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Bibliographic Citations

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For this assignment I worked through cited-in sources, cited references, and subject searched databases. My main area of investigation was researching oppositional sources. Admittedly, I found it difficult to find credible (not to mention substantial) sources that were against Language Diversity. What I did gain in the process, however, was insightful context on the topic.

I began this research by asking myself a very general question, that is, what is the opposite of Language Diversity? My conclusion settled it held some monolingual position. After a few quick Google searches to get the ground going, I found news articles written on an "English Only" movement in the United States. Though not new, there were some articles surfacing the web from time to time. I was able to locate more sources by searching this subject title as a key phrase. The argument I found here is quite straight forward believing that the U.S. should adopt English to be used at all levels of government. Those in favor (Pro-English platform speakers) make their statement declaring: "In a pluralistic nation such as ours, the function of government should be to foster and support the similarities that united us, rather than institutionalize the differences that divide us" (access: BBC news).

This movement has always been tied to politics wherein the U.S. (especially with our most recent elections) works conjointly with mass media, public backlash, critique and strongly worded opinions. For that reason I've found it difficult to develop a full oppositional claim. Moreover, part of that movement calls "to end bilingual education in favor of language immersion programs in English at American public schools" which with a bit of knowledge on this subject, contradicts much of what research linguistic professionals and academic scholars advocate for.

From these related searches I found myself look at Arizona as a case-study for being one of the only states to ever adopt this policy. In 2010 the Wall Street Journal reported that "the Arizona Department of Education recently began telling school districts that teachers whose spoken English it deems to be heavily accented or ungrammatical must be removed from classes for students still learning English." Using the cited in tools I was able to see where/ how this source was used which landed me on the Linguistic Society of America webpage. Here I found a rebuttal signed by notable American linguistics stating it "undermines the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of English by non-native speakers and may lead to additional harmful socioeconomic effects." They present this position on educated "facts" introducing a list of brief discussion topics based on "decades of scientific investigation in the nature of language and of language acquisition and learning."

The argument was quite resourceful helping me rethink/ reframe the argument in favor of language diversity. While the statement was made in response to Arizona, I found a lot of their key points compelling asserting that there is no such thing as "unaccented" speech" and that is helpful for all students (English language learners as well as native speakers) to be exposed to foreign- accented speech as a part of their education. Similarly, they stated that this policy "affirms pre-existing patterns of linguistic bias and harmful 'linguistic profiling'."

From this enlightening pool of information, I found myself fascinated on the concept of 'linguistic profiling' -- a term I was not familiar with before though very present (and unspoken of) in our common lives. In short, linguistic profiling is a way of identifying and characterizing individuals based on a person's dialect and accent. The issue with this, as with many of the other forms of discrimination commonly spoken about, is when one consciously acts on these assessments which can severely diminish the chances of equal opportunity and access for minorities or subgroups. Using cited in reference tools my research traced to Dr. John Baugh (professor and linguistic) who coined the term around twenty years back. This alone helped add new voices ranging from higher education blog posts to TEDTalks (not to mention one of them is from *the* voice of Baugh himself).

To add a bit more perspective on the topic I did a quick google search comparison between racial profiling and linguistic profiling. To my surprise racial profiling yielded 22,200,000 search results whereas linguistic profiling resulted in only 1,590,000. While this reaffirms my point of view that this form of discrimination is less spoken about, a lot more questions really come to mind. Why is it that this isn't as formally discussed? Is it taboo? And who is not being represented? Thinking back to last week's article (Wong), it made me pause and reflect on learning how to ask better questions.

Finally, after jumping around citation and hyperlinks I landed on this last source I might consider adding to my portfolio. Coming back to the 'English only' argument, one of few credible points I see come from a first-year college writing professor Peter Elbow in his journal article titled "Inviting the Mother Tongue." Speaking about the conflicts and benefits of Standard Written English (he calls SWE), Elbow writes "On the one hand, I feel an obligation not to force all my students to conform to the language and culture of mainstream English. (See "The Students' Right To Their Own Language" [Committee].) On the other hand, I feel an obligation to give all my students access to the written language of power and prestige."

From reading this, briefly, I think the argument he's trying to make here is saying that by pushing SWE (i.e. his definition of mother tongue), his students become better equipped and empowered in learning how to participate in positions ruled by management, majority populations, and power. It's a lot of research so far and right now I could use any advice for learning where/ how to move forward with all this!!!