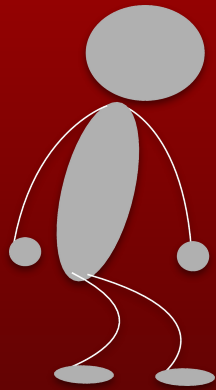


Says Who?

Linguistic Discrimination in Academic
Publishing

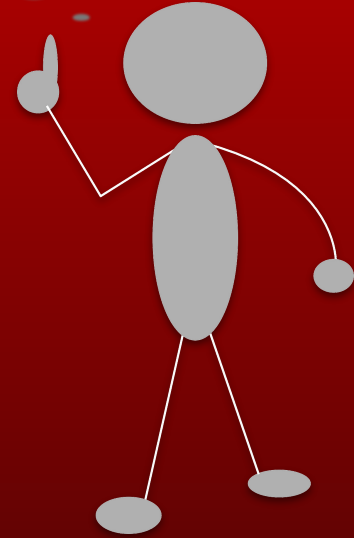
Presented by Stella Sanchez





*Can I go to the
bathroom?*

*I don't know,
CAN you?*



Linguistic Discrimination

Definition

“[L]inguistic discrimination is when individuals are **mistreated and/or devalued based on their language use.**”¹

“Dominant narratives that certain ways of using language...are more valuable than others have no linguistic validity: **no language is superior or inferior to another, and no way of using language is better or worse than others.**”³

Standard Language Ideology

Definition

“[A] bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is **drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class.**”²

Ethical Issues At Hand

1. How do we remain ethically responsible while addressing linguistic discrimination as it appears in the editorial policies of scholarly publications?

2. Can we justify establishing a set of language “standards”? If so, how do we distill a set of standards from the breadth of diversity within the English language?



Narrowing the Scope

- Scholarly Publishing
 - English-language publications
 - Linguistic discrimination looks different in the humanities vs. STEM, but its impact is significant across the board. Thus, we will address it across the board.⁷
 - Current research is focused on English speakers of other languages (ESOL), or non-native English speakers. Acknowledging gaps in the research, we'll focus our analysis on the experiences of ESOL researchers seeking English-language publication.

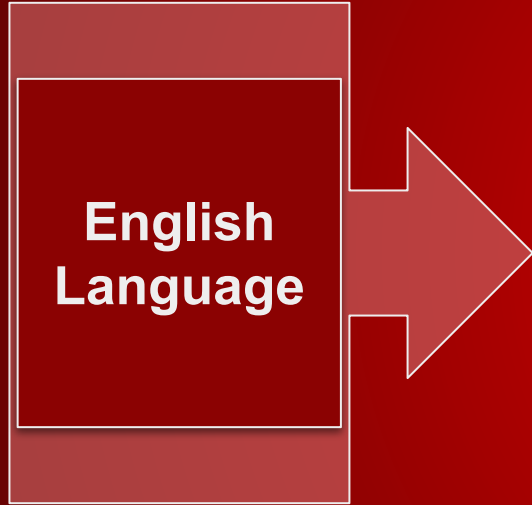


6%

of the world speaks English as a first language.

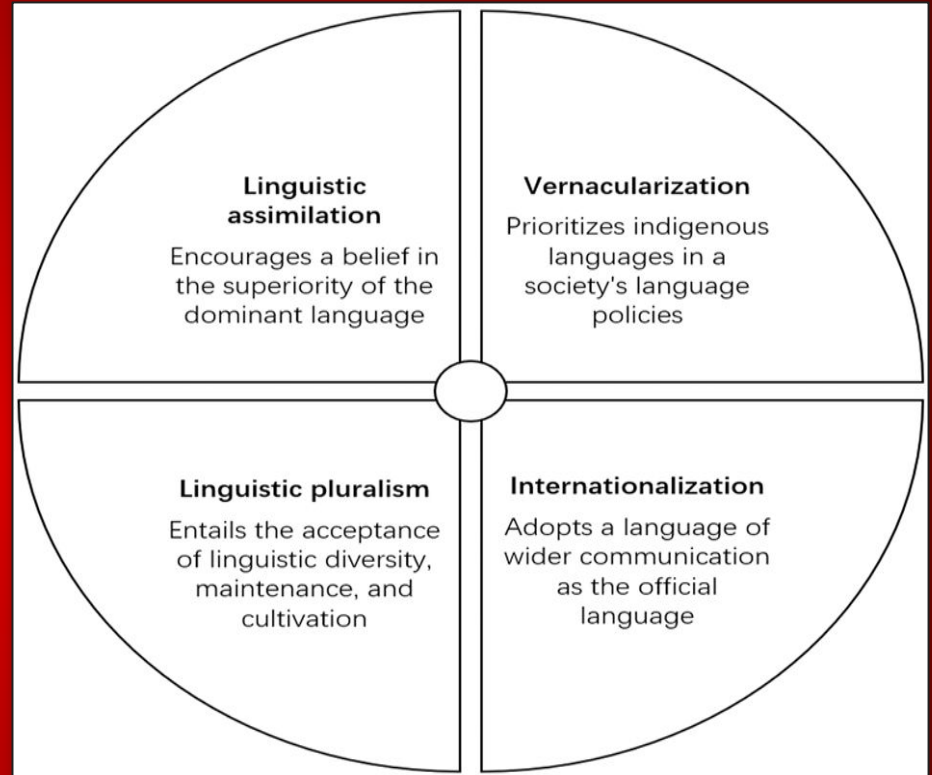
75%

do not speak English at all.²



Editorial Approaches

- Categories of Editors/Reviewers:
 - RINGMASTER
 - “[A] person who manages the performance of others.”
 - GUARDIAN
 - “[S]omeone who provides help by offering solutions to identified problems...sees him/herself as protector of the ‘community standards (being part of the in group).”
 - ALLY
 - “An ally is eager to facilitate non-anglophone authors’ participation within the discourse community of published scientists.”¹¹



One theory of language taxonomy, showing foundational approaches to language that publishers may adopt (individually or as an industry).¹³

Recommendations: A Utilitarian Approach

Ethical Issue #1: How do we remain ethically responsible while addressing linguistic discrimination as it appears in the editorial policies of scholarly publications?

- Considerations

- Investigate implicit/explicit biases within editorial policies and team members, *without* taking too much focus from the academic content
- Remove superfluous editing policies that create barriers, *without* lowering standards for academic rigor
- More actively support and recruit non-native English speakers to editorial process and as authors, *without* disenfranchising native English speakers

- Practical Solutions

- More specific and better internal ethics training for staff, while educating authors and readers about linguistic discrimination and its impact
- Regular reviews of editing policies and instructions for peer reviewers, outwardly redefine “professional” writing for readers
- Collaborate with foreign universities and DEI organizations to build new partnerships, find more non-native English-speaking authors, and teach editors and readers alike how to reframe their concerns about “sharing the pie”

Recommendations: A Utilitarian Approach

Ethical Issue #2: Can we justify establishing a set of language “standards”? If so, how do we distill a set of standards from the breadth of diversity within the English language?

- Considerations

- Need to ensure successful communication to the widest possible audience, *while* adjusting our assessment of potential audiences to include more marginalized groups (i.e., non-native English speaking researchers and students)
- Make policies as open as possible, *without* sacrificing the comprehensibility of manuscripts

- Practical Solutions

- Allow alternative spellings (i.e., color and colour, meter and metre), *but* keep standardized units of measurement
- Allow alternative abbreviations, *but* require definitions of all abbreviations upon first mention
- Make multiple translations of published research an industry standard
- Make double-blind peer reviews industry standard *and* change instructions to peer reviewers to emphasize **SUBSTANCE** over **STYLE**
- Build an internal review process to confirm that peer review feedback is constructive
- When possible, provide high-quality language editing services at no (ideally) or minimal additional cost to authors

“[I]t is not helpful if the editors and publishers who are handling the paperwork, assigning reviewers, determining schedules, recruiting editorial boards, and ultimately making policy and article level decisions are not in fact representative or even cognizant of injustices they perpetuate as ***biased people in a biased system.*”⁹**



Additional Recommended Resources

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