Linguistic Inclusion and Discrimination: The Experiences of Plurilingual

International Students in a Canadian University

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Abstract

This thesis explores unanswered questions regarding linguistic discrimination and linguistic inclusion of plurilingual international students at a Canadian university. In the past ten years there has been a large increase in international students attending Canadian universities (Global Affairs Canada [GAC], 2017; Institute of International Education [IIE], 2021). Plurilingual international students for whom English is an additional language face specific challenges in their time at Canadian universities such as discrimination and marginalization (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Houshmand et al., 2014). In order to gain emic perspectives on these issues, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and demographic questionnaires with 15 plurilingual international master's students at Montreal Central University (MCU). Data was coded into two *organizational,* or top-level, codes based on my research questions and established prior to data collection; Themes emerged as data was coded inductively into *substantive categories* within the two top level codes (Maxwell, 2013). Results show how plurilingual international students at a Canadian university are discriminated against because of linguistic and racial identity markers. To better understand these experiences of discrimination, this thesis introduces a *taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions* which organizes participants' experiences of discrimination into four themes: 1. Ascribed capability; 2. Excluded and ignored; 3. Institutional microaggressions; 4. Restricted. The results de-problematize international students' supposed lack of English-language competence, and instead refocus the problem onto discrimination against plurilingual international students. This thesis shows how linguistic and racial discrimination in the form of raciolinguistic microaggressions denies plurilingual students a feeling of full citizenship within the community of the university and leads to plurilingual international students internalizing deficit views about their English

language practice. Simultaneously, results show how plurilingual international students forge an inclusive plurilingual-international community through plurilingual practices and their plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC).

This thesis offers recommendations for international students in Canada and for Canadian universities, as well as novel contributions to theory and research in plurilingualism and raciolinguistics.

Résumé

Ce mémoire de maîtrise explore les questions négligées concernant la discrimination linguistique et l'inclusion linguistique des étudiants internationaux plurilingues dans une université canadienne. Au cours des dix dernières années, le nombre d'étudiants étrangers fréquentant les universités canadiennes a fortement augmenté (Affaires mondiales Canada, 2017; Institute of International Education, 2021). Les étudiants internationaux plurilingues pour qui l'anglais est une langue additionnelle font face à des défis spécifiques durant leur séjour dans les universités canadiennes, tels que la discrimination et la marginalisation (Cheng & Fox, 2008 ; Houshmand et al., 2014). Afin d'obtenir des perspectives émiques sur ces questions, des données ont été recueillies par le biais d'entrevues semi-structurés et de questionnaires démographiques auprès de 15 étudiants internationaux plurilingues en maîtrise à l'Université centrale de Montréal (UCM). Les données ont été codées en deux codes organisationnels, ou codes de niveau supérieur, fondés sur mes questions de recherche et établis avant la collecte des données ; des thèmes ont émergé au fur et à mesure que les données ont été codées inductivement en catégorie substantives au sein des deux codes de niveau supérieur (Maxwell, 2013). Les résultats montrent comment les étudiants internationaux plurilingues d'une université canadienne sont discriminés en raison de marqueurs identitaires linguistiques et raciaux. Pour mieux comprendre ces

expériences de discrimination, cette thèse introduit une taxonomie des microagressions raciolinguistiques qui organise les expériences de discrimination des participants en quatre thèmes : 1. capacité attribuée ; 2. exclu et ignoré ; 3. *Microaggressions* institutionnelles ; 4. restreint. Les résultats déproblématisent le manque supposé de compétences en anglais des étudiants internationaux et recentrent le problème sur la discrimination envers des étudiants internationaux plurilingues. Cette thèse démontre comment la discrimination linguistique et raciale sous la forme de microaggressions raciolinguistique prive les étudiants plurilingues d'un sentiment de citoyenneté à part entière au sein de la communauté universitaire et mène les étudiants internationaux plurilingues à intérioriser des opinions déficitaires sur leur pratique de l'anglais. Simultanément, les résultats démontrent comment les étudiants internationaux plurilingues forgent une communauté plurilingue-internationale inclusive grâce aux pratiques plurilingues et à leur compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle (CPP).

Cette thèse offre des recommandations pour les étudiants internationaux au Canada et pour les universités canadiennes, ainsi que de nouvelles contributions à la théorie et à la recherche sur le plurilinguisme et la raciolinguistiques.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Context

The present study takes place at a major Canadian university in Montreal that I call Montreal Central University (MCU) for the sake of protecting the confidentiality of my participants. Officially, MCU is an English-medium university and disciplinary learning is conducted almost entirely in English. Like other English-speaking universities in Canada and other English-speaking countries, many international students are required to take an English language proficiency test to enter the University. Unlike many other English language universities, allowances are made regarding French at MCU; for example, students are allowed to submit assignments in French and university communications can happen in both English and French. This is because the university is situated in Quebec, a Francophone province. There is certainly an *elite bilingual ideology* (Flores & Rosa, 2015) reflected in this institutional policy and within the university community: in the context of this English university in francophone Quebec, the status of English and French as official languages of the country confers elite status on bilingual users of English and French. French-English bilingualism is lauded while other bi/multilingualisms are problematized. Students who are more comfortable in French than English are given affordances that international students who are more comfortable in languages other than English besides French are not. While the *elite* French/English *bilingual* is prevalent throughout Quebec and Canada, it must also be noted that Montreal is an incredibly diverse city with a rich linguistic landscape. The university which served as a context for this study keeps statistics on the mother tongues of the student body in three categories: English (46.2%), French (18.9%) and Other (34.9%) (citation redacted for anonymity). The categorization of language into these categories encapsulates the language ideology and policies of the university as well as

of the provincial and federal governments: Any language that is not English or French is *Other*. International students make up 32.2% of the total student body. At MCU, 68% of master's students who have a mother tongue other than English, or French are international students (citation redacted for anonymity).

Background

The international student population in Canada has exploded over the past decade. This development is mainly due to global neoliberal trends which stress the necessity of an English-medium, western education for success in business, science, and academia (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Guo & Guo 2017; Kubota, 2016). Because of this global demand, Canadian universities seeking financial support have been able to rely on a strategy of recruiting international students (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Guo & Guo, 2017). This scenario has played out in Canada and in other English-dominant countries, including Australia, the U.S., and the U.K. (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In 2020, these four countries hosted 47% of all international students in the world (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2021).

The number of international students in Canadian universities increased by 327% from 153,790 in 2010 to 503,270 in 2020 (Global Affairs Canada [GAC], 2017; IIE, 2021), meaning that Canada currently has the largest growth rate of international students in higher education of any country in the world (IIE, 2020). In 2019, Canada surpassed its target of increasing the inbound international student population to nearly half-a-million by 2022 (CBIE, 2018; Global Affairs Canada [GAC], 2019; IIE, 2021), for a total international enrolment of that represented 23.7% of the total student body in Canadian higher education in 2020 (IIE, 2021).

The financial benefits of welcoming inbound international students have been significant for Canadian universities and Canada more broadly. International students contributed

approximately $21.6 billion dollars a year to the Canadian economy in 2018 through tuition,

incidental spending, and taxes (GAC, 2019). On average, international graduate students pay

roughly two-and-a-half-times more tuition than local graduate students and international

undergraduate students pay roughly four-and-a-half-times more than their Canadian counterparts

(Statistics Canada, 2020). Universities are increasingly relying on this income stream as they

continue to receive less and less government funding (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Finally, in a

potentially mutually beneficial relationship for international students and the Canadian

government, international student graduates are viewed as a potential source of skilled labour for

Canada and may be allowed to pursue permanent resident status, leading to citizenship, upon

graduation (Guo & Guo, 2017). The title of the Government of Canada's report, *Building on

success: International education strategy 2019-2024* (GAC, 2019), clearly indicates that the

effort to bring more international students onto Canadian campuses has been a triumph from an

economic perspective.

Problem

Economic success notwithstanding, the supposedly intrinsic benefits of welcoming

international students — such as developing Canadian universities as bastions of intercultural

exchange, diversity, and equity — have proven more elusive (Guo & Guo, 2017). Furthermore,

the focus on economic metrics by policymakers and institutions results in policies that tend not

to consider the day-to-day realities of international students during their time in Canada. The

lack of academic, social, and cultural support for international students is a problem that still

needs to be addressed (Guo & Guo, 2017). Research about international students' experiences in

Canadian universities has shown that they continue to be excluded from the very academic and

social communities they support financially (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Houshmand et al., 2014).

Essentially, Canadian universities have become more diverse without becoming more inclusive. Whereas diversity is the amount of difference between individuals in an institution, inclusion is concerned with whether all individuals are treated equitably (Tienda, 2013). In a diverse space difference exists. In an inclusive space difference is lauded and encouraged. International students represent a diverse group in terms of race, language, and nationality, but often feel marginalized within the academic and social communities of Canadian universities (Cheng & Fox, 2008).

One study, conducted by Guo and Guo (2017), found that the Canadian government and Canadian higher education institutions (HEIs) are committed to bringing international students to study on campus without necessarily being committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable curriculum and campus culture. The researchers explored discrepancies between everyday practices and experiences of international students and policy documents concerning the internationalization goals of Canadian HEIs at both an institutional and federal level. While internationalization plans and statements on equity and diversity created by universities often describe the potential benefits of a diverse and inclusive environment for the Canadian educational community, federal policy documents reveal that internationalization in Canadian HEIs is primarily driven by economic gain rather than positive educational outcomes for students (Guo & Guo, 2017).

International students often choose to come to Canadian universities because of Canada's reputation for academic quality, tolerance, and overall safety (CBIE, 2018). They expect to gain disciplinary knowledge in their field, develop English language skills, and have cultural experiences with locals in a foreign country (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Piller, 2016; Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013). Marketing materials for universities tend to promote this last expectation. It

is not difficult for anyone who has applied to North American, British, and/or Australasian

(NABA) universities to conjure up a brochure photo or website banner showing a diverse group

of students sitting on a grassy knoll, shaded by a wizened tree with old academic buildings just

out of focus in the background. Perhaps a Latinx student drinks an iced coffee and an East Asian

student laughs while a yarmulke-clad undergraduate squints as he waves to even more diverse

friends just out of frame while muting the strings of his guitar. Perhaps one of those students he

is waving to is *you*. However, the reality upon arrival is markedly different.

While international students overwhelmingly report positive overall experiences at

Canadian universities (CBIE, 2018), they also report instances of discrimination and racism

(CBIE, 2012, 2013). According to a survey of international students, "23% of students said they

had experienced some form of racism from institutional staff, 24% from faculty members, 36%

from other students and 40% from members of the broader community" (CBIE, 2012).

International students from Africa, East Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia reported much

higher occurrences of discrimination than international students from Latin America, Europe,

and the United States (CBIE, 2013). Additionally, in a "survey of more than 3,000 post-

secondary international students at 25 universities and colleges across Canada, 56% of

respondents reported having no Canadian students as friends" (CBIE, 2015). Language is still an

academic and social impediment for many international students in Canada. Language

contributes to discrepancies between international students' expectations, and the reality they

encounter, regarding interactions with local students (Cheng & Fox, 2008), and may lead to

discrimination (Houshmand et al., 2014). Ranta and Meckelborg (2013) found that international

students tended to use less English and more of the language they grew up speaking as their time

in university wore on. Participants in the study used a language activity log to measure their

language use during different activities throughout the day, one day a week for seven months. The researchers concluded that levels of English used for academic pursuits remained mostly the same; the change manifested mostly in the social sphere. The authors concluded that this was because many international students felt uncomfortable communicating with local students. They found that the local students' speech is incomprehensible and/or they were afraid of their own speech being misunderstood, as well as of subsequent embarrassment in either situation. Additionally, international students in Canadian universities face challenges adjusting to Canadian academic norms and communicating with advisors and professors (Cheng & Fox, 2008; Guo & Guo, 2017). Many students in these studies felt socially isolated, marginalized, and had struggled to complete their academic work. International students also reported being ridiculed for their accents and ignored, "I think because my English is not very well" (Houshmand et al., 2014). While these studies show that there are myriad challenges facing international students in Canadian universities, language use is a key factor in the problems international students report in all the aforementioned studies.

I refer to the participants of the current study as plurilingual international students due to their unbalanced and dynamic ability to use many different languages and communicative resources. I use the term *plurilingual* because a plurilingual individual has a plethora of resources available for communication. These resources are known as a *repertoire* (Moore & Gajo, 2009)*,* which may consist of one or more languages, such as Mandarin, Hindi, or English; varieties and registers within languages; and multimodal resources such as body language or virtual symbology such as emojis (Marshall & Moore, 2013). Plurilingual international students whose first language is not English face different challenges during their time in Canadian

universities, compared to plurilingual local students and international students such as me, who are first-language speakers of English, the language of the university.

Plurilingual international students regularly endure linguistic discrimination or "the unfair treatment of an individual or a group of individuals on account of their language or speech features such as accent" (Ng, 2007, p. 106) and microaggressions in the Canadian higher education community (CBIE, 2012, 2013; Houshmand et al., 2014; Sterzuk, 2015). Linguistic discrimination is also defined as *linguicism* (Skutnabb-Kangass, 1988). Linguicism is to language what racism is to race, or sexism is to gender. Similarly, the term *linguicist* is to *language* what *racist* is to *race* (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015). Just like racism, linguicism is a form of discrimination. It is important to recognize that while discrimination may be based on myriad factors, such as race, gender, sexuality, and language, it does not often happen based solely on one factor. In defining the theory of intersectionality Crenshaw (1991) argues that discrimination based on two or more identity markers, i.e. language and race, does not happen separately. Rather, discriminatory acts can be understood as an interconnected and intersecting "matrix of domination" (Hill Collins, 2002 p. 251). The Canadian Human Rights Commission (2020) defines discrimination as "an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, age or disability" (para. 1) and provides ten additional bases for discrimination. Language, though indisputably a marker of difference, is not mentioned.

As researchers have noted, linguistic discrimination is the last bastion of socially acceptable discrimination (Ng, 2007; Piller, 2016; Alim, 2016). It is often overlooked in anti-discrimination and diversity policies and is one of the few forms of discrimination that remains overwhelmingly legal and legitimized (Piller, 2016). For this reason, linguicism can, and often does, function as a socially acceptable proxy for forms of discrimination more commonly

recognized as abhorrent, such as racism (Ng, 2007). But linguicism is not only a proxy for other forms of discrimination.

While linguistic discrimination often co-articulates with racial and cultural discrimination, both through proxy-ism and in other ways, it is its own unique phenomenon and deserving of definition and study alongside other discriminatory practices (Alim, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Piller, 2016). Linguicism is both an everyday occurrence and a systemic construct. So, just as it is important to examine personal experiences of racism within the broader context of systemic racism (Delgado et al., 2017), it is equally vital to examine experiences of linguistic discrimination and linguicism within the broader context of society and of specific institutions. Any act of everyday linguistic discrimination can be conceived as rooted in the societal phenomenon of *linguicism*, or the "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, p. 13). Linguicism is prevalent in English-dominant settings, such as Canadian higher education (Sterzuk, 2015).

Recently, there has been increased interest in studying how linguistic discrimination affects plurilingual people in different settings around the world, from urban youth in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (Dovchin, 2019) to students at English-medium university programs in Europe (Wilkinson & Gabriëls, 2020). As the next chapter explains in detail, there is little research that explores the linguistic discrimination experienced by plurilingual international students in the context of Canadian higher education.

To study experiences of linguistic inclusion and linguistic discrimination of international students at Canadian universities, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 participants to

gain emic perspectives on the experiences of plurilingual international master's students at a Canadian university. This method of data collection was based on linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015) which seeks to understand the relationship between language and social interaction in any particular social milieu.

Positionality

I began my own master's program at a Canadian university as an international student. In one of my first classes the professor asked all the international students in the room to raise their hands. Over half of the students were international students and there were many diverse English accents in the room. As the professor worked her way around the room, she warmly greeted the international students and asked where they came from until she came to me… She looked at me and squinted, "where are you from?" She asked.

"I'm from America," I answered, not understanding why her interaction with me was different than her interactions with all the other international students in the room until she responded, "You… are not an international student."

I have reflected on this story a lot since that first class because it raised important questions for me, questions that ultimately became the impetus to conceive and conduct this research: What about the way I look and sound made her say that I was not an international student? I believe that she said that I was not an international student because I am viewed and heard as a White native speaker of English. I have a pale complexion and I speak English with a White-middle-class-settler accent. One would get a good idea of my particular accent listening to an English-speaking-North American newscaster or an actor who is not trying to associate their character with a particular region.

To this professor, the way I look and speak did not match her idea of the way an international student looks and sounds. It bothered me at the time because on the one hand, I was an international student and an immigrant to Canada facing the attendant financial challenges and stress of that lived reality. However, I was (and am) a very privileged international student and immigrant because of my race and because the language I bring with me, English, is the official language of my university and one of the official languages of Canada. So, in a way, this professor had a point, albeit poorly expressed: My experiences in my time at a Canadian university are markedly different than those of the vast majority of international students at Canadian universities because I was never racialized or linguistically minoritized in my time here as so many others are. It is with that in mind that I set out to deepen my own understanding of the particular challenges surrounding experiences of racialization and language minoritization that prior research has shown to affect many of my international peers.

Overview

In the following chapter, CHAPTER TWO, I will elucidate this gap in knowledge by exploring literature concerned with linguistic discrimination. I will lay out a theoretical framework to show how linguistic discrimination is multidimensional and happens both on the institutional level as well as the interpersonal level. Then I will review the distinction between linguistic inclusion, inclusion, and diversity. I will review plurilingual theory and its basis in inclusion and social justice. Understanding the theory of plurilingualism is imperative for understanding not only the ways in which international students communicate, but also for problematizing how they are often treated within the context of a Canadian university. In the last section of the next chapter, I will review empirical studies to provide evidence of linguistic discrimination against international students in Canada and at English medium universities

abroad as well as international students' experiences with plurilingual practice and pedagogy in

Canadian universities.

   In CHAPTER THREE, I will describe the research design at the foundation of this thesis

and describe the methods of recruitment, data collection, and data analysis used. CHAPTER

FOUR presents and discusses results obtained from the data collected and analysed in the

manner described in CHAPTER THREE. The results and discussion in CHAPTER FOUR show

the ways in which plurilingual international students experience linguistic inclusion and

linguistic discrimination at MCU, and discusses the ways in which these experiences affect their

perceptions of their own linguistic repertoires, their agency to use the language they feel is best

in the context of MCU, as well as how experiences of linguistic inclusion and discrimination

affect their conception of their own citizenship within the MCU community. Finally, and in

particular order, CHAPTER FIVE concludes this thesis with a summary of the first four

chapters, followed by proposing the implications of the results derived from the data for

international students in Canada and Canadian universities. Then CHAPTER FIVE presents this

thesis' novel contributions to theory and research. Finally, limitations and areas of further

research are discussed.

   This inquiry intends to add to the growing body of research that explores plurilingual

international students' experiences related to language in English medium Canadian universities.

Through this study, I intend to fill a gap in prior research by explicitly inquiring about

experiences of linguistic discrimination *and* linguistic inclusion in the context of a Canadian

university.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

Conceptual Frameworks

Multiple conceptual frameworks are necessary to examine experiences of linguistic

discrimination and linguistic inclusion among international students at MCU. This chapter will

first define linguistic discrimination and explore the concepts of linguicism, raciolinguistics and

microaggressions. When taken together these concepts create an analytical foundation that will

help to situate experiences of linguistic discrimination in the sociopolitical context of MCU, an

English-medium university with a growing international student population and increasing

linguistic diversity. I will then define linguistic inclusion by exploring theories of diversity,

inclusion, and linguistic inclusion, and reviewing how linguistic inclusion is a main principle of

plurilingualism and plurilingual pedagogy.

Linguistic discrimination

Linguistic discrimination is "the unfair treatment of an individual or a group of

individuals on account of their language or speech features such as accent" (Ng, 2007, p. 106).

To understand acts of linguistic discrimination, where they come from, and why they happen, it

is important to understand both the macro-environmental and micro-interpersonal factors that

contribute to plurilingual international students' experiences at MCU.

Linguicism

English linguicism is a result of globalization and the promotion of English as lingua

franca or lingua nullius (neutral language) that can be used by everyone to facilitate

communication on a global scale (Phillipson, 1992). However, English is no more or less neutral

than any language. The global push for English as the language of business, academics, and

politics privileges mother-tongue English speakers, especially mother-tongue English speakers

from North America, the United Kingdom, and Oceania (Phillipson, 2016a). Linguicism hinges

on monolingual language ideologies which position native speakers from these countries as

superior to non-native speakers, and positions speakers of different varieties of English on a

linguistic hierarchy which in turn impacts these individuals' positions in other socioeconomic

hierarchies (Phillipson, 2016b).

Understanding linguicism in Canadian higher education requires us to understand that

while Canadian society is officially bilingual and increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural

(Galante & dela Cruz, 2021), it is ultimately a W*hite settler society*; a society built on land

expropriated from Indigenous peoples by British and French colonialists whose genocidal

aggressions against Indigenous peoples extended beyond land theft (Razack, 2002). In a White

settler society such as Canada, the dominant languages are the languages of the first colonizing

nations, English and French. Ideologies which conflate this linguistic standard with *Whiteness*

(see below) can lead to oppression of anyone who does not fit the mold of either or both

standards. So, not only Indigenous peoples, but also immigrants and other racialized, and/or

linguistically minoritized peoples are at risk of being othered in *White settler society.*

Linguicism in Canadian universities results in our institutions' monolithic commitment to

White Settler English as the "benchmark for linguistic and academic proficiency and for

legitimate participation in learning" (Sterzuk, 2015, p. 62). By uncritically upholding and

enforcing this standard, Sterzuk (2015) argues that Canadian universities create a *privileged*

norm whereby native speakers of English are the haves, and the rest are the have-nots. In other

words, Canadian universities are supporting what I term *White settler English Supremacy*. The

inextricable link between whiteness and the variety of English lauded by Canadian universities

(Sterzuk, 2015) needs to be acknowledged and critiqued. It is particularly relevant to the present study, given that international students in Canada are largely non-white (CBIE, 2018).

I use the terms *White* and *Whiteness* throughout this study not to refer to the complexion of a specific individual, but rather as understood by Sue:

Whiteness is a default standard; the background of the figure-ground analogy from which all other groups of color are compared, contrasted, and made visible. From this color standard, racial/ethnic minorities are evaluated, judged, and often found to be lacking, inferior, deviant, or abnormal. (2006, p. 15)

Sue's definition makes clear the distinction between white complexion and *Whiteness* as a normative ideology which serves to marginalize those perceived as Other. That said, it is also necessary to consider *standard* language as a dimension of *Whiteness* (Delpit, 2002) and a root of discrimination (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015) in order to fully understand the sometimes intersectional ways in which international students are othered. To understand how language and race co-naturalize and reciprocate in situating an individual as a societal Other, I will review the concept of *raciolinguistics*, which explores how race and language co-naturalize (Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Raciolinguistics

Many conceptions of race, minority status, racism and marginalization rely heavily or exclusively on a visual conception of race. For example, the Canadian government defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Statistics Canada, 2020). However, it is important to recognize that international students who are *both* plurilingual and racialized are more likely to face discrimination than, on the one hand, individuals of color who are first language speakers of the

dominant language, or, on the other, plurilingual white individuals who are not first language speakers of the dominant language (Kim & Kim, 2010). Raciolinguistic theory stresses the intersectionality of *language-minoritized* and racialized people (Flores & Rosa, 2015). The theory of raciolinguistics is built on the foundation of intersectionality (e.g. Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 1990) and therefore recognizes that identity markers such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and language are socially constructed. *Matrices of oppression* (Hill Collins, 1990) may form when deviation from the standard, i.e. *Whiteness* (Sue, 2016) is perceived as a deficit.

Flores and Rosa (2015) and Rosa and Flores (2017) situate Whiteness in their intersectional framework of language and race by conceptualizing a *White speaking and listening subject* (2015) that situates themself or itself as arbiters of standard language. White speaking and listening subjects dictate and/or reproduce the standard of race and language, or the *Whiteness* of a social space, and they racialize those perceived as deviating from that standard (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Flores and Rosa (2015) stress that the *White speaking and listening subject* is not necessarily a living, breathing individual; rather it can also be an institution or a setting. To sum up: a White speaking and listening subject can be an individual, racialized or not, or an institution.

According to Rosa (2016) institutions are particularly instrumental in prescribing these standards and ensuring they are replicated. Rosa asserts that when linguistic standards are reflected in the policies and practices of an institution they may be subsumed into the values, perceptions, and actions of both White and racialized and/or language-minoritized community members alike. These linguistic standards are not empirical or neutral, but instead are based in the *raciolinguistic ideologies* of White listening subjects. These stem from monolingual language ideologies that position native-like language use as the standard to which all other language use

is compared (Flores & Rosa, 2015). This is similar to the way Sue (2003) positions Whiteness as the default standard "from which all other groups of color are compared" (p. 16).

One raciolinguistic ideology Rosa (2016) explores is that of *languagelessness,* the belief that a person is not as proficient as they should be in any of the multiple languages they speak. The author explores this from the perspective of *White listening subjects*, who believe that racialized, linguistically-minoritized people are unable to use any of the languages they have in their repertoire effectively. Rosa argues that this perspective invalidates not only the language practices of racialized and language minoritized people, but ultimately their intelligence and personhood. This stands in sharp contrast to *elite bilinguals*: white individuals with native-like proficiency in the so-called standard language and some proficiency in another language or languages. In this way, multilingualism is deemed valueless for minorities, but lauded as a sign of advanced education when heard coming from the dominant societal group (Alim, 2016; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981).

Alim (2016) theorizes that the raciolinguistic ideologies of White listening and speaking subjects racialize individuals based on the ways they use language. Microaggressions committed by White listening and speaking subjects, and that center around these raciolinguistic ideologies, contribute to the process of others becoming racialized and/or linguistically-minoritized. In the present study, therefore, it is important to understand different types of microaggressions in order to identify them and explore how they contribute to experiences of linguistic discrimination.

Microaggressions

The concept of microaggressions is in no small part rooted in experiences where a listening subject's assumptions about language, race and their interconnectedness causes the speaker to feel racialized. In his foundational work on microaggressions, Sue (2003) describes a

personal experience of a microaggression where a White woman complimented his English

based on the assumption that he must be an immigrant and therefore a non-native speaker.

Though of East Asian heritage, Sue is, in fact, born and raised in the United States. Sue defines

his experience and ones like it as *racial microaggressions* (2003), even if the comment was

intended to be a compliment. It was a compliment based on problematic ideologies about race

and language.

Racial microaggressions* happen interpersonally and can be divided into three distinct

though not mutually exclusive categories: *microassaults*, *microinsults*, and *microinvalidation*

(Sue et al., 2007). *Microassaults* are characterized as the use of derogatory language or slurs

consciously intended to hurt a minoritized person or to establish the white supremacy of the

assaulter. *Microinsults* and *microinvalidations* are distinct from microassaults in that they are

often unconscious (Sure et al., 2007). Microinsults "demean a person's racial heritage and

identity" (Sue et al, 2007, p. 274) through comments which may not necessarily seem offensive,

but when contextualized, prove to carry a covert insult embedded within an innocuous-seeming

statement. Finally, according to Sue et al. (2007) microinvalidations disregard or ignore the

experiences, thoughts and/or feelings of a racialized individual. While each of these

microaggressions is distinct, they are not mutually exclusive, and a statement can be experienced

simultaneously as a *microinsult* and a *microinvalidation* (Sue, 2007). Recently, scholars have

begun to synthesize the theories of microaggressions and raciolinguistics in order to develop a

conception of *raciolinguistic microaggressions* (Corona & Block, 2020). Raciolinguistic

microaggressions are *microaggressions* based on *raciolinguistic ideologies* (Flores & Rosa,

2015) which serve to maintain hierarchies of race and language (Ramjattan, 2020).

Linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988), raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) and raciolinguistic microaggressions (Corona & Block, 2020) are all rooted on some level in monoglossic conceptions of language use which privilege monolingual-like language users while marginalizing plurilingual language users, who frequently have imbalanced competence in their many languages. Imbalanced competence is considered a problem, and monolingual-like language use is considered paramount in a monoglossic conception of language (Kubota, 2016). However, the theoretical framework of *plurilingualism* considers the use of many languages in an imbalanced way as something normal and valid (Piccardo, 2019). Plurilingualism challenges monoglossic conceptions of language by theorizing the way in which each individual has a valuable repertoire of linguistic resources. In the following section I will review the theory of plurilingualism, the foundation of my conceptualization of *linguistic inclusion*.

Linguistic inclusion

Despite a recent focus on linguistic discrimination in sociolinguistics research, the term *linguistic inclusion* is rarely used. I define being linguistically inclusive as individuals in a social space encouraging and celebrating different languages and varieties of languages. In this section I will review broader conceptions of institutional diversity and inclusion and the distinction between diversity, inclusion, and linguistic inclusion. This will be followed by a review of plurilingualism, and the ways scholars envisage increasing linguistic inclusion in institutions through plurilingual pedagogy and practice.

Diversity, inclusion, and linguistic inclusion

There is a clear consensus in the literature and among stakeholders in organizations that the terms diversity and inclusion mean different things (Roberson; 2006). Though the two terms are often used together, this should not imply that they are synonymous or by that achieving one,

an organization inherently achieves the other. Rather it is possible, or maybe even likely, that a diverse social space is not an inclusive one (Tienda, 2013). Diversity is a demographic assessment of an organization, institution, or nation-state. Diversity can be assessed through a census or other quantitative means. It is reflected in percentages. Diversity is important because there can be no inclusion without it, but it is a starting point. This is true of linguistic diversity as well. Diversity is important, but it is vital to also consider inclusion, which is concerned with the quality of a diverse space.

An inclusive space welcomes and utilizes the ideas and skills of diverse individuals within that organization, institution or even nation-state. Inclusion is about being involved. Tienda (2013) defines inclusion in a university setting as "organizational strategies and practices that promote meaningful social and academic interactions among persons and groups who differ in their experiences, their views, and their traits" (p. 467). Inclusion in educational settings involves making salient and lauding the diverse identities of students, which, in turn challenges the status quo of equality based in neoliberal meritocracy and difference blindness that almost always benefits dominant groups, i.e. first language speakers of the language of school and White individuals (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014).

While Tienda (2013) uses the terms "inclusion" and "integration" interchangeably, linguistic inclusion must not be understood as synonymous with linguistic integration, which is more akin to linguistic assimilation. "Linguistic integration often means no more than ensuring that migrants speak the language of the political state into which they come" (García, 2017, p. 12). By this definition, linguistic integration is the antithesis of linguistic inclusion. Therefore, the terms should not be used interchangeably or confused with one another.

Linguistic inclusion is the rejection of oppression based wholly, or in part, on the basis of the linguistic repertoire. It is necessary to distinguish *linguistic inclusion* from *inclusion* as defined above by Tienda (2013) because while the terms *inclusion* and *integration* are synonymous in a general sense, the terms *linguistic inclusion* and *linguistic integration* are antonymic. Thus, it is necessary to define a specific and unique model for *linguistic inclusion,* even if the aims—representation, equity, and anti-racism—of both *inclusion* and *linguistic inclusion* are the same. Much research has been concerned with how to achieve *linguistic inclusion.* I will now explore the theory of plurilingualism, which can be a means to achieve social justice and linguistic inclusion in conjunction with an intersectional framework like *raciolinguistics.*

Plurilingualism

Plurilingualism is an inclusive educational and sociopolitical program in pursuit of social justice and openness (Piccardo, 2019, p. 197)

From its inception, plurilingual theory has been grounded in social justice, struggles for equality, and the valorization of linguistic and cultural diversity (Moore & Gajo, 2009). These are values that are important to the concept of linguistic inclusion. This is why I recognize the participants in the present study as *plurilingual* international students. Plurilingual theory is versatile in that it has been used as a basis for language policy, as a pedagogical approach, and as a theoretical framework for studying language use (Marshall & Moore, 2016).

According to researchers, plurilingual practice has been happening for millennia (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). Everyone has the capacity to become plurilingual because plurilingualism is as much about adopting a mindset of linguistic inclusion as it is about using or learning many different languages and combining them in a single repertoire (Piccardo, 2019). Plurilingualism stands in opposition to the monoglossic language ideologies that are at the root

of linguistic discrimination, which position monolingual language users as 'correct' or 'authentic' and plurilingual language users as somehow deficient.

Examining participants' experiences through the lenses of plurilingualism and raciolinguistics is a suitable epistemological choice for understanding how the intersectionality of identity markers can cause discrimination, as well as for exploring how individuals are resisting deficit views of linguistic variation from the local standard. Both theories help to buttress an intersectional perspective on discrimination and inclusion. Crenshaw (1991) who coined the term intersectionality explains that the failings of social justice scholarship and work lies not in its inability to "transcend difference," but instead in the inability to shift the societal narrative around difference from a deficit perspective to a recognition that "delineating difference need not be the power of domination; it can instead be the social empowerment and reconstruction" (p. 1242). Plurilingualism supports this notion by theorizing ways to valorize difference rather than transcend it.

Plurilingualism recognizes that a person has numerous resources available for communication known as a *repertoire* (Moore & Gajo, 2009). A repertoire can consist of multiple languages, different registers of the same language, and semiotic resources (Marshall & Moore, 2013). Therefore, each person has many ways of communicating, or communicative resources, available to them in their repertoire and *partial competence* in a particular resource is not considered a deficit. Rather, according to Coste et al. (2009), plurilingual individuals continually develop competences in a diverse range of communicative resources, based on their histories, desires, and aspirations. Furthermore, communicative resources are inherently imbalanced and dynamic, and each individual's repertoire is unique and dynamic, rooted in that

individual's history and identity and also changing and developing based on interactions with others (Coste et al., 2009).

Because each person's repertoire is distinct, and because conceptions of what is appropriate or correct language are neither universal nor static but locally situated and always changing, all language use becomes a process of mediation (Piccardo, 2019). According to Piccardo (2019), in a process of plurilingual mediation, *social agents* (Moore & Gajo, 2009) attempt to facilitate communication in order to make meaning with one another. Research into the practice of plurilingualism, therefore, explores how individuals deploy their repertoires to create meaning in a particular social circumstance, including flexibly using components from multiple languages simultaneously. According to a review of concepts of multilingualism conducted by Marshall & Moore (2016) there is wide agreement among researchers that language functions in this flexible way (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011; Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015; Piccardo, 2013). However, there is epistemological divergence between how scholars conceptualize this flexible language use. For example, some scholars situate this flexibility as translanguaging, or going beyond socially constructed named languages by using the totality of one's linguistic resources, known as an *idiolect* (e.g., Otheguy et al., 2015). However, scholars of plurilingualism, conceptualize this as using multiple linguistic resources simultaneously and fluidly (e.g., Coste et al., 2009; Piccardo, 2019) without calling for the dissolution of named languages. The act of translanguaging, or creating from one's linguistic resources a novel expression in order to communicate, can also be encompassed within the theory of plurilingualism as a plurilingual practice (Galante, 2020c). Use of translanguaging is one of many ways plurilingual international students might mediate in order to make meaning.

While plurilingual practices such as using the repertoire, being aware of differences and similarities among languages and cultures, translanguaging, transculturalism, and adaptation and integration, are common (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021), they are often discouraged in institutional settings whose policies are based in monoglossic conceptions of language (Cummins, 2007), such as Canadian universities. These institutional policies leave students feeling ambivalent about their linguistic assets and unsure of whether or not plurilingual practice is appropriate or condoned (Marshall et al. 2019). Plurilingual pedagogy is theorized as a means toward reducing ambivalence and increasing opportunities for plurilingual practices among students (Piccardo & Galante, 2018).

Plurilingual pedagogy is not just about learning languages but also about unlearning monolingual biases, and developing agency and *conscientização* (Piccardo & Galante, 2018; Galante, 2020b). Defined by Freire (1993) as "deepening the attitude of awareness" (p. 44), *conscientização* is a means of uplifting minoritized populations through critical literacy focused on power inequalities and social justice. Plurilingual pedagogy is not simply about developing expertise in multiple languages or acquiring a language. Rather, plurilingual pedagogy seeks to develop language awareness and agency by co-constructing knowledge based on learners' heritage and their lived experiences, as well as their current situation and language learning goals (Council of Europe, 2020; Galante, 2020b). Another goal of plurilingual pedagogy is to develop learners' ability to deploy the contents of their repertoires and flexible practices, such as codeswitching and translanguaging, in order to create meaning (Marshall & Moore, 2016). This competence is defined as plurilingual and pluricultural competence, or PPC (Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009; Galante, 2020a). The cultural component of PPC is important because language is socially and culturally situated. Therefore, choosing which communicative resources to deploy in

any given situation is based not only on one's linguistic ability to deploy said resources, but also knowledge of the cultural appropriateness of those linguistic resources in a particular social space. PPC is a unilateral construct (Galante, 2020a) because linguistic and cultural competence only facilitate communication in conjunction with one another.

Because plurilingual pedagogy is not exclusively concerned with learning languages, but also with how to interact with diverse languages in inclusive ways, it can readily be adopted in disciplinary learning settings such as courses and research labs, as well as language classrooms (Corcoran et al., 2018; Galante 2020b; Marshall, 2019). Plurilingualism is important for understanding the experiences international students have with language use at Canadian universities because scholars of plurilingualism offer a framework for linguistically inclusive policy, pedagogy, and practice.

In this section, I first reviewed theoretical frameworks related to linguistic discrimination, *linguicism, raciolinguistics,* and *microaggressions*. I then presented a conception of linguistic inclusion distinct from inclusion or diversity. Finally, I reviewed the theory of plurilingualism; this review is key to understanding linguistic inclusion. To analyze international students' experiences of linguistic inclusion, or linguistic discrimination, it is necessary to use multiple theoretical frameworks, because these experiences can happen at the policy level, through pedagogy, and in informal languaging in the social sphere. To illustrate this point, I will now review empirical studies from Canada and from English-medium universities in other English dominant countries.

Empirical Studies

Plurilingual international students are perhaps in a particularly apt position to identify and reflect on experiences of linguistic inclusion and discrimination. This is because, as Kim and

Kim (2010) point out, international students are often members of the ethnic and linguistic majority of their home country who face a new reality of linguistic marginalization upon their arrival to English language universities. While one tries to avoid broad generalizations about individuals, international students are, by definition, a group who have been fortunate enough to have access to the kind of education required to pass gatekeeping exams that allow them to attend English-speaking universities. Research has shown that when international students are socially repositioned from being members of privileged elites in their home countries to being minoritized and racialized members of the higher education community in North America, it is a particular shock to them (Kim & Kim, 2010; Houshmand et al., 2014). This shock puts them in a prime position to reflect on linguistic inclusion and discrimination. The authors of the following studies use a variety of theoretical frameworks and research designs; however, the researchers who conducted each of the following studies concerned themselves with understanding the role that language plays in the international student experience.

Linguistic discrimination

The following studies explore linguistic discrimination, a consequence of the monolingual biases and linguicism in English medium universities in Canada. I also draw from studies in English-medium universities outside of Canada because there is a dearth of research concerning how plurilingual international students experience linguistic discrimination in Canadian universities alone.

Cheng and Fox (2008) report that English for academic purposes (EAP) courses are often perceived by international students to be a safe space where they feel comfortable speaking in English and other languages because they are amongst other students learning English as an additional language. Meanwhile, in disciplinary learning and social interactions, where students

spend the majority of their academic time in university, international students often face

linguistic discrimination and microaggressions by other community members (Alim, 2016;

Cheng & Fox, 2008; Piller, 2016).

Lindemann (2002, 2005) conducted experimental studies at a university in the southern

United States to explore the effects of prejudice on communication between international and

local students. The author (2002) explored the effects of native speaker attitudes on the

completion of a communicative task through an experiment with six Korean plurilingual

international students paired with six native-English-speaking American students. The

Americans were preselected based on their responses to a survey: One group of six Americans

were pre-determined to hold negative attitudes toward the Koreans' communication skills, while

another group of six Americans held positive attitudes. The task involved the Korean plurilingual

international students giving directions on how to draw a line through a map, and the local

American students drawing the line. The American undergraduate students were encouraged to

ask clarifying questions but were not allowed to gesticulate. Lindemann (2002) found that of the

twelve host-national student participants, all six who had negative attitudes toward the

communicative abilities of Koreans before the experiment perceived the performance of their

Korean partner as unsuccessful, regardless of whether they were able to complete the task

together or not. All the partnerships with host-national students with positive attitudes toward

Koreans completed the task and rated their partner's communication as successful. Students with

negative attitudes used strategies of avoiding or problematizing input from their Korean

plurilingual international student partner. Not even successful completion of the task could sway

local students' preconceived notions of their partner's communicative abilities.

Lindemann (2005) also examined the link between sociopolitical factors and expectations of non-native speakers' English language use. The study showed that U.S. undergraduate students generally had negative opinions of English spoken by people from Middle Eastern countries (Morocco, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Afghanistan (p. 94) despite (or perhaps because of) never having interacted with people of those nationalities (Lindemann, 2005). According to Lindemann (2005) the English spoken by nationals of other countries with which the U.S. had conflict within the post-WWII era, such as Vietnam or the countries of the former Soviet Bloc, was also viewed negatively. Macro-sociopolitical factors, such as considering a country to be an enemy of the U.S., had a direct result on attitudes towards the English spoken by nationals of that country (Lindemann, 2005).

Both of Lindemann's studies demonstrate the inextricability of race, nationality, and language in understanding the social, academic, and linguistic experiences of plurilingual international students. Prejudices about how capable someone is of communication based on their race or their perceived nationality reflect *raciolinguistic ideologies* (Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Dovchin (2019) uses data from linguistic ethnographic interviews (Copland & Creese, 2015) to explore international students experiences with "racism based on their usage of English" (p. 2) at an Australian university, as well as the psychological repercussions of those experiences. The participants in Dovchin's study reported both *linguistic stereotyping* and *ethnic accent bullying*. Whereas linguistic stereotyping is the assumption that a person will speak a certain way based on their appearance, ethnic accent bullying is the denial of entry into to a community due to pronunciation or other speech features considered outside the standard of the institution. It is worth noting that, though distinct, these two types of linguistic discrimination serve to reinforce one another, as racialized, language minoritized speaking subjects are

simultaneously bullied because of the quality of their speech and irrevocably perceived as speaking differently because of their appearance (Alim, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Lindemann, 2002 & 2005; Piller, 2016). Students in this study reported being openly mocked and excluded from social groups because of their accents (Dovchin, 2020). Some participants shared how experiences of linguistic racism can contribute to inferiority complexes, social anxiety disorders and even suicidal ideation in international students. As Dovchin demonstrates, the consequences of discrimination against international students are severe.

Within the university community, the most common form of linguistic discrimination against international students is microaggressions (Piller, 2016). Because of the prefix "micro" in word microaggressions, they might be considered insignificant. However, just like microplastics, which generate at least 3.2 million metric tons of plastic pollution each year (Dauvergne, 2018) so too microaggressions, though small and subtle, are also insidiously pervasive and can cause major damage, both psychologically and physically, to those who experience them (Dovchin, 2019 & 2020; Piller, 2016; Sue, 2003; Wei, Wang, & Ku, 2012).

Houshmand and colleagues (2014) drew on data from nine interviews that were part of a larger project on adjustment among international students in Canada. The researchers chose these interviews from a larger pool of 129 participants using purposeful sampling. The participants were chosen because they had experienced "some form of racial or ethnic discrimination" (p. 379) at a large Canadian university. Researchers identified four main types of microaggressions described by their participants: "excluded and avoided, rendered invisible, disregarded international values and needs, and environmental microaggressions." (p. 381). The researchers also documented coping strategies such as engaging with homogenous cultural groups and avoiding the academic community; instead, students found a community outside of the university

in the city where it was located. The authors (2014) conclude that the Asian students in their study want to interact with their White peers, but often feel rejected by them because of their accent or English-language proficiency, and that these rejections color much of their experience in university.

Cheng and Fox (2008) describe numerous experiences of discrimination in a study which explored the academic acculturation of plurilingual English additional language (EAL) international and immigrant students at Canadian universities. The researchers asked what factors international students themselves see as most integral to successful academic acculturation in order to make recommendations for EAP courses based on their needs. Many international students relied on help from others to achieve success in Canadian HEI. Twenty-three percent of students surveyed reported that they would prefer to seek help from a professor or TA rather than local students because, as one student described, they were afraid of being misunderstood or made fun of (Cheng & Fox, 2008). Additionally, the researchers found that some international students reported feeling ignored and not being taken seriously by Canadian students during group work and collaborative assignments. They therefore preferred to work in groups of other international students regardless of shared nationality or linguistic overlap. The results in this study attests to a lived reality of marginalization and fear of linguistic discrimination at the hands of local students, whom the undergraduate plurilingual international students in this study described as "arrogant" and "impatient" (Cheng & Fox, 2008, p. 320). International students interviewed for this study saw their EAP classes as social safe havens where they could connect with other international students. Still, 71% of interviewees reported that they needed help learning how to befriend and interact with local students, though perhaps it

is local students (and nationals of English-speaking countries generally) who need help in realizing their own role in perpetuating linguicism through acts of linguistic discrimination.

Linguistic discrimination can come from professors as well. Marshall (2020) found that some professors at a Canadian university would ask students to switch to English if they were overheard speaking other languages in the classroom. One professor's reasoning for this was that workplaces in the field demand English, and therefore, English should be spoken in the classroom. This falsely equates English proficiency with success in the workforce, ignoring, amongst other factors, the experiences of high-proficiency English speakers who still face marginalization and barriers to participation in professional communities as racialized people (Pillar, 2016; Ramjattan, 2019). This is by no means an exhaustive list of the ways professors may discriminate against plurilingual international students because of their language, but rather a few notable examples from previous studies.

Guo and Guo's (2017) study, which compared institutional policy and practice concerning internationalization in Canadian higher education, found that many international students experienced some form of discrimination based on their race and/or language use. This data was collected through semi-structured interviews (Guo & Guo, 2017). One international student interviewee reported that local students were not patient and did not try to understand international students. Other students self-deprecated by reporting their own lack of English as a reason for lack of friendships with local students (Guo & Guo, 2017). Another student reported that she had been given a maliciously low mark on a paper because of what the instructor described as language issues, which the student later had amended by the department. The students also experienced prejudicial assumptions about their academic and language abilities based on their appearance. One Chinese student interviewed by Guo and Guo (2017) described

how a local student intentionally excluded her from a group assignment by passing the sign-up

sheet in the opposite direction. This was on the first day of class, before the local student had

heard her speak. Another Chinese student reported that even though she was physically included

in group projects, her ideas were ignored because of her accent and language use (Guo & Guo,

2017).

Ramjattan (2020) explored experiences of raciolinguistic microaggressions among

international teaching assistants (ITAs) in the engineering department ($N = 7$) of a university in

Ontario, Canada. The researcher theorizes how ITAs may learn that their accents are problematic

through repeated experiences of raciolinguistic microaggressions and either attempt to

standardize their accents or resist that normative practice. Data were collected through semi-

structured interviews about how "accent affected their work" (p. 6). Importantly, Ramjattan

concluded that these microaggressions were only experienced by racialized participants; the

only white participant in his study did not experience microaggressions related to their accent.

The researcher notes that this may also have been due to the White participant's French accent

being mistaken for French Canadian and thus situating him as local. This highlights the

intersecting ways in which race, nationality, and language co-construct perceptions of local and

foreign. The author concludes that racialized ITAs experienced raciolinguistic microaggressions

which led them to "understand the 'deficiency' of their accents" (p. 12) and calls for social

change in engineering departments to dismantle the "white perceiving subject" (p. 4) which

serves to problematize ITA's accents and marginalize them from the engineering community.

Taken together, the studies in this section show how ideologies of language and race

intersect to *other* and marginalize international students in their time at Canadian universities.

Despite a large growth in the international student population in Canadian universities, these

students still feel segregated from the majority of the university community. This feeling of

separation may stem in part from international students being subjected to *raciolinguistic*

microaggressions (Corona & Block, 2020) during their time in the university. Some researchers

argue that *plurilingualism* is a way to resist the monoglossic language ideologies at the root of

linguistic discrimination (Piccardo, 2019; Galante, 2020d). However, the status quo at Canadian

universities is that plurilingual spaces are few and far between (Marshall, 2019). The next

sections will review initiatives and research conducted to create and study plurilingual spaces in

the Canadian higher education community.

Plurilingual practice

Plurilingual practice is the flexible and imbalanced use of various communicative

resources in a social agent's repertoire (Moore & Gajo, 2009). Van Viegen and Zappa-Hollman

(2019) demonstrate how students may use plurilingual strategies to support their studies, such as

note-taking in English but looking up materials in Chinese to clarify complex ideas. The

researchers assert that if and when learners are encouraged to utilize their plurilingual

competence, it is an overwhelmingly positive experience both socially and academically.

However, international students in Canadian universities are often discouraged from

translanguaging, that is, from using their repertoire flexibly and moving between and mixing

semiotic resources (Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015) in formal academic contexts such as

classroom discussions and written assignments (Van Viegen & Zappa-Hollman, 2019). The

researchers argue that this practice of discouragement is a result of the monolingual bias of

Canadian universities.

According to Marshall and Moore (2013) while many sociolinguists and language

education researchers have rejected the notion of dual monolingualism, Canadian universities

have not. The concept of dual monolingualism understands plurilingual people as having separated, full competence in two or more named languages, and uses this model as the basis for developing language-teaching pedagogy (Ortega, 2014). Marshall & Moore (2013) researched the plurilingual practices of a small group of international students in a Canadian university. The students in Marshall and Moore's (2013) study were aware that they were being held to a standard, however they were not sure what that standard was or how to achieve it. The monolingual expectations of the institution meant that these international students used diverse communicative resources with friends in personal communication as well as in the invisible work they do to create texts for assessment, while attempting to create texts that adhered to the unclear standards and expectations of the university.

In a similar study, Marshall and colleagues (2019) explored how plurilingual international students at a university in Vancouver, BC use their linguistic repertoires in learning, their attitudes toward language use in learning, and the pedagogical implications of their responses. A main goal of this research was to examine whether plurilingual practice can be an asset to learning in higher education. Data for this study was collected through interviews with twelve plurilingual international students, as well as recordings of classroom interactions with four of the twelve interviewees. The participants' repertoires included English and Chinese (Marshall et al., 2019). Researchers found numerous instances where students were able to use their plurilingual and pluricultural competence as an asset to their learning, such as using Mandarin with peers in order to discuss and ultimately gain understanding of a complex concept. The authors (2019) concluded that when plurilingual students are encouraged to use their plurilingual repertoires in class, they feel more confident and are able to engage with the material and classmates more effectively. However, as Marshall and Moore (2013) concluded, the

policies of the university do not often support plurilingual practices. These policies do not

prohibit the use of other languages, but neither do they encourage it. Marshall and colleagues

(2019) use the word *ambivalent* to describe the attitude toward plurilingualism reflected in

university policies and conclude that this *ambivalence* toward plurilingual practice is internalized

by international students. The participants in this study were proud of their competence, but

simultaneously experienced a lot of pressure to adhere to monolingually-biased policies and

pedagogies of the university. Additionally, some participants in this study (Marshall et al., 2019)

reported feeling stress when interacting with native English speakers. Ambivalence about the

appropriateness of language use ultimately led to academic challenges and a feeling of social

exclusion (Marshall et al., 2019).

These studies all show that when plurilingual practice is encouraged, or at the very least

allowed to happen, it is a positive experience. However, Canadian universities are currently not

providing many opportunities to use languages other than English, and in Quebec, English and

French. Even when opportunities present themselves, students feel unsure of whether or not

plurilingual practice is appropriate or condoned.

Next, I will review studies on plurilingual pedagogy in Canadian higher education,

which, as the studies will show, can help students feel confident and open to communicating

plurilingually.

Plurilingual Pedagogy

Studies in the context of Canadian higher education support Piccardo's (2019) assertion

that plurilingual pedagogy can be beneficial for language acquisition, academic development,

and can facilitate learning about social justice. Furthermore, plurilingual pedagogy can be used

in English for academic purposes classrooms (Galante, 2020b) and disciplinary learning (Marshall, 2019).

Galante (2020b) focused on plurilingual pedagogy in the context of teaching English as a second language (TESOL) courses as a potential means for developing agency with plurilingual learners through a process of *conscientização,* Freire's concept of liberation through critical literacy education to develop agency in learners (1993). In the Canadian university TESOL classroom, education for *conscientização* focuses on critical discussions of power relations among languages, particularly the power of English as the most dominant language in Canada, in higher education, and in the world. Galante (2020b) asserts that helping international students understand Canadian academic norms can reduce what Marshall and colleagues (2019) referred to as *ambivalence* about their plurilingual repertoires and help them communicate confidently in order to succeed in their university studies. International students can use the confidence and agency they gain in EAP programs like the one described by Galante (2020d) in pursuit of whatever disciplinary learning goals they might have. Additionally, plurilingual pedagogy can be applied in disciplinary learning contexts by professors who are not language experts with positive student outcomes, as the next study shows.

Marshall (2019) explored plurilingual pedagogy for disciplinary learning in a Canadian university. In this study, plurilingual pedagogy was framed as a means for creating spaces in disciplinary learning classrooms where students feel comfortable and supported using languages other than English as tools for learning. Marshall (2019) contends that creating plurilingual spaces can in turn support intercultural exchange, increase language awareness, and create more democratic educational spaces by requiring both instructors and students to act as mediators to bridge comprehension gaps. The shift of onus of responsibility for successful communication

disrupts the traditional student-professor power dynamics, which position professors as all-knowing and students as deficient in any unsuccessful mediation. This disrupted pattern of mediation is part of a larger phenomenon of "pervasive institutional discourses about plurilingual/EAL students around which their presence in classes is often seen in terms of deficit, problems, and a lowering of standards" (Marshall, 2019, p. 12). The barriers to creating linguistically inclusive spaces exist within classrooms, but also in the policies of the institution and unconscious biases of its faculty and students.

Dela Cruz (2020) investigated plurilingual practices and self-perception of PPC among ESL tutors and tutees ($N = 20$) in the context of a peer-to-peer tutoring program at a university in Montreal. The findings showed that both the tutors and tutees regularly used "plurilingual practices such as translation, translanguaging, and cross-linguistic analysis" (pp. 36-37). Dela Cruz (2020) asserts that because students are already using these plurilingual practices in their interactions with one another, students would welcome and ultimately benefit from these practices being applied in other spaces in the university, specifically L2 classrooms.

The aforementioned studies take important steps toward conceptualizing linguistically inclusive, diverse, internationalized campuses. They show that steps toward positive change can be achieved in language programs, disciplinary learning, and support services through encouraging plurilingual, pluricultural competence. They also highlight how it is necessary to remedy institutionalized monolingual bias and its attendant discrimination in Canadian universities while encouraging the linguistic diversity and plurilingualism of international students.

Summary

This chapter reviewed empirical studies concerning international students' language experiences at English medium universities in Canada and abroad, as well as the conceptual frameworks that I used to analyze the data: raciolinguistics and plurilingualism. Linguistic inclusion is a key component of plurilingualism, which has been shown to be beneficial to international students, especially those who may be more comfortable using languages other than English in certain situations. However, plurilingualism has yet to be embraced in Canadian universities. Instead, Canadian universities adhere to monoglossic language policies that create a hierarchy of language with native-like English at the top. Native-like English is the standard or norm of the institution and all other languages are seen as other or deficient. In this way, native-like English becomes a marker of *Whiteness*, conferring on its speakers the status of belonging to the majority group, and non-native-like English becomes a marker of *non-Whiteness.* This marker of nonwhiteness intersects with other markers such as ethnicity, and of course skin color. Plurilingual international students often report feeling excluded from the Canadian university community and perceive language to be a major reason for their exclusion (Cheng & Fox, 2008).

This study seeks to better understand experiences of plurilingual international students in Canadian universities related to linguistic inclusion and discrimination within our community. To that end, the present study is grounded in the following research questions.

Research Questions

- In what ways do plurilingual international students at a Canadian university experience linguistic *discrimination* based on their repertoire?
- In what ways do plurilingual international students at a Canadian university experience linguistic *inclusion* based on their repertoire?

CHAPTER THREE: Methods

Research design

This thesis reports on a study that sought to gain emic perspectives from international students on their experiences in a Canadian university. To that end, the research was conducted in a qualitative paradigm, using linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015). Linguistic ethnography is designed to provide an insider's assessment on local, current social interactions while also considering how these interactions are "embedded in wider social contexts and structures" (Copland & Creese, 2015, p. 12). Linguistic ethnography is explicitly concerned with how language and social interaction dynamically affect one another (Copland & Creese, 2015), making it an ideal research paradigm for the present study. The present study utilizes semi-structured interviews, the preferred type of interview within the paradigm of linguistic ethnography, as outlined by Copland & Creese (2015). Although semi-structured interviews are not an ethnographic approach in the traditional sense, the present study takes an *ethnographic perspective* (Copland & Creese, 2015) wherein interview data serves to answer the questions typically examined through conducting lengthy observations of a community. This approach is ideal for studying practices in Canadian universities because it allows the researcher to explore everyday practices which are often ignored or taken for granted, through the perspectives of those affected by them. While ethnography has traditionally relied heavily on field work and observations, linguistic ethnography supplements information gathered through field observations with semi-structured interviews in order to gain emic perspectives. The present

study was conceived and conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic[1]. As a result, field work

was an impossibility. Fortunately, the type of data collected through semi-structured interviews,

that is, emic perspectives and reflections, is the type of data best suited to answer the research

questions posed in this study. That is because only through an emic perspective on experiences

of linguistic discrimination and inclusion can we understand not only when, where and with

whom these experiences occur, but also how these experiences affected participants in the

moment and moving forward.

Recruitment

I began recruitment for this study at the end of November 2020 after receiving ethics

approval for research involving human participants from McGill University (see Appendix A).

Because of the global COVID-19 pandemic beginning in February of that same year, this study

was conceived with a methodology for recruitment and data collection which would allow the

researcher and participants to communicate virtually while remaining socially distant. All of my

recruitment efforts centered around a digital flyer (See Appendix B). Initially I posted this flyer

to social media and emailed it to master's students and professors I knew personally, some of

whom also shared the recruitment poster with their research labs and related social media

accounts. Through these combined efforts I was able to recruit two participants. I then sent out

the same digital flyer through departmental listservs at MCU, through which I ultimately

---

[1] The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2019 and is ongoing at time of writing, necessitated the physical distancing of people all over the globe, including at MCU where this study was conducted. Therefore, during the recruitment and data collection phases of this study, researchers and participants were unable to be physically present with one another. This necessitated the use of virtual communication for recruitment and data collection and precluded in-person research methods.

recruited the remainder of the participants. Individuals who expressed interest in the study were

sent a consent form (Appendix C) and a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). When those

were returned to me, I scheduled an interview, which was ultimately conducted on Cisco WebEx

at a mutually convenient time. Participants were given the opportunity to select a pseudonym for

themselves to be used in this thesis. If they did not choose a pseudonym, I chose one for them

and confirmed that they felt it was appropriate.

Participants

I initially sought twelve participants for this study but ultimately interviewed fifteen.

Twelve was the minimum number of participants I was comfortable interviewing because I

wished to seek diverse perspectives and experience related to my research questions. Ultimately,

I was able to recruit and interview fifteen participants in the timeframe of a master's thesis. The

international student community is quite diverse, and I strove to have a pool of participants that

would reflect that diversity. I focused specifically on international students currently pursuing

master's degrees, or who had finished their master's degree one semester prior to the study. I

chose master's level students in part because I am a master's student myself, and therefore have

some understanding of certain challenges inherent to pursuing a master's degree, but also

because many master's students engage with a large amount of course work, research, and entry-

level jobs in academia such as teaching assistantships and research assistantships during their

two-year degree. Ultimately, the participants represented a diverse cross-section of international

students in terms of gender, race, age, nationality, area of study, and, of course, languages.

Below is a profile of each of the participants in my study (Table 3.1).

In all, participants represented nine nationalities and thirteen programs of study. Three participants came from China, three from India, and three from Mexico, while the remainder were the only participants from their respective countries: Turkey, Singapore, Oman, Nigeria, Iran, and Greece.

Table 3.1

PSEUDONYM	NATIONALITY	LANGUAGES SPOKEN	PROGRAM	AGE	PREFERRED PRONOUNS
LUCKY	China	Mandarin, English, German	Electrical & Computer Engineering	23	She/her
CATHERINE	China	Mandarin, English, French	Second Language Education	33	She/her
ETHAN	China	Mandarin, English	Microbiology & Immunology	25	He/him
LIZA	Greece	Greek, English, French	Human Nutrition	29	She/her
RICHARD	India	Tamil, Hindi, Badaga, Kannada, English	Parasitology	23	He/him
ADAM	India	Tamil, Telugu, English, (Hindi, Marathi)	Computer Science	24	He/him
KURO	India	Tamil, Telegu, English, French	Cell Biology	24	She/her
VIVIENNE	Iran	Farsi, English	Dentistry	29	She/her
LAURA	Mexico	Spanish, French, English	Education and Society	35	She/her
INEZ	Mexico	Spanish, French, English	Natural Resources, Neotropical Environmental Option	28	She/her
MARIA	Mexico	Spanish, French, English	Second Language Education	35	She/her & They/them
ROB	Nigeria	Yoruba, English	Dentistry	31	He/him
HELEN	Oman	Arabic, English	Educational Leadership	34	She/her
CHLOE	Singapore	English, Mandarin, French	Education and Society	35	She/her
ISABELLE	Turkey	Turkish, English, German	Educational Psychology	23	She/her

All three participants from Mexico listed the same languages, Spanish, English, and French on the demographic survey. No other two participants listed the same sets of languages, though there was some overlap of shared languages, especially for participants of the same

nationality. For example, all of the participants from India listed Tamil. All participants listed

English as one of their languages, but only two participants listed English as the language in

which they are most comfortable. Participants were also diverse in their visible minority status.

Visible minority is a term used by the Canadian Government and defined as "persons, other than

Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Employment Equity

Act, 1995). I chose this term because it has a clear definition that I was able to share with

participants via a resource link in the demographic survey. Ultimately, the term

visible minorities serves as a euphemism for racialized individuals.

I decided to break down visible minority status into two questions for the purposes of

participant demographics: *do you consider yourself a visible minority?* And *do others perceive*

you as a visible minority? (Figure 3.1) Two-thirds of the participants considered themselves

visible minorities while one-third did not.

Figure 3.1
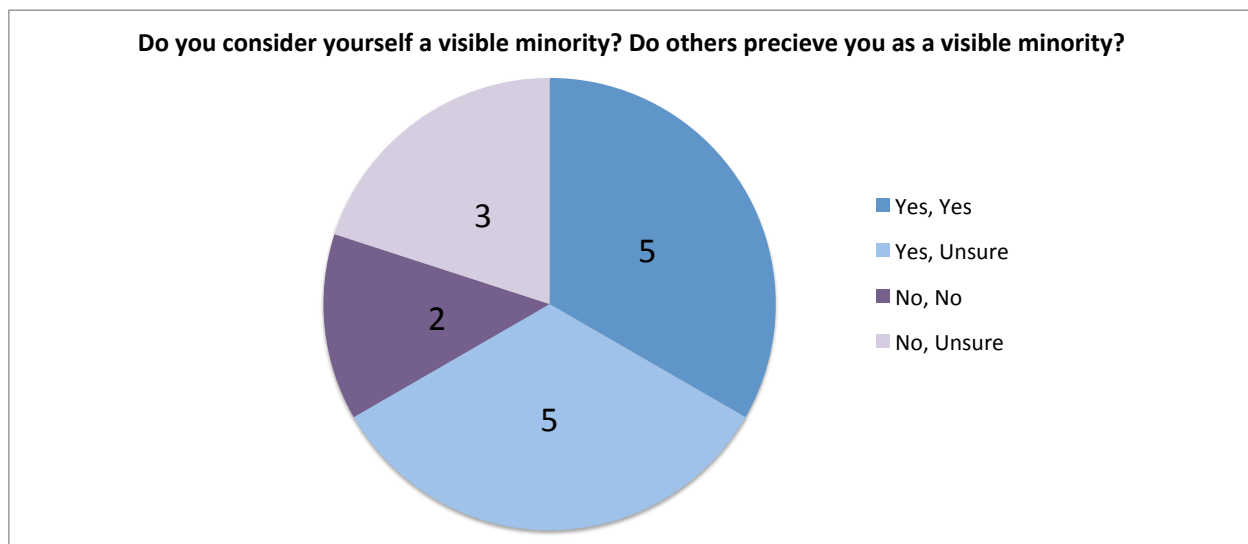
The participants were split between those who believed others perceived them with the

same visible minority status they ascribed to themselves, (Dark blue & Dark purple in figure 3.1)

and those that were unsure how their visible minority status was perceived by others. None of the

participants considered themselves to be a visible minority while believing that others did not

consider them a visible minority or vice-versa. This group of participants reflects the academic,

linguistic, national, and racial diversity of the international master's student body at MCU.

Data collection

I collected data between early December 2020 and early January 2021. The main

instrument for data collection was semi-structured interviews (see guide in Appendix E). Data

was also collected through demographic questionnaires (Appendix D). The demographic

questionnaires were completed prior to the semi-structured interview. Data from the

questionnaires served to help me adapt interview protocols for each participant based on factors

such as whether or not they had worked as a TA and whether they were completing course work

or writing a thesis. The demographic surveys also provided data about the participants'

perspectives on their visible minority status. The data relating to each participant's visible

minority status is relevant when considering the intersectionality of race and language in

experiences related to language use.

I sent each participant the interview protocol after receiving their demographic survey.

The semi-structured interviews took between 45 and 75 minutes, averaging approximately 60

minutes. I never cut off any participants, but allowed the interviews to last as long as the

participant felt was necessary to share their experience. By sending interview questions in

advance and allowing participants unlimited time in interviews, I was attempting to facilitate

prolonged engagement with the interview proceedings to attempt to ensure trustworthiness

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The interview protocol consisted of 12 main questions and a number

of potential follow-up questions. Certain questions had two potential phrasings based on

responses from the demographic surveys. For example,

- ***I can see from your demographic survey that you are doing a master's thesis, what influenced that decision?***
                                        --- OR ---
- ***I can see from your demographic survey that you are <u>not</u> doing a master's thesis, what influenced that decision?***

Therefore, I adapted the interview protocols for each participant based on their answers on the

demographic survey.

Receiving the interview guide ahead of time allowed participants to reflect on the

questions being asked and gather their thoughts. It also allowed them time to think about

experiences that might be relevant to the questions. I wanted to give participants time to think

about the questions before the interview and to look up any unfamiliar terms in the interview

protocol. Some participants looked at the questions ahead of their interviews and others did not.

One participant went so far as to write down some responses she felt were particularly important

for her to share and get right.

An unintended, though not necessarily negative, effect of sending the protocols

beforehand was that some of the participants who had read the questions beforehand came into

the interviews itching to share the experiences they felt were most relevant to the study. When a

participant wanted to get something off their chest right away, I gave them the space to do so.

The emic perspectives of my participants were more important than the order of the questions, or

even the questions themselves. The questions were meant to serve as a jumping off point.

Ultimately, I was most interested in the participants' experiences with linguistic inclusion and

discrimination. However, in allowing participants to begin by talking about what they were

excited to share with me, the order of the interviews became jumbled and certain questions

became unnecessary. When this occurred, I would repeat the question with a preface along the

lines of "I know you already spoke to this, but I just wanted to make sure that there wasn't anything else you would like to add," followed by the question.

Two of my participants identified as native English speakers. While I had not expected to recruit plurilingual international students whose first language was English, I was nonetheless interested to see how the experiences of plurilingual international students whose first language was English would compare to the experiences of plurilingual international students for whom English was an additional language. These interviews were less structured because many of the questions were designed with individuals for whom English is an additional language in mind and because their experiences of linguistic inclusion and linguistic discrimination were different in many ways than the experiences of the other participants. Overall, I tried to focus on creating a space where participants felt comfortable to honestly explore their experiences. I also explicitly asked each participant what they would like people to know about language at MCU.

Interviews were conducted via the Cisco WebEx Meetings platform and recorded via the platform's built-in recording feature. Most interviews were conducted with both audio and video interaction and recording. However, in certain interviews, the bandwidth did not support audio and video interaction. In these situations, the participant and researcher were forced to turn off their cameras in order to maintain verbal communication and the quality of the audio recording. One participant never turned on his camera, and I did not ask him to do so. The other participants all chose to have their cameras on. Ultimately, all interview recordings were automatically uploaded and stored in the Cisco WebEx Meetings cloud. I downloaded each recording and converted it to an Mp3 file. Then, those files were run through Microsoft Word's dictation feature which generated a rough transcript. I then listened to each audio file, edited, and

formatted the transcripts using broad transcription to generate accurate transcripts of the interviews.

Data analysis

After transcribing the semi-structured interviews, I imported all the transcripts into the data analysis software NVivo. In addition to analyzing data from the transcripts, I also created case classifications and case files for each participant. This allowed me to organize and visualize coded data based on demographic features such as nationality and visible minority status.

I began the process of coding the data from the transcripts with *organizational codes,* "broad areas or issues that you want to investigate… often established (either explicitly or implicitly in your thinking about your study) prior to your interviews." (Maxwell, 2013, p. 107). Using the software NVivo, I established the two *organizational,* or top-level codes, prior to data collection. The codes –based on my research questions– were *linguistic discrimination* and *linguistic inclusion*. Using these two *organizational codes* as a guide, I read through the transcripts for experiences related to one of these two codes. I used thematic analysis to code data, using these top-level codes, inductively, based on connections and similarities between interview excerpts (Seidman, 2006). As I coded data using these top-level codes, I began inductively generating themes based on what Maxwell (2013) describes as *substantive categories* within the two top level codes. *Substantive categories* are descriptive and deal with participants' thoughts and beliefs about their experiences (Maxwell, 2013). Some of these themes were generated from theories and results I had read about, such as raciolinguistic microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007) and plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) (Galante, 2020a) while conducting my literature review, which I recognized the participants in my study describing first-hand. Others came from recognizing multiple pieces of data that related similar experiences,

collected either from the same participant or from multiple participants, such as the engage mediation practice of offering feedback and the raciolinguistic microaggression of restricting linguistic practices. As Maxwell (2013) explains, while substantive categories often come directly from the *participants'* own words and ideas, they can also come from the *researcher's* understanding of the participants' experiences. Ultimately, *substantive categories* are meant to identify the content of a statement, or what the statement really meant (Maxwell, 2013). This thick description, including experiences, context, and the quality and nature of the event, fulfills the quality criteria of *transferability* through *thick* description (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121).

I coded the content of the transcripts based on the quality, or substance, of the experience rather than the location of the experience or who the interlocutor was. For example, if a participant said, "I often felt ignored by other students in the classroom," that would be coded as *being ignored* rather than as *in the classroom* or *other students*. Themes were continually added, merged, and deleted throughout the coding process. I added third and fourth top-level codes consisting of all of a participant's answers to specific questions from the interview, *What languages do you use at MCU?* and *What would you like people to know about language use at MCU?* These responses did not necessarily relate directly to the top-level codes of *linguistic inclusion* and *linguistic discrimination,* but they provided valuable data related to the participants' experiences of language use during their master's programs, nonetheless.

This chapter has described the design of the present study and methods of data collection and analysis. In the following chapter I will share and discuss the principal findings of this investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR: Results and Discussion

This chapter is divided into two sections: 1) linguistic discrimination; and 2) linguistic

inclusion. The chapter begins with a section that will relate and discuss participants' experiences

of linguistic discrimination in a Canadian university. The linguistic discrimination section is

divided into three themes, i. 'What languages do you use at MCU?' ii. Raciolinguistic

microaggressions; iii. "Good English".

The second section of this chapter, linguistic inclusion, explores five themes related to

linguistic inclusion; i. Linguistic diversity; ii. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence; iii.

Engaged communication; iv. Plurilingual pedagogy and policies; v. Plurilingual community.

Linguistic discrimination

This section is subdivided into three themes:

- 'What languages do you use at MCU?'

- Raciolinguistic Microaggressions

- Good English

The first theme deals exclusively with participants' answers to the question "What

languages do you use at MCU?" which they were asked at the beginning of their interviews.

The answers reveal participants' perceptions of the implicit and explicit language policies of

MCU, and the value ascribed to the different languages in their repertoires. The second

theme, raciolinguistic microaggressions, explores participants' experiences of linguistic

discrimination at MCU using a *taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions* that I

developed, based on participants' experiences. This taxonomy was adapted from previous

taxonomies of racial microaggressions conceived by Kim and Kim, (2010), Sue and

colleagues (2007), and Houshmand and colleagues (2014). This new taxonomy identifies and

categorizes the raciolinguistic microaggressions experienced by the participants in the

present study. Grounding the taxonomy in the concept of raciolinguistics necessitated the

alteration certain themes from pre-existing taxonomies, such as converting Houshmand and

colleagues (2014) theme of *excluded and avoided* to *excluded and ignored* in the present

study, as well as the creation of entirely new themes, such as *restricted,* in which data is

presented which shows how plurilingual international students were restricted from using

languages other than English in their time at MCU. Finally, "Good English" presents and

discusses results concerning how the raciolinguistic microaggressions experienced by the

participants affected their perceptions of their linguistic repertoire and minority status during

their time at MCU.

'What languages do you use at MCU?'

This section explores participants' answers to the interview question, 'what languages do

you use at MCU? This question was intended to be an icebreaker before delving into more

substantive questions. However, many participants' answers revealed how some of their

linguistic resources are rendered valueless within the university community and how those

beliefs have been internalized by the participants themselves. That the participants had

experienced linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2015) was apparent even in many answers to this

innocuous-seeming question.

For instance, Isabelle answered "I only use English since I only know English because I

don't speak French." However, on her demographic questionnaire she listed her languages as

"Turkish, English, German." When asked explicitly about Turkish, the language in which she

feels most comfortable, she responded,

I have one more person in my cohort who is speaking Turkish. But since we see each

other in the classroom environment, and since our cohort speaks English all the time,

when we see each other, we also speak English. I also have a couple of more friends in

MCU. They're Turkish. So, I use Turkish as well. Yeah, it turns out to be. –Isabelle

In all, seven of fifteen participants disregarded linguistic resources other than French and English

when answering this question. When this happened, I asked the question a second time,

specifically about whether they use the language they are most comfortable in, as reported on

their demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). Just like Isabelle, Vivienne, a speaker of Farsi

and English, interpreted the question, "What languages do you use at MCU?" to be, "Do you use

French, English, or both at MCU?" perhaps because these are the languages our community is

conditioned to view as relevant within the university. However, when asked specifically about

Farsi, it became clear that Vivienne frequently used her "mother tongue" at MCU. Below,

Vivienne explains how she uses Farsi with her Persian peers to discuss a range of topics, in her

role as a teaching assistant, and as a learning tool to help her better understand complex

academic material in her field:

Oh yes, we are a ton of Persian people in the Department… So sometimes we have this

debriefing sessions. We discussed topics in our mother tongue, which is awesome. And

because I was a teaching assistant to a class with people who might be in junior year

whenever they couldn't understand, I would have a debriefing session in Farsi for them.

So, I could say that to some extent we use Farsi between our own community to address

the research issues that we have or the educational issues that we have in that debriefing

sessions manner. – Vivienne

Despite the seemingly important role of Farsi in both her learning and employment at MCU, Vivienne was quick to add "But nothing formal. It is completely informal, but we use it a lot." Another participant, upon being asked about languages other than English and French, was struck by the realization that despite sharing a common language with peers, these languages were rarely used for communication at MCU. Adam, whose linguistic repertoire includes Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and Marathi, explained, "When I just bump into them in the corridor, perhaps then sometimes we talk in Hindi, but that's pretty rare. Now that I look at it, it's very surprising that most of the times that we interact, we stick to English. It's very rare that we start using Hindi." Adam believes that the reason he and his peers stuck to English, despite having other shared linguistic resources, is "just the environment that we are in. Because we just bump into each other in the department itself. So, I don't know, maybe it's like an unconscious bias that we resort to using English. I don't know any other possible reason for it." The use of the term *unconscious bias* is particularly apt, because MCU does not have any explicit policy forbidding the use of languages other than English. However, as Adam notes, the environment of the university implicitly imposes linguistic norms and restrictions. In Adam's case, these norms were adhered to uncritically during his time at MCU.

The participants in this study were hyper-aware of the language standards of the university and the province of Quebec. The concept of *elite bilingualism* (Cummins, 2001; Rosa, 2018) has been used to explain how certain types of bilingualism are lauded while others are seen as deficiencies for learning in school and for future opportunities. The participants I interviewed understood that academic success at MCU was tied to their ability to perform written and spoken academic English. Furthermore, they knew that if they were hoping to remain in Quebec after graduation, they would have to develop their ability in French as well to achieve

professional success. Because MCU is an English-language institution in officially francophone Quebec, there is an implicit elite bilingualism of English and French. Some participants also reported explicit pressure from supervisors to improve their French language skills.

Other participants talked about how and when they use diverse languages. However, there was still an emphasis on English as the language used most frequently, especially in academic spaces, which may make sense since MCU is an English-language university. Many interviewees used linguistic resources other than English for social interaction, but rarely, if ever, in their academic work. Only one participant, Kuro, brought up a language that was neither English, French, nor a language in her own repertoire in her answer: "I use English a lot because, of course, my supervisors are from Spain and they speak Spanish, and I don't speak Spanish and they speak English and that's all. And I had a very good friend, so she is also from my state. She's in a different lab but we are in the same building, so we meet often. So, I speak both Tamil as well as in English in MCU." Many of the students interviewed for this study had supervisors who were most comfortable in a language other than English. That Kuro highlights the linguistic diversity of her department and lab shows that she is considering languages outside of the implicit elite bilingual standard of MCU. Furthermore, her assertion that she would communicate with her supervisors in Spanish if she was able is tantamount to a rejection of the traditional monoglossic ideologies of Canadian universities which, as Marshall (2019) has asserted, often problematize languages other than English being used in academic spaces.

Ultimately, all the participants interviewed used languages other than English during their time at MCU to varying degrees. Some participants, such as Adam, used English for social interaction even with peers who came from the same country and spoke the same first language. Many participants spoke of an academic/social divide. Lucky, from China, explained that when

another Mandarin speaker would email her about something related to the course, that email and

her response would be in English because "English is like a language for work and like

everything related to academic and related to our thesis or paper project, we usually speak

English. And everything related to social life, we usually speak in Chinese." Other participants

found the idea of sending emails in English to other students with similar linguistic backgrounds

altogether wrong,

> Who the hell messages in English? It doesn't make sense, Come on! I would make fun of
>
> them if they do that! I would make fun of them definitely, 'Oh, what is wrong? What the
>
> hell is wrong with you?!?' –Vivienne

 Most participants used their mother tongue regularly in social situations and to a lesser extent to

discuss assignments or academic problems with other students who shared a common language.

Only two participants, Ethan and Inez, regularly used their first languages, Mandarin and

Spanish respectively, for academic pursuits. Ethan used Mandarin as a means of communication

with his advisor, post-doctoral researchers, and lab technicians in the lab where he conducted

research for his master's thesis. Inez completed part of her master's thesis by taking courses and

conducting research in Panama, where she regularly communicated with her co-supervisor in

Spanish.

Overall, participants' answers to the question "what languages do you use at MCU?"

were focused on English as the language used at MCU, while also stressing the importance of

French. Very little consideration was given to linguistic assets outside of the official languages

of Canada by participants at the onset of the interviews. The responses reported above show how

linguistic assets outside of English and French are often disregarded and devalued to the point

that they can seem irrelevant within the context of the university, even to the speakers of these

languages themselves.

Raciolinguistic microaggressions

I felt that there was this discrimination. It was subtle, but I could see it, I could feel it.

Obviously, they wouldn't say it to your face, but through their actions, through the way

that they would think, and they would actually express their thinking, if you were actually

observant enough, you could see that this was going on. –Liza

The majority of the linguistic discrimination experienced by the participants in this study took

the form of *raciolinguistic microaggressions* (Corona & Block, 2020). Raciolinguistic

microaggressions are microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007) based on raciolinguistic ideologies

(Flores & Rosa, 2015). These raciolinguistic microaggressions serve to maintain hierarchies of

race and language (Ramjattan, 2020). Sue and colleagues (2007) divide microaggressions into 3

categories, *microassaults, microinsults,* and *microinvalidations*. *Microassaults* are intentionally

harmful uses of derogatory language or slurs. *Microinsults* are seemingly innocuous statements

or even apparent compliments that, when socio-politically contextualized, other or demean a

racialized, linguistically minoritized person. *Microinvalidations* disregard the thoughts or

experiences of a racialized, linguistically minoritized person. Especially prevalent in the

experiences of these international master's students were microinvalidations and microinsults

such as Liza describes above, wherein subtle or silent acts of discrimination lead to the

minoritizing of international students at MCU.

Using the intersectional lens of raciolinguistics to study microaggressions begins with

the understanding of the relationship between the social constructs of race and language as

reciprocal. It would be impossible to analyze these experiences as being *exclusively* the result of

language practices because to do so would ignore issues of race, which is the very analytical

omission the theory of raciolinguistics seeks to rectify. Therefore, the microaggressions

described in this section are not exclusive to language or race as separate social constructs but

related to the intersection of race and language. In other words, the participants either believed

that language was a contributing factor as to why these microaggressions occurred, or,

alternatively, the results of the microaggression influenced the participant's perception of their

language and made them feel marginalized in the university community.

Taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions

The results presented in this first half of the chapter were coded inductively into themes

under the top-level code of linguistic discrimination. Through the process of coding, it became

clear that several of the salient themes regarding participants' experiences were similar to themes

in pre-existing taxonomies of microaggressions, which I have used as a basis for the organization

of the taxonomy below and from which I have adapted some of the themes in the taxonomy of

raciolinguistic microaggressions.

To my knowledge, there are no prior taxonomies of raciolinguistic microaggressions.

Though earlier works (e.g., Houshmand et al. 2014; Kim & Kim, 2010; Sue et al, 2007) have

presented taxonomies based on racial microaggressions. Sue and colleagues developed a

taxonomy of racial microaggressions which identified microaggressions and divided them into

themes. The researchers also gave an example of a *microaggression* within each theme: *Alien in*

own land; Ascription of intelligence; Color blindness' Criminality/assumption of criminal status;

Denial of individual racism; Myth of meritocracy; Pathologizing cultural values/communication

styles; Second-class citizen; Environmental microaggressions using quotes, and the *message* that

microaggression conveys (Sue et al., 2007, Table 2). Kim and Kim (2010) adapted Sue and

colleagues' (2007) taxonomy to create themes for their review of microaggressions against

international students in the United States. Houshmand and colleagues (2014) further adapted the

taxonomy to explore the experiences of international students in Canada. Reviewing the themes

from these studies and the experiences of my own participants, I have developed *a taxonomy of*

raciolinguistic microaggressions experienced by international students in a Canadian university,

divided into four overreaching themes with examples, categories, and messages (see Table 4.1).

The themes presented below were developed through analyzing the data in the present

study. Some of the themes were adapted from prior existing taxonomies of racial

microaggressions to apply to raciolinguistic microaggressions based on their applicability to the

data collected in the present study. For example, two themes from Houshmand and colleagues

(2014), *excluded and avoided* and *rendered invisible* and a third from Kim & Kim *exclusion and*

social avoidance (2010) were combined into *excluded and ignored* in the present study (see

Table 4.1). Similarly, *ascription of intelligence* (Houshmand et al, 2014; Sue et al., 2007) was

broadened to *ascribed capability* (see Table 4.1). *Environmental microaggressions* (Houshmand

et al, 2014; Sue et al., 2007) was narrowed to *institutional microaggressions* (see Table 4.1) due

to the context of the present study. The theme *restricted* is novel. The themes are based on

participants reflections on their experiences, as described in semi-structured interviews,

interpreted and consolidated into a few sentences by the researcher. Whereas many of the themes

were adapted from prior taxonomies, the examples and messages are new.

Table 4.1 Taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions

Theme	Example	Category	Message

Ascribed capability	"People often tell me, 'Your writing is better than your speaking'". –Isabelle	Microinsult, Microinvalidation	I assess your capability in all areas based on your ability to conform to standard language practices in a particular domain, or your appearance.
Excluded and ignored	"They just ignore you in this horrible, polite way" –Vivienne	Microinvalidation	I do not value your presence and your input is unimportant or unwanted.
Institutional microaggressions	"What I found is really, really stupid about the language test is that you need to redo it once every two years or three years." –Richard	Microinvalidation, Microinsult	Your citizenship in this community is conditional on your ability to conform to language standards and that ability can be called into question, despite your accomplishments.
Restricted	I wanted to have a debriefing in Farsi with students, the prof. asked me not to do it" – Vivienne	Microinvalidation, Microinsult, Microassault	Your language is unwelcome here. You are not capable of choosing the most useful language for communication.

Ascribed capability

How smart somebody is, is not related to their ability to speak English. Because actually,

they can be really amazing at actually writing it, reading, studying in it, but maybe the

expression is different. –Liza

Many of the plurilingual international students I interviewed faced prejudicial

assumptions based on their linguistic ability. The participants in this study described being

ascribed capability in three main ways: i. Through assumed homogeneity of English language

proficiency ascribed to all international students as a monolith and/or assumptions that everyone

from the same country speaks the same language and has the same proficiency in English; ii.

Capability was ascribed based on prejudice regarding the inferiority of participants' home

country; iii. Capability was prejudicially ascribed in a modality of the English language based on

perceived proficiency in another modality of English, for example a professor assuming a student

has low proficiency in English writing because they speak English with an unfamiliar accent.

This last example will be explored in greater detail later. Now, I will report and discuss

microinvalidations and microinsults based on the assumption that all international students, and

especially international students coming from the same country, have the same linguistic

repertoire and English proficiency.

"When they hear some of us speak differently, or better, or worse, then they get a little

surprised." Here, Richard explained how he experienced local students' surprise at his spoken

English because of their preconceived notions about what international students from India

sound like. Another participant from India, Kuro, had negative experiences with people in the

university community that assumed that she was a Hindi speaker because she is from India:

> They were like, 'what?' and they're accusing, like, 'oh, you guys don't speak Hindi?' and
>
> we were like, 'No, neither of us don't speak Hindi.' She knows Hindi, but she's not good
>
> at speaking. So, neither of speak Hindi so we stick to English, and they'll be like, 'oh,
>
> you should have one language. And we're just like 'no, no, no, we are happy with what
>
> we have.' –Kuro

Kuro was deeply affected by this experience and other microinvalidations of her linguistic

heritage based on the assumption that language is bounded and defined by nationality. While

language ideologies which equate nationality with language are problematized across many

theories of language, including plurilingualism, they are still widely held beliefs, especially in

Western countries (Kubota, 2016). Kuro explained that, "I want to come here and to say, there is

another language called Tamil and, not all Indians speak Hindi." The desire to disrupt the

common assumption that everyone from India must speak Hindi was Kuro's motivation for

participating in this study.

Ethan, from China, was seen as unique among Chinese international students by his lab

mates because he spoke to them in English not only about their research, but also about daily

life. He reported that "they told me, oh, you are not a traditional Chinese."

These kinds of assumption of sameness among international students extended beyond international students from particular countries to the entire international student population, as Isabelle described, "I feel like sometimes as international students, people see us as international students, but also inside this, international students have many different experiences". That all international students at Canadian universities experience the same obstacles is challenged by the variety of experiences reported by the participants in this study. Some, like Isabelle, found social English a bigger challenge than academic English. Others, like Catherine from China, found academic writing to be her biggest obstacle. It is clearly inaccurate to make assumptions about the linguistic capabilities and challenges of all international students as a group, or even international students from the same country. Each of the participants in this study had unique linguistic repertoires and *imbalanced competence* as suggested by Coste and colleagues (2009), or "varying degrees of proficiency" (p. 11), both between languages as well as in different modalities within the same language. While research has continually shown that each individual possesses a unique and imbalanced linguistic repertoire (Moore & Gajo, 2009), this reality is not always recognized at MCU. According to Isabelle, "They just see you like symmetrically, and they just say that 'oh, she's a grad student and she's probably speaking English well.' So, they assume that you know everything in the language."

Next, I will share the experiences of participants who did not live up to the assumption Isabelle described in the previous sentence of "knowing everything" in English. The following microaggressions are described by participants who were perceived to lack proficiency in spoken English by their peers and professors. These perceptions can lead to the microaggressions of ascription of capability in other language modalities, and even ascriptions of general intelligence.

Some participants described microinvalidations embedded in compliments about their writing from both other students and professors. Isabelle was proud of her academic writing and often received compliments on it; "people compliment my academic writing a lot because they say that my writing is better than my speaking." Another participant, Laura explained that "one of my teachers this semester, in one of my assignments, he wrote that for a non-native speaker my English was actually pretty good." Now, on the one hand, it is important to recognize that plurilingual students approach writing with different linguistic resources and require different approaches to feedback and writing support (Corcoran et al., 2018). However, this comment clearly reflects this professor's own bias toward the writing of plurilingual students for whom English is an additional language. These "compliments", when contextualized, can reinforce that these international students' English speaking is deficient. These statements are also potentially othering, in that they position the students' achievement in their writing as conditional. It is not "good English," rather, it is "pretty good English" for a "non-native speaker." With this kind of messaging from professors, who hold a position of power within the university community, it is unsurprising that many of the participants in this study who were confident in their academic writing still had deficit perceptions of their spoken English.

The analysis revealed other examples of microaggressions caused by a professor's ascription of capability in the domain of academic writing based on spoken English. Rob, from Nigeria, experienced a microinvalidation and microinsult when a professor did not believe he could have written a section of a research paper as well as he had.

She needed to be sure. But of course, you wouldn't have needed to be sure if she hadn't spoken with me like a week earlier, perhaps hearing the way I speak, or assuming that my English writing is not that advanced. So, she made the assumption that my writing of

English is not supposed to be that advanced, I assume based on my accent. So, she

couldn't believe it. –Rob

While this professor did not go so far as to formally accuse Rob of plagiarism, she did insinuate this claim to his supervisor, who intervened on his behalf. This demonstrates the narrow scope of expectations for international students in our community who speak English with a non-local variety of English from a former colony, traditionally associated with second-language speakers, which Kachru refers to as *outer circle* English-speaking countries (1992). This professor's language ideologies are similar to the professor who wrote "this is pretty good for a non-native speaker" on Laura's paper. She has an expectation of how people should write based on how they speak. Her perception of Rob as a deficient English speaker led her to doubt that his academic English writing could be anything other than deficient. Deviation below the expected standard of English language use by international students often means being seen as incapable of doing the work expected of a master's student. Deviation *above* the expectation causes suspicion and could be equally detrimental. Through this example we see how language ideologies re-enforce the power dynamics which position international students, non-native English speakers, and accented speakers of English as deficient in the academic community.

Rob also expressed his aggravation at being constantly perceived as at fault when miscommunication happened with his Canadian colleagues, "It's more frustrating for me because I feel like to them, they [Canadians] will just assume that I said something wrong." This is a microinsult and a microinvalidation on the part of Rob's interlocutors that shows they assume that he is communicatively deficient. Positioning Rob in this way othered him and ultimately made him question his own linguistic identity. I will explore this in greater detail in the next

section. This microaggression, and many of the other microaggressions in this chapter, are as much about what is left unsaid as what is explicitly stated.

Liza, whose quote began this section, described experiencing consistent "subtle" discrimination linked to her accent and spoken English: "I felt that because my English wasn't maybe as elaborate as others, some people would subconsciously assume that you are not as smart." Liza further explained that "they wouldn't say it to your face, but through their actions, through the way that they would think, and they would actually express their thinking, if you were actually observant enough, you could see that this was going on." Liza experienced her peers ascribing her capability based on her spoken English through their actions, such as spending extra time going over her part of a group work assignment, showing they did not trust her to do the work, as well as comments she overheard about other international students made by students with standard language practices,

> Whenever that girl from China used to talk in class, obviously, yes, she was actually
> taking her time, she was making mistakes, all that, and at some point, I remember one of
> these girls said that 'whenever this girl is speaking, I cannot stand it.' –Liza

Through these observations and overheard comments, Liza came to understand that many of her peers falsely equated proficiency in English with overall intelligence. These experiences were raciolinguistic microaggressions against Liza even though they were not necessarily directed at her, because, as she pointed out, "even if they weren't addressed to me, I was thinking, if they say this for that person, they're probably going to say it for me."

Experiences of discrimination by professors and peers were reported by many participants. Many of the experiences of ascribing capability reported by participants, like Liza

overhearing a comment about a Chinese international student, resulted from interactions with

local peers who were speakers of standard Canadian English,

> Canadian native English speakers are not humble, and they don't acknowledge your skills
>
> and they take your skills for granted. They think that you came from these horrible
>
> countries when you were like living under bush. They don't consider you as a skillful
>
> person. They take you for granted. –Vivienne

Here, Vivienne explains the attitude she has experienced in her interactions with "Canadian

native-English Speakers" wherein they ascribe capability to her based on her country of origin.

On the surface this might appear to be a microaggression centered exclusively on nationality;

however, note that Vivienne describes the perpetrators here as "Canadian native-English

speakers." In a racially diverse society such as Canada, recognition of Vivienne's foreignness

might not have happened without recognition of her non-local accent. Therefore, Vivienne's

interlocutors prejudged her capability based, in part on her non-local accent. This, combined with

her identification of the perpetrators of these microinvalidations as "native English speakers,"

situates language as a factor in this microaggression.

Participants' accent and spoken English were the largest factors contributing to ascription

of their capability by other community members at MCU. At the same time, due to the co-

construction of racial and linguistic ideologies, race was also a factor. Additionally, for some

participants, physical appearance led to ascription of linguistic capability. Chloe, from

Singapore, is a native English speaker who is comfortable communicating in Mandarin. She is

also a biracial woman. In her experience, "the expectation people had for me was very

strange. Asian people don't think I speak Mandarin and then there are some Canadians, some

Western people that don't think I speak English. So, I'm like, what language am I supposed to

speak then?" In many instances, ascription of capability based on participants' raciolinguistic

identities led to acts of exclusion and what one participant described as "ignore-ance" on the part

of standard Canadian English-speaking colleagues at MCU.

Excluded and Ignored

Experiences of being excluded and/or ignored were by far the most prevalent form of

microaggression experienced among the participants of this study. As the participants recounted,

exclusion and "ignore-ance" were experienced in a variety of settings and with a number of

interlocutors. Most frequently, these experiences happened in interactions involving local

students who were well versed in standard Canadian English. In all of the following experiences,

plurilingual international students felt that they were excluded or ignored because, in the words

of Rob, their "English is different."

Chloe, from Singapore, who is comfortable in both English and Mandarin, explained that

in her experience classrooms were a "melting pot" where everyone interacts together regardless

of language. However, socially there tended to be a divide. In describing an experience in the

hallway outside the classroom before class began, she situated this divide as a split between

international and local students, between non-native and native English speakers, and between

non-white and white students,

I do see an international student and a – for lack of a better word – White student group.

… I'm just going to say it's a White-English speaking group, right? –Chloe

In this example, race, nationality, and language co-construct the identities by which students had

self-segregated in their social interaction forming what Chloe describes as an "international

student" group and a "White-English speaking group". Liza, from Greece, felt excluded from

social interaction and selection for group work assignments by White-English speaking North

American students,

> …With these people, I couldn't really blend in as much, so I would actually make friends
> with people that were not from here... All of my friends were from other countries. –Liza

She discerned that international students from the United States would "prefer to hang out with

more anglophone people" who had "better fluency with the language [English]". This meant that

Liza, and many other participants, ended up socializing almost exclusively with other non-

American international students. This is supported by a survey conducted by the CBIE (2015

wherein only 56% of international students surveyed reported having even a single local friend.

Many of the participants experienced raciolinguistic microaggressions as a result of their

interactions with local students in their time at MCU. These participants were surprised and

disappointed that local students had an aloof attitude toward input from international students

and resistance toward engaging in meaningful communication.

> When I first came to Canada, my idea was that people here are not racist, and they are
> welcoming, and they are inclusive, and they were not. Every English speaking, native
> English speaking, person that I have seen have this air to themselves that they don't let
> you in. –Vivienne

Participants reported that these attitudes were not openly expressed. Instead, these attitudes were

revealed through the actions of local students, who would disregard input from international

students and not make any effort to communicate. More often than not, lack of communication

between local students and international students was not because of a lack of English language

proficiency on the part of the international student, but rather, as Rob explains, because "I wasn't

in a position where I felt that they didn't understand what I was saying. I was more in a position

of they understood but they're like, 'so what?'"

Detecting this form of discrimination is challenging because of the subtlety of these

microaggressions. One participant, Isabelle, explained that there isn't a "language barrier"

between international and local students, since everyone speaks English, but that there are "other

factors like an accent or word choice that could be a *ghost language barrier*." Rob also related

the ephemeral nature of his difficulties communicating with local students, "I can just feel that

I'm not getting across. I can feel it. I can't really put my hands on, but I can feel it." Many other

participants used the words like "vibe" and "wavelength" to express how they felt othered in

their time at MCU in a way they could not quite explain.

Lucky, an international student from China, described how in her experience some people

"think you are wasting their time because you couldn't speak well." But "even if they think this

way, they won't act it out. So, they just try to be very polite. So, the language and the

conversation between us will be very superficial." Vivienne, from Iran, referred to this polite

superficiality as the "*Canadian smile*"

> We call it the Canadian smile. So, they're being very polite to you. And then you ask
>
> question, and they say, 'Oh yes, you are right!' and 'yes, this is this and this is that' and
>
> they're being extremely polite and they're extremely ignoring you. They politely refuse
>
> to make progress in a conversation. So, they make something that could be a great and
>
> deep conversation to become small talk. They don't follow up on what you suggest on
>
> your comments on what you are showing interest in. They just give you the shortest
>
> politest answer possible, so you wouldn't be able to use it against them to say that this
>
> person is being racist, or this person ignored me. –Vivienne

Vivienne explained how insulting and invalidating her experiences with local students had been. "They just ignore you in this horrible, polite way where you're not being discriminated against but your whole existence is being ignored." Kuro explained that "it felt like they like sometimes they don't care what you're trying to say. They just go and do what they want to do, and they never listen to you." Participants expressed a similar sentiment in social spaces, academic spaces, and in roles in student government.

One participant, Rob, explained jocularly that he was not sure if he was the only international student sitting on the student governance body, "but I'm pretty sure that I'm the only Black student. At the very least I'm sure of that." As a racialized and language minoritized plurilingual international student, Rob was consistently ignored in his role on a student governance body at MCU. He felt that his words and ideas were heard and understood, but not engaged with, by local students. Rob ascribed this experience to being a racialized speaker of Nigerian English, rather than Canadian English,

> You just get that dull look. Then someone else comes on the floor. Someone else comes on the floor that speaks the regular Canadian English and you don't get the same vibe. Then when you take the floor, you start getting that vibe all over again. I'm like, 'Oh my God. What is going on here?' –Rob

Rob did not believe that this was a "problem of language, per se" nor "just as simple as black and white" but rather, "a problem of context, cultural context, of the situation." He explained that "There are things that comes out of the way we speak the English language that are intangible stuff, the accent the, the cues, the verbal cues." Rob makes an important distinction here between comprehensibility and effective communication. He used the word "convince" a lot

in our interview to explain this distinction. Rob believed that people heard and understood his words, but they were not convinced.

> I felt like my experiences there and my ability to do this somehow is you know, is impaired by the fact that my English is different. I couldn't shake off the feeling. Perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps I'm just finding a way to rationalize my failure to bring everybody across to do this, but it's rare for me to rationalize this kind of stuff and find excuses.
>
> –Rob

As hard as he tried not to blame his style of communication, which, as Rob rightly points out, is "not something that you can wake up from a different culture and be able to replicate another culture," ultimately, he had to confront the reality of his lived experience and recognize that the way he spoke, though comprehensible, was not effective for achieving his goals of passing measures in the student government at MCU.

While being ignored in social settings and extra-curricular pursuits is marginalizing, in the university setting it was perhaps more troubling for participants when microaggressions happened in academic settings such as labs and classrooms. In the previous section, Liza reported feeling like her contributions to group projects were overly scrutinized because she was marked as a non-native English speaker. Here, Vivienne explains how, rather than being over-scrutinized, she was completely ignored.

> Whenever I made a joke or made a comment she wouldn't laugh, she wouldn't react, she wouldn't comment back, she would just ignore. And it was so annoying. It really pissed me off. I mean, what is your problem? It was really unpleasant because we had to work with this group every session during the semester and every session, what I received, as I

said, I wouldn't say racism, but ignore-ance. I felt like my comments were being ignored.

–Vivienne

In Catherine's experience, the input of international students was also excluded in specific

classrooms,

We [plurilingual international students] got really low score in the participation. But it's

not because we didn't pay attention, or we didn't want to speak. Sometimes I feel, just

because they [local students] are more confident to speak up in the class and sometimes

they take up more opportunities to speak in the class. They act faster, they don't need to

organize their thoughts or even translate their thoughts into English. So, whenever the

teacher raises a question, and they just speak. So, the rest of us may stay silent. –

Catherine

There are many complicit parties in the situation Catherine describes above. The professor in the

quote above may be conforming to the standard practices of the institution, and perhaps her

classroom policies are the result of institutional pressure. That said, this professor, could become

more aware of the privilege her pedagogy and grading confers upon students for whom English

is a first language while simultaneously marginalizing plurilingual international students in the

classroom and adapt her policies to resist these outcomes. Ultimately, this professor is complicit

in what is, at the core, an *institutional microaggression*. In other words, this microaggression

occurs because the professor and students are conforming to the expectations and implicit

language policies of the institution. There are many policies and practices at MCU which re-

enforce raciolinguistic ideologies. The next section will examine participants' experiences with

these institutional microaggressions.

Institutional microaggressions

This section covers institutional microaggressions rooted in two areas. The first is a lack of institutional support and available support services for plurilingual international students, constituting a microaggression in the form of a barrier for plurilingual international students' success. The second is raciolinguistic microinvalidations centered around experiences with standardized English language tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The IELTS purports to be "designed to help you work, study or migrate to a country where English is the native language. This includes countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and USA. Your ability to listen, read, write and speak in English will be assessed during the test." (IELTS, 2021, para. 1)

Many participants found support for international students lacking at MCU. While they knew about programs offered and offices on campus intended to support international students, they felt that these programs and services did not benefit them personally. Vivienne, from Iran, explained the challenges around writing for those students who, like herself, had not had the advantage of English-medium education prior to MCU.

> This is what I always tell my supervisor that you guys in Canada don't know how much we don't know. They assume that we know a lot of basic things that we don't know. And then you start from this level while we're on this level [holding one hand high and one hand lower] and there's nothing to gap this lack of language skills, especially in terms of writing. –Vivienne

While some felt that the programming from the writing centre was too advanced, some felt that it was not targeted toward the right kinds of writing support. Isabelle, from Turkey, explained that "No one is telling us about how to write a proper email!" Isabelle was confident in her academic

writing and oral presenting, however her informal or social English, such as the pragmatics of writing an email, had been a challenge for her in her time at MCU.

While the quality and focus of the writing support available for international students was a barrier for some, others were unable to access the programing. For example, Laura, from Mexico, also recognized the need for increased support for a range of linguistic repertoires and abilities in the English language, "Yeah, so probably just to have more support in that sense, you know, just not to assume that everybody can cope the same with the language." However, for Laura, as a non-thesis student, it was ultimately a financial barrier which kept her from accessing writing support at MCU. The writing center offers courses, some of which are designed specifically for non-native English speakers. These courses are reimbursed for master's thesis students (making them effectively free) but not for non-thesis students. This cost was prohibitive for Laura, who was ultimately unable to access this writing support. Another participant, Lucky, reported difficulty accessing support from the writing center because the classes filled up too quickly. So, for diverse reasons, many participants felt that there was a lack of institutional resources available for plurilingual international students to improve their English writing.

Standardized language assessments as a requirement for entrance to university were a source of microinvalidations for many participants, many of whom had some, if not all, of their prior education in English. This was especially true for Rob, who despite being a native English speaker from Nigeria with a BA from an English medium university was still required to take an IELTS test for admission into his master's program at MCU. Rob believed that this was wholly unfair, "How can you ask me to write IELTS? I speak English. I did every day. They were like, 'oh no that these are the list of the countries that you have to have.' Well, we didn't have any choice." He explained the feeling of Nigerians who are required to take IELTS, "We take it as an

affront like an insult that we have to write that exam in English." English is the official language of Nigeria, it is the language of government and education and the common language for speakers of Nigeria's approximately 500 Indigenous languages and all tertiary instruction is conducted in English (The World Fact Book, 2021; Udofot, 2011). Rob is equally fluent in English and his Indigenous language, Yoruba. Despite this, he faced the microinvalidation of having to prove his English language proficiency.

Richard, from India, who also completed the entirety of his education in English-medium schools and regularly uses English with family in his home, was not bothered by having to take the IELTS exam the first time around. However, he found it offensive that he would have to take the test again to further his studies in North America and even at MCU.

I didn't mind taking the language test. I mean, all my transcripts show that I studied English throughout, but then they want it now. OK, fine. They want it. Let me do it. And it would not be a big deal for me back then. But what I found is really, really stupid about the language test is that you need to redo it once every two years or three years. I mean I would understand if it was someone who got a lower score in the language and then they had to redo it, but I don't see how a language test score would expire. I mean if I got really good score on the test, I don't see how I would forget the language in two years when I'm studying abroad in a country where English is one of the primary languages. – Richard

According to MCU's website, students with bachelor's degrees from "recognized foreign institutions" that have English as the official language of instruction are not required to provide proof of English proficiency (Citation redacted for anonymity). Yet, my participants who completed their bachelor's degrees at English medium institutions in India and Nigeria were still

required to pass IELTS tests to enter MCU. Perhaps their undergraduate institutions are not recognized by MCU, and thus their English language proficiency is called into question. That someone with a bachelor's degree from an English-medium university in Nigeria or India is required to take an IELTS exam, but someone with a BA from an Australian university does not, is rooted in raciolinguistic and colonial ideologies of standard English as the dominion of White people. This coarticulates with the ideology that academia as an institution exclusively of the global north de-legitimates the academic achievements and English language competence of students from the global south, who are often racialized. Standard English status is often conferred to descendants of colonizers, rather than the colonized. This microaggression is also reflective of western conceptions of *native* language as being the only language a person speaks, or a language learned in the home. This conception of *native* language is also rooted in colonial misconceptions of the inextricability of nationhood, race, and language. These stand in contrast to the social reality of increasing linguistic and racial diversity, as well as the plurilingual practices which were prevalent in pre-colonial societies, most notably in the global south (Canagarajah & Liyanage, 2012). This native-speakerism does not consider that many around the world grow up speaking multiple languages simultaneously rather than one native language, and, furthermore, individuals' home language(s) might not be the language they are most adept in using for school (Mohanty, 2010). Additionally, like all native-speakerism, conceptions of what is or is not native English have been devised by a "privileged in-group" (Holliday, 2006, p. 385) in order to maintain their privilege by othering "students and colleagues from outside the English-speaking West" (Holliday, 2006, p. 386). Finally, this native-speakerism supports "the imperialist worldview that white people from the predominantly English-speaking countries of the First World have more ownership of English than non-white people from the Third World"

(Amin, 2005, p. 184). As Amin (2005) states in the preceding quote and Rob's experiences confirm, conceptions of who is and who is not a native speaker are linked to white-ness and nationality. It is unlikely that a racialized person, especially a racialized person from the global south, will be recognized as a native speaker of English. MCU promotes or at least capitulates to this native-speakerism through its admissions policies at the expense of students such as Rob and Richard.

Restricted

Participants' language use was frequently restricted at MCU. These acts of restriction came from professors, supervisors, and peers. In each instance described below, the participant used their plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) to determine the language that was the best form of communication for that situation. Coste and colleagues (2009) define PPC as "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures" (p. 11). In the situations described below, participants used their PPC to agentively choose to facilitate communication with interlocutors by using a language other than English and/or cultural knowledge from outside of the western perspective which dominates academic and social discourse at MCU. Each time, they were marginalized through a raciolinguistic microaggression by an interlocutor who insisted, in one way or another, that English be used instead.

Vivienne describes how the professor she worked with as a TA did not allow her to communicate with students in a language other than English during the class, or even outside of the class meeting times.

I wanted to have a debriefing in Farsi with students, the prof. asked me not to do it, but I

did it anyways. The course instructor asked me not to do that. She said something like, 'if

you want to do it, you have to do it in English so everybody could use it.' So, because we

have also Egyptian, Nigerian and we have Jordanian, we have other nationalities in the

class. And I said, 'I can't do it in English because the concept is so complicated. And I

have to use examples that make sense to everybody. I know what examples make sense in

Farsi. I don't know what examples make sense in Arabic or Nigerian.' I don't have the

language barrier in Farsi, so I can explain, as a TA I can explain. So, she told me not to

do it and throughout the course she tried to put me in breakout rooms with non-Iranians.

and I wouldn't hold it against her, I think she just wanted me to attend to non-Iranians as

well. –Vivienne

In this example, Vivienne identified an opportunity for increasing learning with a group of

students in the class, but the professor refused to let that happen because she saw the practice of

using a language that only some of the students understand as unequal. Vivienne's linguistic

assets were denied by this professor for the sake of equality, but this was certainly not equitable,

especially considering the socio-political situation Vivienne described for the Iranian students in

this course. Vivienne explained that because of the political climate in Iran it is very difficult to

get English lessons and that there is very little exposure to English. This course was taught

during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the Iranian students Vivienne sought to help were in

Iran, with very little exposure to English, making their transition to learning at an English

medium university even more challenging. Vivienne considered these factors, as well as her own

experiences as a plurilingual international student at MCU and decided to hold sessions for the

Farsi speaking students in the class in Farsi to help them learn the material.

While the professor who restricted Vivienne's communication in the above example was not a Farsi speaker herself, many professors who share a common language with students still refuse to use it, insisting instead on using English, especially in academic settings and regarding academic topics. Ethan and Lucky, who are from China and are most comfortable communicating in Mandarin, both worked in labs with professors who refused to communicate in Mandarin, despite being capable of doing so,

> The professor in that lab, he is also Chinese, but he has lived in United States for very long time, and he has a lot of students from China. So, he usually speaks English to Chinese students. He never speaks Mandarin to Chinese students. Even though he knows how to speak Mandarin. –Lucky

The professor Lucky interacted with in a summer program in the U.S. as part of her master's research was very strict in his English-only policy. Ethan's supervisor, on the other hand, tried to communicate with everyone in his lab in English, but was unable to shift the linguistic dynamic of the space. As will be discussed in much greater detail in the *linguistic inclusion* section of this chapter, but is worth mentioning briefly here, being in a plurilingual environment did not hinder Ethan socially or academically and may have even helped him.

Ethan described that there was a post-doc researcher and a lab technician who simply refused to communicate in anything but Mandarin if their interlocutors could communicate in Mandarin. There was even a running joke among those who spoke Mandarin about the professor who ran the lab: "When he was mad, he'd go for English. When he is in very happy, talking about Chinese news, and Chinese festivals, Chinese food, very happy and relaxed, he goes for Mandarin." Ethan wished that his supervisor had communicated with him in English because "If I use English, it will push me to work harder." As previously mentioned, Ethan, who spends a

large amount of his time in this linguistically fluid environment, was marked as a particularly

outgoing and talkative Chinese international student by his local peers.

These examples show professors who deny their own linguistic assets and/or restrict the

language choices of their students by demanding that only English be spoken. Instructing

students to only speak English in a lab or classroom is commonplace and seen as beneficial for

plurilingual students. In reality, the experiences described in this section are linguistic

discrimination based in raciolinguistic ideologies which re-enforce the status of White Standard

English speakers at MCU by invalidating the choice of using any other language or dialect

within the confines of the institution. The dual messages of the microaggressions that

participants have faced seem to be, "You must use White Standard English" and "You are

incapable of using White Standard English." It is therefore unsurprising that in their final

semesters, or by the end of their master's programs, most of the international master's students

interviewed for this study had negative conceptions of their own ability to communicate in

English. These deficit views will be explored in the next section.

Good English

"My English is not good." –Ethan

The phrase "good English" may have meant different things to different participants, but

it was a term that carried a lot of weight for all the participants. "Good English" had significant

value for all the participants in the context of MCU. At the same time, most of the participants

believed that their English was not "good" despite meeting the requirements for entrance into an

English-language university, successfully completing courses, research, and in some cases on-

campus jobs and theses, not to mention being confident enough to sit and reflect on experiences

about their time at university in a sixty-minute interview conducted in English. The belief that

they did not have "good English" came up organically and repeatedly across interviews. It was

often mentioned offhandedly as a statement of fact. However, these self-conceptions are valuable

data insofar as it is possible to analyze this self-deprecation as a result of continued exposure to

raciolinguistic microaggressions. The following experiences demonstrate how, for some

participants, repeated experiences of microaggressions within the university community caused

self-perception of their linguistic resources to shift to a deficit perspective.

Isabelle had always believed she was good at English before coming to MCU. She had

travelled extensively throughout Europe and, "In Europe, I felt like my English was amazing

because everyone was asking me where I'm from and they were not guessing at Turkey or

somewhere. They were asking me whether I'm from States or not because I'm speaking English

fluently." She had also done her undergraduate studies at an English-medium university in

Turkey. She recounted how when she first came to MCU, "I had this confidence with my

English, and I was feeling like a star." A year and a half into her master's studies, however, her

confidence in her spoken English had waned because of the types of experiences she recounts

below,

> My friends just guess what I'm saying, instead of asking me what was I saying. They just
>
> try to guess, and they make an assumption whether I'm saying something, and they
>
> answer my question in a really different way. So, this happened to me a couple of times.
>
> And they weren't judging me, I feel like they have no bad intentions, but at the same time
>
> these experiences can affect you. That affected me as well, and after those happening to
>
> me a couple of times I started speaking less and I started expressing myself less
>
> confidently compared to the times that I was in Europe, or my first times at MCU. –
>
> Isabelle

Here, Isabelle is describing a repeated microaggression, as well as defining this microaggression as a microinsult and microinvalidation. Isabelle's experiences can be interpreted as both a microinvalidation and a microinsult because interlocutors assumed or guessed what someone else was saying rather than asking for clarification. Such assumptions can devalue the contribution of the speaker and situate them as unable to contribute meaningfully. As she reported, after this happened to Isabelle multiple times, she started speaking less and less confidently. Asking for clarification is ultimately more inclusive than the act of ignoring another because of difficulty understanding them.

Isabelle was confident in her academic English writing, but her experiences left her unsure of how to define her own spoken English competence. Returning to the microaggression Isabelle experienced, where people commented "Your writing is better than your speaking", I asked Isabelle about the negative connotation of the compliment. She acknowledged that she hadn't noticed it at the time: "that didn't occur to me at that time, but now I feel like maybe… Yeah, because exactly. What's wrong with my speaking? I mean, I speak well… I speak OK." Here, Isabelle rephrased her response from "I speak well" to "I speak ok". Compared to before she came to MCU, when she felt like an English "superstar" it is clear that she has had a major shift in her conception of her own linguistic resources.

Similar to Isabelle, Kuro came to MCU thinking her English was excellent. She is still very confident in her spoken and written English, but she did experience a shift in how she perceives her accent.

> I came here and there was this one particular person who pointed out, and she's like, 'oh, your accent is good.' I was like, 'Oh, do I have an accent?' So that's when I realized. For me, that's the moment, like, oh, I do have an accent. –Kuro

Above Kuro explains how a comment, intended as a compliment, was a microinvalidation and microinsult. Kuro's confidence in her oral communication was affected by this experience, "After that, I started being wary, thinking of my accent a lot when I'm talking to someone. It is something, subconsciously telling me, 'You mind your accent, mind your accent'. I don't know, something is telling me, 'Accent, accent.'"

Rob also had a major shift in his linguistic identity in his time at MCU. He experienced numerous microaggressions in his time at MCU, many of which have been outlined above, beginning with having to take and pass the IELTS, in order to gain admission to the university despite identifying as a native English speaker, which he described as "an affront." Rob also experienced the same microinvalidation Isabelle describes above, wherein other people at MCU did not understand him, but also did not tell him they misunderstood,

> …instead of the person telling you that, 'I am not sure I picked that word' you know? Or 'I'm not sure that I fully understand.' Then it's just, 'Oh OK yeah, yeah.' Then by the time we come back to the conversation, maybe a week after, they realize they did not understand you and they didn't tell you that they did not understand. –Rob

Eventually, Rob began to second guess himself. "I had to look up some words again, and words that I've been using all my life, all my life. Vocabularies that are part of me." He began to doubt his own ability in English as he struggled to conform to White-English: "I was questioning the authenticity of it. I started, you know, adjusting and fine tuning what I was saying." Rob put in the work to adapt his English to the local standard of the university despite the realization that, "sometimes I use too high vocabulary in some sense and they [Canadians] don't understand what I'm saying. And rather than maybe admitting that they don't understand what I said. They just assumed that it was me saying it wrong". Here, Rob encapsulates how accented, racialized

individuals are not given the benefit of the doubt, or even the expectation of competence from

White-English speakers. These repeated raciolinguistic microaggressions led Rob to re-evaluate

his own linguistic identity as a native English speaker,

> It's a question that a lot of us and I particularly grapple with every day. You fill the form,
> and they ask you to fill your first language and you can see English, you can see French,
> you can see other. Way before now, I don't think about put in English. You know it's just
> put English, that's my language you know. But now since I'm reconsidering my place in
> the English-speaking world, I've swallowed my pride. Now I just put other, and I put my
> Indigenous language. Because I can still speak, I speak my Indigenous language
> [Yoruba]. –Rob

Above, Rob explains how he no longer identifies as a native English speaker as he used to prior

to coming to Canada and pursuing his master's degree. He explains that "If I had filled that form

two or three years ago, I would put English. But I can't do that again. I think I have a better

understanding of the whole politics of English. If you permit me to put it that way." Rob

successfully completed his master's degree and has begun pursuing his PhD as well, but it is

clear that he received another education in what he describes as the "politics of English."

Rob's education in the politics of English happened through repeated raciolinguistic

microaggressions committed both by the institution itself and members of the academic

community. The institution committed a microinvalidation and microinsult of Rob and other

Nigerian students like him by forcing native English speakers to take IELTS. Professors

questioned Rob's ability to produce quality written English based on their own preconceived

notions of students with unfamiliar accents. On the student government body, Rob felt that his

words were consistently disregarded. Ultimately, he had no choice but to view this as a symptom

of the way his words come across to local students. Rob, who is a Black man, did not believe that

his experiences of marginalization were rooted exclusively in racism based on skin color, or

exclusively in language. He compared the experiences of African Americans and Nigerian

students in North America to make his point.

> It's hard to really say it's about race but let me put it this way, you are from the U.S.,
>
> OK? I mean, it's beyond the pale that a Black American would be considered nonnative
>
> English speaker, no? I don't think anyone do that. So, if you are black and you are born in
>
> the U.S. and you grew up in the U.S. you are a native English speaker. At the very least,
>
> our prejudices has not cross towards those very terrible places. But, at the same time, a
>
> Black man from Nigeria, and like I said, we have kids that all their life they can't speak
>
> any other language apart from English. But they are not considered native English
>
> speakers, so what gives? It's not as much about the race, I put it that way, but as much
>
> about you know ignorance really. Ignorance. Or I don't even know if there is a word for
>
> that, like some sort of other-ness, like these are the others. These are not part of us. You
>
> hear someone speak and immediately, oh, this is not an American, or this is not
>
> British, this guy is not a Canadian, not an Australian, as the case may be. They know this
>
> is definitely not part of that cohort then that's not a native English speaker, you
>
> immediately ascribe that. –Rob

Above, Rob reflects on how there is a standard of language at MCU, and more broadly in

western society, and that that standard is situated in a core of predominantly White, British, and

former British colonies. It is worth noting that Rob's home country, Nigeria, is a former colony

as well, but is not part of the "native speaker cohort" he describes. India is another notable

omission from this cohort. Similar to Nigeria, India is a former British colony where there are

many native English speakers who do the entirety of their schooling in English. But it is not

typically considered in what Rob defines as the "native speaker cohort" and Kachru (1992)

describes as *inner circle English Countries*. In Rob's explanation he lays out how race, language

and nationality interplay and ultimately serve to "other" and marginalize those who are not seen

as Standard or White, including many plurilingual international students, such as the participants

in this study.

Whereas Rob considered himself a visible minority and believed that others considered

him a visible minority as well, other participants were unsure of whether to consider themselves

visible minorities and even less sure if others perceived them as such. The complex ways that

language and race co-construct minority status were evident in Liza's interview. She brought up

the questions (excerpt 4.1) from the demographic questionnaire because she wanted to talk more

about them and clarify their responses, both for me and for herself.

Excerpt 4.1: Demographic Questionnaire

11. Do you consider yourself to be a "visible minority*"? _____

12. Do others perceive you as a "visible minority*"? _____

Liza used the term "subtle discrimination" to describe her experiences with local students

in classrooms, collaborating on group projects, and in social situations. She stressed that the

"subtle discrimination" she experienced was not connected to her appearance,

You were asking in which ethnic group I was part of. I was always putting white but then

I realized I feel like Greeks are not white. It's a different type of ethnic group. Although I

am white, I don't know, I never felt white. So, it's like a different type of… There is some

nuance. Nuance? Yeah. And I can understand how people of like a darker color might

feel even worse. And imagine that my brother is actually darker than me. It's like, you

know, you can tell that he's dark. So, like it, it really depends I guess with this. There are

some like ethnic groups that you cannot really tell that they're nonwhite, but they are in

terms of the language and everything else.

[Researcher: Right. What role does language have in that in your feeling of non-

whiteness?]

Yeah, exactly, it does play a really big role. Language and the accent. Language is the

first thing that you hear about a person. –Liza

Here, Liza identifies the large role that her linguistic repertoire and accent have had in her

experiences of discrimination at MCU. She also acknowledges that people who are more easily

identified as minorities because of the color of their skin would face more discrimination than

she has. From a raciolinguistic standpoint, this shows the intersectionality of individuals who are

racially and linguistically minoritized. It is worth noting that in Liza's case she felt minoritized

and othered despite being visibly white. As she explains, "language is the first thing you hear

about a person". Regardless of visible minority status, all but one of the participants interviewed

had experienced and/or witnessed some form of raciolinguistic microaggression during their time

at MCU. Some were deeply affected by these experiences. Others brushed them off as "normal"

or "unsurprising." At the same time, all the participants interviewed had overall enjoyed their

time at MCU and saw their master's program as a positive experience.

 In this section I have explored international students' experiences with linguistic

discrimination at MCU. I described the languages participants use at MCU and discussed how

these answers reveal linguicism on a systemic level at MCU and how this institutional linguicism

sometimes becomes internalized by plurilingual international students such as the participants in

this study. Then I introduced a novel taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions, which I used

to organize participants' experiences of linguistic microaggressions in their time at MCU into

four themes:

- Ascribed capability

- Excluded and ignored

- Institutional microaggressions

- Restricted

I provided examples of microaggressions within each theme and discussed the ramifications for

participants' conceptions of their own identities and linguistic and academic competencies, as

well as effects on social life and overall well-being. Finally, I demonstrated how, at the time they

were interviewed, most of the participants considered their own English to be deficient. I outline

how this mindset is partly the result of the numerous and repeated raciolinguistic

microaggressions these plurilingual international students have experienced in their time at

MCU.

In the next section I will discuss the participants' experiences related to linguistic

inclusion and how those experiences had a positive impact for them both socially and

academically.

Linguistic Inclusion

First of all, you don't feel like you're the only one in the room who has a funny accent

because other people also have different accents. So, I find it colorful. I feel like I'm

listening to something beautiful when I hear a different accent and I really appreciate it. It

is not easy to speak a second language, which is not your native language and that's why I

really appreciate it. And I feel more confident in terms of expressing myself, because I

feel like if I say something wrong, the person who I'm talking to will try to understand

me and they will try to make an effort to understand it, to understand it or ask at least,

and I feel like language is a huge part of those interactions. -Isabelle

This section discusses participants' experiences with linguistic inclusion at MCU. These

experiences are divided into five themes: 1) Linguistic diversity; 2) Plurilingual and pluricultural

competence (PPC); 3) Engaged communication; 4) Plurilingual pedagogy and policies; 5)

Linguistic inclusion: Plurilingual community

First, I will summarize and discuss data about the linguistic diversity at MCU and how

participants saw the diversity of the linguistic landscape at MCU as positive, believing that they

benefitted from it in their time at MCU. Next, I will describe how in this linguistically diverse

environment, plurilingual international students use their plurilingual and pluricultural

competence to code-switch and translanguage depending on the linguistic repertoires of

interlocutors and linguistic restrictions of the social space (Lüdi & Py, 2009). Then, I will discuss

experiences in which *engaged communication*, wherein interlocutors listen carefully and attempt

to overcome communication barriers, was described as an inclusive practice by participants.

After that, I will explore how plurilingual pedagogy and plurilingual policies facilitate engaged

communication and plurilingual practice among linguistically diverse, plurilingual students at

MCU. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by sharing and discussing evidence that these

experiences of linguistically diverse spaces, wherein engaged communication is facilitated

through plurilingual and pluricultural competence as well as plurilingual pedagogy and policies,

ultimately can support the linguistic inclusion of international students within plurilingual

communities at MCU.

Linguistic Diversity

The plurilingual international students interviewed for this study described a rich

diversity of languages and nationalities in their departments, classrooms, research labs and social

groups. Many participants reported that the student body at MCU was very linguistically diverse

and described how they often overheard many different languages being spoken.

> So, if you walk into our department, we have few people who have gathered around the
>
> table, and we have like four groups. A group is talking in French, a group is talking
>
> Indian, a group is talking Farsi, a group is talking Arabic, and also Brazilian…
>
> Portuguese. –Vivienne

Above, Vivienne explains how there are many languages regularly spoken within her

department. Adam had a similar experience in an introductory lecture course, "There were a lot

of groups of people who were from India and Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan. So, I could hear

various dialects of I would say Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and stuff."

Kuro regularly overheard a number of languages being used around her department,

"There is Chinese, and then Iranian, and Spanish. I think that's pretty much it, so I didn't have

any people… but yeah sometimes Korean." Similarly, Liza heard a variety of languages used

around the suburban campus of MCU at which she did the majority of her studies, "you also had

Indians that they would only speak Hindu, or you actually had the Chinese that they would speak

Chinese. So yeah, well it wasn't a big deal." All of these experiences evidence a rich linguistic

diversity at MCU in multiple departments, in labs, classrooms and around campus.

These descriptions of plurilingual environments, where multiple languages are spoken,

heard, and embraced by community members, are seemingly in contrast to results found to the

question "what languages do you use at MCU?" where many participants framed their responses

exclusively in terms of English and French. Additionally, all the participants reported that most

of the student body, as well as many of the professors they encountered in their time at MCU,

were international and had learned English as an additional language. For some participants,

their colleagues in research labs where they spent the majority of their time were almost entirely

international students:

> For a long time, we didn't have anybody who was a native English speaker in our lab.
>
> Everybody was from some other country until finally the girl who is from Canada joined
>
> the lab for her undergraduate research. –Richard

While in the classroom, many participants reported a ratio of about 50:50 of international

to local students. Chole and Maria, who are in the same department, estimated that there was an

even divide between international and Canadian students. Chloe then corrected her statement to a

60:40 ratio, taking into consideration students from the United States. In the same way as a

professor telling me, "You are not an international student.", Chloe's self-correction shows how

native-English speaking international students, especially those with a North American accent,

can have different status ascribed to them in the MCU community compared to people who

speak English with accents that are unfamiliar to North American colleagues and professors.

International students with non-local accents (in the context of Canada) made up a large

proportion of many participants' departments. Richard reported that "the majority of the students

there were international people from Iran, Italy, Nigeria and certain other African countries, a

few from Greece." In discussing why her social interaction happened mostly with other

international students, Lucky explained, "most of my social interactions with grad students and I

think mostly grad students, they are international students."

The linguistic diversity at MCU extended to professors as well, according to Richard.

"Most of my professors were also international. For example, my own supervisor was from

Brazil and my thesis advisory committee member was from Iran." Liza also reported that "a lot of the professors, they weren't like 100% English speakers, so some of them might have been from Latin America, some others were francophone." Most of the participants had plurilingual supervisors originally from countries other than Canada. Overwhelmingly, the participants in this study saw the rich diversity of languages and nationalities at MCU and more broadly in Montreal as positive. For Vivienne, "the best thing about Canada is that we [international students] are the majority, at least in graduate school." Inez explained that the diversity at MCU and around Montreal was a major contributing factor to her time there being a positive experience, despite myriad challenges:

> So, it might seem that I didn't enjoy my time in Canada, but actually I do think that it's a super interesting city, Montreal. It's so diverse. I really love that, and you could go into the Metro and hear all these languages, I love it. It's amazing. –Inez

Inez's perception of Montreal as a linguistically and culturally diverse city is supported by a recent study by Galante and dela Cruz (2021) who found that 92.9% of the total number ($N = 250$) of Montreal-based participants in an English-speaking university considered themselves to be plurilingual, both undergraduate and graduate students. Inez went on to explain that she thrived in diverse communities because of her love for meeting new people, engendered in her time volunteering for NGOs,

> I think it's so enriching, you learn so much. It's so much fun. I really like it, so yeah that's something that I really enjoyed in Montreal and in my lab in general at MCU, it's so diverse. –Inez

> Liza appreciated the diversity on the suburban campus of MCU, "It was interesting to learn and to actually meet people from other countries. It was really cool. So, I think actually it

was a good experience that I was at that campus for the cultural experiences." Diversity is

important in that it allows for cross-cultural exchange that, as Inez notes, can be enriching. At the

same time, communicating with a diverse group of people with unique linguistic repertoires and

different cultural backgrounds and nationalities is not always easy for everyone. Making

meaning across cultures and languages is a major part of PPC (CoE, 2020; Galante, 2020a).

In the next section, participants describe how they use their PPC to navigate the linguistic

and cultural diversity at MCU.

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence

The linguistic and cultural diversity of MCU was tangible for the participants in this

study, as the data in the previous section demonstrates. The plurilingual international students in

this study spent much of their academic and social lives among other plurilingual international

individuals, but also with local students and professors. Thus, codeswitching, code-meshing and

translanguaging strategies were employed by the participants in this study for their own

academic purposes, such as note-taking, to facilitate meaningful communication, and to create

linguistically inclusive environments.

All the participants reported using languages other than English in academic spaces and

social situations. At the same time, many participants felt it was appropriate to switch to English

when someone who did not understand the language being spoken was in earshot. One

participant explained,

> Well, if only two of us are speaking, we do. But if we feel like there's another person in
>
> the class who is also in our record also who is not speaking Turkish, we immediately
>
> switch to English because in our culture, when someone is not understand what you're

saying it is really rude. So that's why in order not to exclude anyone we prefer English,

usually. –Isabelle

Here, Isabelle describes switching to English as an inclusive practice, since English is the common language shared by everyone at MCU. For Maria, speaking English when people could not understand Spanish was a principle. "My inner rule is that if other people around do not understand Spanish, I try to speak in English in order to not exclude them." Inez also explained how she and her peers chose to communicate in English to ensure inclusion of everyone present by switching between and mixing English and Spanish.

Ethan explained that his previous negative experience in a lab where everyone else besides him used a common language he could not communicate in led him to try to reach out to the linguistic minority, those who could not communicate in Mandarin, in his research lab.

If I speak Mandarin and others cannot understand us, that's not good. Because, three years ago I was in UBC. I did an internship at UBC. I was in a Brazilian group. They spoke Portuguese, I think. I didn't feel comfortable there. Only one Chinese, and no English speaker. They are all Portuguese. They are all Brazilian, so they spoke Portuguese and I feel uncomfortable, actually. That's why I'm here in MCU, in my lab, the majority are Chinese, so I go for speaking English with Chinese students when other students are present. For respect. –Ethan

In the above quotes, the participants' use of words like "polite" and "respect" as well as "exclude" and "include" show the consideration and awareness they have of how language choice impacts communication. They all describe attempts to create more inclusive spaces by switching to English in conversations where the majority of people are more comfortable in a language other than English, for the sake of the linguistic minority in that particular interaction.

The participants describe how they are aware of other's languages and have language ideologies rooted in inclusivity, which can also be understood as high plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

Some participants, like Kuro, leveraged their linguistic resources in order to communicate privately in public,

> When you're riding an elevator and speaking in Tamil, people mind their own business. So, they didn't have any problems to put out or something, they just mind their own business. And I don't know what's going on in their head. At one point of time, I thought I cared and then I was like no, I don't care. Probably I should mind my own business and, like, have fun with my people whenever I'm around them. And the rest of the time act like an actual Canadian, not care about others. –Kuro

While Kuro was explaining how she leveraged her linguistic resources in the social sphere, Richard described how he and others leveraged their linguistic resources in order to talk about their academic work. In order to relay information to specific people about classified experimental research they were working on in their department, Richard, and his colleagues "...would talk to each other in Tamil about the procedure".

Kuro, Richard, and their interlocutors are making agentive choices to communicate with specific pieces of their linguistic repertoires to communicate with intention and purpose. It is through these languaging choices that individuals, such as Richard and Kuro, create plurilingual spaces in which they can thrive. This lends credence to the assertion, "agency is thus at the core of plurilingualism" (Piccardo & Galante, 2018 p. 151). Richard and Kuro both describe how they believe it is ok for themselves and others to use languages in order to communicate privately. Kuro used Tamil primarily for "gossip." Richard described how he and

his plurilingual peers code-switched to languages other than English to discuss confidential data and experiments happening in their research labs within earshot of others.

Participants leveraged their diverse linguistic resources not only for privacy, but in other ways as well. As a teaching assistant, Vivienne used Farsi to help students in the class despite the professor attempting to forbid this practice. Below Vivienne explains how she utilized not only linguistic, but also cultural resources to help explain concepts to students in the class,

> They asked me for the briefing session, and I gave them a lecture of three hours and try to explain paradigms with the examples that make sense in my community. So, for instance, we have a paternalistic way of managing family. And so, fathers are like, the boss and mothers are… their role is mostly in the house. So, there are some examples that make sense, and I used those examples to explain paradigms for them. So, it was not just about the language, it was also about the culture. I was very comfortable using Farsi and having examples related to my own culture to teach them qualitative research and specifically paradigms. –Vivienne

Vivienne's experience and initiative here demonstrates how "languages and cultures are inextricably linked in the identity of plurilinguals" (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021). Knowledge of both the culture and language were necessary to facilitate learning in this instance, and Vivienne persisted in helping the students in the course this way, despite the professor's stance that this practice was not inclusive of the non-Farsi-speaking students in the course.

Often, participants described how they code-meshed, using English *for* specific academic terminology and another language to communicate ideas *about* that terminology. Vivienne explained that when she takes notes,

It's a mix. I use a mixture of Farsi and English. [holds up notebook] This is what I was

doing right now in the meeting and let me show you. So, you see, half is English, and half

is with Farsi. See? Half English, half Farsi. It's a mixture. For some words, I don't find an

adequate Farsi substitute. If I want to use Farsi, I have to write the sentence, but it would

be a single word in English. So, for those words I use the word, and it also depends on the

how quick I want to take the notes. –Vivienne

Here, Vivienne demonstrates how she choose the most adept word, phrase, and language to

analyze the content of their courses for themselves and with others. For some participants,

English was the language they used not only in the classroom, but also in their behind-the-scenes

work on their master's theses, "when I put myself in my 'I'm doing my master's' mood I do this

hybrid kind of thing, and I actually think that I try to write more in English than in Spanish, but

I'm not sure why." –Inez.

At the same time, many participants noted a linguistic divide between academic and social

communication, and explained that most of the time, the language they prefer to use for

communicating about academics is English, but that the language they use in social life is the

language in which they are most comfortable. This was especially true for Ethan and Lucky, who

both had a large community of other Mandarin speakers who they frequently socialized with. For

Chloe, Mandarin, her second language, was a way to connect socially with other Mandarin

speakers, but not a language she would ever use in the classroom,

…it doesn't make sense to use Mandarin in class. But it's also because certain set of

feelings or certain words is better expressed in Mandarin, only if you know the language

and some of them, because they're not native English speakers, so they are more

comfortable in Mandarin outside the classroom, so it just makes it easier to code switch.

> So, I think they can understand English better than they can sort express themselves. So,
> it just makes sense to, if certain things just means more specifically in Mandarin, I'll just
> code switch for Mandarin, so it's almost always informal. It's outside the classroom. –
> Chloe

Chloe had never had a full conversation in Mandarin in her time at MCU, "Yeah, so it's not a whole conversation, just in Mandarin. It's always a bit of English, a bit of Mandarin. Yeah, that's true. It's never a full conversation in just one language." But even so, she felt that using a mix of Mandarin and English connected her with her Mandarin-speaking peers "because we speak, you know their inside language. You know that language they're comfortable with," while providing her a social space with people who were culturally similar to her with whom she could discuss things like where to get good Chinese food in Montreal. Vivienne also spoke to the importance of having communication with someone from similar cultural background, even if they didn't share the same linguistic background,

> We were five Iranians in my class, and we also had our WhatsApp group and we also
> interacted and communicated with each other, but we were all potatoes, so nobody knew
> anything. So, I communicated with a research assistant which is Syrian, and because she
> was more familiar with my culture as a Middle Eastern, sometimes she would tell me
> things like this, 'OK, in our part of the world things are done this way that you're saying,
> but in this part of the world things are not done.' So, it was a cultural thing. She would
> guide me just to transit from one culture to another… – Vivienne

Above, Vivienne and Chloe describe how not only language but also culture plays a role in facilitating communication. Communicating across cultures and/or languages is vital for creating linguistically inclusive spaces. In the next section, I will share and discuss participants'

experiences with interlocutors – local students, professors, and international students alike – who

put in the effort to facilitate plurilingual communication.

Engaged communication

They [people at MCU] like to listen and to understand you well and they don't miss

anything or misunderstands you so. So yeah, I like that kind of environment and whatever

you say, it matters. That's what I like about MCU. –Helen

Above, Helen described her experiences communicating with people at MCU as

universally positive. While other participants reported a mix of negative and positive experiences

related to communicating with other students and professors at MCU, this section deals

exclusively with positive interactions with interlocutors who engaged meaningfully in

communication with participants.

Engaging

As the medium of instruction and the implicitly agreed upon common language for the

vast majority of interaction at MCU, English was frequently the shared linguistic resource among

community members at MCU according to participants in this study. When participants

described positive experiences around the use of English, it was often described in terms of other

people taking the time to make sure that effective, reciprocal communication was happening,

I have that experience with an international professor and with the other professors

because I feel like, professors, they're more open in terms of like understanding you and

they try to understand you, and I feel like it's because of like their position, because when

you ask something, they need to give you a solid answer. They cannot just assume what

you're asking. That's why when I ask something, they usually ask for follow up like, 'did

you mean this?' if they didn't understand what I'm saying. So, I clarify and that's why our

communication works. –Isabelle

Above, Isabelle describes the difference between communicating with professors and

communicating with other students in English to explain why her experiences with professors

were generally more positive. Essentially, Isabelle felt professors participated more fully in

communication by not assuming and instead asking follow-up questions, whereas Isabelle

believed that her peers often just guessed at what she was saying (*see page 78)*.

Ethan had especially positive experiences communicating with one local student in

particular. Ethan and this student communicated in English and multi-modally on a variety of

topics related to everyday life in Montreal.

Ethan was very appreciative of the time and effort undertaken by his friend and lab mate to assist

him with buying a car and subsequently avoiding parking tickets. The lab mate and Ethan used

speaking, writing, and map-drawing to facilitate communication on these topics, all of which

took considerable effort on both their parts. Ethan described a lot of effort on his own part to try

to communicate in English in order to socialize with local students. At least one student,

described above, reciprocated that effort. All the participants came to MCU with hopes of

engaging in and improving their English. When positive interactions did occur while

communicating in English, participants often described strategies of *Mediating* and *Offering*

Feedback used by their interlocutors to facilitate communication and ultimately linguistic

inclusion. The following excerpts reveal how these strategies were recognized and appreciated

by the plurilingual students interviewed for this study.

Mediating

Participants felt recognized and included in social spaces when their interlocutors adjusted their speaking speed, register, or word use in an attempt to accommodate them when communicating in English.

> So, Canadian students, they speak very fast. But for me he will speak slowly and use more simple words. Also, sometimes they would draw a picture for me to illustration the contents because sometimes I don't understand. –Ethan

In these interview excerpts, Ethan describes the strategies he recognized local students used to facilitate communication through mediation . This kind of mediation is an agentive choice and an important aspect of plurilingual communication (CoE, 2020). The mediation described in these situations revolves around two of the mediation activities and strategies outlined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CERF), namely, *facilitating collaborative interaction with peers* and *Adapting language* (p. 90)*.*

The choice to make the effort to mediate and engage with someone of a different linguistic and cultural background demonstrates an inclusive position on the part of the interlocutors described above. These participants appreciated that their interlocutors took the time to make sure they were communicating effectively. However, it could be argued that this is asymmetrical communication wherein only one side's opinion is valuable. Neither Ethan nor Catherine express here that their interlocutors asked them clarifying questions. Rather, they only made sure that Ethan or Catherine had understood them. Of course, that may also be because Ethan and Catherine were communicating effectively. Essentially, Person One mediating to make sure that Person Two understands their point is part of plurilingual communication, but it is not inherently inclusive if Person One does not make that same effort to understand and clarify

the meaning of Person Two. This is precisely the "ignore-ance" that many participants described

facing at MCU (*see Excluded and Ignored earlier in this chapter*). Overwhelmingly, the

participants interviewed for this study appreciated it when their interlocutors clarified meaning

and offered feedback on the participant's English during communication.

Offering feedback

All the participants acknowledged their varying competence in the languages and modes

of communication that made up their linguistic repertoires. As discussed earlier in the chapter

(*see Good English)* this knowledge was often couched in ideologies of *native-speakerism*

(Holliday, 2015) and *monoglossia* (Bakhtin, 1981), leading participants to make statements such

as, "my English is not good." The majority of participants saw English as a valuable linguistic

asset and appreciated when interlocutors took the time to mediate communication in English

through clarification and correction. Below, Kuro describes a relationship she forged with a local

student who was able to give her advice and correction on her English communication.

> I mix up words and, probably, I don't know how exactly to use them, but it's good thing
>
> that I had people who don't make fun of me or something. They just correct me. They
>
> would first try to check whether I'm okay with those connections because some people, if
>
> you try to correct them, they would just shut off and they get angry and something. For
>
> me, I was open and I was like, 'please let me know, because I'm trying to get used to this
>
> and I don't want to make the same embarrassing mistakes again.' And my friend, I told
>
> you, right? My Canadian friend. So, she helped me a lot. Whenever I made some kind of
>
> mistakes or something, she would point it out and she would say the correct usage of the
>
> words, and how it's used. And then we had conversations about that. So, I was happy that
>
> I had her. –Kuro

Here Kuro describes one local student in particular was sensitive to the fact that she might not want to be corrected but was also willing to give her advice and feedback on her English language use because she herself requested it. This shows PPC and a desire to communicate from Kuro and from her interlocutors. Kuro did not experience this kind of relationship with local students frequently at MCU. Rather, she described how for the most part local students don't want to talk and "just ignore you" (*see page 67*).

Receiving feedback and correction on written assignments in English was seen as important to participants in this study. Some participants were disappointed in the lack of writing support MCU provided, but simultaneously reported positive interactions related to receiving feedback on their English writing from course instructors and their supervisors,

> Teachers sometimes correct my small mistakes or proposition that it was another one or a verb tense or something like that. Or sometimes a little of the grammar, you know? But all of that is actually appreciated, because that helps me. –Laura

Above, Laura explains how she values professors' corrections of her grammar on assignments she submits for her coursework at MCU. The next section on plurilingual pedagogy discusses results of classroom practice, including types of writing feedback that were perceived as most effective for participants as well as their impressions of policies in academic spaces at MCU.

Plurilingual pedagogy & policies

Plurilingual pedagogy celebrates diversity and can foster inclusion (Piccardo, 2019). This is done in part through validating students' cultural backgrounds, linguistic repertoires, and imbalanced competence in different linguistic resources (CoE, 2020). Participants in this study experienced this validation from professors at MCU by observing professors' own plurilingual practices, by connecting with professors who they felt understood their struggles with academic

English, and when professors intentionally engaged with plurilingual pedagogy in their

classrooms. For some participants, MCU was the first educational institution they had attended

where they were permitted to speak a language other than English. Richard explained that in his

education in India he was forbidden from speaking Tamil, and that he used Tamil much more

frequently at MCU,

> I was happy that people were able to talk in whatever language they wanted to. It's a good
>
> thing, because not everybody comes completely prepared to communicate extensively in
>
> English, and they're more comfortable talking in other languages, and you know, thinking
>
> in other languages and I think that's a good thing, honestly. And I initially was also happy
>
> to be around so many languages because I like listening to them. They sounded nice, they
>
> sound good, so I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's a good thing that MCU is a little
>
> more liberal when it comes to the medium of conversation between two people, or
>
> professors. –Richard

Above, Richard explains how it is a good thing that MCU does not have a strict English-only

policy. Richard sees the value in allowing students to rely on the totality of their linguistic

repertoire in academic spaces to facilitate learning. However, this opinion is not always shared

by professors, such as the professor for whom Vivienne was a teacher's assistant. This professor

believed that having an English-only classroom environment was best practice. Richard also

explained how he enjoys being in a linguistically diverse environment and hearing many

different languages spoken. He was also grateful to be able to use Tamil at MCU because he felt

that in an English-only environment, "that there's a gradual loss of the command you have over

other languages." It was especially validating for many participants when they witnessed the

plurilingual practices of international professors in Academic spaces.

Plurilingual practices of professors

Below, Kuro explains how her supervisor and another professor speak in their first languages in the department,

> MCU has a lot of international community, so even the professors are from different backgrounds. So, since my professor was Spain, so, there was another professor who was also Spanish. So, our lab collaborated with their lab –Kuro

Both Kuro and another participant, Richard, who had a similar experience, felt positively about these interactions, and believed that MCU was a space where they were free to communicate in the language of their choosing. In other words, they felt less restricted and believed they had agency over their own linguistic choices. The modeling of plurilingual practices by their professors may have contributed to their own ideologies about appropriate modes of communication at MCU. For some participants, there was a sense of camaraderie and community when international professors used the languages of their home countries or cultures, or even when they simply acknowledged that they themselves were struggling to remember an English word or phrase:

> We had a small class of five students and the prof was Brazilian, and she blanked on something, and we had two Brazilian students and she asked them in Brazilian, and they responded. So, it also happens with profs sometimes. I mean this person is a full professor, so I don't think the language barrier will ever disappear. She has been in Canada for 20 years. But she still blanks. Even our dean sometimes takes Farsi words in between because she's Persian. She speaks Farsi words in between her speeches and explode with laughter. –Vivienne

Even these small acts can resonate with plurilingual international students and be perceived as inclusive and validating because they are indicative of a shared experience among plurilingual international faculty and students. These experiences are a tacit acknowledgement that no one is perfect at communicating in any language and a validation that it is possible to achieve success in academia as a plurilingual international individual. These small acts had a positive impact on student's feelings of belonging in their classrooms, research labs, and departments at MCU. The more intentionally plurilingual pedagogy was utilized by professors, the more positive the impact on these participants seems to have been.

Validating through plurilingual pedagogy

This section presents and discusses interview excerpts in which participants discuss their perspectives on linguistically and culturally validating pedagogy applied by professors at MCU. While these professors may not all consciously be using plurilingual pedagogy, their teaching and advising methods can be situated as such because they are achieving some of the fundamental outcomes of plurilingual pedagogy: linguistic and cultural validation; celebration of diversity; inclusion of students with diverse linguistic repertoires and varying competencies in numerous languages, registers, and modes of communication (CoE, 2020).

In classrooms, one participant noted how professors were aware of the level of comfort their students had with the language of instruction, English, and made accommodations for students who needed additional time or support to communicate their ideas in classroom discussions,

> They don't pick only the native speakers to answer questions, they also give others the
>
> chance to speak up and they give them their time, and also helping them into expressing

> their ideas. So, it wasn't like this person's ideas matter and that person's ideas doesn't
>
> matter. So, we were at the same page. –Helen

Helen felt validated by her professors. Through recognition that certain students needed more

time and support to communicate their ideas in English than others, the professors that Helen

describes showed that her ideas and the ideas of other students were all equally valuable,

regardless of English-language proficiency.

Inez experienced lecturers who would give lectures in Spanish, English, or a flexible

mixture of both languages in her field study program in Panama,

> You have researchers coming and giving talks all the time. So, we have like 8 different
>
> talks per day, so some of them are Latin American and some of them chose to give their
>
> talk in Spanish, a few of them. So yeah, it was kind of a mixture and it's quite flexible.
>
> They were never asked to give the talk in English. Actually, I really like when they spoke
>
> Spanish because I thought that they were kind of imposing themselves, kind of saying,
>
> 'This is my country. This is my language, and all of these people will, most of these
>
> people will understand.' –Inez

This experience was very positive for Inez. She felt that these professors were challenging the

traditionally English-only academic space of the institution, wholly separate from MCU, where

she conducted her field study. Furthermore, she felt like part of the community represented by

these Latin-American academics. During her field study in Panama, Inez, her Costa Rican co-

supervisor in Panama, and American master's supervisor at back at MCU were most comfortable

communicating together using Spanish. Inez was not the only participant who communicated

with their supervisor in a language other than English in their time at MCU. Ethan also

communicated with his supervisor in their shared first language, Mandarin.

Professors who engage in advising through languages other than the official languages of Canada, English and French, challenge the elite bilingual habitus of the institution. Though none of the participants in the present study communicated with their supervisors in French or did any academic work in French it is worth recognizing that French language supervision and even French language Theses are common at MCU. So, it is important to recognize MCU as an institution with an elite bilingual habitus, rather than a *monolingual habitus* (Gogolin, 1997). This elite bilingual habitus is still inherently restrictive to languages outside of the standard of the institution, in other words, languages other than English and French.

Vivienne felt that her relationship with her supervisor benefitted because they were both immigrants to Canada who faced similar challenges with immigration, language, and acculturation,

> He doesn't have any prejudice against me because he understands my journey. For instance, he understands his phases of immigration, he understands that it takes time for me to blend in the community. He gives me that time. He provides me with the support. – Vivienne

Vivienne explained how her supervisor supported her by spending extra time and effort to help her proofread for grammar mistakes in English, as well as giving her lectures and advice about academic English writing. To Vivienne, this was going above and beyond what a supervisor's role traditionally is, but he was able to recognize the linguistic support she needed "because he has been international and he also struggles with English and he has the lived experience, he could put himself in my shoes and he could guide me better." Vivienne was extremely grateful for her supervisor's extra feedback, which was personalized in recognition of her ability to write in academic English:

We're so lucky that our profs are international, and they care about us. I mean, my

supervisor is my anchor. I wouldn't know what to do without him because he makes me

feel that I matter, that I have skills, that I have value and that is what keeps me going. –

Vivienne

Another participant, Maria, compared her experiences receiving feedback on written

assignments from multiple professors. The first professor's feedback positioned Maria as

incapable of academic English and therefore unworthy of her place at MCU, through feedback

such as "saying that I didn't know how to write, and he said that my academic writing was very

poor and that I had to read some books in order to know how to write in English"

While she acknowledged that this feedback may have improved her writing, ultimately, she

believed that an approach to feedback based in plurilingual pedagogy was more beneficial,

Maria explained that feedback which corrected English grammar was beneficial for improving

writing. However, "when they show interest on your culture and who you are, that's the most

important thing.the most important thing". Maria felt validated by feedback that acknowledged

her challenges with English while recognizing that they were not uncommon or insurmountable.

She knew how to guide me in a different way. Like, 'Oh, maybe you should do this. Or

you should do that. I understand that this way or this phrase thing is very common in

Spanish, but in English we do this.' and that made me feel very different. You know, like

accepted and validating knowledge, not just classifying me as, 'no, you don't know

anything. go away.' –Maria

Maria studies second language education and plurilingualism as part of her master's degree, and

therefore uses vocabulary similar to the vocabulary I use throughout this paper, words such as

"repertoire" and "validation." However, all the participants in this section describe similar

experiences and feelings when, through plurilingual pedagogy, or through witnessing

plurilingual practices of professors, they felt more part of the community of MCU and worthy as

emerging scholars in academia. Many participants describe the community they forged at MCU

as a plurilingual international community of students and professors apart from the linguistically

standard community at MCU. Rather than seeing this as a problem, the participants in this study

celebrated that community and saw it as a vital part of their success at MCU. This community

was forged through validating interactions among plurilingual community members, as well as

through negative interactions with monolingually biased community members who, more often

than not were also local, rather than international. The follow section shows how crucial this

plurilingual community at MCU was for many participants in this study.

Plurilingual community

In this section, I discuss data relating to participants' perceptions of their social and

academic support communities at MCU. While some participants reported experiences of

linguistic inclusion in their interactions with local students and faculty, all the participants

reported feeling included among the international community at MCU.

Many participants spoke to the academic and social benefits of having peers at MCU who

shared a common linguistic and/or cultural background. Below, Kuro explains how one such

peer helped her navigate her department when she first arrived at MCU,

> She is the only closest person who helped me to get myself accommodated in the
>
> university. So, she told me where can I find stuff, and she told me what's the procedure
>
> for everything, and since we speak a common language, so I started depending on her a
>
> lot and she helped out a lot. –Kuro

Inez explicitly related having other Latin American peers who shared a similar linguistic and cultural background to feelings of inclusion at MCU, "I felt like very included. It's helpful that in my lab there are other two Latin Americans." She also described a sense of ease-of-belonging among her Latin American social group that she did not experience with local students who could not speak Spanish,

> By the end of the day, you have to think when you try to speak English and you're tired so, you just want it easy and have someone to chill and talk without having to really make such a big effort to only communicate. – Inez

Having reliable social communities was an important part of feeling included and satisfied at MCU for these participants, who were able to leverage their linguistic resources to navigate academic and social spaces in a manner that ultimately led to their success as master's students and overall satisfaction with their time at MCU. However, there was a prevalent expectation among some participants that international students should not associate too much with people from their home countries. One participant, Ethan, explained how he pushes himself to speak in English and interact with Canadians as much as possible. Similarly, Liza discussed how she tried to avoid having many Greek friends at MCU, "In the beginning, I didn't want necessarily to only have friends that are Greek because I wanted to meet other people. But yeah, it actually felt good when I did." Liza explained that her Greek friends at MCU were not necessarily people she would have been friends with if they had met in Greece, but that having some friends with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds facilitates communication, "It's both. The language, obviously it actually allows you to express yourself better, of course, and the culture, obviously because you have some commonality, I guess with the other person that you can actually talk about."

While some participants benefitted from having a community with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, all the participants felt an "affinity" [Maria], or "connection" [Isabelle] with "other international students" [Richard] and faculty for whom English is "always going to be their second language" [Maria]. Thus, participants felt included in a community of students and faculty sharing a common struggle with English as the accepted standard language of MCU. On the one hand, participants described communities with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds helping them to acclimate to MCU and as a setting where they could relax, be themselves, and feel a connection to their homes; on the other, they described feeling validated as a member of the MCU community as a whole through their interactions with other plurilingual international students for whom English was an additional language. These feelings of validation manifested regardless of common linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds. Below, For Richard, his closest friends were international students from countries other than India, "My closest friends were Italian and Nigerian... I was more comfortable talking to them than a few other international students I knew who were from India –Richard

Helen explained that she felt a "sense of belonging" when she recognized other international students in her classes. Isabelle also explained the sense of community that is often fostered among plurilingual international master's students at MCU in classrooms, research labs, and social life,

> When I see another international student this feeling of empathy just kicks in and I start
> feeling more comfortable. Especially if their first language is not English. I express
> myself more confidently –Isabelle

Kuro similarly explained that it was easy to communicate with other international students for several reasons, including the similarity that they were all "non-native speakers". Kuro explained

how "non-native [English] speakers" would support each other, "taking care of each other, helping out" because they had empathy for one-another and an understanding of the difficulties one another were facing.

For most of the participants in this study, one of the unifying commonalities between themselves and other international students was their experience of learning English as an additional language,

In an international group, even if we're all speaking English with each other, because not everyone in the entire group might speak Mandarin, for example. Everyone is on a level of OK, we are speaking in a second language almost. Right? So, if we take an extra beat or if our accents don't match up there is more ease in that group. As opposed to a more Canadian or a local group, then it stands out more. Or it might stand out more. –Chloe

Above, Chloe explains how socializing with plurilingual international peers is different from socializing with local students, who are more comfortable communicating in North American English. Chloe describes how international students are intentionally accommodating towards one another because of a shared awareness that they are all communicating in an additional language. In addition to the experience of studying in an additional language, the experience of moving to Canada for their studies bonded international students into a community, according to Liza.

…it wasn't just because of the language. I believe it was other things too. It was more the fact that we could actually bond better, I find. Because we both moved from other countries, we have that similar experience that would actually bond us better. –Liza

The above quote demonstrates the complex interplay between language and nationality international students experience when situating themselves within the community of MCU.

Having what Isabelle called a "funny accent," being plurilingual and comparing languages, and

being originally from countries other than Canada all were important markers that led to feelings

of inclusion and camaraderie among the participants in this study and their plurilingual

international peers. Isabelle appreciated the diversity and uniqueness of international students as

well as the commonalities of shared experiences between other international students and herself.

> I would describe it as a positive experience because it is really fruitful, and I feel like I've
>
> always been a person who is curious about other cultures and other traditions people
>
> have. That's why hearing other people, where they coming from, their stories, I really like
>
> it. And at the same time, I feel like other international students and I have many things in
>
> common. –Isabelle

As Isabelle alludes to above, international students are simultaneously very diverse yet

share certain similar experiences distinct from the rest of the student body. Recognizing this

reality is an important consideration for any policy or pedagogy geared toward international

students. For some participants, the sense of community extended beyond plurilingual

international peers to plurilingual international professors:

> At least in Canada we are the majority, so it doesn't hurt that much. We have our own
>
> community, and as I said, profs, profs are international. And that's a huge anchor for us
>
> and that's a huge motivation for us to keep going. –Vivienne

Above, Vivienne describes how international professors provide motivation and support for

plurilingual international students. Though less common, a few participants experienced

linguistic inclusion and validation from local students and faculty as well.

> Overall, participants seemed to situate their community at MCU not exclusively with

peers who had proficiency in all the same languages as them, but instead, as a community of

international, plurilingual students and professors for whom English was an additional language. Having the common experience of studying in English, an additional language, in a foreign country, Canada, meant that there was a shared experience and sense of camaraderie among this community regardless of national origin or languages spoken.

Summary

This chapter presented and discussed results related to plurilingual international students' experiences with linguistic discrimination and linguistic conclusion. The participants in this study ultimately felt marginalized from the wider academic community at MCU but flourished within a community of international students and professors. The marginalization the participants experienced stemmed from raciolinguistic microaggressions, which I analyzed using a taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions which divided the experiences of participants into four themes: 1) Ascribed capability 2) Excluded and ignored 3) Institutional microaggressions 4) Restricted. Through this analysis it is shown that repeated exposure to raciolinguistic microaggressions caused marginalization, racialization, and internalization of deficit perspectives about participants' own English competence. Simultaneously, participants found solidarity and validation in the rapidly increasing community of international scholars at MCU. Within this linguistically diverse community, plurilingual international students found interlocutors who valued their input and engaged in meaningful communication through various linguistic resources and modalities. The plurilingual practices and policies enacted by international professors for whom English is an additional language were especially validating for the participants in this study. In the concluding chapter, I will summarize Chapters one through four, examine the implications of the data discussed in the present chapter, consider the limitations of the present study, and reflect on potential areas of further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

Summary

In this thesis, I addressed a research gap concerning plurilingual international student's experiences of linguistic inclusion and linguistic discrimination at a Canadian university. In order to fill that gap, I asked two research questions:

- In what ways do plurilingual international students at a Canadian university experience linguistic *discrimination* based on their repertoire?

- In what ways do plurilingual international students at a Canadian university experience linguistic *inclusion* based on their repertoire?

In CHAPTER ONE: Introduction, I reviewed the context of an English-language university situated in Francophone Quebec, code name: MCU. I shared the linguistic make-up of the student body of MCU based on the only available statistics provided by the university, English (46.2%), French (18.9%) and Other (34.9%) [citation redacted for anonymity]. The introduction highlighted the drastic increase in the international student population over the past ten years, making Canada the country with the highest growth rate of international students anywhere in the world, 327% over 10 years (GAC, 2017; IIE, 2021). As a result of this growth, there are 503,270 international students studying at Canadian universities, according to the most recent data (IIE, 2021). I further explained that Canadian universities have become increasingly reliant on international student tuition and spending as a means of financial support, while, in return, the Canadian government offers some international students a path to permanent residence after graduation (Guo & Guo, 2017). On a macro level, the problem that this study contends with is the reality that Canadian universities have worked to become more internationally diverse without working toward ensuring that there is an inclusive academic

environment to support the increasingly diverse student body (Guo & Guo, 2017). This systemic

problem has manifested in the day-to-day realities of international students who feel excluded

and marginalized from the academic and social community of the university (Cheng & Fox,

2008). Previous studies have shown that English communication, especially with local students,

plays a large role in these experiences of marginalization and discrimination against international

students in Canada (Houshmand et al., 2014). Simultaneously, international students

overwhelmingly report that their time at Canadian universities has been positive (CBIE, 2018).

Because of this seemingly incongruent reality, the study reported here focused on how language

affected international students' experiences with both discrimination and inclusion.

In CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review, I revealed how the present study would rely on

two conceptual frameworks: 1. Raciolinguistic microaggressions, and 2. Plurilingualism, to

explore the challenges and successes of international students at a Canadian university. In the

literature review, I explained how raciolinguistic microaggressions are a form of subtle

discrimination experienced by racialized and linguistically minoritized individuals. Then, I

explicated the differences between diversity and inclusion, and defined plurilingualism as a

framework for lauding linguistic diversity and promoting linguistic inclusion in social spaces.

Finally, CHAPTER TWO reviewed empirical studies exploring the role of language in

international students' experiences in *inner circle English countries* (Kachru, 1992) such as

Canada, the United States and Australia. These studies showed that international students

experience linguistic discrimination, especially in the form of microaggressions, and also that

there is a body of research which explores the role plurilingual practice plays in the lives of

international students and how plurilingual pedagogy, though under-utilized, can be a force for

positive change at Canadian universities.

CHAPTER THREE: Methods explained how the present study was designed with the

goal of gaining emic perspectives on the linguistic discrimination and inclusion of international

students at a Canadian university. Therefore, I used semi-structured interviews to be able to

discuss experiences with participants and allow them to reflect on their own experiences. Data

collection and analysis was rooted in *linguistic ethnographic interviews* (Copland & Creese,

2015) which rely on interviews to gain emic perspectives which may not be attainable in

traditional ethnographic field work. This was both advantageous for the goals of the present

study and necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which precluded the possibility of any in-

person data collection given the timeframe of the current project. I was able to virtually recruit

and interview fifteen participants in total. Additionally, participants completed demographic

questionnaires prior to their interviews. Data from interviews was coded using thematic analysis

to code for substantive themes (Maxwell, 2013; Seidman, 2006).

CHAPTER FOUR: Results and discussion explored data collected from semi-structured

interviews and demographic surveys. The first section discussed data concerning experiences of

linguistic discrimination. First, I explained how answers to the question "what languages do you

use at MCU?" showed that English and French were the main languages participants felt were

worth recognizing in the context of MCU. Languages other than English and French were often

perceived by participants as not noteworthy in this context, even though they frequently used

these languages at MCU. Then, Chapter Four described the numerous raciolinguistic

microaggressions experienced by participants during their time at MCU. These microaggressions

were categorized according to a taxonomy of raciolinguistic microaggressions (Table 4.1) with

four themes: 1. Ascribed capability; 2. Excluded and ignored; 3. Institutional microaggressions;

4. Restricted. While the message received from each of the types of raciolinguistic

microaggressions was slightly different, the overarching message of all of them was marginalization and racialization based on participants' linguistic repertoires; the repertoires included accented-ness and agentive use of multiple and varied languages beyond the standard languages of the university and surrounding sociocultural milieu.

Finally, I showed that many participants, including some who were native speakers of non-local varieties of English, had developed strong deficit views of their English language skills. I put forward that repeated experiences of raciolinguistic microaggressions led these participants to deficit views of their own English proficiency, as well as devaluation of languages other than English and French in their linguistic repertoires.

The second section of CHAPTER FOUR: Results and discussion focused on participants' experiences of linguistic inclusion. This section explored the ways in which plurilingual international students at MCU experienced their multilingualism as an asset and felt encouraged to make agentive choices to deploy any part of their linguistic repertoires. The data in this section was divided into 5 themes: 1. Linguistic diversity; 2. Plurilingual and pluricultural competence; (PPC) 3. Engaged communication; 4. Plurilingual pedagogy and policies; 5. Plurilingual community. I began this section by exploring data concerning the linguistic diversity of MCU and the surrounding environment. All the participants interviewed for the present study both recognized and appreciated the linguistic diversity at MCU and more broadly in Montreal. The diversity of languages and accents present made them feel more confident in their ability to communicate using their unique linguistic repertoires. It also helped them to resist feelings of otherness when they experienced raciolinguistic microaggressions, because they were aware that they were part of a large community of plurilingual international students and professors. As discussed at the end of the linguistic inclusion section, in theme 5. Linguistic inclusion:

Plurilingual community, this community provided a supportive and inclusive social space for participants where they thrived socially and in their academic work. The linguistic inclusion section of CHAPTER FOUR: Results and discussion also explored how participants were plurilingually and pluriculturally competent. In this section I gave many examples of how the plurilingual international students interviewed for this study used linguistic strategies such as codeswitching, code-meshing, and translanguaging, as well as cultural knowledge, in order to communicate with a linguistically and culturally diverse range of interlocutors during their time at MCU. I also reveal data concerning engaged communication, where participants shared experiences of successful communication strategies utilized by their interlocutors, such as mediation and multimodal communication. Finally, in contrast to the institutional microaggressions theme from the previous section of this chapter, I explore plurilingual pedagogy and policies enacted by professors and supervisors which made participants feel that their plurilingualism was acceptable, valid, and even an asset at MCU.

Taken together, these data reveal the complex role linguistic repertoires played in these participants' experiences of linguistic discrimination and inclusion. On the one hand, participants were judged, discriminated against, marginalized, and racialized within the MCU community due, in part, to their non-local linguistic repertoires, most often by local students and professors. On the other hand, participants found solidarity and agency among other plurilingual international students and professors, with whom they formed a linguistically inclusive community which the participants described as instrumental to their successes at MCU. In the following section I will discuss the implications of the findings which were explored in

CHAPTER FOUR: Results and discussion.

Implications

This section puts forward implications based on the results for key stakeholders, plurilingual international students, professors, and institutions, as well as discussing contributions this study makes to theory and research.

International students in Canada

It is important for prospective international students to be aware that discrimination based on linguistic and racial markers is experienced by international students in Canadian universities. It is also important for current international students to know that any experiences of raciolinguistic discrimination that they have faced are not exclusive to them, nor are they based in any quantifiable deficits in their ability to communicate, but rather are an endemic and systemic problem rooted in outdated and pervasive language ideologies, such as native-speakerism, and the misrepresentation of White English as neutral, which affects plurilingual international students by minoritizing them based on their linguistic repertoires. It also must be asserted that linguistic minoritization operates differently depending on whether an international student is visually racializable. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the processes of racialization, language minoritization, and othering that affect many plurilingual international students in their time in English Canadian universities may co-construct one another and be rooted in the same intersecting colonial ideologies about race, language and nationality which have served for years, in one way or another, to oppress those outside of the power in-group (Pennycook, 2002; Phillipson, 2008) .

Key to the co-construal of race and language is that the supposed linguistic deficiency of racialized individuals is inherently and irrevocably asserted by those who claim ownership over

the language of power, regardless of communicative ability (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Additionally, even individuals who are visibly white are linguistically minoritized for not speaking the ingroup-designated standard language variety. All this is not to say that it is impossible to resist raciolinguistic discrimination as an international student.

In the case of my participants, feelings of inclusion and full citizenship within the university community were most commonly achieved through plurilingual practice and pedagogy, and through building a community of plurilingual students and faculty, that plurilingual students experienced linguistic inclusion at a Canadian university, rather than through improving their English language proficiency. Linguistically inclusive experiences happened most frequently among plurilingual international students themselves, and with plurilingual international professors for whom English was an additional language. However, participants also experienced linguistic inclusion with local students who were willing to communicate plurilingually—in other words, to mediate and make meaning multimodally and through different languages. Furthermore, it was through these same plurilingual interactions that participants felt they improved their English communication, rather than through academic pursuits or formal EAP courses.

Canadian universities

Linguistic inclusion of international students happens not through improved academic and social English, but through forging relationships based on plurilingual communication. Canadian universities might therefore better serve their students by redistributing resources away from repeated testing and resources aimed at improving the English of international students which tend to problematize the English communication of plurilingual international students and frame them as deficient. These resources could instead be devoted to building an inclusive

community by educating the entire student body about plurilingual and pluricultural competence and how to communicate with people with diverse linguistic repertoires, as well as recognizing and confronting linguicism in our community and in our own language ideologies.

As authority figures within Canadian universities, professors are able to create linguistically inclusive spaces through plurilingual pedagogy or even simply through their own plurilingual practice. I am by no means suggesting that professors across all disciplines become experts in plurilingualism and plurilingual pedagogy. The theory of plurilingualism describes the natural agentive process of communication. So, simply by acknowledging their own plurilingualism and using languages other than English in academic spaces, professors can resist the implicit linguistic ideologies of Canadian universities that place White English at the top of the linguistic hierarchy.

Finally, it is vital that Canadian universities recognize that a percentage of their student body fall into the category of *audible minority* defined here, in distinction to the definition used by Bond and colleagues (2010), as: a person who's languaging deviates from what is considered the norm or standard of their present institution, locality, or country. This audible minority population is disproportionately represented by international students at MCU. This category is deserving of recognition in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies along with visible minorities as being an audible minority may be a basis for discrimination within the university community.

Contributions to theory & research

This research contributes to a growing body of research (e.g., Dovchin, 2020; Houshmand et al., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Lindeman, 2005; Ramjattan, 2020; Sterzuk; 2015) into the discrimination international students face at English universities in

inner-circle English countries (Kachru, 1992), or Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the U.S., and UK. Over the past 20 years, numerous studies have shown that international students, especially racialized and language-minoritized students, face discrimination at these universities. While previous studies have used taxonomies of racial microaggressions to explore the experiences of international students, no studies to date that I am aware of have taxonomized raciolinguistic microaggressions. Furthermore, no work studying any population of participants has developed such a taxonomy and this is a novel contribution of this thesis and an important step in developing the theory of raciolinguistic and raciolinguistic microaggressions. This method and this taxonomy could be deployed by researchers in future studies into experiences of linguistic discrimination. This study is also unique —to my knowledge— in its use of the dual theoretical frameworks of plurilingualism and raciolinguistics. In the present study the two concepts support each other in their ultimate goals of social justice and inclusion for speakers of diverse languages and language varieties. Looking at data through both of these lenses illuminated areas that may have been underexplored in previous literature and so paints a more holistic picture of the experiences of plurilingual international students. On the one hand, plurilingualism scholarship must actively acknowledge the significant role that race plays in agency and mediation. On the other hand, studies focused in raciolinguistics can look to plurilingualism as a transformative approach to languaging and language education, with a focus on linguistically minoritized individuals and power imbalances between languages and speakers of those languages.

Limitations

This study was limited in scope and methodology. It was necessary to have real conversations with the participants, in the form of semi-structured interviews, in order to answer

the research questions posed in this study. However, arranging, conducting, transcribing, and

analyzing this kind of data is an inherently time-consuming process. Given the time constraints

of a master's thesis and the fact that I was conducting this research independently during a global

pandemic, the results shared here represent the experiences of an admittedly small number of

participants. The results is nonetheless valuable in that it provides first-hand accounts and

reflections on experiences of linguistic inclusion and discrimination which would not have been

attainable from a larger scale data collection method, such as a survey with multiple choice

questions. While it might have been useful to spend time observing participants' interactions in

the real world, this was made impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the brief window

of time allotted for data collection, due, again, to the exigencies of completing a master's thesis

in the time given.

Additionally, the participant pool was limited to plurilingual international students who

had successfully completed most of —or the entirety of— their master's thesis. This inherently

precluded participants for whom experiences of linguistic discrimination, or a lack of linguistic

inclusion at MCU, led them to leave the institution altogether. Exploring the experiences of

international students who leave institutions because of experiences of linguistic discrimination

could be one rich area of further research using this same methodology and set of research

questions.

Areas of further research

There is much research to be done in the area of linguistic discrimination and inclusion,

both in Canada and around the world. It would be possible to conduct a similar study with

newcomers to Canada, rather than international students, to explore that population's experience,

for one example. It would also be useful to devise a psychometrically sound survey to measure

experiences of linguistic discrimination and inclusion in order to be able to collect data from a wider sample size. Finally, broadening the scope of this research to explore the attitudes and biases of perpetrators of raciolinguistic microaggressions would be an important, but challenging step. Based on many participants' points of view, the raciolinguistic microaggressions they encountered were a result of unconscious biases on the part of the perpetrators. Due to its unconscious nature of linguicism, and of course, the social stigma around discriminatory behavior, studying the roots of linguicism is a challenge, but it is not insurmountable. The implicit association test (IAT) (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998)

can be used to measure implicit biases including race, gender, sexuality and has been shown to be a psychometrically valid, robust method of measuring a wide range of implicit biases, according to Greenwald and colleagues' meta-analysis of 122 studies (2009). There have been few studies which use this methodology in the area of sociolinguistics (Campbell-Kibler, 2012), and nonnative accent bias (Roessel et al., 2018). However, to my knowledge, no studies to date have explored language ideologies related to raciolinguistics using this methodology to explore these biases. Refocusing research away from the problems international students have themselves with language, and towards the problems *other* community members have with the language use of international students, would be an important step to de-problematizing the language use of international students. By focusing on the problem of linguistic discrimination, rather than the perceived linguistic deficits of certain groups on campus, we, as a higher education community, can begin putting energy toward developing meaningful solutions to linguistic discrimination on Canadian campuses.

Final words

This thesis sought to explore plurilingual international students' experiences of linguistic inclusion and discrimination at a Canadian university. Results show that the experiences of discrimination international students face are impacted by their linguistic repertoires, countries of origin, and race. These social markers have significant impacts on how international students are treated by local students. International students reported being marginalized, not because of their linguistic repertoires, their countries of origin, or their race per se, but rather, because of the way these factors co-articulated to racialize and linguistically minoritize many of the participants in this study. Simultaneously, these plurilingual international students all found support and validation among other international students and professors at MCU. We must therefore revisit the false idea that increased diversity will ultimately foster inclusion. As long as language ideologies, such as native speakerism and deficit views about international students' linguistic and academic ability, engender haves and have-nots among the student body, there will always be a schism between the experiences of international and local students. It is the responsibility of everyone in the university community to work toward supporting plurilingual practices to foster communication and inclusion.

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Appendix A: Research Ethics Approval

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office Tel: (514) 398-6193
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325 Website: https://www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance/human
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Research Ethics Board 2
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 20-08-030
Project Title: Linguistic inclusion in Canadian higher education **Principal Investigator:** Ben Calman
Department: Integrated Studies in Education
Status: Master's Student
Supervisor: Professors Angelica Galante and Mela Sarkar

Approval Period: November 6, 2020 - November 5, 2021

The REB 2 reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Georgia Kalavritinos
Ethics Review Administrator

_____

* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.
* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

Appendix B: Recruitment Materials

Digital Flyer

Email to graduate program administrative staff

Hello,

My name is Ben Calman, I am a student researcher currently pursuing my Master of the Arts in Second Language Education in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. My master's thesis research is being supervised by Dr. Angelica Galante angelica.galante@mcgill.ca and Dr. Mela Sarkar mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca

I am conducting research on international master's students' linguistic experiences at McGill University. I am seeking international students to participate in sixty-minute interviews about their experiences during their time at McGill University. This study will contribute valuable data to understanding a problem that affects a significant portion of our community at McGill.

I was wondering if it is possible to forward the attached flyer to the mailing list for your graduate program.

Thank you for your understanding of the necessity of this manner of recruitment, given the present situation resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Ben Calman

MA student | Second Language Education | McGill University

Appendix C: Consent Form

McGill

Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE)
     Education Building
3700 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

Participant Consent Form

     Title of project: Linguistic inclusion in a Canadian university

Researcher: This research is being conducted by Ben Calman, an M.A. Candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. Ben Calman, the principal researcher, can be reached by email at benjamin.calman@mail.mcgill.ca or by phone at +1 (514) 458-1404.

Supervisors: As a student researcher, Ben Calman is being co-supervised by Dr. Angelica Galante and Dr. Mela Sarkar. Dr. Angelica Galante may be reached by email at angelica.galante@mcgill.ca or by phone at +1 514 971 4807 Dr. Mela Sarkar may be reached by email at mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca or by phone at +1-514-294-5819

     Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to explore plurilingual students' experiences of language use in a Canadian university. Your experiences can provide important data about this topic.

Study Procedures: Because you have responded to the recruitment flyer for this study, you have been sent this consent form and a demographic questionnaire.

- Please read this form thoroughly. If you wish to participate in the present study you may print, sign, scan, and return the form to the principal investigator, Ben Calman, by email at benjamin.calman@mail.mcgill.ca

- You have also been sent a demographic questionnaire. It is attached to the same email through which you accessed this form. Please fill out the demographic questionnaire and return the form to the principal investigator, Ben Calman, by email at benjamin.calman@mail.mcgill.ca
- You must return both this consent form and the demographic questionnaire to the principal investigator if you wish to participate in the present study.
- This form and the demographic survey will be stored in a password protected folder on the principal investigator's computer and backed-up to an external hard drive kept at the principal investigator's private residence. Should you choose to participate in this study, no one will know your true identity except for the principal investigator.
- After returning this consent form and the demographic questionnaire, the principal investigator will contact you to schedule an interview.
- For those who consent to participate but do not meet the inclusion criteria, the consent form, contact information and the demographic information will be immediately destroyed.

- Should you meet the inclusion criteria, you will be sent the interview questions ahead of time so you can familiarize yourself with the topic.
- The interview will last approximately 1 hour and be conducted using WebEx. The interview will be semi-structured, meaning that all participants will be asked the same set of questions, but that the principal investigator may also ask some follow up questions based on your answers.
- The interview will be audio recorded using the WebEx platform's "record" feature. The recording will be stored on the WebEx cloud, which has been approved as secure by the McGill research ethics board.
- The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed by the principal investigator. Transcripts of the recording will be kept in a separate, assigned folder on the principal investigator's McGill server-based OneDrive, which has been approved as secure by the McGill research ethics board.
- The principal investigator will ultimately use the transcription of your interview, along with the interviews of other participants to generate data which will inform the principal investigator's master's thesis, as well as future publications in peer-reviewed journals, blogs, and academic presentations at domestic and international conferences.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. The choice to participate, or not participate, will not have any bearing on your course grades, relationship with faculty or international student status at McGill University. During the interview you will be given the option of selecting a pseudonym for yourself. If you do not wish to select a pseudonym, one will be assigned to you. This pseudonym will be used in any and all publications of this research study. Your name and the name of your university will not appear in the published study. Only the principal investigator will have access to your identifying information. Participants will be allowed to withdraw their consent as long as data remains identifiable, a period of seven years after first publication. If participants withdraw prior to first publication, their data will be destroyed. If they withdraw following publication, data will be retained, but removed from any further analysis or publication.

Potential Risks: There is a potential risk for emotional distress when discussing linguistic experiences. If at any time during the interview you are unable to continue due to emotional distress, I will offer you the option to withdraw from the study or resume the interview at a later time. If you decide to end the interview you can choose to withdraw from the study or reschedule the interview for another time. Although all precautions are taken, there is always the possibility of third-party interception when using communications through the internet.

Potential Benefits: There are no expected direct benefits to you from participating in the study, but it is hoped that this study will contribute to an understanding of the linguistic experiences of international students. This study ultimately hopes to make recommendations for how universities can develop better policies and practices to improve the experiences of international students studying in Canada.

Compensation: No compensation will be offered for participation in this research study.

Confidentiality: Maintaining confidentiality of your personal and identifying information is a top priority for the principal investigator. Any and all identifying information, including this consent form and a list of your real name and a pseudonym to be used in publications, will be securely kept in the principal investigator's McGill server-based OneDrive in a separate, assigned folder for a period of seven years after first publication. Only the principal investigator has access to this OneDrive account and the folder within it. Your name, and the name of your university will be changed in any future publications and/or presentations resulting from the data collected

during your interview. I will not share your name or other information which could be used to identify you with a third party for any reason.

Questions: If you have any questions about the study or would like to request additional information, please contact me, Ben Calman, by email at benjamin.calman@mail.mcgill.ca or by phone at +1(514) 458-1404. Additionally, you may also contact either of my supervisors, Dr. Angelica Galante angelica.galante@mail.mcgill.ca or Dr Mela Sarkar, mela.sarkar@mcgill.ca with any questions or concerns.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to
participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

13. Your name: _____

14. Choose a pseudonym to be used in the study: _____

    -or- ☐ I would like you to choose for me

15. Your email: _____

16. Age: _____

17. Preferred pronoun: ☐ she/her   ☐ he/him

    ☐ they/them   ☐ other (please specify): _____

18. Nationality(ies): _____

19. Have you ever lived in any countries besides your country of nationality and Canada?

    ☐ Yes (please specify): _____

    ☐ No

20. First Language: _____

21. Additional languages: _____

22. In what language(s) do you feel most comfortable? _____

23. Do you consider yourself to be a "visible minority*"? _____

24. Do others perceive you as a "visible minority*"? _____

25. Program & intended degree? _____

26. Semesters completed: _____

27. Are you doing a thesis as part of your program? _____

28. Are you working or have you worked as a research assistant at McGill? _____

29. Are you working or have you worked as a teaching assistant at McGill? _____

*For clarification on the term "visible minority" you can click the following link:

https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=45152

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Interview questions:
- **What languages do you use at McGill?**
  - What about in class?
    - Could you tell me about a time when you have used a language other than English in the classroom?
    - Are there any times you would use a language other than English in the classroom?
      - Why or why not?
  - What about working on assignments?
    - Do you use any language other than English in researching or planning an assignment?
    - Do you use any language other than English in the submitted assignment?
    - Are there any other times when you have used, or would potentially use a language other than English when completing an assignment?
  - Do you use any language other than English to pursue your master's degree?
    - If yes – Can you tell me how?
    - If no - Are there any other times when you would potentially use a language other than English in any work undertaken in fulfillment of your master's degree?
  - What languages do you use in informal interactions with other members of the McGill community?
    - An example could be given here: What if you ran into a classmate outside of class?
    - Could you tell me more about that?
  - I can see from your demographic survey that you have worked as a (research assistant / teaching assistant) …
    - Do you ever use any language other than English when you are working as a (research assistant / teaching assistant)?
- **Where do your interactions with native-English speaking colleagues or classmates typically take place?**
  - Can you describe a typical interaction?
  - Do you have any interaction with them outside of those situations?
  - If so, where?
  - How do you feel about these interactions?
  - Is language ever an issue in your interactions with native-English speaking colleagues or classmates at McGill university?
- **Can you describe any very positive interactions with native-English speaking colleagues or classmates during your time at McGill University?**
  - Why do you believe this interaction stands out?
  - Is this kind of interaction something that happens frequently or is it unusual?
- **Can you describe any very negative interactions with native English-speaking colleagues or classmates during your time at McGill University?**
  - Why do you believe this interaction stands out?
  - Is this kind of interaction something that happens frequently or is it unusual?
- **Do you prefer interacting with native English speaking or non-native English-speaking classmates at McGill university?**
  - Could you explain why?
- **Can you describe your interactions with your professors at McGill university?**
  - Is language ever an issue in your interactions with your professors at McGill university?

- o Do you feel professors treat you differently than they treat native-English-speaking students?
- o If yes
  - How so?
  - Do you remember a specific time when you felt you were being treated differently or you observed someone else being treated differently?
  - Why do you think this happened?
  - Was this a unique occurrence or something that happens frequently?
- **In your time at McGill, have you ever felt that others treat you differently because of your ability to express yourself in English?**
  - o If yes
    - How do you know?
    - Can you describe the situation?
    - Can you describe a specific situation where this happened to you?
    - Is this kind of situation something that happens to you frequently or is it unusual?
- **In your time at McGill, have you ever felt that others treat you differently because you use languages other than English?**
  - o How do you know?
  - o Can you describe the situation?
  - o By whom?
    - Native speakers of English?
    - Non-native speakers of English?
    - Professors?
    - Classmates?
- **I can see from your demographic survey that you are doing a master's thesis, what influenced that decision?**
  - o Can you describe your experience so far while working on your master's thesis?
  - o Has language been a big factor in your master's thesis work?
  - o Do you think it's unusual for international students to do a thesis track for their master's degree?
    - Why do you feel that way?

--- OR ---

- **I can see from your demographic survey that you are not doing a master's thesis, what influenced that decision?**
  - o Did your language background have anything to do with that decision?
  - o Did anyone tell you it would be too difficult to do a thesis because of your language background?
- **Why were you interested in participating in this study? What do you want people to know about language use at McGill?**
- **Those are all the questions I had for you, do you have any questions for me, or anything else you would like to add?**