The process of knowledge production through writing in academia has therefore become a way to assert belonging in inclusive, elitist academic environments, and to exclude writing which does not conform to those standards as illegitimate or invaluable.

My project hopes to deconstruct some of those rules and limitations that have been placed upon writing in the academy. It takes inspiration from Gloria Anzaldúa, who writes, “Throw away abstraction and the academic learning, the rules, the map and compass. Feel your way without blinders. To touch more people, the personal realities and the social must be evoked-not through rhetoric but through blood and pus and sweat. Write with your eyes like painters, with your ears like musicians, with your feet like dancers. You are the truthsayer with quill and torch. Write with your tongues of fire. Don't let the pen banish you from yourself. Don't let the ink coagulate in your pens. Don't let the censor snuff out the spark, nor the gags muffle your voice. Put your shit on the paper. We are not reconciled to the oppressors who whet their howl on our grief. We are not reconciled” (Anzaldúa 1981, 173). While writing systems may differ in their particular details between the various academic fields and departments, the dominant expectations of standard academic English still stand and particular linguistic norms are expected from students within the academic environment. While a humanities class, a STEM class, and an art class all may employ different assignments, standards, expectations, and specific methods of teaching, many of them maintain similar principles about academic writing that center on idealized eurocentric and White values. Building upon Anzaldúa’s words, the dominant linguistic

norms of the academy are an extension of the oppressor's goals, and while the details may be different, the values being communicated are grounded in the oppressor's values.

Marginalized, multilingual students have long been forced to give up parts of themselves in the hope that they will be able to enter and be accepted into elite academic environments and professional spaces. Those students are often told to separate their languages, that there is a good and a bad language and they must learn to keep the two apart. Those languages are an extension of students' stories, cultures, and histories. It is an extension of the powers which dominate our society and it affects the conditions that students navigate within an academic institution. Multilingual students continue to learn to force parts of themselves out to suit the standards of those with privilege and power. This project hopes to push back against that and hopefully, assist students in seeing a space to integrate their full sleeves into their work, unencumbered by unequal social hierarchies and power dynamics. It takes inspiration from Neisha-Anne S. Green, who writes, "there was and will always be more than some influencing going on… there is some bullying going on in my academic, professional and social selves that seeps into my speech and writing. My goal now as a more learned student is to continue merging my selves, even the so-called "bad," into the best most true self that I can be" (Green 2016, 77).

Bates College and Higher Education

I chose to specifically examine language and writing within the parameters of higher education because I believed it occupies a powerful position. Bates College represents a particular type of institution that claims that social justice is a tenant of its work, and that diversity and inclusion are an important part of what it does, all while its methods of instruction, structure, and curriculum are in constant contradiction with these values. This creates an interesting dynamic between minoritized students and the institution, one where students are

forced to represent values of diversity and inclusion by attending this institution, contribute to its work by offering their personal experiences, insights, and emotional labor, but not do so too much that it would endanger the institution's political and economic interests. I wrote this work to try and highlight this contradiction and offer ways for Bates College to address it. I hope that I can support Bates College in making progress in its goals for achieving true diversity, equity, and inclusion and note the subtle ways in which oppressive structures have been able to persist within its walls for so many years. I hope for my work to truly support the efforts and conversations that have been had on smaller scales all around campus, and encourage Bates College to take the steps necessary to resolve these issues. If not, I hope my work will simply empower students to use and take pride in their voices, to become conditional in their contributions until they are properly appreciated, to let go of the standards of writing that have been imposed upon them, and to no longer let the critiques they receive on their languages to tear them down, but prove to them they are furthering the work for social justice. I would hope that students can take this work as a sign to rebel against these structures in the way they see fit for them and to know that the choices they make will always be a reflection of their hard work, commitment, and intelligence in how they continue to find ways of surviving these systems.

Literature Review

Introduction

While the politics of language seemed like a natural avenue for me to explore when thinking about advancing social justice or discussing issues of diversity and inclusion in higher education, it was still important for me to ask: Why is language a meaningful subject to examine? What prompts me to suggest that something is wrong with the way education is structured in the U.S.? What does it mean for academia to do better for its marginalized students? Apart from my opinion and background, these topics have been a focal point in previous scholarship. Many have directed their attention to these issues throughout the years and have documented the explicit and implicit goals of education in the U.S., theorized a connection between identity and language, compiled evidence to support one pedagogy over another and outlined the persistent impact of colonialism in education. My project is a product of the intersection between these earlier works and the necessary change they describe. I wonder how, if at all, can we use a newfound understanding of the intertwined nature of identity, language, political and economic systems, and the continuous, sometimes seemingly unending project of decolonization to advance the liberation of marginalized peoples?

This literature review outlines the theoretical bases for my project and expands upon its branches. It discusses the components necessary to contextualize the overarching questions I ask and provides a logical framework to analyze the ethnographic materials collected throughout the research process. The following literature review takes a topical approach to organizing previous scholarship. The decision to do so is in part because each of the concepts addressed contains deep complexity and nuance that must be given enough attention. With a proper understanding of each, I can draw out some beneficial connections to investigate. More importantly, this review

intentionally includes what is considered to be non-traditional scholarship. This is a direct extension of my project's aims— to deconstruct prescriptive labels that intentionally exclude certain types of knowledge from the academic domain.

Education In The United States: What It Wants To Do & How It Does It

In light of the United States' history, it is no surprise that the American education system has consistently shown itself to be a means to some structural end— a method of creation, production, alteration, and indoctrination that fits within the parameters of the political and economic landscape of the time. One understanding of this education system is that it is a machine explicitly coded to output non-threatening, productive individuals; committed laborers, and disciplined members of the working class. Scholarship has suggested that goals of education in the United States are not as noble as one may want to believe, and this isn't necessarily difficult to uncover. In 2006, The International Bureau of Education claimed that the goals of education in the States are to "enable all children to achieve their highest potential as individuals, serve effectively as citizens of a free society, and successfully compete in a changing global marketplace" (International Bureau of Education 2006). The Biden Harris administration has emphasized the importance of an education that "[provides] every middle and high school student a path to a successful career" (The Biden Plan For Educators, Students, And Our Future 2021). The United States Department of Education's website states, "Our mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access" (U.S. Department of Education 2021). These statements are similar in that each circles back to the production of an effective and productive worker as the cornerstone of the American education system, and it can be traced back to its original founding. Benjamin Rush, a prominent contributor to the early construction of education in the

United States, describes it as such that, “the greatest task of a republic is the establishment of an educational system in accord with the form of government” (Rush, cited in Holder Jr. 1988, 409). Rush wrote, “Our schools of learning, by producing one general, and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government...This must be done, if we expect them to perform their parts properly, in the great machine of the government of the state” (Runes 1947, 87-92). The imagery of the machine previously used was not a cynical one, but a true representation of what American education is built to be.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that the production of the necessary workers is not the only significant goal of this system. Rush spoke of a homogeneous population, essentially indicating a necessity for creating a population with a uniform set of beliefs and abilities. To meld the population requires the elimination of the ‘other’ among them. Native Americans have historically been one ‘other’ the United States is fighting against. Scholars state, “institutionalized throughout the nation and exported to other countries… portrayals of the good Indian (those who help Europeans) and the bad Indian (those who resist Europeans), nostalgic vanishing, brave warriors, romantic princesses, and countless ignoble images of brutality and degradation. Such representations obliterate or mask the realities of tribal nations struggling to maintain their populations, lands, resources, and sovereignty” (Hirschfelder & Molin 2018). American political leaders found it beneficial to ‘remove the Indian’ to maintain the intended composition of the country. Native Americans were on the receiving end of an acculturation process, and education was the primary method for it. Hiram Price, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs between 1881 and 1885, summed up their logic by stating, “It is cheaper to give them education than to fight them” (Price 1885). Scholars describe the way Native American children

were forced into the education system by stating, “federal Indian schools pressed Indian students into a strictly homogenous mold of dress, appearance, and (limited) educational opportunity… trained them to adopt the work discipline of the Protestant ethic and to accept their proper place in society as a marginal class” (Lomawaima 1993, 236).

This process of altering the other was physical and material, and it reflects within it the structure from which the modern education system of the United States extends, yet it is nonetheless ideological; the installation of the core values of the American way of life, the supremacy of a White European understanding of life. In 2021, the sentiment surrounding what constitutes a core American culture hasn’t strayed far away from early ideologies. In April of 2021, former U.S. senator Rick Santorum exclaimed in a speech, “We came here and created a blank slate… We birthed a nation from nothing. I mean, there was nothing here. I mean, yes we have Native Americans, but candidly there isn't much Native American culture in American culture” (Fitzsimons 2021). The blatant disregard for the displacement and genocide of Native Americans, as well as their contributions to the country, is both a product of a defective education system and a reflection of its purpose. Choices made to either exclude certain knowledge or represent only one type of knowledge support a singular understanding of present structures and one’s role in them. By extension, these limitations have contributed to the reproduction of racist sentiments common in the United States. The racial hierarchy of the United States is maintained in part through its education system and it can occur through a variety of methods— such as the underfunding of predominately Black schools (The Century Foundation 2020), the criminalization of Black and brown students by the school to prison pipeline (Welch 2017), or the institutionalized discrimination against Black and brown bodies (Mbilishaka 2020). Research indicates that both historically and until today, the United States

education system was built to promote the interests of the state and to sustain its larger political goals, maintaining homogeneity and White, European dominance.

Furthermore, it is significant to recall the history of constructing racial identities around economic and class powers. This continuous process of assimilation and the elimination of the 'other' among Americans was done in contingency with the establishment of the American economy, which is reliant on a subservient, easily exploited class. Scholarship highlights that "racism formed an indispensable weapon in the armory of the state elites, used to limit multi-ethnic cooperation and contain the class struggles waged by subaltern populations with a view to restoring social order and making the system safe for capitalist accumulation" (Virdee 2019, 22). The othering of certain groups worked in collaboration with education to create a single shared identity centered around productivity. This process of maintaining political and economic structures, and the social order defined the system's methods. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis in *Schooling in Capitalist America* highlight some of the ways that education structures in the U.S. correspond to prominent capitalist work structures which aim to enforce not only hierarchy within the social domain but also the standardization of knowledge to fit within the boundaries of the American workforce (Bowles & Gintis 1976). What American schools choose to teach is commonly associated with some long-term future benefits of helping students integrate into their work environments. It states, "the possibility of revolutionary reforms in education arises from the contradiction… between the objectives of corporate employers and other privileged elites— to use school to perpetuate the capitalist system and its structure of wealth and power— and the needs of just about everyone else for a school system dedicated to greater equality and fuller human development" (Bowles & Gintis 1976, 263). They continued on to argue that "schools prepare people for adult work rules, by socializing people to

function well, and without complaint, in the hierarchical structure of the modern corporation" (Bowles & Gintis 2002, 1). While there are valid critiques of their work, they offer significant insights into the connection between structure and purpose. Scholars argue that "schools and education are best understood in a larger social and economic context. But Bowles and Gintis give it a particularly sharp twist, namely that American schools should be understood in terms of their functions in life under capitalism. They summarize this in the notion that schools have "re-produced the social relations of production" (Cohen & Rosenberg 1977, 133).

Robinson sums up the significance of these connections through the questions, "what type of human capital does the emerging global capitalist system require for it to function?... What type of educational system would be able to deliver such a mass of humanity endowed with, or lacking in, the sets of skills, knowledge, and mental facilities needed to meet these requirements" (Robinson 2016, 1). These questions prompt us to consider a possible alternative or to simply imagine a way out of a structure that is intentionally meant to marginalize a large population of people throughout the history of the United States.

Something Is Wrong With Higher Education

As such, scholarship urgently demands a change in America's approach to education. This necessity is particularly striking in higher education institutions because research has noted that "[universities] are institutions whose symbolic power and capital extend way beyond their campus geographies as their graduates take up elite and leadership positions in the wider social and political world… universities are themselves very much constituent players in the forces of structural social differentiation" (Neal 2017, 2291). In the contexts of these institutions, the shortcomings of the American education system manifest themselves more clearly, particularly within issues of identity and injustice. One scholar states, "white students attending elite

universities are greatly influenced by the color-blind frame that dominated their pre-college lives… shaped in part by neighborhood segregation and the school experiences of many of our respondents prior to college… The color-blind and diversity frames seem to co-occur in students' lives in ways that lead to ambivalence with respect to many race-related policies and racially marked experiences" (Warikoo & Novais 2015, 871). Higher education institutions either disregard the limitations of secondary education in the U.S. or do not recognize them as limitations, and in both cases, individuals with marginalized identities are harmed when attending these institutions because they lack adequate inclusion of their experiences and needs within their frameworks. A Native American faculty member at a state university in the midwest recalls his experience with discrimination and describes the issue by stating, "In my opinion, most higher education institutions, including this university, have carefully insulated themselves against 'those people' and the 'problems' they cause. In spite of the lofty rhetoric espoused by faculty and administration in general regarding rational thought, objectivity, and the intellectual process, and in spite of the lip-service paid to diversity and multiculturalism" (Mato Nunpa 2003, 350). Furthermore, the issue transcends a surface-level disregard for the emotional and physical well-being of marginalized individuals but is a deep-rooted problem stemming from the institution's construction. One scholar wrote that minority students "[undergo] emotional hardships because of the imposition of stereotypes and the pressure to conform to the expectations of those who represented the dominant social structure… this form of education was not about attaining knowledge but about socialization into a social structure" (Gareau 2003, 198). These works among others have highlighted the necessity of uprooting the methods through which education is conducted in the United States, and have documented relentlessly the ways through which minority individuals, particularly BIPOC students, are harmed.

One way that harm has been perpetuated in higher education is through linguistic discrimination. Language discrimination is important to address when thinking about reforming American education. Gerald Roche defines linguistic injustice as the coercive and unjust pressure for language shifts and linguistic assimilation following colonialist understandings of language and perpetuated by an "uneven distribution of resources and respect," which results in the marginalization of minority identities in academia (Roche 2019, 2). While some have argued against this claim of linguistic inequality in academic settings, alleging that there is no substantial evidence to claim a disadvantage, other scholars have responded to this criticism by explaining linguistic injustice through exposing linguistic privilege, which according to them "manifests in many ways, including easier access to political and social institutions (e.g., having legal processes available in one's native language), access to linguistic capital (e.g., job opportunities), and being perceived positively (e.g., as more educated)" (Politzer-Ahles 2016, 4). This is not a recent phenomenon and it can be traced back to a long history of stigmatizing, problematizing, and devaluing non-dominant, minority languages in the United States, and it is particularly notable in academic settings. Thinking back to the processes of coerced assimilation that Native Americans endured, banning the use of native languages was a specifically significant approach utilized by colonizers. It is known in the case of Indigenous children who were forcibly removed from their families and placed into boarding schools that "torture was used to punish children for using [their] Aboriginal languages" (Smith 2004, 91). Linguistic discrimination remains prevalent in America, and it is a particular extension of the way America has long demonized BIPOC identities. Carter G. Woodson writes, "in the study of language in school pupils were made to scoffat the Negro dialect as some peculiar possession of the Negro which they should despise rather than directed to study the background of this language as a

broken-down African tongue –in short to understand their own linguistic history" (Woodson 1993, 33). Demeaning languages spoken by minority groups in the United States is in part due to the cultural significance that those languages have to people's identities. Robbins Burling's 1973 book, *English in Black and White,* is one of many pieces of scholarship[1] which argued for the cultural significance of African American English, and the social and political implications that surround the use of different forms of English and other languages in predominantly White spaces, specifically in academia. It highlights the political implications of linguistic injustice and the way it is driven by past colonial ideologies of knowledge and linguistic supremacy intertwined with racial discrimination.

Scholarship agrees that models of forced linguistic shifts within academia affect the academic experience of marginalized groups in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and hinder their ability to not only perform well but to engage with and contribute freely to the existing pool of scholarship and knowledge within their fields. As such, it appears that higher education maintains the hegemonic devaluing of certain languages, which pushes against "shifts of consciousness that prepare us to see and react to the socio‐political contexts that so heavily influence education theory and practice" (Gorski 2008, 515). African American English speakers commonly navigate the exclusion of their languages from academia. Describing her experience watching her Black peers speaking and writing in AAVE, Wonderful Faison writes, "I never would dream of speaking or even writing that way in school. What was wrong with these kids? Didn't they get it? Didn't they understand that if you can't speak and write English you can't make it in the United States? How were they going to get jobs? How were they going to have

[1] Other works that look similarly at 'Black English' include books by J. L. Dillard (1972), Russell John Rickford (2000), Geneva Smitherman (1977), and others as such, which situate this language within a larger cultural context.

their voices heard if they kept speaking this vile, putrid, inferior form of English or rather slang?" Reflecting on her past ways of thinking, she then went on to say, "If I said it befo' I done said it a thousand times: If you cain't take the BLACK off my face you sure cain't take the BLACK off my tongue. My language is ME and I am my language. It lives. It moves. It breathes. To kill my language is to kill me. Period. Point blank. End of story" (Faison 2014). Marginalized identities have long been forced to self-censor in White spaces. Barbara Cameron in *This Bridge Called My Back* writes, "there is an Indian way of talking that is an essential part of me. I like it, I love it, yet I deny it. I "save" it for when I'm around other Indians… white people seem so surprised to find brown people who can speak fluent English and are even perhaps educated. We then become 'articulate'" (Cameron 1981, 49).

There is a hierarchy placed upon languages in the United States and widely accepted labels of appropriateness, intelligence, and sophistication, which are derived from a history that demonized the identities these languages communicate. Those harmed by that hierarchy utilize strategies to avoid the repercussions, such as using the process of code-switching. Through code-switching, the person alternates between different forms of expression, those being different language varieties or dialects, in different contexts. Early scholarship on code-switching included Pieter Muysken's 1995 *Code-switching And Grammatical Theory,* which looked to organize how code-switching was used, and Charles DeBose's 1992 *Codeswitching: Black English and Standard English in the African-American linguistic repertoire* which looked to see when multilingual speakers used code-switching, in what contexts, and why. Early works understood this as a random process occurring in multilingual individuals, but more recently, scholarship has become more concerned with the implications of boundaries controlling language use, and what it means for academic settings to have standardized languages in the

classroom and the curriculum. The process of code-switching seems to maintain colonial assumptions around knowledge and intelligence because it relies on constructed binaries that label one language as an academic language and others as non-academic languages. Therefore, languages primarily used by Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are labeled as unacademic, while standard academic English commonly used by White people is thought to be the appropriate language to use. Vershawn Ashanti Young's 2009 *Nah, We Straight: An Argument Against Code Switching* claims that the modern use of code-switching is "not about accommodating two language varieties in one speech act… rather [characterizes] the teaching of language conversion" (Young 2009, 50). In agreement, Elkin adds on to say that "Code-switching is one strategy that students use to navigate the social class. Code-switching occurs when individuals choose their styles of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, and identity performance based on the situation and who is involved" (Elkin et al. 2018, 35).

Language, Identity, And Processes Of Construction

The significance of addressing linguistic injustice comes as a result of the connection between languages and the construction of personal and cultural identity for individuals and populations. Scholarship has argued that language must be maintained as a focal point in the process of advancing social justice, as "language is seldom neutral; it is infused with meaning, power, and status. Language can be a powerful ideological tool that embodies assumptions about how our world is ordered, and how it may be changed" (Hawkins 2001, 2). Franz Boas's foundational work suggested that language and culture are distinctly and significantly connected by stating, "a thorough insight into ethnology can not be gained without practical knowledge of the language, [because] the peculiar characteristics of languages are reflected in the views and customs of the peoples of the world" (Boas 1911, 73). This understanding is not unique only to

ethnographic work. Different fields have also adopted a similar approach to language, including psychology (Noels et al. 1996), sociology (Fishman 1971), and gender studies (Eckert & Ginet 1988). Across different approaches and theories, language has consistently and unsurprisingly proven to be a significant part of what it means to be an individual existing in a particular context.

Furthermore, the complexity of language extends beyond the individual's relationship with their society, as scholarship maintains that language does not passively sit within a context but is active in constructing it. The Speech Act theory proposed by JL Austin in *How to Do Things with Words*, argues that words not only can mean things, but they can also do things and that less emphasis should be placed on what words mean within a language and more on what people do with this language. Others have gone on to suggest maintaining an explicit emphasis on intention and purpose, the overt behavior attached to language, the context, the effect, and the social consequences (Allwoods 1977, 6). Language functions as an active agent in the reality of people. Michel Foucault argued that language both manifests as a part of and develops the discourses people experience reality through and influences the way they understand and navigate relations of power. Particularly, he argued that discourse around sexuality arose from sexual repression and an associated inability to discuss sex freely. He writes, "but is sex hidden from us, concealed by a new sense of decency, kept under a bushel by the grim necessities of bourgeois society? On the contrary, it shines forth; it is incandescent" (Foucault 1990, 77). He argued that language transcended boundaries by not simply being either a result or a cause. Nonetheless, in *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, Marilyn Strathern agrees with this idea but continues on to argue that language does not only create people's realities but that in a language there are dominant particular metaphors

that qualify people's understanding of certain concepts, which influences their social structures and broader cultural perceptions. These metaphors are unique to people's lived experiences and are significant in building a holistic understanding of a culture. For example, Strathern argues that the Western understanding of the gender binary and the relationship hierarchies that are produced as a part of it are a metaphor that dominates Western reality, but it is not the same in a different culture. Therefore, one cannot analyze gender relations within that culture without using their particular metaphors of gender (Strathern 1988).

These works reiterate the significance of language and support demands of implementing necessary change to combat linguistic injustice. Language discrimination in the American education system is a manifestation of an intentional exclusion of the identities attached to these languages. Different languages contain within them specific cultural knowledge, such as "the languages of the Arctic Indigenous peoples [that] sustain traditional Indigenous livelihoods and knowledge. Rich knowledge and unique cultural expression are embedded within each Indigenous language… [and are] important for the well-being of the Indigenous peoples, as Indigenous languages support traditional ways of life that contribute to Indigenous peoples' health, cultural vitality, and overall well-being" (Arctic Council 2021). Furthermore, Gloria Anzaldua writes, "Because white eyes do not want to know us, they do not bother to learn our language, the language which reflects us, our culture, our spirit. The schools we attended or didn't attend did not give us the skills for writing nor the confidence that we were correct in using our class and ethnic languages" (Anzaldua 1981, 165). Using these languages is an act of resistance against the assimilation project exhibited by education in the United States, and research highlights that in the process of advancing social justice pushing against linguistic discrimination is a must.

Combating Linguistic Injustice

Addressing linguistic injustice requires actively including non-dominant language in the academic domain. Artificial barriers push these languages to the periphery in the process of knowledge production under the guise of professionalism, effectiveness, and standardization. In response, recent scholarship has offered code-meshing as an approach specifically designed to dismantle these barriers. Code-meshing is defined by Young and Martínez's *Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance* as the process of mixing two or more linguistic varieties to produce a more complex and effective mode of communication, and is a natural, functional, and effective use of the different codes that each speaker uses. They argue that code-meshing is a more progressive structure for language use as compared to code-switching, which both Young and Elkin et al. argue supports arbitrary language divides and power hierarchies. Code-meshing "begins with the belief that it is possible for people to live their lives free of the compulsion to choose between language varieties… knocking down the artificial ideological walls between language varieties" (Young and Martinez 2011, xii). An example of that is the work of Neisha-Anne S Green, whose essay, "The re-education of Neisha-Anne S Green: A close look at the damaging effect of 'A Standard Approach', the benefits of code meshing, and the role allies play in this work," offered an analysis of her autoethnography, exploring issues surrounding code-switching and the struggles that she had to face as a multilingual writer. She described the inevitable loss of knowledge that happens when certain languages and dialects are excluded from academic spaces. And more importantly, she wrote about how the process of censoring and misrepresenting one's self to be able to fit within academia was harmful. She states, "as a younger student everyone kept trying to change me, shape me into a "newer, better" version of myself by policing and limiting my use of my codes

and pushing agendas that focused on a standard that we know doesn't exist in the way that is usually professed" (Green 2016, 77).

Research supports the notion that traditional models of teaching writing and language are historically grounded in a colonial, eurocentric theory of knowledge that upholds racial and economic power structure and serves the rich and White. April Baker-Bell in *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*, explores the personal experiences of linguistic injustice that Black students in higher education face. She argues that the colonialist and racist "White linguistic supremacy" has continuously harmed Black students. Baker-Bell's work analyzes ethnographies from the lives of Black students within the parameters of White institutions and provides evidence to support a new pedagogical approach to language and education, in an attempt to overthrow linguistic supremacy, unjust barriers, and their overarching colonial project (Baker-Bell 2020). Similarly, other scholars such as Timothy G. Reagan in *Linguistic Legitimacy and Social Justice* examined the effects of constructed language legitimacy labels within teaching and emphasized that this broader conceptualization of language has "important implications for the teaching and learning of languages, for the language policy and language planning activities, and discussions of language rights" (Reagan 2019, 18). It focuses on the significance of power relations within contexts of academia as they relate to linguistic variation.

Decolonizing Education

What the scholarship continues to reiterate is that education in the United States is flawed. Research has reliably showcased a myriad of valid grievances against the system's role in enforcing homogeneity, removing the 'other' among them, and preparing its citizens to submit to the system with disregard for their identities and needs. The evidence suggests that these

issues are a direct result of the country's colonial ideologies and structures, including White supremacy and capitalism. The United States is a colonial and imperialist state, and thus the process of untangling the issues outlined can only stem from a critical examination of the United States' past— and present — colonialism and imperialism. It requires decolonization. To be specific, decolonization in relationship with education has been described in scholarship as the reconstruction of knowledge and practice by delinking them from the colonial matrix of power. Particularly that "decolonizing knowledge and decolonial knowledge [are] necessary steps to imagining and building democratic, just, and non-imperial/colonial societies" (Mignolo 2011, 118). Mullen denotes that the purpose of decolonizing education is "to make the invisible visible… to change mindsets, unsettle colonialism, and consider possibilities for a better world… [to challenge] the prevailing social order" (Mullen 2021, 12). Decolonization works to allow marginalized identities into the process of knowledge production by destigmatizing the use of non-standardized languages and dialects. The matrix of power is not only responsible for how education is conducted, but also for imagining its purpose and its curriculum. Colonial history is integrated into the mainstream perception of valid, necessary knowledge. The values established by settler-colonialism and maintained by Western imperialism both in the United States and in the Global South produced "the specific social discriminations which were later codified… [into] the power structure [that] was, and still is, the framework within which operate the other social relations of classes and estates" (Quijano 2007, 168). Colonialism encoded within the social fabric of the United States a single conception of appropriate, valid knowledge, one which the republic can erect itself upon.

While the history of colonization is bloody and violent, the subjugation of people under these systems extends beyond the physical. With that in mind, scholarship has argued that while

acts of land return are essential steps in the process of decolonization, it additionally demands explicit attention to the subtle effects of that history. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor" argued that decolonization is a material process involving land return and not a symbolic process of advancing social justice, and while it is both a fair and timely argument critiquing a liberal fear of systemic, revolutionary change, it disregards how colonization was conducted more implicitly and metaphorically. Garba and Sorentino in "Slavery Is A Metaphor," responded to Tuck and Yang and argue that "it stands to reason that settler colonialism cannot be adequately theorized without metaphor: the excision of metaphor from settler colonialism is necessarily the excision of slavery. The collapse of slavery into a non-discursive event is why... slaves are stuck in a treadmill of political indecipherability—both victims and antagonists, essential to the clearing of land and inessential to its return—that exemplifies the violence of slavery itself… [and] we argue that to be anti-metaphor is to be anti-Black" (Garba and Sorentino 2020, 13). The works instruct those engaged with the process of social justice to examine the historical construction of matrices of power that manifest themselves in all aspects of life, including the intellectual and academic domain, and not only in physical displacement and struggle.

This understanding of the symbolic nature of colonialism, as well as the necessity to attend to the more subtle manifestation of harm, urges a more substantial delinking of the educational system from the eurocentric understanding of knowledge it utilizes. On the issue of intellectual decolonization, scholarship suggests an urgent need to support linguistic justice as a possible framework for the decolonization of academia. Decolonization of knowledge production would look to reject and reconstruct what the educational system values and seek to include

non-dominant languages and dialects that carry within them identities often excluded from academic settings.

Conclusion

My project is a byproduct of the issues the outlined scholarship has highlighted. It aims to take this general understanding of the way education works in the United States and offer a possible alternative derived from the needs expressed by international, multilingual students in an elite higher education institution. It is interested in further exploring the connection between linguistic injustice and the reproduction of the larger systems that influence education in the United States. I hope that this project will understand better how the linguistic experiences of students within the parameters of these educational institutions affect how they navigate society outside of them. The research points to a connection between linguistic injustice and the reproduction of White supremacy and capitalism, and I am taking that suggestion and investigating it more particularly in the context of Bates College as a unique point in place and time. Overall, one objective of this work is to advance a project of decolonization and to promote a just approach to language in higher education. These works provided a framework that will be used to analyze the ethnographic materials collected, focusing on connections between language and identity.

Writing and Language Teaching at Bates College

To begin thinking about the issues that students encounter at Bates, I needed to examine the current structure for writing and language teaching at Bates College. Understanding its mission, values, and methods of instruction uncovered some of the common issues which have been outlined previously by scholarship about higher education, but also by my and other students' experiences. More specifically, I wondered if there is a connection between some of the students' grievances and the line of thinking used to plan and evaluate students' performance when it comes to academic writing and general language use. To start, Bates College claims that it offers its students "the promise of a world-class education focused on employing the "transformative power of our differences" (Bates College Mission and Outlook). Language stands out to me as a significant difference between many students at Bates. Just in the fall of 2020, Bates had enrolled 453 BIPOC identifying students, 149 international students, and 236 first-generation students (Bates College Demographics Dashboard). While the specific number of multilingual students at Bates isn't readily available, it is safe to assume that among the aforementioned demographics along with some in its domestic and White student population, Bates College would have significant linguistic diversity represented within its student body. Bates College has been ranked in the top 5% of schools for its diversity, and as such, it would seem imperative that these differences are appropriately acknowledged and, as Bates would argue, employed in its education for its "transformative powers" (College Factual). This is because of the connection between language and identity, or as Incho Lee writes, because "language is not neutral; it conveys ideas, cultures, and ideologies embedded in and related to the language, so that language education needs to be examined not only on the purely linguistic level, but also on the broader social and political level" (Lee 2011, 47). Upon examination, I

find that the values for language and writing teaching at Bates College are not a reliable representation of the instruction methods utilized in Bates' classrooms. Rather, they have often been pushed aside in favor of common exclusionary methods of instruction, caused by uneven implementation, poor training of faculty, under-resourced initiatives, and an overall rejection of student's differences in contexts that do not benefit Bates College's advertised image.

Language and writing teaching is not only an academic element but a personal and political one characterizing students' experiences with how they see themselves represented and treated. To supplement student experiences for this project, I recently attended an event organized by an international student that aimed to offer multilingual and international students a space to discuss their experiences with language while at Bates. One student very passionately pointed out that she has yet to understand why it was that, if the way she writes is representative of her way of thinking and her identity, she is often instructed to write differently. This is a core issue in writing at Bates, and I found it to very succinctly articulate students' experiences here. Overall, the shared experiences of the students who attended this event, their most formative and significant memories at Bates, indicated to me that Bates is not living up to the values it advertises when it comes to language. More specifically, these issues caused by the standardization of writing and language teaching at Bates can highlight how "schooling has been one powerful way to reproduce colonial repression by justifying and perpetuating, inside the classroom, existing power relations and, whether intentionally or out of the teachers' own ignorance, hiding from students, especially those of color, alternative histories" (Camangian 2011, 128). For the students who have felt that their differences have not been welcomed in the classroom, Bates' outlined mission and values are a misrepresentation of reality.

Writing Attentive Curriculum

As a part of their Writing Attentive Curriculum, Bates argues that its writing instruction methods focus on "[providing] students with a solid footing in using writing as a means for communication, scholarship, intellectual discovery and civic action" (Writing @ Bates). To do so, Bates offers and requires students to take classes designated as W1, W2, and W3. In W1 classes, students are meant to develop and improve their writing process, and acquire what Bates believes are "foundational skills that they can then transfer to writing in subsequent courses." The Writing @ Bates website doesn't directly outline what these foundational skills are, but this lack of clarity corresponds with a wide variety of possible teaching methods for their students. In my conversations with faculty, as well as through my work with the writing committee at Bates College, I have learned that generally, faculty at Bates are not adequately or purposefully trained in specific and progressive writing pedagogy, and faculty who teach these W1 classes, also known as First-Year Seminars (FYS), are additionally not provided satisfactory or cohesive training into how to 'teach' writing to their students in these introductory courses, and especially multilingual students. Additionally important, the limited level of training that faculty do receive is the responsibility of one professional staff member, who has consistently faced pushback in their attempt to improve faculty training. Therefore, I see that based on my and other students' experiences, these foundational skills implicitly reference standard academic English and its multitude of rules to the extent that each faculty member sees it appropriate, and based upon their individual perspectives on writing. I recall my own FYS class, where even in creative writing assignments, I was often given feedback directly related to my use of standard academic English. Students' first experiences at Bates College are designed to quickly identify students' writing weaknesses and, as one faculty member described it to me, "fix them." It is a less than a soft introduction to the expectations that students will be required to meet while at Bates College.

Students are then meant to graduate into much more complex writing at the W2 level. In those W2 classes, students are meant to learn the specific requirements of their chosen fields, wherein these classes "orient students to the unique and often idiosyncratic expectations for communication that exist within every academic discipline, preparing students to produce scholarship within their major." On this level, we begin to have a much clearer understanding of Bates' definition of the preferred use of writing, and therefore what that writing should look like. As it will be described later on by students' experiences, this often means that the only avenue for writing available is writing for an academic discipline. Many students repeated that notion, with one student, Hannah, specifically stating that despite many students not choosing to go into academia after graduating, Bates' main focus remains to be preparing students for navigating academic spaces.

This prioritization of academic language highlights a large concern regarding Bates College's mission. As it stands, much of the College's training for students centers on writing for "scholarship, [and] intellectual discovery" with little emphasis on writing for communication or "civil action." This focus on writing for academia and academic recognition corresponds with academia's inaccessibility, one of its many critiques. In his article, "Why Academics Stink at Writing," Steven Pinker writes, "Why should a profession that trades in words and dedicates itself to the transmission of knowledge so often turn out prose that is turgid, soggy, wooden, bloated, clumsy, obscure, unpleasant to read, and impossible to understand?" (Pinker 2014). He goes on to outline a few valid personal reasons for why academics may choose to write in a convoluted manner, but I would argue that these methods are in response to a much larger, and historically constructed reason perhaps beyond any individual academic: academia is not designed to include everyone. Some individuals learn to write academically, which often

corresponds with complex unnecessary jargon only understood by a few, in the hopes that one day they are acknowledged academics within that field, accepted by the majority. This inaccessibility manifests differently in different academic disciplines and often is serving a specific type of elitism and exclusivity associated with that field. For the fields concerned with social issues, such as anthropology, or issues of human behavior and health, such as psychology, their discipline-specific writing often evades the rhetorical choices or vernacular necessary to direct its discipline-specific knowledge towards populations who would benefit from it or evidently where that knowledge is derived from. For disciplines of arts, their writing maintains exclusive access to various art forms and histories, making it difficult for low-income or historically under-resourced or under-represented populations to gain access to the world of art. It is unique for each field and the way it was historically constructed and hierarchically organized, but it remains that only a small subset of individuals are meant to find a home in these academic writings. It's a cycle that doesn't give much room for transformative knowledge to come out of academia. STEM classes, additionally, can offer a clear example of this. One STEM faculty member at Bates shared with me,

> Scientific writing is not accessible like at all … I don't sit down and read a paper and just like you know the period of time it takes me to read this thing is as long it takes to read the words. Like you have to stop and think about every single thing, and part of the problem is that I don't think most scientists who are making these papers are especially good communicators, that's a different skill set… people want to sound like they're smart, you know? People want to look impressive…

In STEM writing, building upon previous work and establishing credibility within the academic community is particularly motivating for the way scientific writing can be unrelentingly

complex. I believe that generally speaks to the way academia can fail in having a notable impact on social issues and the difficulty for it to remain significant in advancing the state of the world. Especially in disciplines that specifically harvest knowledge from various communities, cultures, or groups of people, academia's inaccessibility points to its exploitative nature.

This is significantly reflective of the specific interests that Bates, as an academic institution positioned within the larger historical context of American higher education, serves. At its inception, higher education was meant to educate the American elite. What it has developed into is an industry meant to maintain centralized power over knowledge proclaimed as ultimately seeking the truth about the state of people and the world, which as it remains, is not open for most people, let alone multilingual and multicultural individuals. Bates College aims to train and prepare students to enter this industry. In W3 classes, students are meant to produce "an original, significant work of scholarship that represents the culmination of their growth as writers, scholars, and researchers during their time at the college." It is the standard expectation that by the end of their time at Bates, students will be able to present themselves as part of their chosen academic fields, including their methods that are presented as axiomatic. As such, the expected progression of students at Bates not only assumes a desire to remain in academia but also a transformation of the student to be able to effectively do so. As it will be outlined further on, this transformation requires students to sacrifice, hide, or detach from their identities.

Class Writing Assignments

Class assignments commonly used at Bates College similarly showcase the limitation of the current methods used, specifically in its neglect of issues of effective communication and civic action. For departments that center on academic writing, such as STEM courses or courses in the social sciences and humanities, generally, writing assignments require students to

formulate well-backed arguments stemming from previous findings in the field. This is how most faculty and students describe the goals of writing assignments at Bates, which communicates an additional issue about academic writing. At Bates College, academic writing relies heavily on eurocentric ideals of education and knowledge production, including building upon scholarship that is dominantly White.

One dominant eurocentric value is the idea of logic and evidence based-writing in the construction of an argument. It is caused by an "underlying epistemological assumption that only through "reason" can one know, or should care to know… [which] should therefore be considered within its particular historical and cultural context. In other words, there is no particular reason to assume a priori that all the peoples of the world would or should place such a high value on reason" (Mazama 1998, 4). I will not be constructing an argument against the concept of logic, but rather aim to point out how academic writing norms generally highly center successful argumentation based upon the use of previously established beliefs and theories, often pulled from convoluted and complicated academic texts and recycled to present written work that will then be assessed based upon that previous knowledge. Many of the assignments that students complete while at Bates, require them to use previously produced and acknowledged to be legitimate scholarship in their field or topic. For many disciplines, such as biology, psychology, anthropology, or politics, much of that knowledge was written by and for White people only (at least in academic work that is taught at American institutions), using eurocentric ideals of logic and objectivity, and are often a product of harm done to various communities who rarely benefited from the production of this knowledge. In anthropology, for example, canonical academic texts centered on a eurocentric perception of reality, a pseudoscientific objective lens, and the 'othering' and fetishization of various cultural groups. In the sciences, such as biology,

many of the early findings were products of violence, wherein “from the grotesque surgeries of James Marion Sims to the stolen cell line of Henrietta Lacks, for over four centuries, biomedical research has been designed to exploit African Americans” (American Bar Association 2021). Afterward, these scientific findings were rarely used to serve the population is most benefited from, as it has been highlighted by “the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on Black and Latinx communities in the United States… [and] varying access to treatment, preventive measures, and other resources [resulting] in imbalances in health care” (American Bar Association 2021). Moreso, students whose cultural identities may place value upon oral language, personal experiences, dreams, emotions, or myths, must consistently dismiss their validity to conform to previously established eurocentric standards of knowledge. Additionally, through policed academic writing, it is thought that scholars can think more critically about the claims they make by remaining detached and objective. Mazama writes, “by allowing one to distance oneself from what one reads or writes, writing supposedly promotes critical attitudes and objectivity. This is fantasy of the highest order, but one nonetheless quite consistent with the European belief in ‘objectivity’ which can be obtained only through the separation of the knower and the known accompanied with the objectification of the latter " (Mazama 1998, 8). When students are taught to detach themselves from their subject matters, to write ‘objectively’ and ‘critically’ about the various issues which plague our world, they are often taught to do so through the lens of a eurocentric perspective on these issues pulled from historically produced knowledge.

Similar connections can be made to descriptors such as concision. Many languages utilize a much more ‘poetic’ or ‘wordy’ approach to communication. This is not inherently reflective of its efficacy, as will be further discussed later on, but rather the lack of emphasis on concision in

comparison to standard academic writing. During my freshman year, I took an introductory Gender Studies class which included many writing assignments, both large and small scale ones. My professor took time in class to discuss her expectations for these assignments, including a strongly worded emphasis on using concise language and communicating effectively within the one-page word limit. I didn't see anything wrong with that due to my entrenchment in academic writing, but another student, who also spoke Arabic, raised his hand to contest that expectation. I recall him beautifully, yet very carefully explaining how different languages value complexity and details, and how it seemed unfair to limit that linguistic difference in class assignments and reductive to the type of knowledge that students may end up producing. The professor's answer was very simple and now is not shocking at all: that is the necessary approach to writing valued by the job market and various academic expectations, and despite her being sympathetic to his grievances, it is her job to prepare us for what is required of us outside of Bates. Every professor I spoke to shared a similar idea about their role as faculty. One professor told me, "I have a duty to prepare [students] for what happens after you leave Bates." Almost all faculty members I spoke to said some variation of this, and it is a big part of faculty's understanding of their role at Bates, which includes molding students into valuable assets for the 'real world.' It is a part of what Bates College promises to students as an institution; success and achievement after graduation. That success, according to faculty, is reliant on students' abilities to write in standard, dominant, and socially acceptable ways. Thus, Bates College's goal as an institution becomes apparent as reproducing academics in line with previously established standards and serving socially dominant structures. While my professor's answer is an accurate description of the reality of the world in some ways, it limits writing learning at Bates to practicality rather than advancement. It argues that students are meant to learn how they can succeed in the capitalist

market outside of Bates and that this objective is much more significant than any personal connection they may have for their own languages. In many ways, traditional writing assignments serve no value other than practicing American expression. Therefore, I believe it is fair to assume that "employing the transformative power of our differences," is not among the most represented values at Bates.

The Role of Faculty

Some of these disparities can be attributed to the way faculty at Bates lack comprehensive training in working with linguistically diverse students. Faculty members at Bates College are individuals who have internalized personal experiences with language and writing in their lifetime and academic careers, and through their role as instructors can influence students' experiences at Bates and reproduce the conditions of their learning history. Instructors' relationship with language and writing, whether it be their previous experience learning different languages or their experience speaking multiple languages growing up, can greatly impact the perspective and teaching style that students receive in the classroom and that varies widely. Granted, what some faculty members shared with me about their experience is not necessarily how they still view language now, or how they explicitly teach it to students, but it seems reasonable to assume an underlying impact of the way faculty members have previously experienced language and writing. Instructors' bad or good experiences with language can shape their acquired values about what they believe may be good or bad language and writing, and these attitudes are projected onto students in the classroom. In one of my conversations, one faculty member mentioned how he grew up in an English-only speaking household, and that throughout his learning process, his language was highly policed. He shared,

> [I am] a Grammar nerd, I loved English grammar, and my mother was into grammar, and my dad loved [it]... at the dinner table, we talked about who and whom, you know whatever, and there was a good way to speak and there's a bad way to speak. Literally, my mother would slap me in the face if the grammar was messed up… I don't know to what extent it did come from my mother, sort of, me being the first-gen, her being the valedictorian of her class, couldn't afford to go to college and yet went to a really high-end secretarial school and was a secretary for presidents of companies in New York, but had to learn proper language, proper English…

While there has been progress in how some in academia view language, which even I can see just through my conversations with faculty, and disregarding how well-intentioned or progressive some faculty members may be, it would be wrong to dismiss their experiences as irrelevant to their teaching methods.

Faculty's biases in the classroom are an extension of their own highly restrictive linguistic experiences. These are individuals that have had to go through and become accepted to and accustomed to the academy, and that constructs their perception around linguistic hierarchy. At Bates, because of the lack of intentional instruction or training given to faculty on equitable writing and language teaching pedagogies, and because their fields historically did not allow for much linguistic variation, professors can be seen reverting to their own internalized perceptions of language and writing in their courses. Very commonly in classrooms, professors will use their experience with writing back in 'their days' to legitimize their choices for their writing assignments or language expectations. Many will use their previous struggles conforming to standard academic writing or the various punishments they received as justification for limiting

students to standard academic English. The lack of direction given to faculty on approaching writing teaching beyond preparing students for their disciplines grants them the ability to continue harming students in the way many of them were similarly harmed.

During my conversation with faculty members, I found it easy to note how their view of linguistic diversity remains both limited and influenced by White supremacist values. Many described non-dominant languages in academia using words such as ‘alternative’ or ‘non-academic language.’ While mostly unintentionally, these descriptors continue to position multilingualism or non-standard, or not socially accepted language use in contrast to standard academic English. ‘Alternative’ argues against non-dominant languages’ legitimacy and offers it to be similar to an artistic choice or a rebellious tendency rather than a valuable, legitimate academic method of learning or writing. This is a very common approach to writing in academia. Even when given the space to explore, students are often instructed that they may use “non-traditional sources" or “more creative and less academic writing,” and these descriptions promote the false dichotomy that non-dominant languages are not, and can not, be academic. Additionally, it continues to position these languages as opposite to standard academic English, so that if standard English is academic then they are not, or if standard academic English is professional then they are not. For example, “most speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is just a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, or worse than that, an unimportant and mostly abusive repertoire of street slang used by an ignorant Urban class” (Pullum 1999, 40). Non-dominant languages, commonly associated with minoritized identities, are thus consistently recognized as illegitimate variations of the standard language, and therefore their use must be a reflection of one’s poor understanding of language and writing.

Failures of the Current Structure

The writing and language learning process at Bates College is highly flawed for several reasons. Faculty are not properly trained to work with multilingual students, class assignments fail to acknowledge the breadth of knowledge that exists in the world, and the writing structure is dependent upon eurocentric capitalist and historical White supremacist values. Students are then left to carry the burden of keeping parts of their identities out of their academic lives. Bates' mission for their writing curriculum states that "the writing-attentive curriculum at Bates College is designed to provide students with a solid footing in using writing as a means for communication, scholarship, intellectual discovery and civic action." Furthermore, it states that writing criteria at Bates is meant to "foster effective pedagogy and provide a framework for incorporating writing, not to limit innovation!" The values outlined are significant and progressive in comparison to other institutions, however, the current implementation and structure completely fail that objective.

At Bates College, there is only one professional staff member responsible for training and, as she calls it, 'coaching' faculty to use effective and socially equitable writing pedagogies. This individual is highly under-resourced and under-supported in her efforts to disseminate more recent, and more socially just scholarship of writing. Initiatives relating to linguistic justice and various conversations relating to writing teaching are often a part of the individual or small group projects that are rarely granted enough departmental or administrative support. While planning a panel on linguistic justice specifically targeted towards faculty at Bates, my requests to make such a panel either generally mandatory or requiring at least some representation from each department was quickly denied. At many of the events I have participated in relating to linguistic justice conversations, not more than 10 faculty members have been present. More

specifically, it is often the same professors who have taken it upon themselves to progress in their instruction methods and who have maintained their commitment to learning and social justice who appear at those events. Because conversations and initiatives around linguistic justice are limited, underfunded, or lack support at Bates, it often becomes the responsibility of a few to advance this work. BIPOC faculty, especially, often bear the brunt of this work through their individual efforts and emotional labor. As it will be discussed further, these issues perpetuate the harm that students encounter throughout their careers at Bates College.

The "Ideal" International Student at Bates College

The writing and language learning structure at Bates perpetuates harm toward multilingual students with minoritized identities because it devalues and excludes their languages from the academic space. International students are uniquely impacted by this because of their positionality as outsiders to the United States and its political, social, and linguistic structures. At Bates College, there are certain standards we as international students are expected to adhere to, some of which are communicated to us implicitly through various experiences while others are a direct result of the choices made by Bates College and Western global imperialist values. Moreso, these standards are a result of the intersection between colonialist language models, the network of academic systems at Bates College, the students' cultures and backgrounds, and the realities of the society we either live in or hope to integrate into.

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of an 'ideal' international student in the eyes of Bates College. The 'ideal' international student is my understanding of the place that international students occupy within the Bates College structure and the role they are expected to play while they attend this institution. Specifically, I believe it highlights the conditions that international students live through. I arrived at Bates believing that I was very qualified to present the image of an international student worthy of a spot at this prestigious institution because of my background. I attended a 4-year international high school that was systematically structured to produce someone capable of handling the American college experience. During my high school years, I recall my teachers, predominantly White and American, writing on the board a four-level scale for where we should aspire to be in our academic abilities in comparison to the American college standards each year; by Sophomore year you were expected to read at an American college freshman level, by Junior year you were expected to write at a college

sophomore level, and by senior year you were expected to research and produce academic writing at a college junior level. This was meant to prepare me for college in the United States and help me portray myself as a competitive applicant, and as a financial aid recipient, a worthy investment. I graduated proud of my English language capabilities and came to Bates College ready to put those skills to good use.

My previous training in academic English writing didn't entirely make my experience at Bates College easier, but it helped me navigate its environment, gain the praises of my professors, and the acceptance of my White counterparts. I find this part of my experience now significantly relevant to my project because my process of ethnographic research not only humbled me (very quickly) in how I perceived my skills but also indicated to me a sort of pattern in the international student experience, which I now believe is the mandated 'ideal' international student at Bates College. I define the 'ideal' international student at Bates College as someone who has successfully demonstrated their level of mastery over the English language, is consistently using that English language, consistently improving that English language, and seamlessly conforms to the academic linguistic structure at Bates College— even if that means losing parts of their identity not deemed academic enough. The 'ideal' international student for Bates College will present a well-adjusted, hard-working, and perfected learner of the academic standards they are introduced to.

English Language Competency

Before coming to Bates, many of the admitted international students studied English at an academic level in a way that allowed them to successfully argue to Bates— through essays, SAT scores, TOFEL or IELTS scores, grades, …etc — that they would be able to succeed academically. While at Bates College, international students can provide the necessary diversity

numbers by attending this institution, without being able to fully embody or represent these diverse experiences and identities academically. Rather, by being both strongly competent and experienced in academic English, international students can be more beneficial to Bates College than a threat to its academic standards. By being extensively trained to navigate the academic environment through their English language qualifications, international students can require the least amount of resources and cause the least amount of ruckus to the academic environment, but be able to serve as tools to promote Bates College's standing as a progressive institution.

Admittedly, the personal relationship many of us have to the English language is determined by the conditions of our upbringing, which as it stands is highly influenced by global Western imperialist power. Many of my interviewees reported English as their "school" language, or the "second language that [they] learned through education" in their lives. In fact, most international students I spoke with started learning and speaking English at a very young age. Unsurprisingly, research argues that due to its role in facilitating domains of power on a global scale, English is believed to be an indicator of class, intelligence, success, and advancement, and its use is often a part of gatekeeping higher education and important positions in some developing countries (Haidar 2019, 42). Global linguistic hierarchy and English language supremacy are instilled in us very early on, and for people like me, my mastery over the English language has always made me proud— not simply because I knew a second language, but especially because that second language was English. Young children in the Global South are taught very early on that learning English is a rite of passage required for success and acknowledgment in the world. One Bates international student, Mia, shared her family's experience with me, stating

> Obviously, none of my family speak English, but like my mom wanted me to speak English… [she] tried to learn English herself and teach me English, and then she felt, um she didn't go to like a four-year college, she went to like a vocational school and went to work straight away and then I think her experience being in a company before getting married really recognized the power of English as like the language that everyone wanted, that the society prioritized, she was saying that yeah you couldn't get a promotion if you don't speak English, and you'd get promotions just because you speak English… when she got married and had me, she decided that she doesn't want her daughter to go through the same thing.

These sentiments are a result of decades of imperial, Western, and colonialist powers shaping the experiences of the 'Third World.' The value placed upon English as a superior language globally can be attributed to many methods of control that the Western world has used over time. It can be traced back to early British colonization, wherein the education of the colonies focused on English language learning and the future of individuals from those places was highly dependent on their learning of the English language (Phillipson, 1992). Presently, it extends into cultural exchange programs, such as the Fulbright program, which are specifically designed to import the gift of the English language to other countries, but specifically in the Global South. These programs supply a steady stream of 20-something Americans with little-to-no experience in teaching to travel abroad and teach English to children in various developing countries. These experiences can often instill a focus on learning English rather than the students' native languages. One writer sums up the issues by stating, "there is this patronizing, dehumanizing element that is purely neo-imperialistic. These privileged, predominantly White postgrads, are

traveling to our countries to teach English… [and] the influence of English in these countries has created an even stronger class issue, in that speaking English is a sign of being more educated and modern" (Mohan 2018). This can put some of the international students' experiences commonly found at Bates into perspective. English was introduced to us as the superior language of advancement and success, and that continues to qualify the relationship we have with it. I grew up watching my community place English on a pedestal so high they are willing to relinquish their native tongue to speak it. Parents choose to emphasize English learning to their toddlers instead of Arabic to ensure success for them as they grow old. When I travel back to my country, my ability to speak English often presents me as superior in my education in comparison to individuals who do not speak it. People will treat you differently because you speak this language.

Dedication to the Advanced Learning of English

Despite the mastery that international students have successfully showcased to earn a spot at Bates College, an 'ideal' international student continues to learn and advance their English language skills. They seek for their language use and writing to be flawless, articulate, and not seem like the product of a multilingual writer. In addition to my personal experiences, this is something I was able to notice through my tutoring sessions at the Bates Writing and Language Center. There is a clear difference between how domestic and international students view their English writing skills and how they approach improving them. Tutoring international students include a sense of urgency in the session, a heightened feeling of uneasiness about positioning themselves as anything but fully capable when it comes to standard academic English, providing specific needs and justifications for why they are visiting the center, and approaching their writing through a harsh and overly critical lens. I recall international students anxiously awaiting

me to give them a solution to their mistakes or resolve an issue they saw present in their writing or that a professor highlighted to them. Many of the international students I have tutored believed that if I told them what they are doing wrong and showed them what the 'correct' way of writing something is, then their writing will become better. I often had difficulty working with them because it seemed to me that they believed I was supposed to know and teach them perfect grammar and writing. I often did not know what to say when I saw their writing as good. I had read and understood their writing, found it effective and insightful, and based upon my training which explicitly said to avoid commenting on mechanics, I couldn't help them, and that felt disappointing to some of them. All I could do was try and convince them that their writing was okay. Domestic or native English speaking students' approach to their writing is often very different. While many are similarly invested in improving their writing, their approach does not employ as much a sense of shame and embarrassment in their work. Their writing "deficiencies" come up as lighthearted, normal parts of their journeys as college students.

International students' position as English language learners continues despite how proficient a student may be in it. While presenting a workshop on linguistic justice in language and writing tutoring, I was rightfully called out for consistently using international students as an example of someone who may come into the center needing some writing help. An international student reaffirmed in response to my presentation that "international students are often over-qualified" when it comes to academic writing at Bates. Reflecting on my experiences as a tutor, that seems to be the case actually. In addition to favoring English learning in our home countries and the rigor of the international schools we were very meticulously picked out of, international students' competency that earned them a spot at Bates, challenges the image of the struggling, English language learning international student. Even more recently, while sharing

some of my research findings, an international graduate student similarly asked me how I consider the fact that international students are often very qualified in academic writing. I approach these statements now with skepticism, not in international students' skills but rather in the value that is placed upon these skills. I am hesitant to support the perspective that since international students are competent in English, then that means they must be doing well and seamlessly advancing in their academic careers. Conversely, I argue that despite international students' strong command over the English language, we are still learning that language as it continues to eat away at our non-dominant, non-English language skills, and knowledge. For some of us, that is not an issue, but for others the takeover that English has had on our way of thinking, speaking, and writing is difficult and harmful.

Performing the 'Ideal' International Student

The 'ideal' international student must continuously model perfected language skills. As they work to improve and advance their writing and speaking skills, international students must project an image of competency at all times to reaffirm their belonging to this institution. Many of the international students I spoke with indicated to me this standard that they see for their language use. Many described how they are often driven to be 'careful' and 'purposeful' when speaking in both academic and social contexts. This is the performance of the "ideal" international student that Tina, a senior student, spoke to me about, saying,

> When I moved to the U.S. I think the same thing happened with me, especially surrounded by like almost 99% of native English speakers, I was really self-conscious speaking up in classes and I used to think that English proficiency was a measure for intelligence and I used to hide my accent a lot, and especially

> being a theater major, I wanted to fit in so bad… I was really practicing a lot to get rid of my accent because I really wanted to blend in

Another student, Arya, a sophomore, shared similar notions with me,

> Coming to America, the language use here is so much different than the language use back home, especially academically in English. So over here, at least with certain professors, they expect big fancy words for your essays or they like talk in class and sometimes the language that they use I do not understand, and I'm clueless… sometimes I know I shouldn't be embarrassed but I'm like okay I don't want to interrupt them or I don't want to be like the only person who raises their hand up in a class of fifty people and be like okay what does this word mean or what does that sentence mean.

For international students across different years, these similar expectations are explicitly communicated, such as a student being told by a professor that she does not know how to write and should go to the writing center for help, and others are more implicit based on the way we often get treated or looked at when we use 'incorrect language' while speaking in class. Nonetheless, they become highly internalized in multilingual students and it can make it so that time spent at this institution can often be widely lonely and draining. Students learn they are outsiders to the preconceived social fabric of the institutions early in their college careers, and from that moment on the process of establishing some sense of belonging begins.

Linguistic belonging is a significant part of international students' experiences, and it is difficult because of the way language impacts students' academic and social experiences. During my conversations with other international students, we found comfort in sharing our similar experiences realizing that distinction in our dorm rooms and at the dinner table. We connected

over the experience of putting in extra work to try and keep up, belong, and succeed in this place. A junior student, Daphne, reflected on her experience sharing how it felt listening to people speak here,

> People are really nice and friendly, but at the same time, it is still very difficult, like there is a bubble, and it's difficult to really be a part of the whole, bigger community. It's just like sometimes when you are walking to your room and you know you don't belong…

International students attempt to minimize any apparent differences between their language use and the socially and academically accepted English language. In the cases of the students mentioned early, this can be done through anything from hiding your accent to avoiding asking questions in classes. Amelia highlighted that these experiences are additionally caused by the fear that someone may connect your "deficient" work or the occasional misunderstandings in the class to your identity as an international student at Bates. They described that fear manifesting itself sometimes through feedback from professors, stating

> They don't say it like that, they just say like no this is just not, umm it's word choice, it's word choice here and I'm like it made sense, it made sense to you you're just saying you think it's just a little bit off… I feel like I never get it wrong enough that they'll be like this is wrong, I'll always get like a quirky comment like oh this is an interesting way to say this, and it's like okay but give me substantive feedback though. It feels like it puts emphasis on the fact that I am not a native speaker, in one way or another, and I'm like I know that, we know that, that's been acknowledged for a while.

Many students shared receiving similar comments which emphasized the "uniqueness" of their writing style not as either a valid distinct approach or even as an incorrect or incoherent approach, but rather simply as a different way of communicating than the way a native speaker might have done it, and therefore perhaps it would be good if 'we tweak it just a bit'. This is possibly a result of the faculty's perception of these non-dominant languages which they often label as 'alternative' and 'non-traditional.' This delegitimizes students' native languages as being appropriate for academia, and it positions them and the identity associated with them, as less knowledgeable. More specifically, it devalues students' unique ways of expressing themselves in comparison to native speakers'.This speaks to the way students find themselves unable to belong within the institution or the academic environment. These attempts at 'tweaking' students 'quirky' language and writing continue to push certain languages and students out of the academy by manipulating it out of their produced knowledge and accomplished tasks, and slowly working to eliminate the various ways in which their non-English, non-American voices appear in their work. Consequently, students learn to avoid these traits in their thinking and writing styles that stem from their individual identities and structures and either intentionally or unintentionally switch out of them in an academic space.

Trying Not to Stick Out

The previously mentioned types of comment that many international students receive for their writing or language skills highlights them as different from the average student prototype. Thinking back to the history of academia and higher education, these spaces were intentionally designed not only to bring in a certain type of student, White, rich, and male but also to keep those who did not have that identity out of it. For example, standardized testing was very intentionally created to discriminate against Black, Brown, and Indigenous students. Ibram X.

Kendi writes, “to tell the truth about standardized tests is to tell the story of the eugenicists who created and popularized these tests in the United States more than a century ago…We still think there’s something wrong with the kids rather than recognizing [there is] something wrong with the tests. Standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools” (Boston Coalition for Education Equity 2020). Even though many institutions, including Bates, have stopped using standardized test scores as part of their admissions process, that surface-level change does not impact the curriculum, methods, and values still maintained in ‘traditional’ academia. And it specifically doesn’t address how students, in this case, international students, are made to feel inferior for their differences. That distinction can be specifically bothersome or generally exhausting to navigate, and to avoid these instances of unwanted attention directed towards your international status, some students learn to adjust their behaviors to better fit the expected student model of the institutions.

Therefore, the ideal international student learns how they stick out and then proceeds to do what they can to hide those parts of themselves, including their differences from the larger academic population. For example, when students' writing and language are called out for being distinctly different from the native English speaker’s approach, the ideal international student will adjust their writing to better fit the American standard. Amelia additionally reflected on this experience of adjusting by saying,

> …I feel like I’ve been pushed to that point to a certain degree, I feel like my writing style has assimilated, or assimilated to a certain degree, and it’s weird because I feel like maybe it was last semester when I started… I was writing the

> most American when I started to get the best grades I've gotten and I was like well, okay! I feel like there is a lot of positive reinforcements in it for you…

This is a very common experience. Natalie, a recent international student alum similarly spoke about this pressure to "[make] the paper sound more American" to do well. International students' experiences demand that they pay extra attention to the nuance of this social and academic context to better present themselves as a legitimate part of it. International students learn that becoming more American in the way they write or speak is a necessary part of succeeding at Bates College. Students did not particularly expand upon what they mean by writing more 'American,' but I see it as a reference to the more accepted academic texts produced by White Americans, and are generally regarded as significant work. It combines things such as concision and objectivity, with complex words and sentence structures to emulate a more respected writing style.

Similar to the way faculty perceive their role at Bates, which exclusively requires them to teach students how to succeed in the world as they see and understand it, students recognize how many of those expectations are inescapable and necessary. Many international students recognize the reality of the world and the need to properly adapt to American standards of English. One international student, Ben, summarized it very well for me, stating

> Regardless of what makes Bates unique and all the aspects that make Bates different to everything else, Bates is still a reflection of the bigger society, so a lot of what we talk about, languages in academia and all those things… this is a curriculum that is in English, using American English norms as the standard, we follow those things because it's what is normalized

This is a good encapsulation of the very limited choices that are available to this group of students. Based upon colonialist English language supremacy and the dominant structure of academia, students are forced to oblige to the standards communicated to them while at Bates. Additionally, the choices and sacrifices that students may have had to make to end up at Bates College during their freshman year; all the hard work, the time spent away from family, the emotional and financial toll that it had, it is really easy, at least for me, to see why choosing to partake in achieving those standards is both valid and necessary. Unsurprisingly, this doesn't come without its challenges and harm.

Living Multilingual at Bates College

Many of the international students I interviewed as a part of this project shared how they felt like their issues have often felt ignored at Bates, and more generally, how lonely their time at Bates has felt. While reflecting on how I landed on my project, I recognized that much of my work has been inspired by my personal experiences and feelings while at Bates, much of which can be summed up with words such as ignored and lonely. My inspiration for the questions I am asking stemmed from feeling cornered into making choices that have not felt genuine to myself, and working through challenges that no one else seemed to be working through. When I signed for the "Theory & Practice of Writing and Tutoring" my freshman year at Bates, I distinctly chose it because I believed it would enhance my writing. After a year of feeling like my language skills were inadequate and having decided to no longer major in English because of it, this class appealed to me because I believed it would offer me the chance to review basic English rules that perhaps I had forgotten. I felt like I no longer knew how to communicate. One assignment in that class was especially influential for me: the literacy narrative. The literacy narrative was a major assignment in that course, and it asked us to reflect on our literary experiences growing up and how they continued to develop throughout our lives as a way to gain a deeper, more complex understanding of who we are as writers. For example, we could think about how we learned our languages, our reading experiences growing up, the role that family played in shaping our interest in writing, or any other experiences that seemed significant to us as learners of a language. I hated that assignment. Draft after draft I couldn't understand what my professors were asking of me. I learned English, I spoke Arabic, sometimes my grammar isn't perfect, and spelling was hard; nothing seemed particularly special about it.

When I reread that piece now, I feel proud of my ability and vulnerability to communicate 19 years worth of experiences in 5 pages, but what I found most significant is that I still feel the same way about my language and writing 3 years later. In my literacy narrative, ironically titled *Me and Writing: Imperfect and Proud*, I wrote

> I worked hard to build my way up in writing, from regular English in freshman year to honors English in 10th grade and then AP [Language] junior year. I worked my way up from wrong punctuation, struggling to spell, learning grammar that doesn't make sense, and working with everything else this crazy language has; from almost right to alright. The formality of English writing was hard to get, but as I continue to get it I become now a mix of different types of thinking, speaking, and writing. I cannot be in a straight line now, because I have to maneuver through both to reach a reconciliation of what I am.

Having digested scholarship about linguistic injustice and languages' relationship to identity for the past 3 years, I have grown to have a much better understanding of my own literary experiences, all the way from internalizing English language supremacy as a child to why I have stopped enjoying writing now as an adult. I am writing this for the other international, multilingual, and multicultural students who may have felt the same way.

As a part of my conversations with international, multilingual students I wanted to learn more about their experiences and their languages; I was interested in how they thought about their different languages, where they used them, with who, and why. Inspired by an activity my professor always did in linguistic justice workshops, I asked students to share with me what languages they spoke, how they learned them, what they usually use them for, how often they use them now while at Bates, and how their voices may differ from or converge towards each

other to perform themselves. The answers I received from students drew out familiar experiences; moments of realizations, challenges in communication, divides becoming more and more comfortable, and always, our identities feeling undervalued, unacknowledged, and inadequate while at Bates. I argue that the multilingual, international student experience at Bates is characterized by incessant self-management, an inability to own and express a deep and meaningful sense of self, and feelings of alienation that are the result of consistent urging to eliminate our connection to the languages that are a part of our identities.

Keeping The Voices Separate

As students adapted to Bates College life, many emphasized that they felt a continuous need to keep their different languages separate, in when, where, and how they used them. More specifically, the students I spoke to reported becoming very good at maintaining this divide between their different voices, each of which serves its own purpose, uses its own tone, and invokes its own feelings. Importantly, some believed that their skill to switch and maintain clear boundaries between their languages was an especially significant thing for them to do because it reflected their ability to effectively communicate as multilingual people in standard American English-dominated spaces. Adam, a recent Bates alumni, shared his experience as a multilingual student who has sustained this divide, saying

> I never really had a lot of trouble, sort of actually keeping the two [languages] pretty distinct… I am able to sort of mentally switch my brain between these two languages pretty easily just because you know I've grown up in an environment where I had to do that. It's just kinda second nature, if I'm in class if I forget a word, I rarely ever default to a [native language] one… I'll usually just find something analogous to it

This is a frequently occurring experience. Despite believing there is a more appropriate word to use, many of us default to words that may more easily, although less accurately communicate our thoughts in classrooms surrounded by native English speakers. Seemingly harmless incidents like this can often disregard that our native languages may hold valuable, more accurate words, concepts, or frameworks to talk through a question or an issue. While speaking in class recently, I felt embarrassed while scrambling in my brain to quickly find the words in English to describe what had come to me as a thought in Arabic, but my professor said "say it in Arabic, and then explain it to us in English. It'll come to you." As I uttered the phrase in Arabic, *Booz Elmadfa',* I could more clearly think of an English description that communicated what I had meant much more effectively than any single English phrase could. The professor may not know it, but that moment meant a lot, specifically because I felt like I was able to more accurately say what I thought. The difference between explaining a cultural phrase and translating it to the closest English word may seem insignificant, but for some people, it may mark a difference between communicating and feeling understood or not. For some students, the choice to revert to a close-enough English word is the result of being told to only speak English in class by a professor at some point in their time at Bates.

For many students, the process of self-presentation and expression is not an easy thing to do. It requires consistent self-management to maintain these strict boundaries determining when and where some languages are allowed to be. To an extent, it feels like a necessary thing to do as a multilingual student. Kim shared her experience with this process by telling me,

> I have trouble not mixing the languages. For example at Bates sometimes like when I am speaking English I cannot help but to, you know, pop up with Chinese words or Japanese words and it's, it's weird… It's not like weird reactions, it's

> like I just, how is it, it's probably I know I am speaking English with other people, but sometimes I cannot like change the mindset between those languages and I think that's a little bit weird but mostly funny.

This feeling of weirdness is a significant part of that experience. Many students similarly reported feeling weird while shifting between the different mindsets that come with each language and the attempts to quickly translate ideas and thoughts. It seems that the weirdness could stem from a few different things, including these internalized rules that claim some voices are not meant to be in certain spaces or situations, making many of us uncomfortable in bringing those non-academic languages into the academic space, even in passing. Thinking back to the previously mentioned expectations some students receive, a part of that is perhaps due to the standard English competency requirement that is part of being an international student at Bates College. It is possible that the incorporation of non-dominant languages in a space that highly regards English competency feels like an unintentional invitation for attention, or that it highlights a part of you that you may not have the space or desire to expand on. Additionally, it may feel like a violation of academic linguistic norms, including exclusively writing and speaking in academic English in classrooms, which are often used to label individuals as proper, professional, or intelligent.

The mental switch required to transition between various languages may be very prominent for some students. Different languages contain within them very specific cultural knowledge, and these differences may be significant in the students' ability to authentically and comfortably express both their ideas and feelings on a topic. The necessity of switching so exclusively between languages while in academic contexts is part of an established system that assigns appropriate uses for each language, and these constructed labels are then able to design

and gate keep a homogenous system. This is a constant aspect of the multilingual students' life at Bates, an academic institution that both explicitly and implicitly maintains a hierarchy of languages.

Limited Authentic Self-Expression

These dominant divides which regulate students' linguistic use effectively limit students' ability to communicate in a way that feels true to themselves and alter students' self-presentation to fit a historically exclusive definition of who is an acceptable student in higher education. As previously described, students must navigate the different voices they have, each with its unique perspectives and knowledge. As such, students are often unable to appropriately and freely share parts of their identities at Bates. Arya talked to me abit about these feelings, saying

> The language shift is a lot, especially in my freshman year, where even though I understood what [others] were saying I found myself trying to translate whatever they were saying just to make sure I caught what they were trying to say… Coming to Bates in the social scene I think the difference was just more emphasis on talking in English rather in [native language]... over here initially when I [would joke] I got crickets. People didn't understand me, they looked at me in a way like they wanted me to translate or wanting me to make it make sense to them. That was definitely different and after that, I understood the cues and I was like okay I guess I should not do this anymore… I started filtering more and I started getting more conscious about who I interact with and how I should interact with them.

Other students also spoke about the difference in humor between their languages, as well. Some felt like they were funnier in their native languages which prompted them to become more

self-conscious about how they spoke with people. Humor is only one way in which students can feel limited in their self-expression. Humor is an example of various other aspects of the self that are not provided the adequate space to exist. While the student spoke about humor as a part of her identity in the context of the social life at Bates College, I believe it can extend beyond that into the academic space as well. As a part of our academic and professional lives students are meant to form important relationships with professors, advisors, and administrators. In many ways, that requires multilingual and multicultural students to examine parts of themselves and decide whether or not those aspects will be considered appropriate. Monolingual Americans are not often interested in the process of bridging understanding. Especially in the context of communications with faculty, emphasis is placed on efficiency and clarity, which cultural and linguistic differences in communication may hinder. Through the various interactions students have on campus, students are both consciously and subconsciously learning to fragment parts of themselves, set boundaries between them, and learn to then fit them in their appropriate spaces. In my personal experience, I find that Arabic speakers, at least where I grew up, tend to be quite expressive and loud. I appreciate that aspect of my Arabic which allows me a very emotional and personal delivery when speaking, however, when that trait infiltrates my English it can be misread by someone who may not have my background as rude or instigative. While it may be the case of simple miscommunication, the frequency with which some English-only speakers construct judgments against these cultural differences causes this to be a much larger issue for multilingual international students to contend with.

It then becomes the job of multilingual international students to learn to manage their self-expression to more seamlessly fit into Bates' social and academic fabric. More significantly, this is another example of the process of assimilation required of multicultural and multilingual

students here, which limits the parts of their identities allowed to be used. Tina summed up her personal experience on the matter, saying

> I believe that my English personality is a lot smaller than the one in [my native language] because I was always trying to make myself like, not not noticeable, but like I just wanted to get things done, you know what I mean? Like I use English as a tool, not necessarily to socialize that much, I would like mostly speak to my [home country] friends and that was my way of like relaxing and just like talking to people, I was like talking [in my native language] and English was my school and academic language so I think that my personality, even though that's like changing a lot, I think that my English personality is like a little straightforward, to the point, and my [native language] is more creative…

This is an intentional aspect of the dominant educational structure in the United States. The impact that self-censorship can have on someone's ability to feel heard, feel seen, and to feel able to contribute freely is massively significant in encouraging students to assimilate, especially BIPOC students and students of different nationalities, into the larger political and economic structure. In a world that values hierarchy, blind productivity, and eurocentric standards, students 'getting things done' and working 'straightforward and to the point' is a lot less threatening than a student feeling creative, honest, and empowered. All of which would work to deconstruct a system that does not benefit those in power. The previously discussed connection between identity and language is an important one considering the way linguistic discrimination has been employed in furthering oppression against marginalized identities throughout U.S. history. Therefore, the limitations placed on multilingual, international students' languages at Bates can only be viewed as part of that larger structural assimilation project.

Feelings of Alienation

These limits on students' use of their languages cause students to feel alienated. Alienation was a big part of what students communicated to me throughout our conversations, and it felt validating to my own experience as well. While at Bates, students see that they must be able to manage different fragments of their identity to succeed. The values that students receive about the natural superiority of the standard American English language cause them to feel out of place and unable to belong. This is even the case for international students whose first language is non-American English. Julia, a international student alum from an English speaking country, reflected on her time at Bates saying

> Even though it was annoying at times like I did come to the U.S. knowing how to speak English, and that's a massive massive privilege … but one thing I would say was just like in my class participation, I've always been more of a reserved person like I think that's just how I grew up, you know I found that like very overwhelming. Americans just putting up their hands sharing like all of their personal details, and I was like Woah , that's really intense… especially when I first got to the states it just felt different because my voice didn't sound like everybody else's in the class…

It's a familiar feeling. To be specific, the issue is not in the reality that students from any place will be different and have different cultural boundaries and standards for language use, but in the way, international students will often be impacted by their differences. This can manifest in many ways, for example in struggling with participation, but more deeply in the way that students are made unable to comfortably situate themselves in classrooms. Their differences are rarely taken into account, and in the process of learning and adopting American academic class

standards and boundaries, international students are made to feel alone, misunderstood, and rarely considered.

Final Loss of Identity

The process of dividing and managing your voices, ensuring their use at the appropriate time, limiting your self-expression, and figuring out your place in classrooms on your own are the constant and exhausting characteristics of the multilingual and international student experience. Within multicultural, multilingual international students there is always a dual stream of consciousness that requires continuous attention to keep track of them flow; to learn how to filter them, how to seamlessly switch between them, and how to be fair to all the knowledge you hold and the identities, history, and cultures they represent. A lot of what makes us who we are often gets lost in our journeys to feeling well situated at an academic institution like Bates, and that is a well-designed trait of this education system. This is similarly true for domestic students who may be multilingual or multicultural, or who speak different dialects or vernacular that are not regarded as highly as standard academic English. Reflecting on my experience, I can recognize now that my Arabic voice has been lost throughout my attempts to succeed at Bates. In my literacy narrative I wrote, "I cannot be in a straight line now, because I have to maneuver through both to reach a reconciliation of what I am." My first-year self may not have intended it in that way, but the process of 'maneuvering' is a lot easier when there is less to 'maneuver through.'

Being at an institution like Bates necessitates shedding layers of our identity as multilingual students to manage what it asks of us, and it is a tragically common story. Natalie similarly shared how I felt while speaking about her non-English voice, saying "I know it got killed somewhere by the time I graduated… I definitely feel like I am losing my voice in [my

native language], like even when my thoughts are in [my native language] it just sounds like a different person." Because these languages are a huge part of people's cultural and national identity, this loss is intensely hurtful. Especially for those who come from countries that have seen the impact of imperialism and strong Western influence, it could feel like a betrayal to see yourself so clearly changed by these Western standards of language. The loss of significant cultural roots along with the history and wisdom that cannot be found somewhere else can be especially painful to students, but it is a strong pillar of the academy. It's an ingenious trait of how deeply rooted colonialism is within this institution, except it transitions (only in some cases) from colonizing the land to colonizing the self and the minds of individuals. Looking at all of the stories the students have shared with me, the implicitly and explicitly communicated rules and boundaries that encourage students to fragment themselves and assign labels and spaces for their voices serve a larger project of colonialism and White supremacy.

Writing As A Multilingual Student At Bates

The exclusion that multilingual students experience at Bates is an important aspect of their in-class experiences. In addition to the previously outlined boundaries placed on multilingual students' voices, self-expression, and sense of belonging more broadly at Bates, linguistic injustice is significantly perpetuated within classrooms through various writing teaching practices. Students' writing experiences are shaped by a sense of exclusion that stems from the traditional academic structures and methods that are still being used at Bates. Writing at Bates College is concerned with training students in traditional academia by eliminating opportunities for creative self-expression, imposing a White audience on the students, providing biased and limited feedback, prioritizing traditionally accepted 'academic' evidence, and punishing students by using historically unproductive approaches to assessment. As such, multilingual student writing at Bates College demands careful consideration, planning, and a large amount of self-restriction on the part of the student. While multilingual students can be very particular about their language use, as well as, being deliberate in choosing their rhetorical strategies and structures, the limits they are subjected to point to how their languages are not perceived as effectively able to communicate knowledge on their own. The methods instructors used characterize students' experience writing at Bates and are responsible for communicating to the students that the parts of their identities connected to non-dominant languages and dialects do not qualify for the academic space, and it continues to promote the historically racist and exclusionary standards that American education was built on.

Limited Opportunities For Creative Expression

In contrast to the values that the Bates writing attentive curriculum outlines, which includes writing for scholarship and intellectual discovery in addition to communication and

civic action, many classes are often limited to traditional, academic writing assignments meant to train students in the production of traditionally accepted writing. Many students reflected on that in our conversations and spoke about how many of their classes are focused on advancing "department-centered goals," in an attempt to prepare students to enter that academic space. This was a specifically reoccurring comment from students throughout our conversations, wherein many of them saw their education to be limited to academic training. The practice students receive in meetings specific disciplinary standards is either pushing for students to enter academia or limits students learning to meet arbitrary standards of an industry they do not wish to be a part of. Nonetheless, students see that their teaching practices are invested in advancing one single writing and thinking style. Many of these assignments are particularly concerned with teaching students field-specific mechanics and expectations which do not translate, as students put it, "real-life skills." These assignments are often shallow, surface-level examinations of certain class topics that do not request or accept the individual expression of the self through the writing process, but rather a straightforward, often regurgitated analysis that may lack creativity, engagement with real-world realities, or encourages wider accessibility. This is especially true for multilingual students who are forced to silence other aspects of their identity and voices to interact more smoothly with these assignments designed to test their ability within the academic field and their proficiency in producing inaccessible regurgitated knowledge.

Essays are perhaps one of the most common assignments students will need to do while at Bates. Many of the essay assignments in Bates College class are rarely well-thought-out. In my experience as a writing tutor for the past 3 years, many essay assignments here can often lack legitimate reasoning or motivation for the questions being asked. They will often lack clear directions or prompts, but rather ask students to choose their own topics and write to fit a random

page limit, and for those that do provide clear instructions, they often present obscure questions, a limited approach to answer them and fail to provide a valid rationale for the assignment. My hardest tutoring sessions are often due to these limited or obscure parameters that fail to motivate students or present them with a logical need for their work. Students who come into the center are often confused as to what is being asked of them, and it is especially frustrating for them to see the absurdity of assignments in comparison to the realities of the world.

In a world plagued by systemic racism, wealth inequality, climate change, a looming nuclear war, surveillance and privacy issues, police brutality, and rising far-right nationalism, to only name a few, these standardized, lackluster, and futile assignments act to distract students from real-life applications that may be available for these topics. Real-life applications may specifically threaten the structural integrity of academia that relies upon students' complacency and detachment from the realities of a capitalist and White supremacist world. In general, research has noted that homework assignments rarely boost students' learning, but in fact, harm them. One empirical study has noted that “current homework practices in privileged, high-performing schools sustain students’ advantage in competitive climates yet hinder learning, full engagement and well-being…too much homework can diminish its effectiveness and even be counterproductive… the research calls into question the value of assigning large amounts of homework in high-performing schools. Homework should not be simply assigned as a routine practice” (Galloway, Conner, and Pope 2013, as cited in Parker 2014). Moreover, the issues may extend beyond the personal impact this type of superfluous homework has, but rather points to a larger, structural issue within the context of higher education. This busywork assigned to students, specifically work that is exceptionally monitored and structured, promotes a sense of indifference or acceptance of menial tasks, hierarchical structures, and obedience. One article

summed up these issues by saying, “before the emergence of class society, education was a communal activity deeply intertwined with daily life, socializing, storytelling and rituals…The education system in most countries today has not substantially changed in the last 200 years. This is because it emerged out of the development of capitalism and was constructed to serve the needs of the capitalist class in a new industrial era. It was the industrial revolution that initially drove the need for a basic level of expertise in the working population” (The socialist 2017). These basic assignments which do not promote student engagement with, as Bates puts it, civic action and can be attributed to the historical, large-scale purpose of education that remains intertwined with capitalist interests and its associated White supremacist values.

These types of assignments are designed to measure students' capacity for straightforward, bounded academic work that can fit easily into traditional industry needs. For multilingual students, it also works as an examination of their linguistic skills, unrelated to a real necessity, and following common educational practices that limit which voices are allowed to be used in these academic spaces.

An Imposed Audience

These assignments are often limited by the presumed audiences that students are meant to communicate with and write for. Attending an academic institution such as Bates means consistently being surrounded by and catering to the elite, White standards of communication. Many assignments at Bates often instruct students to write, envisioning their classmates and their course professor as their audience, and in a PWI such as Bates, this usually means writing for a very specific, White, rich, and monolingual audience. This restricts students’ forms of communication and limits their ability to practice working for the general public and the

communities they belong to. Amelia felt passionately about this, and shared their experience with writing these types of assignments by stating,

> I feel like we never discuss audience ever, either. Like we are just writing for the professor, and it's just so weird… because I am like well I don't actually know who is reading this like we don't have an audience… I guess it assumes an audience that is a college-educated White American, and it is weird because like maybe you don't want to write for that person, but the reality is that is your professor too, so you kinda have to write for that audience and forced to write for that specific audience exclusively… The issue is it really comes back to what we are writing for and who we are writing for, and the who we are writing for inevitably becomes the professor who is a White professor, who is a White professor who speaks English, and who probably only speaks English… [I am] measured by how good I can write for a White audience.

Amelia's testimony highlights a very core issue of writing at Bates and the implications that these standard practices can have on how students understand their role in the world. Through these assignments which force students to specifically address a very limited audience, using techniques available only to that audience, students at Bates, but especially multilingual and multicultural students, learn to appeal to White standards of professionalism and intelligence.

When considering the traditional, stereotypically accepted type of academic writing, it is clear that the work is rarely made accessible to individuals who do not belong or are unable to enter these elite exclusive academic communities. When students at Bates College are instructed to address this predominantly White audience, an audience that is rarely the subject of examination in academia, they are trained to accept and work to maintain the inaccessibility of

academia. This is an especially pertinent aspect of the academy and its history. One scholar writes, “What might be the point of writing something which only a handful of people can understand?... We are writing ultimately about people’s lives. What can it mean if only 20 people in the world understand what we are saying? It means that we are either so bad at writing that we can’t communicate, or so full of ourselves that we don’t want to communicate” (Hayot 2014, 53-54). Hyot specifically addresses the “ego and vanity” of academics, but I would additionally point out that elitist and exclusive academic spaces were an intentional part of constructing academia, not a by-product of mismanaged academics’ egos. To claim that the reason for the obnoxious and inaccessible complexity of academic writing is that academics are so full of themselves to appropriately address their audience is to completely disregard that history of construction and the associated values of academia which chooses to benefit from but not cater to the communities they write about. For multilingual international students, these assignments discourage them from thinking in their voices because they do not directly address or benefit the rich, White academic community. To constantly write for this pre-established, non changing audience, international students must set their cultural and linguistic identities aside and employ only the academic voices they are trained to use.

What students are then left with are what Amelia referred to as “weird little bullshit takes.” A well-worded, accurate description of how many students view the type of work they are consistently completing while at Bates. Amelia seemed to be referring to the common, and consistent essay style writing assignments concerned with basic level summary, arbitrary argumentation, or simple level analysis that do not particularly relate to especially profound learning. For example, prompts such as ones that ask students to mindlessly compare and contrast two scholarly works, to choose a random text to analyze, or even think of their own

questions to address using some random number of sources. Students are rarely granted the opportunity to explore their unique linguistic styles even in assignments which invite students to choose their own prompts, because they do not benefit from training in the particular standard writing requirements. These assignments serve to further position one identity, the standard rich and White American, as more academic than others, and for students to succeed in this environment they find it imperative for them to think, write, speak, and argue in ways that subscribe to their standards and cater to the identities in power.

'Not This, But That' Feedback

For students to succeed while at Bates, they are guided to learn and use these standard academic writing skills. The feedback that students get while writing at Bates is responsible for the messages they internalize regarding the 'non-academic' nature of their languages and identities. The types of feedback that faculty commonly use work to establish what proper academic writing looks like, thus necessitating a non-academic counterpart that is inappropriate to use in these spaces. Broadly speaking, multilingual and international students' writing can sometimes exhibit qualities that deviate from traditional academic writing. Faculty at Bates are not equipped or prepared to accept them as legitimate variations because of the superior value that is granted to standard academic American English, disregarding whether the writing was clear in its communication or effective in its argument or not. Kai, a junior student, spoke about his experience with that type of feedback, stating

> I had this conversation with my FYS professor and he was like 'the way you write is just so interesting' and I'm like oh, okay, say more and he's like 'like people don't write like this' like okay say more… he was like 'I guess it is because you grew up with British English'… It was good and bad feedback, good in the sense

> that he knew why it was different but bad because he was like trying to encourage me to switch to how I should write… things like 'I've never read someone say this' or 'maybe say it in this way'… I guess it was a kind way of saying this is not what you should be writing… He wasn't correcting the rules of English but I think [correcting] the way I just write

The student is particularly speaking about receiving vague or unnecessarily picky or mechanical feedback that is more concerned with advancing the uniformity of the writing to standard academic English, and less concerned with addressing the general knowledge the student is producing through that assignment. The feedback that students receive from faculty mainly argues against the choices they make that causes their writing to stand out from the rest. It points to the way faculty is perhaps more interested in policing writing as an activity and less in thinking about what that writing is communicating. Amelia argued that simply put, the feedback they receive on their writing places the "emphasis on the fact that [they are] not a native speaker." Feedback at Bates is rarely designed to support students' larger writing process and ability to communicate but rather designed to police students' expression.

Specifically, writing at Bates is intended to emulate American speech patterns and American academic values. Multiple international students noted that the feedback they often receive causes them to feel judged for not sounding "American enough." Student alums echoed these grievances, stating that by the time they had graduated from Bates, they had learned to make their writing "sound more American." Building upon my understanding of the dominant writing structure at Bates, these testimonies point to the way multilingual students' identities are often villainized, delegitimize, or devalued in comparison to American academic English. In stark contrast to the values that Bates advertises, the writing process at Bates is limited by

feedback that fails to "engage the transformative power of our differences" and commit to what Bates describes as writing that "[includes] multiple languages, modalities, and means of communication." Some of that feedback includes, but is certainly not limited to, the following:

Clarity— both students and faculty reported that a part of what is considered successful writing is clarity, or the ability to clearly articulate and communicate your argument and evidence. Following the previously highlighted biases that faculty have, clarity, a value that may seem objective and fair, is often twisted to only encompass writing which follows American academic standards of expression. Clarity can often be misconstrued to refer to successfully implementing what can be described as following "conventions for writing in the discipline or area of study, including usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems" (Writing @ Bates). That specialized vocabulary or format seems to reference White American standards for language use. Clarity is often manipulated to refer to a student's ability to follow the expected linguistic norms that faculty may be more familiar with, especially as they are predominantly White and native speakers of English. As shown through the various examples highlighted earlier, students' writing is often critiqued on its ability to directly communicate to a specific audience or population or specifically using native English speakers' lexicon regardless of substantive concern for the content of the written work. Mia talked to me about her experience with this type of issue, saying,

> even though it is the same expression, it is supposed to have the same meaning… I am actually basically asking the same question but because I was phrasing differently, a lot of people are asking me like 'sorry, can you say that again?' I got that questions so many times. It is not that I don't speak English, it is that I just was not phrasing it in a way that they are used to and I think that was adding an

> additional barrier. I think probably writing 'good' writing at Bates is figuring out a way that is more communicable to the audience, but I think that is mostly White people in academia.

While clarity is an essential part of effective writing, clarity means different things to people, and in a predominantly White institution in the United States, a White and American comprehension and appreciation of the work is centered as a highly significant feature that a written piece can have. This means that disregarding the genuine quality of the work in its ability to achieve a particular purpose, if that work does not meet those standards, it is subject to criticism.

Concision— Concision is a highly regarded value in American writing. Many of the students reported concision as a big issue in the feedback they have received while at Bates. Kai shared that the feedback he'd received reaffirmed the importance of "[being] economical with [his] words." In fact, many students shared similar feedback framed similarly, using terms such as "efficient" and "clean." The use of 'economical' to describe or assess students' writing is no coincidence, but rather an extension of the way education is highly influenced by capitalist values which deem efficiency a highly desired trait. The U.S. is a fast-paced capitalist country that uses productivity as a reflection of people's worth. According to one faculty member who is concerned with issues of linguistic injustice, concision is a highly "Western rhetorical value" and it requires multilingual students to restrict other parts of their linguistic identities. Many of the students' native languages are characterized by long sentences, descriptive language, and beautiful complexity that is devalued in comparison to "the practicality of the English language," as Daphne describes it. The feedback that is more concerned with concision than the actual strength, complexity, or validity of a students' arguments is a part of linguistic injustice at Bates College.

Grammar and Mechanics— This is possibly the most important type of feedback that students receive at Bates because it reflects the hierarchy of values that dominates students' writing processes. Disregarding the content of students' written pieces, grammar-centric feedback is far more concerned with the standardization of the language and the students' academic language competency than with the larger ideas being communicated. Tina told me about one of her experiences with a written assignment where she had received a lower grade for her submission over mechanical issues, even though the professor did not request initial drafts or offer feedback to guide students in their writing process. For many multilingual international students, this type of feedback caused them to believe their writing is bad and to try and avoid writing-heavy classes overall.

The feedback students receive at Bates is concentrated around the aspects of their writing that deviate from the linguistic norms that dominate American academia. For multilingual international students, this process causes them to continue to prioritize their relationship with American academic English over the non-dominant languages or dialects that they speak.

Grades As Punishment

The methods used to assess students' writing are reflective of the larger system that forces students to assimilate their writing to American academic English standards, and it includes accepting a reality where their entire identities cannot exist in academic spaces without it being divided. Grading students' writing at Bates acts as a punishment for students' attempts to integrate different aspects of their linguistic skills into their academic work, something that scholarship argues can introduce new and important knowledge in the academy. Because grading is a very common and dominant practice in most educational institutions, students are not always aware of the way it is used to push them to leave parts of their identity out while they are writing.

Tina reflected on that as a senior and the way that grading impacted her relationship to writing as a multilingual international student while at Bates. She shared,

> Now looking back, these are the only bad grades that I have had in college. Like I would've been a 4.0 if I didn't have A-minuses in intro classes, and like I wasn't really frustrated with it back then because I thought it makes sense my writing sucks, like yeah having an A-minus isn't that bad but now when I actually think about it I am like you know it was actually really unnecessary. I was kind of avoiding writing classes like I was kind of scared of those classes…

She additionally shared that she "didn't see the necessity of grading [her] writing that intensely." Other students shared similar experiences, noting that they saw an uptake in their grades when they began intentionally sounding more 'American' in their writing. Circling back to Amelia's comments, she indicated that when"[she] was writing the most American [she] started to get the best grades." This pattern points to the manifestation of linguistic injustice that exists at Bates. Multilingual and international students are significantly affected by the linguistic hierarchy that dominates the Bates Writing culture.

As international students learn to adapt to the Bates environment, grades are used to punish students for failing to reach arbitrary standards that stem from a history of White supremacy and a wider project of assimilation. Grades in this case are used to push students into forgoing the parts of their identity that are not considered appropriately academic to be successful in their academic careers. It is a method of pushing students' into obedience and rationalizing hierarchies that dominate this academic environment by threatening their chance to succeed. One writer argues, "if the purpose of academic grading is to communicate accurate and specific information about learning, letter, or points-based grades, are a woefully blunt and

inadequate instrument. Worse, points-based grading undermines learning and creativity, rewards cheating, damages students' peer relationships and trust in their teachers, encourages students to avoid challenging work and teaches students to value grades over knowledge" (Lahey 2014). Grades are not used to communicate accurate information about students' learning, but rather to communicate their ability to achieve historically racist standards of writing and academic knowledge production. Early grading history in the U.S. included practices such as Harvard University's "system of classes" which offered a way of ranking students and establishing academic divisions. As such, grades can be viewed as influential labels that mark a students' academic progress according to American academic standards. As indicated above, many students are explicitly aware that for them to get better grades, and therefore be able to succeed academically, is highly reliant on their ability to suppress parts of their identity.

Multilingual and international students' experiences with writing at Bates are highly influenced by the threat of low grades. For example, one writing assignment rubric in a Bates course read, "B papers have a few problems with writing but are clear enough nonetheless… The writing might have some problems with grammar or mechanics, but they do not interfere with the clarity of the argument." In this case, students' 'failure' to perfect their paper on a mechanical or grammatical level can cause them to lose grades, even though these 'deficiencies' are explicitly described as not having a significant effect on the students' ability to communicate an effective argument. These incidents cause students to avoid certain writing-intensive courses or departments with a high amount of written assignments because it influences their academic standing. Tina specifically reported that, stating explicitly "I was kinda avoiding writing classes, I was kind of like scared of those classes." She additionally mentioned choosing to not take a specific class because she knew it had a lot of writing. Students' stories showcase how their

chance of succeeding at Bates is highly influenced by unjust writing standards and assessment methods. They are often left to choose between missing out on a class and the content taught in it or impacting their grades by taking those classes. These issues contribute to the contradiction between the values that Bates has for their writing curriculum and the methods that are used.

What Can And Cannot Be Academic

As a part of learning to produce academically valuable work, students at Bates are often limited to the use of traditionally accepted academic scholarship as the basis for their writing. Traditional academia relies on a strict hierarchy that labels different types of knowledge as more or less legitimate, accurate, or valid than others. The knowledge that is considered to be more significant is tied to the identities that hold more power within the White supremacist, colonial reality of the U.S. Reflecting on this hierarchy of knowledge, one author writes, “recognizing the way in which the Academy has historically been implicated in the process of colonization required me to take another look at intellectual traditions I had previously thought of as forces for social justice and emancipation… [and] prompted me to reevaluate my own epistemological assumption and to realize how inextricably academic knowledge production is tied up with the maintenance of unequal power relations…the Academy remains very much a neo-colonial Western institution in "settler states"” (Biermann 2011, 387). At elite academic institutions such as Bates, this hierarchy of knowledge remains highly powerful, and it demands that students build their thinking on top of what is considered to be significant, valuable, and superior knowledge. As such, students are limited to addressing and navigating issues through the lenses of those the academy has deemed consequential.

Students whose languages and cultures deviate from the qualities that Western academic standards regard as appropriate are unable to bring that aspect of their identities into their

academic work. Students spoke about the ways this influenced their relationship with academia and writing. Julie noted that the standards for academic writing that only allowed her to use what she referred to as “rigid thinking & rigid ways of presenting [her] ideas" were largely responsible for driving her away from the academy after graduating Bates. Hannah, a current senior, shared similar feelings about disliking the limits placed on students' work by being forced to build their work on the people who came before them. As previously mentioned, the emphasis placed on using evidence and logic in argumentation which necessitates the use of historically accepted scholarship excludes minoritized identities from academia and regards them as less valuable or effective in comparison to eurocentric values of knowledge. Students being limited to using a specific type of pre-approved scholarship that often was produced through violence, exploitation, exoticization, or even the exclusion of BIPOC people communicates clearly to the students the value of their identities in academia. Marginalized students' identities are historically only beneficial for what they can offer to support the interests of various institutions in the United States. To produce anthropological work, academics explicitly exoticized different cultures, but now students from those same cultures are expected to contribute the emotional labor needed to contextualize this work in the classrooms. Academic institutions largely were built off of the exploitation of Black bodies and labor, but now they Black and Brown students can be used to grant an institution a desirable image of diversity and inclusion. Those identities are allowed to be seen in the ways that benefit larger structures, either of a specific field or of a specific institution, but when they threaten a particular status quo in the knowledge production process, they are often quickly eliminated. Labeled subjective, anecdotal, or personal, the experiences and stories of marginalized identities continue to be removed from the academic work that receives wider recognition.

Linguistic Injustice Beyond Bates College

The alteration and remodeling of multilingual students' language use while at Bates impacts the way students perceive and navigate the world after leaving college. The experiences of international, multilingual students carry across the academic boundary into the 'real world' in ways that perpetuate centuries-long linguistic hierarchies within American society and beyond, and the associated oppression that comes with them. Those experiences are what disconnects Bates's advertised values, an emphasis on the "transformative power of our differences, cultivating intellectual discovery and informed civic action…[and] a love of learning and a commitment to responsible stewardship of the wider world," from the reality of its role as an educational institution in the United States. The mistreatment of non-dominant languages in higher education not only correlates to harm done to students within the academic environment but is complicit in larger oppressive structures outside of it. The language learning process at Bates communicates to students the desirable attitudes and values they must take on. The learning of the English language while in an American institution is not limited by learning the mechanics of a language but is additionally "imbued with the weight of the social and political complexity that goes far beyond simply the matter of acquiring a second language" (Olsen 2000, 196). This is specifically a result of the hegemonic sanctity and validity granted to the academic domain in the United States, as educational institutions have the power to manipulate and produce populations that align with the nation's ethos; including perpetuating capitalist values and ideals, White supremacist hierarchies, and Western imperialist global power. Therefore, the linguistic injustice which affects the daily lives of students at Bates College translates into real-life implications within connected political, social, and economic domains. The messages students receive about the validity, appropriateness, or usefulness of their languages and the

identities intrinsically connected to them greatly reshape students' relationship to their languages, along with the culture embedded in them. After graduating from Bates, students retain the values they learned while attending the institution, including internalizing the legitimacy of the various structures which necessitated them to fragment, exclude, or abandon parts of their identities. Years spent at this institution were used to weaken or eliminate students' minority identities, advance White ideals, and solidify the power of eurocentric standards and expectations.

Advancing A Capitalist Society

I had previously highlighted that there has been significant scholarship arguing that education in the United States is connected to the reproduction of its economic system. Largely, many have claimed that students in the United States are often learning the values necessary to support the economic system of the United States. During my research for this project, one scholar posed the following questions: "what type of human capital does the emerging global capitalist system require for it to function?... What type of educational system would be able to deliver such a mass of humanity endowed with, or lacking in, the sets of skills, knowledge, and mental facilities needed to meet these requirements?" (Robinson 2016, 1). Along with other types of violence and propaganda used to justify capitalism as an economic system, I argue that linguistic injustice, or the process of linguistic standardization in the U.S., is additionally involved in perpetuating its values. The manipulation of the identities of individuals through the linguistic domination that is connected to racist and colonial ideals assists in homogenizing a population to "[make] the system safe for capitalist accumulation" (Virdee 2019, 22). It does so by disconnecting students from their identities and cultures, stripping them from their individuality and cultural ideals and values, training students to accept and internalize various

capitalist principles such as efficiency and productivity, and centering capitalist success at the core of the methods of instruction used at a given institution. The final product can then be anything from students who have rationalized and internalized capitalist structures to students who do not have the necessary skills or empowerment to push back against them.

Throughout my conversations with current international students and alumni, they frequently characterized their language and writing learning at Bates as practical, important "for utility's sake," mandatory, or necessary. Almost all students described Academic English taught at Bates as professional, efficient, standard, formulated, rigid, less emotional, or straightforward in one way or another. In contrast, these students described their native languages with words such as beautiful, natural, concerned with feelings, complex, poetic, dynamic, or flowery. The descriptions are not related to inherent, intrinsic linguistic values but are related to the way people are socialized to perceive the use of a language in the same way they had been socialized or taught which language is considered more professional or appropriate in different scenarios. The methods of instruction that are used to police students' languages maintain a separation between languages by utility, one concerned with efficiency, productivity, and professional development, and others that are not. Kamila, a Bates alum, noted that at Bates, "the way [she] wanted to express [herself] didn't seem professional enough," and throughout her journey at Bates, the work she had done "conditioned [her] to identify what professional writing looks like." Kamila may have been specifically noting the perception of a certain language as more or less appropriate within a certain space, but it is additionally useful to consider it as a reference to the professional environment outside of Bates. Different languages here are granted different stations within a capitalist economy, one's which assist in maintaining workplace hierarchies through their professionalism, rigidity, or lack of emotions, and others that may threaten

particular power structures by involving a dynamic, complex, or emotional approaches to work. In academia, students very explicitly receive instruction on what is considered appropriate, and very commonly, faculty will invoke workplace rules to legitimize expectations or assessment standards for written assignments. Students then see that parts of their identities do not 'naturally' fit the expectations presented to them about professional work settings, and thus learn to separate and/or eliminate those parts of themselves.

Expectations surrounding where a language would be appropriate to use are related to the different spaces which exist beyond the boundary of an academic institution, which in the case of the United States is highly organized by the capitalist economy. Students note that their work at Bates is explicitly meant to prepare them to enter those spaces for future work and to learn how to navigate them. The training to separate languages and mindsets that were highlighted earlier is significant in teaching students how to appropriately advance within professional opportunities available post-graduation. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to take on the values considered important for these professional spaces, one of them being productivity, for example. Productivity is an important value in a capitalist society. One scholar describes productivity as "a favorite shibboleth as well as a genuine preoccupation of the managerial and ideological agents of capital, [and] in recent years it has acquired a currency in popular political discourse that is altogether unprecedented. Together with "competitive and "flexibility," productivity has become a mantra that is repeatedly intoned to account for our current economic malaise and highlight the harsh realities of the 'new global economy'"" (Smith 1993, 262). Even more recently, the COVID-19 public health crisis pushed forward the discourse on the value of productivity within the capitalist system, specifically showcasing how within a "competitive capitalist productivist framework [work] is individualized, standardized, disciplined and commodified, and there is

little room for the creative growth of workers and their skills" (Nayak 2020). I argue that there is a correlation between the terms used to describe capitalist productivity as standardized or disciplined and the way students are taught to perceive academic English as more efficient, practical, standard, or straightforward and generally more appropriate to use. Even faculty are very clearly influenced by this type of ideology, as they often center issues of practicality and efficiency in opposition to linguistic justice efforts during the panels, workshops, or conversations I have been a part of. I have engaged in conversations with various faculty on these issues and I am often met with resistance stemming from a difficulty to visualize multilingual writing as effective. Many have even specifically stated that they see it as too much work to navigate, assess, or fully comprehend. A part of writing that involves two or more languages or linguistic repertoires requires faculty to take the time to understand and individually learn about their students and their languages. It requires writing to be a process including feedback, conversations, and a willingness to continue learning. This is not necessarily efficient, and it will require individuals to pause and think about the choices being made as well as their previously held perceptions. I find there to be an important connection between the work done to exclude or devalue students' languages that do not fit those parameters of capitalist significance, often by positioning them as not professional, to the role of the academy in assisting to reproduce the larger capitalist structures and conditions.

Many students are often led to internalize these values even if they can see how they have been harmed by some of those systems. During a conversation with Natalie about what linguistic justice would mean or look like for us, she stated

> I am now thinking about the real world and does that really prepare us… and does that put minorities at a disadvantage when they are applying for jobs, for example.

> Because, you know, that is not the language that is considered professional or eloquent or appropriate to talk to clients with…

Natalie spoke to me prior about her different experiences with language and learning academic English before and while at Bates, but along with her stating that she had lost her voice in her native language and that she can see it "got killed" throughout that journey, she finds the assimilation process important to succeed in the 'real world.' I would not blame a minority student for learning the tricks that allow them to survive or succeed in the conditions of the world, but I am critical of the education that needed to take place for those survival tactics to become so normalized and perceived as naturally occurring. If Bates, or any other institution, wishes to argue that it is interested in the advancement of "social justice and freedom" then it needs to unshackle its teaching methods from the economic system that has continuously been documented to stand against those pursuits.

Maintaining White Supremacy

Moreover, the teaching methods utilized at Bates cannot be separated from the larger historical construction of the academic domain in the United States and the role that White supremacy played in it. White supremacy is defined as a system centered upon "the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that whites should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-whites… [it] describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains the social, political, historical and/or industrial white domination" (National Education Association 2020). I intentionally include the well-known definition to draw attention to the concept of White superiority that drives this system of racism. White superiority does not only exist in the explicit acts of racism and violence that are common within American society but is also powerful as implicitly held up beliefs that

have constructed and maintained the various institutions within this country. The previously outlined history of racism and White supremacy that largely influenced the goals and structures of the American Educational system remains highly intertwined with the pedagogies used today. The writing and language teaching methods at Bates are no different, and in fact, are highly reflective of the White supremacist standards that continue to marginalize and devalue non-White identities within academia. The linguistic injustice at Bates causes the elimination of non-White, non-American voices from the academy and can be named partly responsible for the White supremacist values that are a part of the larger society as well. Linguistic injustice is driven by White linguistic superiority and the belief that White American standard academic English is more indicative of intelligence, civility, or professionalism at a level other non-dominant languages are not capable of. At Bates College, the emphasis placed on Standard Academic English and how it is centered in course work reflects how White linguistic supremacy is embedded within the academic culture of the institution and can be noted as a factor in sustaining White supremacist values outside of the school's boundaries.

The way writing assignments are structured, framed, and assessed at Bates as previously described continues to rely upon standards of White linguistic supremacy. These methods act as "specific [tools] of linguicism that Inoue (2019) defines as the indoctrination that white language practices, such as standardized English or Spanish, are superior to all other language practices… influenced by sociolinguistic ideologies. That is, white language supremacy positions the languaging of racialized peoples as deficient and inferior to the languaging of white speakers by function of the white listening subject (Flores & Rosa, 2015)." (Caldera & Babino 2020, 4). Many of the previously highlighted student experiences showcase that, starting with the imposed White audience that dominates many of the writing assignments at Bates to the way students are

consistently instructed to alter their ways of speaking and writing to better fit the standards of the classrooms through faculty's feedback. These standards have positioned the students' non-dominant languages as less academic, and therefore, less valuable, intelligible, or proper. Students are then pushed to eliminate the parts of their identities that rely upon these languages for self-expression because they do not fit the parameters of what is considered acceptable within society. The languages are manipulated to indicate a particular political stance or social status in the way they are meant to communicate intelligence or civility for an individual rather than a representation of the individual's self or culture. If students choose to still use their non-dominant languages in academic spaces it would presumably reflect their linguistic incompetency or general unpreparedness to belong in and contribute to that space according to academic standards and White ideals. Thus, these languages and the identities associated with them continue to be excluded, as it was historically intended with the construction of elite academic institutions.

In reflecting upon the ways linguistic justice has impacted her, one university professor writes, "I realized that my academic and career success could, at least in part, be attributed to my ability to conform my most authentic way of communication to one that has, at times, seemed contrived. As a Black woman, I am accustomed to having to negotiate aspects of my identity…I saw myself as having only two options. Switch codes (languages) or fail. So, I switched." (Caldera & Babino 2020, 9). Multilingual international students at Bates College, in combination with other multilingual BIPOC students, are continuously pushed to make that choice. When students are forced to do so, to give up parts of themselves to succeed, to shed aspects of their identity in order to be recognized for their achievements and their abilities, and to present themselves as close to Whiteness as possible to receive the benefits of belonging to an institution, White supremacy is upheld. The Conference on College Composition and

Communication outlines it as such, “WLS assists white supremacy by using language to control reality and resources, by defining and evaluating people, places, things, reading, writing, rhetoric, pedagogies, and processes in multiple ways that damage our students and our democracy. It imposes a worldview that is simultaneously pro-white, cisgender, male, heteronormative, patriarchal, ableist, racist, and capitalist (Inoue, 2019; Pritchard, 2017). This worldview structures WLS as the default condition in schools, academic disciplines, professions, media, and society at large. WLS is, thus, structural and usually a part of the standard operating procedures of classrooms, disciplines, and professions” (CCCC Statement on White Language Supremacy 2021). The linguistic injustice at Bates is a part of a cycle that continues to position Whiteness as superior but specifically through languages. The four years spent learning content and skills at Bates remain to be shrouded by White American standards and White supremacist values. For students to take on those values, they in turn must learn to silence, devalue, or exclude their non-White identities and voices, upholding the system of White supremacy.

Supporting Western Imperialist Power

While Capitalism, White supremacy, and Western imperialism are intertwined at their core, I address the impact of linguistic injustice on Western imperialism more particularly since this project was focused on the experiences of international students. Reflecting upon how international students communicated helplessness in opposition to the global power of English and therefore the need for them to master it and prioritize it, I am compelled to draw a connection between the White linguistic domination that students are victims of and the persistent global power of the West. In addition to the more physical and tangible acts of violent colonialism that the West leads upon countries of the Global South, White linguistic supremacy contributes to its social and economic domination. Imposing English as the primary economic

and academic language further promotes Whiteness as the ultimate ideal on a global level. Many international students at Bates have found their way to this American institution in part due to the power that the West maintains over global resources through their imperialist and colonialist violence in the countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. International students can perceive that power and internalize why it is then necessary for them to have competency in standard academic English. While reflecting on some of the different possible ways that the relationship between language and academia can be organized, Ben, an international student offered the following understanding,

> My English is not in academia. I understand the reason why to some extent, because I know that my English has become this sort of decentralized English… The idea of having one standardized language by itself in general would be beneficial in the extent that it would be one way of communicating that is persistent, therefore, anyone who wants to interact with this type of information just needs to be able to comprehend this standardized language. If it is not a native language they will have to learn it, but then they will be able to understand whatever is in academia… if we settle on some nation's language, if we settle on American language as the standardized language, it brings this sort of social disadvantage and social privilege to others… the only reason it would be chosen to be the standard language for academia would be because this is an economically powerful nation, and so those who have this privilege of being in an economically powerful nation are now given more privilege of their language being the standardized version in academia…

The student spoke generally about what he sees to be possible advantages and disadvantages to the standardization or, as he describes it, the decentralization of language in academia, and similarly invoked issues of efficiency and access as it was highlighted prior. But very significantly, I believe, the question of the economic power that the United States has on a global scale is in part a reference to the larger constraints that international students face in their attempts to enter and contribute to academia. In continuation to the English language supremacy that many of us are exposed to at an early age, the process of assimilation that takes place at Bates, further distances students from their languages, cultures, and identities in a way that promotes the ideals of Whiteness through its connection to standard academic English. Many of the students spoke about the distance they now feel from their languages, and how that makes it harder to find belonging, understanding, and the feeling of being grounded. When students are made to give up their languages and the parts of their identities connected to them, they are less able to contribute to their communities. They are less able to communicate their thoughts and capabilities in a way that would benefit their home countries. The White-centric perspectives, histories, ideals that are embedded within standard academic English continue to infiltrate our communities.

Linguistic injustice at academic institutions is consistently contributing to linguistic imperialism globally. Linguistic imperialism is "the exploitation of the ideological, cultural and elitist power of English for the economic and political advantage by dominant English speaking cultures…first by the UK during colonial times, and later by English speaking nations during the era of globalization" (Rose & Conama 2017, 386). Linguistic imperialism contributes to not only the inequality and the division of power and resources between nations, but additionally supports the elimination of culturally significant languages globally. In reference to the work of Robert

Phillipson on linguistic imperialism, Rose and Conama continue to highlight that "linguistic imperialism was mainly driven by political and economic interests… With the spread of English speaking nations into non-English-speaking regions, ideologies were enforced in policies, which purposely advantaged English speakers, and disadvantaged speakers of other languages" (Rose & Conama 2017, 387). I argue that the linguistic injustice that defines many of the international students' experiences at Bates, trains and recruits students to further advance the imperialist agenda of the West that demands full control, economic, political, and social, over countries of the Global South in the pursuit of power and resources. In their attempt to achieve success and further their education, students are made to give up the connections they hold to their countries and their cultures.

What Can Be Done?

A lot can be done to combat linguistic injustice and its larger social repercussions at Bates College. It requires commitment from the administration and the faculty along with the students, but this conclusion will outline some possible ways in which writing and language teaching could be changed. This chapter is an attempt at highlighting some of the practical practices and important steps that can be done to advance Bates College's advertised commitment to social justice and to support students at Bates, particularly multilingual, multicultural, and international students, in freely contributing to academia using their most complete selves and without compromising any part of their identity. Many of the outlined recommendations are taken directly from my conversations with international students and are a reflection of students' needs. Additionally, others are communicating the requests and needs of the faculty which were also communicated to me during their interviews. Some are my own, and they reflect 3-years worth of observation and investment put into issues of linguistic justice at Bates College. This by no means is a comprehensive list of possible solutions, but I hope it acts as a good stepping stone for further improving Bates and supporting efforts for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

1. To support students' exploration of different writing and thinking styles using their different languages, it would be beneficial for faculty to include more diverse, 'non-traditional' writing in their course work. Specifically written work by multilingual, international, and/or BIPOC scholars. Students would benefit from seeing academic writing presented to them in ways they may not have been exposed to before, specifically writing that is acknowledged as significant, academic work that successfully breaks convention within its genre or discipline. Faculty could benefit from being exposed to

this type of writing as well, as it could help them navigate students' writing if they are monolingual English speakers. It would additionally be helpful for students to contribute to class readings and offer some suggested work of their own. Students are then allowed the opportunity to see parts of their identity or their experiences included within the academic domain without it compromising its authenticity or culture.

2. I would encourage faculty to design more writing assignments that allow students linguistic creativity. While it may still be important for students to practice more 'traditional' writing assignments and to maintain a generally proficient level of English in the United States, there is a wide variety of ways that writing can be employed outside of the academic domain that deserve additional attention. Assignments such as essays and research papers should not always occupy the highest percentage of large class assignments and it would be beneficial for students to gain experience in different writing genres that could render academic findings more accessible and useful for the general public. Through those writing assignments, students should be encouraged to explore the various ways in which their writing can be structured, the different tones they can employ, and the different rhetorical strategies that could be used to make the writing more effective in this genre.
3. To add upon number 2, writing assignments should continue to fulfill particular, well-thought-out purposes that enhance student learning rather than serve as practice for following instructions or regurgitating information. For example, many assignments at Bates are often used to check for completion of other work, such as summary essays or reading responses. Assignments that do not specifically contribute to students' learning but rather reaffirm their commitment to other classwork are not necessarily useful. I

believe it highlights a weakness within the classroom structure. For example, if students are not engaging in stimulating conversations that would require them to employ and showcase the knowledge they have gained from course readings, then emphasis should be placed on advancing these discussion spaces instead of requiring 'filler' assignments. Assignments meant to test students' completion of other assignments not only harm students by applying more pressure on them, but further push students to silence their creative, rounded voices in favor of standard, rigid, and straightforward ways of thinking and writing.

4. Additionally, assignments should center on different, more diverse audiences. Faculty should look to familiarize themselves with the needs and expectations of different audiences that do not fit the historical White, male, rich academic. Students should gain experience writing for people that would benefit from having access to the information being circulated in classes. In the case of some STEM classes, students could practice writing research findings in ways that would simplify and/or clarify the results and the implications, and direct readers to some helpful sources that could assist them in further incorporating the important information into their lives. For classes in the humanities or the social sciences, students could practice communicating information through different genres and purposes. For example, students could look into writing to inform a particular population of a certain issue or topic that influences them, thereby requiring the student to think critically about what that audience would appreciate or benefit from most. For art classes, students could look to describe art concepts, skills, or histories for populations that may not have access or familiarity with that certain art style. Through those assignments, students could be expected to break out of standard academic English and

utilize more diverse linguistic repertoires that resonate with non-academic audiences to fulfill the goal of an assignment.

5. Faculty should stop associating non-standard academic English writing expectations with low-stakes assignments. Assignments such as reflection papers are often labeled as low-stakes assignments, meaning that they do not have a huge impact on students' grades. Those assignments often have fewer expectations and do not emphasize standard language as much as larger assignments such as a term paper. This further cements the idea that non-dominant languages are deficient in comparison to standard academic English and support the hierarchy that labels certain languages and their associated identities as less academic, and therefore less intelligent or professional. Faculty should look to incorporate opportunities for multilingual exploration within major assignments and work individually to prepare themselves for tackling students' work.
6. Faculty should transition to a feedback-only mode of assessing students' writing. Grading is an outdated type of assessment that hinders students' learning and often pushes students away from exploring different types of writing styles or challenging conventions in meaningful ways. By providing consistent feedback, students can improve their writing and explore aspects of their identity they may have been punished for before. Feedback should be individualized and should rely upon conversations with the student to explore their argument, their thought process, and their writing process. By forming a reader-writer relationship, students' writing is not only going to improve and become more effective in communicating its ideas, but students can advocate for themselves and their identities in ways that could invite faculty to learn and explore new linguistic repertoires as well.

7. I would encourage faculty to allocate more time in class to discuss writing expectations and allow for students to offer their perspectives in a constructive manner. Students have the right to understand why they are completing certain assignments in certain ways. The unequal power dynamic between student and professor is exacerbated by non-intentional or non-purposeful assignments that lack direction because it forces students to abide by rules and instructions blindly. If faculty are confident in the purpose that a particular assignment serves, then they should be able to present that rationale to their students.
8. Additionally, it would be helpful to spend time in class thinking about the writing expectations that students will have to look up to and the reasoning behind them. Students at Bates College are high achieving, intelligent students. If an assignment is supposed to train them in traditional academic writing and prepare them for the 'real world,' then it would be helpful for students to know that. Presenting standard academic English as naturally superior and academic by enforcing it blindly in classrooms contributes to students' internalization of these White-centric standards. If faculty believe that traditional writing assignments are important for students' development and ability to succeed within a specific field, then they should communicate that to the students as the purpose of the writing assignment.
9. If faculty remains inclined to grade students' writing, I encourage them to stop grading grammar and mechanics. Unless grammar is specifically hindering the faculty's ability to understand or keep up with a student's argument, which is highly unlikely, students should not be punished for not achieving 'perfect' grammar. This often highly impacts non-native English speakers and multilingual students, and unsurprisingly it does not help improve students' writing.

10. Faculty should avoid providing feedback on grammar and mechanics as part of their assessments unless a student is specifically interested in improving their standard academic English. Many students will still seek help with their grammar or other aspects of their standard English because they recognize its significance in the current state of the world, but that does not require those parts to be more emphasized than others while assessing students' writing. Instead, the focus should be placed on students' arguments and how effective they were in communicating them.
11. Bates College should both increase its international student population, as well as more intentionally diversify its international student population. Additionally, it would be helpful for Bates College to break away from the 'ideal' international student model by admitting students that did not necessarily spend their entire lives learning English or attending English-centered schools.
12. Bates College should invest in more support systems for international students. Currently, at Bates, there are around 150 international students, and only 1 professional staff member who is responsible for supporting them. This often leaves students feeling overwhelmed and it discourages them from advocating for themselves or accessing resources.
13. Linguistic justice should compromise a larger portion of the international student orientation, and conversations on the topic should become a more consistent part of students' experiences at Bates College. This is specifically important because of the lack of support this particular population gets, and it would be helpful for them to think about these issues before being exposed to writing at Bates College. I believe it would help

create awareness around this problem and indicate to students that others experience similar issues as well.

14. Bates College should allocate more resources for the various individuals, departments, and initiatives that are attempting to highlight the conversation about linguistic injustice more on campus. While many individuals are interested and invested in this work, there is only one professional staff member who is trained and responsible for addressing these massive, structural issues on an administrative level.
15. Linguistic justice should become a more central part of faculty orientation and faculty training. It is unsound to rely on the faculty's individual values and experiences with writing and linguistic hierarchies, and it causes the many unfortunate incidents that students have experienced at Bates College. This is especially important for faculty who teach writing-centered classes, such as First-Year Seminars.
16. Faculty should attend mandatory social justice trainings that are specifically addressing issues of linguistic justice and writing standards at Bates.
17. Bates College should hire more non-native language speakers in language departments. Especially for colonial languages, such as English, Spanish, and French, the department faculty need to represent the wide variety of linguistic repertoires that exist within one official language. Department faculty should include individuals from historically colonized countries or who speak the unique language of those historically colonized countries.
18. Faculty must provide the space for students to incorporate non-traditional or non-dominant scholarship in their writing. Peer-reviewed journal articles and research studies are not the only type of knowledge that exists and they should not be treated as

the most significant or reliable types of knowledge in academic writing. It would additionally be helpful for faculty to highlight the conditions that influenced this work or its production. A critical analysis of this scholarship in the context of decolonizing academia would be important to communicate with students.

19. Faculty should promote the use of different languages within classroom settings and invite conversations about linguistic nuance more consistently within class discussions.
20. Tutors at the Writing & Language Center, as well as content tutors at the Academic Resource Commons and tutors working in the Math & Statistics Workshop, should be adequately trained in working with multilingual students prior to beginning their work. Their training curriculum should comprehensively convey the history, theory, and methods that promote linguistic injustice, and they should be provided the strategies necessary to support students' unique linguistic repertoires and needs while working with them.

Conclusion

My purpose in writing about this linguistic injustice was to highlight the often-overlooked experiences of my fellow international and multilingual students. Throughout my interviews, I asked students if they saw that their multilingualism seemed to them to be an advantage or a disadvantage while at Bates. Many of them quickly responded that they saw their multilingualism at Bates as a hindrance to their ability to thrive while attending this institution. One student claimed that her multilingualism was idealized, exhibited a positive aspiration for diversity and inclusion, but never fully acknowledged for the work it takes to navigate, and never offered the necessary support to exist fully while at Bates. Many international students feel unseen, and unheard in their languages. Many have internalized it within themselves that it is easier to hide, expel, or marginalize the parts of themselves that act as barriers for them in the space, and to take on the ideals necessary for them to flourish. I wished for my work to present an opportunity for international students to be fully acknowledged as the complex, intelligent, hard working students that they are; students who are continuously fighting for a space to exist at Bates while contributing an immeasurable amount of knowledge and perspective to further advance it.

While at Bates College, international multilingual students have been forced to place parts of their identities on the sideline, to appease what Hannah refers to as an "institution that takes English at default," and places the culture, values, and belief system of this language and those who were privileged enough to be born into it at a pedestal. The methods of instruction used at Bates, including the assignments, feedback, and curriculum, continue to value standard academic English, along with Whiteness, at a higher level than any other language and therefore maintain that certain languages and identities that stand opposite to Whiteness and standardized

American English do not belong within the confines of the academy. Those methods of instruction continue to claim daily throughout the classrooms of Bates College that some languages are simply more professional, proper, and intelligent than others, thereby ensuring that students do not and can not bring their own perspectives, stories, and cultures through their languages into those elite spaces, threatening the very structure these institutions have historically been built upon.

The discrimination that students face at institutions such as Bates is not limited to the boundaries of the institution. This discrimination is an extension of the oppressive systems which have labeled certain identities as more civilized, deserving, and advanced than others. Yet it is also one way by which these systems continue to flourish through forcing students to give up parts of themselves and expel parts of their identities from their academic careers and achievements. Despite the many promises made by Bates to its students, quite often students leave this institution with more lost than gained; the loss of identity, language, and connection to their community's values. Many leave with the inability to authentically exist within themselves. Others have normalized their survival skills to a point where they feel inevitable. Some international students continue to try and retrieve what was lost, and claw their way back to the parts of themselves that they left behind on the way to so-called success. I'd like to believe I am a part of that final group and that this thesis was a core part of me persisting in my attempt to reconnect with my language.

I hope that those who read this work will feel encouraged to pursue and advance the work of linguistic justice in their own lives. There is still a lot that needs to be done to deconstruct the connections between White supremacy, capitalism, imperialism and academia and higher education. There are additional ways of combating linguistic injustice that I may have not

considered and there are identities that are additionally impacted by this type of discrimination that were not granted enough representation in my work. I hope that future works can address some of the gaps that can be found in my project. For example, while my project broadly outlines the way various fields approach writing, further research can address particular disciplines more specifically, examining the unique structures and expectations of that field, using more precise examples from faculty and students in that department. Additionally, my work primarily focused on English as the powerful language, but it would be interesting for other works to look into linguistic hierarchies of other colonized languages, such as Spanish and French, and examine the ways that linguistic injustice occurs more particularly for those who speak non-dominant forms of these languages. Future work can focus on students with one particular linguistic background and uncover the particular cultural roots that this language has and the nuance that it must have on students' relationships with it and with the process of learning English and attending an American institution. Future work can examine the specific possible strategies that have been recommended to fight against linguistic discrimination and analyze the impact that it has on the students.

There is still much to be done. Linguistic injustice is pervasive in higher education in general, and in the teaching of writing at Bates College in particular, and it manifests in small, complex, and idiosyncratic ways. It is so pervasive that it is easily ignored, easily dismissed, easily forgotten. I hope my work acts as a stepping stone for both Bates College and other institutions to begin deconstructing the oppressive conditions that dominate their students' lives. Perhaps then, academia can finally reach its full potential, advancing our societies and offering spaces for a myriad of forms of knowledge to exist.

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