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Linguistic Discrimination: An Issue of Research and Collaboration in Philosophy, Psychology, and Academia

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Abstract

Linguistic discrimination can have adverse consequences on individuals, organizations, and society at large. This paper provides an overview of the manifestation of this phenomenon in philosophy, psychology, and academia. It also discusses various research methods and techniques to combat linguistic bias and promote linguistic justice while highlighting weaknesses in current research and offering future directions for investigation. The authors highlight the need for expanding the study of marginalized languages worldwide and advocate for researchers to test ideological claims, increase replicability, and employ new approaches to studying linguistically marginalized languages and populations. Ultimately, this overview article aims to inspire future researchers to take multifaceted, multidisciplinary approaches to combat linguistic discrimination. The authors recommend that institutions of higher education and funding bodies play a critical role in promoting linguistic inclusivity in academia through language support, multilingualism, language-inclusive pedagogy, funding and scholarships, language and culture immersion programs, interdisciplinary collaboration, partnerships with local communities, evaluation and revision of language policies. These efforts can help decrease the consequences of linguistic discrimination and have positive impacts on academia and society through language inclusivity.

Keywords: linguistic bias; linguistic discrimination; linguistic justice; philosophical psychology

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1. Introduction

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Linguistic discrimination is a form of prejudice or bias towards individuals who use a different language or dialect compared to the dominant language in a particular society (Pauwels & Winter, 2006; Pool, 1987; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). This type of discrimination is a pervasive issue that affects people across the world, and its negative effects can range from employment and housing discrimination to lower levels of educational achievement (Walker & Dayton, 2012). Despite the significant impact that linguistic discrimination can have on individuals and communities, there is still ongoing debate about the nature and definition of this phenomenon (Pavlenko, 2014). One of the main challenges in understanding linguistic discrimination is the fact that it can take many different forms and can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and cultural background (Lippi-Green, 1997). As a result, there are several different approaches to defining and understanding linguistic discrimination, each of which provides a unique perspective on the phenomenon.

One approach to linguistic discrimination is the sociolinguistic perspective, which views language as a social phenomenon that is shaped by society and culture (Gumperz, 1982). This approach recognizes that language is a powerful tool that can be used to express identity, convey cultural values, and establish social relationships (Fishman, 1991). In the context of linguistic discrimination, this perspective emphasizes the role that language plays in creating social inequality, as well as how language use can be used to exclude and marginalize individuals who are seen as "different" (Crawford, 2012). Another approach to linguistic discrimination is the linguistic rights perspective, which views language as a human right that should be protected and preserved (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001; UNESCO, 2018). This approach recognizes the important role that language plays in enabling individuals to participate in society and exercise their rights and freedoms (Coupland, 2016). In the context of linguistic discrimination, this perspective emphasizes the need to protect the rights of individuals to use their native language, as well as the importance of promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity (Lippi-Green, 1997). A third approach to linguistic discrimination is the linguistic justice perspective, which views language as a key factor in determining access to justice and the ability to participate in the legal system (García & Li Wei, 2014). This perspective recognizes that individuals who are not proficient in the dominant language are often excluded from the legal system and are unable to access justice and obtain fair treatment (Matsuda, 1989). In the context of linguistic discrimination, this perspective emphasizes the need to ensure that individuals have access to legal services in their native language and that the legal system is inclusive and culturally responsive (Tran et al., 2018).

Despite the different perspectives and definitions of linguistic discrimination, it is important to acknowledge that each approach provides valuable insights into this complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). However, the fact that different approaches yield different accounts of what linguistic discrimination is like also highlights the ongoing challenges in understanding and addressing this issue (Pavlenko, 2014). One of the main implications of this situation is the need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing linguistic discrimination (Lippi-Green, 1997). Given the complex and interrelated nature of linguistic discrimination, it is unlikely that any single approach will be able to provide a complete and accurate picture of this phenomenon (Kiang & Bhattacharjee, 2016). Instead, a more integrated approach that draws on insights from multiple perspectives is likely to be more effective in addressing linguistic discrimination and promoting linguistic justice and equality

(García & Li Wei, 2014). The different approaches to linguistic discrimination yield different accounts of what linguistic discrimination is like highlighting the ongoing challenges in understanding and addressing this issue. However, this situation also provides an opportunity for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing linguistic discrimination, as well as the need for ongoing research, analysis, and policy development in this field. This broad overview paper explores many of the major developments in linguistic discrimination to better understand this phenomenon and suggest future directions for the field.

2. Linguistic Bias in Philosophy and Academia More Generally

Both intentional and unintentional linguistic discrimination can have negative consequences for individuals and society (American Psychological Association [APA], 2021; Dovchin, 2020). Linguistic bias refers to the phenomenon where stereotypical language shapes and influences the way people think, communicate, and understand others (Beukeboom & Burgers, 2017). This can result in unequal and unfair treatment of certain individuals or groups, especially in areas such as philosophy and academia where language plays a crucial role in the development and dissemination of ideas and knowledge (Tsuda, 2007). This section examines the issue of linguistic discrimination in philosophy, given philosophy's strong influence on academia and psychology by proxy for ages, and subsequently its implications for academia and ways in which linguistic discrimination can be addressed.

Although philosophy is a widely studied subject, it has faced criticism for being biased toward certain viewpoints, as noted by Brownstein and Saul (2016), Erden (2021), and Olson (1977). Additionally, there have been concerns about the culturally biased language used in philosophical discourse, which can restrict the perspectives and experiences of particular individuals and groups, as highlighted by Bruya (2017) and De Cruz (2018).

One example of linguistic bias in philosophy is the use of gendered language. Historically, philosophy has been dominated by male voices and perspectives, which has resulted in the use of male-centric language that assumes a universal male experience. This can lead to the marginalization and exclusion of female philosophers and their perspectives, as well as perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes (Richardson, 2010). For instance, feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1973) argued that the use of masculine-centric language reinforced the idea that femininity is defined in relation to masculinity rather than as a separate and distinct category.

Another example of linguistic bias in academia is the use of Eurocentric language (especially English) and perspectives (Schwitzgebel et al., 2018). Western academia and philosophy more specifically have traditionally been dominated by the ideas and perspectives of white European men, leading to the marginalization and exclusion of non-Western philosophies and perspectives (Van Norden, 2017). This has resulted in a limited understanding of the world, as it fails to take into account the diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals and cultures outside of the Western world (Olberding, 2015).

Linguistic bias in academia more generally is also a significant issue. This can manifest in various ways, such as the use of language that perpetuates stereotypes (Orgeira-Crespo et al., 2021) or the privileging of certain languages or dialects over others (Schwitzgebel et al., 2018; Zhu, 2021). This can result in unequal treatment and opportunities for individuals and groups based on their linguistic background, leading to the marginalization and exclusion of certain perspectives and experiences in academic arenas such as publishing (Politzer-Ahles et al., 2020).

For example, the underrepresentation of minority groups in academia (Whittaker et al., 2015) might be partial because of linguistic bias as their languages or dialects might not be valued or recognized as legitimate forms of expression. This could lead to a lack of representation of these perspectives in academic discourse and a failure to take into account the unique experiences and challenges faced by these communities. Moreover, research has shown that linguistic bias can also impact the performance and self-esteem of individuals, especially students (Dovchin, 2020),

who may feel that their language and cultural background are not valued or respected in academic settings.

To address linguistic bias in philosophy and academia, several steps can be taken. Some of these ideas were borrowed from the American Psychological Association's (APA; 2021) *Inclusive Language Guidelines.* While they might be generalized to other academic fields, it would be recommended that each field develop its own set of guidelines that are appropriate to them. Firstly, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the issue, as well as its impact on individuals and communities. This requires a critical examination of the language and terminology used in these fields, and an effort to ensure that it is inclusive and representative of a range of perspectives and experiences (APA, 2021).

Another way to address linguistic bias is to encourage the use of gender-neutral language (APA, 2021). This can involve the use of gender-neutral pronouns and the avoidance of gendered terms that reinforce harmful stereotypes. Additionally, it is important to promote the use of inclusive language in academic discourse, such as the use of terminology that recognizes and values the experiences and perspectives of minoritized groups.

In academic discourse, it is crucial to use inclusive language that recognizes and values the experiences and perspectives of minoritized groups. This means using terminology that acknowledges and respects diverse identities, cultures, and backgrounds. This can be accomplished by carefully selecting language that is inclusive and avoids perpetuating harmful biases or stereotypes. By promoting the use of gender-neutral and inclusive language, we can create a more equitable and welcoming environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds. It can also help to foster greater understanding and respect for the experiences and perspectives of those who have historically been marginalized or excluded. Therefore, individuals and institutions need to make a conscious effort to use language that is both respectful and inclusive.

In addition to promoting inclusive language, it is also important to encourage diversity in academia, particularly in terms of representation (Whittaker et al., 2015). This can involve recruiting and promoting individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as creating opportunities for them to participate in academic discourse and contribute their perspectives. Moreover, creating inclusive and supportive environments in academic settings, where individuals feel valued and respected regardless of their linguistic background, might also help to address linguistic bias.

Linguistic bias is a significant issue in both philosophy and academia, and its implications can be far-reaching. From perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes to marginalizing and excluding certain perspectives and experiences, linguistic bias can harm individuals and communities (Fast et al., 2016). However, by recognizing and acknowledging the issue, promoting inclusive language and diversity, and creating supportive environments, it is possible to address linguistic bias and ensure that these fields are more representative and equitable.

3. Does Anglophone Philosophy Have a Problem with Linguistic Bias?

Anglophone philosophy refers to philosophical thought and traditions that originated in or were primarily developed in and are currently being practiced by English-speaking philosophers (Schwitzgebel et al., 2018). In recent years, there has been growing criticism that this tradition is marred by linguistic bias, with many philosophers arguing that the very foundations of Anglophone philosophy are rooted in a narrow and ethnocentric view of language and linguistic meaning (Schwitzgebel et al., 2018). This section examines the evidence for this claim, exploring how linguistic bias may have influenced the development of Anglophone philosophy and considering the implications of these biases for academia's future.

Linguistic bias is a well-established phenomenon, with research demonstrating how language can influence our understanding of the world and our interpretation of reality. For example, research has shown that the use of gendered language can reinforce gender stereotypes,

with people more likely to associate certain traits and behaviors with individuals based on their gender when language consistently refers to them in gendered terms (Lakoff, 1975).

In Anglophone philosophy, there has been a growing recognition of how linguistic bias may have influenced the development of this tradition (Schwitzgebel et al., 2018). For example, some philosophers have argued that the focus on the analytical tradition, which emphasizes the analysis of language and meaning, has led to a narrow and ethnocentric view of language and linguistic meaning. This has resulted in a tradition that is dominated by English-speaking philosophers and is heavily influenced by the linguistic and cultural norms of Anglophone countries (Cheng & Wang, 2012; Kubota, 1998; Zaidi et al., 2022). This has been described as "linguistic imperialism" in which the dominant language and cultural norms of Anglophone philosophy serve to marginalize and exclude other philosophical traditions and perspectives (Chakrabarty, 2000).

One of the most significant ways in which linguistic bias has influenced Anglophone philosophy is through the privileging of a particular understanding of linguistic meaning. The analytical tradition, which has dominated Anglophone philosophy for much of the 20th century, has focused on the idea that meaning is derived from the use of language and that the meaning of a word or phrase can be determined through a careful analysis of its usage (Quine & Van, 1960). This view has been criticized for its narrow focus on linguistic meaning and its disregard for the broader social and cultural contexts in which language is used (Bhabha, 1994). For example, critics have argued that the analytical tradition's focus on linguistic meaning has led to a neglect of how power and ideology shape language and meaning, with the result that many important philosophical questions about the relationship between language, power, and social reality are left unaddressed (Butler, 1990).

The marginalization of non-English speaking philosophers and philosophical traditions is an area where the influence of linguistic bias in Anglophone philosophy has been demonstrated. As argued by Chakrabarty (2000), despite the rich and lengthy history of philosophy in countries such as India, China, and various African nations, these traditions are frequently underrepresented and undervalued in Anglophone philosophy. This has led to a situation in which the philosophical canon is dominated by a narrow set of ideas and perspectives, and alternative perspectives are often overlooked or dismissed as less valuable or less rigorous. This has significant implications for the diversity and inclusivity of the philosophical community, as well as for the development of new and innovative philosophical perspectives.

Despite these criticisms, some argue that linguistic bias is not a significant problem in Anglophone philosophy (Catala, 2022). These philosophers argue that the analytical tradition, while dominated by English-speaking philosophers, is based on universal principles of logic and reason that apply to all cultures and linguistic contexts. They further argue that the focus on language and meaning in the analytical tradition is not a form of linguistic imperialism, but rather an attempt to better understand the nature of linguistic meaning and the relationship between language and reality (Bekiyeva, 2022).

However, the growing body of research and criticism suggests that linguistic bias is indeed a significant problem in Anglophone philosophy. This is not to say that the analytical tradition is inherently flawed or that it lacks value. Rather, it is to acknowledge that this tradition is shaped by the cultural and linguistic norms of the English-speaking world and that this has significant implications for the diversity and inclusivity of the philosophical community.

The available evidence indicates that linguistic bias is indeed a prevalent issue in Anglophone philosophy. This is demonstrated by the marginalization of non-English speaking philosophers and philosophical traditions, the restricted focus on linguistic meaning within the analytical tradition, and the neglect of the broader social and cultural contexts in which language operates. Addressing this problem requires a concerted effort to broaden the philosophical canon and incorporate alternative perspectives and traditions. Doing so not only enhances the inclusivity

and diversity of the philosophical community but also contributes to a more refined and nuanced understanding of the relationship between language, meaning, and reality.

4. Are There Methods that Can be Used to Understand Unintentional Linguistic Discrimination?

Linguistic discrimination refers to a type of prejudice and discrimination that is rooted in language use (Pool, 1987; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). It can manifest in either intentional or unintentional forms, and in either case, can result in significant negative consequences on individuals and society at large. Intentional linguistic discrimination occurs when a person uses language as a tool of oppression or to deliberately marginalize or exclude others. For example, language policies that are designed to suppress minority languages or to enforce the dominant language can result in intentional linguistic discrimination (Bhola & wa Thiong'o, 1987). Furthermore, such policies that promote the dominant language at the expense of minority languages can lead to the marginalization and oppression of minority language communities (Fishman, 1991).

Intentional linguistic discrimination can also take the form of hate speech, verbal abuse, accent bullying, or linguistic stereotyping (Dovchin, 2020; Marques, 2022). This can be directed at individuals based on their accent, dialect, or choice of language (Dovchin, 2019; 2020). For example, a study by Milroy (2002) found that individuals who spoke with a non-standard dialect were more likely to experience verbal abuse and discrimination compared to those who spoke with a standard dialect.

Unintentional linguistic discrimination, on the other hand, occurs when a person is not aware of the effects of their language use on others (Franco & Maas, 1996). This can occur when individuals have different language backgrounds and are not familiar with the cultural norms and expectations associated with different languages (Hambleton et al., 2004). For example, a study by Zhu & Boxer (2021) found that individuals from different linguistic backgrounds may have different expectations for turn-taking and interaction norms in conversation, leading to misunderstandings and unintentional discrimination. This section explores methods that can be used effectively to understand unintentional linguistic discrimination.

First, survey data and self-reported experiences are valuable sources of information about the extent and nature of linguistic discrimination (Clark et al., 2020). Surveys can be used to collect data on the frequency and severity of linguistic discrimination, as well as the contexts in which it occurs. Self-reported qualitative experiences, on the other hand, can provide a more nuanced and personal perspective (Barker et al., 2016) on the impact of linguistic discrimination on individuals' lives. Both survey data and self-reported experiences can be used to identify patterns and trends in linguistic discrimination, as well as to inform policy and practice aimed at reducing it.

Second, observational studies and natural experiments (Barker et al., 2016) could be useful methods for examining the impact of linguistic discrimination in real-world settings. Observational studies can be used to observe and document instances of linguistic discrimination as they occur, providing a detailed understanding of the behavior and attitudes that contribute to it. Natural experiments, in which the effects of language use are compared in similar situations, can be used to isolate the impact of linguistic discrimination and to assess its magnitude.

Third, linguistic analysis and the use of computational methods (Heine & Narrog, 2015) can provide insights into the linguistic mechanisms that underlie unintentional linguistic discrimination. Linguistic analysis can be used to identify language-based microaggressions and implicit biases in language use, while computational methods can be used to quantify and measure linguistic discrimination on a large scale. For example, sentiment analysis and text classification algorithms can be used to analyze language in social media and online forums to identify instances of linguistic discrimination and study its patterns and trends.

Fourth, laboratory-based experiments (Heine & Narrog, 2015) can be used to study the psychological processes underlying linguistic discrimination. These experiments can manipulate language use and measure the impact of linguistic discrimination on individuals' behavior and attitudes, providing a controlled and systematic approach to understanding its causes.

Finally, interdisciplinary collaborations between linguists, social scientists, and computer scientists can help to integrate and synthesize these various methods and sources of evidence and develop a more comprehensive understanding of unintentional linguistic discrimination. Interdisciplinary collaborations can also bring new perspectives and approaches to the study of linguistic discrimination, and help to develop innovative solutions to address it.

Numerous approaches and sources of evidence can be employed to investigate the issue of unintentional linguistic discrimination. These include surveys, self-reports, observational studies, natural experiments, linguistic analysis, and laboratory-based experiments. However, it is crucial to engage in interdisciplinary collaborations to synthesize and integrate these various sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of linguistic discrimination.

Moreover, to address current limitations in measuring implicit phenomena, it is necessary to develop innovative methods that can effectively measure the extent and nature of linguistic bias. By leveraging these methods and sources of evidence, it is possible to gain a deeper comprehension of the underlying causes and consequences of unintentional linguistic discrimination. This knowledge can then be used to devise more effective solutions to combat the pervasive issue of linguistic bias.

5. Are There Any Issues of Linguistic Justice/Injustice Surrounding the Use of Some Approaches to Academia over Others?

Linguistic justice refers to the fair and equal treatment of language users and the recognition of their linguistic rights (Van Parijs, 2002). In the academic context, there are several issues related to linguistic justice that arise from the use of some approaches to academia over others. These issues stem from the fact that dominant language and linguistic practices often marginalize minority languages and language users, resulting in linguistic discrimination and unequal opportunities for those who do not conform to the dominant norms. This section examines some of the ways in which linguistic justice is violated in academia and the implications for language users who are marginalized by these practices.

One of the main ways in which linguistic justice is violated in academia is through the use of a single dominant language as the medium of instruction. For example, in many countries, the use of English as the sole language of instruction has been criticized as a form of linguistic imperialism, as it disadvantages students who are not native speakers of English (Phillipson, 1992) or who do not speak standardized English. These students are often forced to learn and use a foreign language to participate in academic discourse, which can have negative effects on their academic performance and self-esteem (Karpovic et al., 2022). Moreover, the use of a single dominant language can lead to the marginalization of minority languages and the cultures associated with them, as students may be discouraged from using their native languages in academic settings and may be denied the opportunity to develop their linguistic skills and knowledge of their own cultures (Tavares, 2022).

Another issue related to linguistic injustice in academia is the unequal treatment of different languages and language varieties. The consequences of using non-standard dialects have been of interest to scholars for many years (e.g., Rickford, 1996). Standard language ideologies often privilege certain languages and dialects over others, leading to linguistic prejudice and discrimination against those who use non-standard varieties (Blommaert, 2013). This can result in the stigmatization of language users, the denial of opportunities for academic advancement, and the marginalization of their cultures and identities (Lippi-Green, 1997). For example, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has been historically marginalized in academic settings

and has been stigmatized as a non-standard, uneducated variety of English (Knapp, 2015; Rickford, 1999). This has had negative consequences for African-American students who use AAVE, as they may be discouraged from using their native language and may be denied opportunities to develop their linguistic skills and knowledge of their cultural heritage (Rickford & Rickford, 2000).

Another area in which linguistic justice is violated in academia is through the use of language testing and assessment practices that are biased against certain language users (Hernandez, 1994; Macswan & Rolstad, 2006)). For example, language proficiency tests are often designed to assess the ability of language users to conform to dominant language norms, rather than to recognize their linguistic skills and abilities (Canagarajah, 2006). This can result in the unfair treatment of language users who do not conform to dominant norms and may be denied opportunities for academic advancement based on their test scores (Cummins, 2008). Additionally, language assessment practices that are based on monocultural and monolingual norms may be culturally and linguistically biased, leading to the unfair treatment of language users who are members of minority cultures and who use minority languages (Hornberger, 2008; Wyman et al., 2010).

Finally, linguistic justice is violated in academia through the lack of support for multilingualism and multilingual education. Although the majority of the world's population is multilingual, many academic institutions continue to adopt monolingual ideologies and policies that do not support the use of multiple languages in academic settings (Canagarajah, 2006). This has resulted in the marginalization of multilingual students and the denial of opportunities for academic advancement for those who are not fluent in the dominant language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Moreover, the lack of support for multilingual education can lead to the erosion of linguistic diversity and the loss of linguistic resources, as minority languages and cultures may not be passed on to future generations (Cenoz, 2013).

In conclusion, the use of some approaches to academia over others can have serious implications for linguistic justice. Dominant language ideologies and the use of a single dominant language as the medium of instruction can lead to the marginalization of minority languages and language users, while unequal treatment of different languages and language varieties can result in linguistic prejudice and discrimination. Additionally, language testing and assessment practices that are biased against certain language users can unfairly limit their opportunities for academic advancement, and the lack of support for multilingualism and multilingual education can result in the erosion of linguistic diversity and the loss of linguistic resources. To address these issues, it is important for academic institutions to adopt linguistic justice principles and to provide equal opportunities and support for all language users, regardless of their linguistic background or proficiency in a dominant language.

6. How Can Insights Gleaned Using Different Methodologies and Evidence Sources be Integrated into a Coherent Picture of Unintentional Linguistic Discrimination?

Unintentional linguistic discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of individuals based on their language or accent, regardless of intent (Dovchin, 2020). This form of discrimination can have significant impacts on individuals, leading to lower self-esteem, decreased social mobility, and reduced economic opportunities (Porter & Washington, 1993). The study of unintentional linguistic discrimination is interdisciplinary and draws upon theories and methods from sociology, psychology, linguistics, and communication studies (Hudley et al., 2018). This section explores how insights from different methodologies and evidence sources can be integrated into a coherent picture of unintentional linguistic discrimination. It aims to examine the implications of different approaches to the study of linguistic discrimination yielding different accounts of what linguistic discrimination is like and the implications this has for addressing and preventing this type of discrimination.

One approach to studying unintentional linguistic discrimination is through laboratory experiments, which allow for the manipulation of linguistic variables in controlled settings. For example, Purnell et al. (1999) conducted a study in which participants rated job applicants based on job interviews that varied in accent and language. The results showed that individuals with non-native accents were rated lower in competence, hireability, and likability compared to those with native accents, regardless of their qualifications. These findings provide evidence for the existence of unintentional linguistic discrimination and the negative impacts of non-native accents in the workplace.

One way to investigate unintentional linguistic discrimination is by conducting observational studies, which entail documenting and observing actual situations (Blank et al., 2004) where linguistic discrimination may occur. For instance, Erker and Otheguy (2016) conducted a study in New York City where they observed and documented cases of linguistic discrimination. They discovered that individuals who spoke Spanish or other non-dominant languages were frequently exposed to negative attitudes and conduct, such as being disregarded, interrupted, or spoken down to. These observations illustrate concrete instances of linguistic discrimination that individuals could encounter in their everyday lives.

Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, can also provide valuable insights into the experiences of individuals who have been subjected to unintentional linguistic discrimination. For example, Van Laer and Janssens (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with individuals who had experienced linguistic discrimination in the workplace. They found that these individuals often felt marginalized and isolated, leading to decreased job satisfaction and reduced opportunities for advancement. Interviews can provide a rich understanding of the subjective experiences of linguistic discrimination, allowing researchers to gain a deeper understanding of its effects.

Quantitative surveys can also provide valuable information about the prevalence and impact of unintentional linguistic discrimination. For example, Román et al. (2019) conducted a nationwide survey of individuals who had experienced linguistic discrimination. They found that the majority of individuals reported experiencing discrimination based on their language or accent, with the most common forms of discrimination involving being teased, being treated differently by co-workers, and being excluded from social activities. These findings provide evidence for the widespread nature of unintentional linguistic discrimination and its negative effects on individuals.

Finally, the study of unintentional linguistic discrimination can also benefit from the analysis of discourse and language use in various contexts, including media and political discourse. For example, Dragojevc et al. (2016) conducted a content analysis of Spanish-language news media, finding that negative portrayals of Spanish speakers were common and reinforced linguistic stereotypes. These findings highlight how linguistic discrimination can be perpetuated through language and the media, leading to the reinforcement of negative attitudes and beliefs.

The study of unintentional linguistic discrimination draws upon a variety of methodologies and evidence sources, including laboratory experiments, observational studies, qualitative interviews, quantitative surveys, and discourse analysis. By integrating these different perspectives, researchers can gain a more complete understanding of the nature and effects of unintentional linguistic discrimination. There are also likely aspects of unintentional discrimination that current methods are inadequate to address. Therefore, new innovative methods that harness modern technology should be created and developed. Through this interdisciplinary approach, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex ways in which language and linguistic discrimination shape individuals' lives and experiences.

7. Some Approaches to Combating Unintentional Linguistic Discrimination

In recent years, there have been various approaches proposed to combat unintentional linguistic discrimination. Some of these approaches include linguistic awareness training, language proficiency testing, and the use of language interpretation services (Preston, 1996). However, the question of whether some of these approaches should be prioritized over others is a complex one and requires a closer examination of their benefits and drawbacks.

Linguistic awareness training is a process of educating individuals about the impact of language on others and how to avoid unintentional linguistic discrimination (Lucas & Villegas, 2010). This approach involves teaching individuals about the importance of language, the different forms of linguistic prejudice, and how to use language inclusively and respectfully. The main advantage of linguistic awareness training is that it can help individuals develop a deeper understanding of the impact of language on others and can empower them to use language more inclusively and respectfully. This, in turn, can help to reduce the incidence of unintentional linguistic discrimination.

Another approach to combating unintentional linguistic discrimination is language proficiency testing. This involves testing individuals on their ability to speak, read, and write in a particular language, and using the results of these tests to determine their level of proficiency (Brantmeier et al., 2012). The main advantage of language proficiency testing is that it can provide a standardized measure of an individual's language abilities, which can be useful in certain professional settings, such as in the workplace or the healthcare industry (Rumsey et al., 2016). However, one drawback of this approach is that it can perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce linguistic prejudice. Additionally, language proficiency testing can also lead to the marginalization of individuals who do not have high levels of proficiency in a particular language (Shohamy, 2013), even if they can effectively communicate in other ways.

Finally, the use of language interpretation services is another approach to combating unintentional linguistic discrimination. This involves providing individuals with access to interpreters who can assist them in communicating effectively in a variety of settings (Origlia Ikhilor et al., 2019). One potential benefit of utilizing this approach is the ability to bridge communication barriers between individuals speaking different languages, thereby reducing the incidence of unintentional linguistic discrimination. However, it is important to note that a significant drawback of this approach is its cost and limited accessibility, which may pose a challenge for individuals in need of such services.

It can be argued that there is no single approach to combating unintentional linguistic discrimination that is superior to others. Each of the approaches discussed has its advantages and disadvantages, and the most effective approach will depend on the specific context in which the discrimination is taking place. To effectively address unintentional linguistic discrimination, it is important to take a multi-faceted approach that includes a combination of linguistic awareness training, language proficiency testing, the use of language interpretation services, and the creation of new, innovative methods.

8. Implications for Higher Education Institutions and Funding Bodies to Help Level the Linguistic Playing Field in Academia

It is important to recognize the need for effective policies and programs that address linguistic discrimination and promote linguistic justice (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001; UNESCO, 2018). This includes initiatives that promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity, as well as policies and programs that protect the rights of individuals to use their native language, both in their personal and professional lives (Lippi-Green, 1997). It also involves creating inclusive and culturally responsive educational systems, legal systems, and workplace environments that recognize the importance of language and that value linguistic diversity (Matsuda, 1989).

Institutions of higher education and related funding bodies have a critical role to play in leveling the linguistic playing field in academia. Language barriers are one of the major obstacles to academic progress, particularly for international (and likely other linguistically marginalized) students, who often face significant difficulties in navigating the academic and social spheres of their host countries (Koo & Nyunt, 2023). In this context, there are several steps that higher education institutions and related funding bodies can take to help level the linguistic playing field and support linguistically disadvantaged students in their academic pursuits (Byun et al., 2011 as outlined below.

Provide Language Support and Resources

Institutions of higher education can provide language support services and resources to help linguistically disadvantaged students improve their language skills. This can include language classes, tutoring, and online resources such as language learning software and online courses. In addition, institutions can also provide translation and interpretation services to help students better understand course materials and navigate academic and social contexts (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002).

Encourage Multilingualism

Higher education institutions can encourage multilingualism by creating a supportive and inclusive environment that values diverse linguistic backgrounds and cultures (Krulatz et al., 2018). This can be achieved through programs such as language exchanges, language clubs, and language-specific classes, which help students develop their language skills and foster cross-cultural understanding.

Offering Language-Inclusive Pedagogy

Institutions can offer language-inclusive pedagogy by incorporating language development into the curriculum, and by providing training and support to instructors on how to accommodate students with diverse language backgrounds (Lemmi et al., 2019). For example, instructors can use visual aids, incorporate multiple languages into course materials, and provide real-world examples that students can relate to, regardless of their language background.

Provide Funding and Scholarships

Institutions and funders can provide funding and scholarships to support linguistically disadvantaged students in their language development and academics (Li, 2023; Martirosyan et al., 2019). This can help offset the costs of language classes, tutoring, and other resources, and can also provide students with the financial support they need to continue their studies.

Support Language and Culture Immersion Programmes

Institutions and funders can support language and culture immersion programs, which provide students with opportunities to live and study in a foreign country and immerse themselves in the language and culture of their host country (Levine, 2009). This can help students develop their language skills and build intercultural competencies, which are valuable assets in today's globalized world.

Encourage Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Institutions can encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among students and faculty, which can help break down linguistic barriers and foster cross-cultural understanding (Balva et al., 2022). This can be achieved through programs such as research collaborations, study abroad programs, and student-led initiatives, which bring together students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Build Partnerships with Local Communities

Institutions can build partnerships with local communities, which can help students connect with local resources and support systems. This can include partnerships with local schools, community organizations, and businesses, which can provide students with opportunities to practice their language skills and engage with the local community.

Evaluate and Revise Language Policies

Institutions and funders can evaluate and revise their language policies, to ensure that they are inclusive and equitable and that they support the needs of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds (Coady et al., 2016). This can include revisiting admission requirements, language proficiency tests, language support services, and more to ensure that they are accessible and effective for all students.

9. Future Directions

Since there are divergent approaches to investigating linguistic discrimination – and an absence of consensus in this field – there is a continued need for research and analysis. This article serves as a call to action for scholars to engage in rigorous testing of ideological assertions regarding linguistic varieties, enhance replicability, and broaden the scope of approaches to studying linguistic discrimination among marginalized populations and languages worldwide. To this end, the article aims to inspire future researchers to explore the intricacies of language perception not only within English-speaking nations but also globally, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of how to address linguistic discrimination from a multi-faceted perspective.

Given the evolving nature of language and society, it is important to continuously examine and re-evaluate how linguistic discrimination is experienced and expressed, as well as how it can be addressed and prevented (Barwell, 2003). This requires a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach that draws on insights from fields such as sociology, linguistics, psychology, education, and law, among others (Fishman, 1991), including philosophy. As noted above, institutions of higher education and related funding bodies have a critical role to play in leveling the linguistic playing field in academia. By providing language support and resources, encouraging multilingualism, offering language-inclusive pedagogy, providing funding and scholarships, supporting language and culture immersion programs, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, building partnerships with local communities, and evaluating and revising language policies, institutions can help linguistically disadvantaged students overcome the language barrier and achieve academic success.

10. Conclusions

Linguistic discrimination is a phenomenon that has been observed in various academic fields, such as psychology and philosophy. It is widely believed that the biased influence of Anglophone philosophy on academia as a whole has played a role in perpetuating this issue. Therefore, to fully comprehend the complexity of this phenomenon, it is essential to consider a diverse range of factors, including cognitive and social factors. Such an approach would enable a more nuanced analysis of the issue and facilitate the development of effective strategies to address it. This article focused on the adverse effects of linguistic discrimination; whether intentional or unintentional, linguistic discrimination can have negative consequences for individuals, organizations, and society. Linguistic bias, which refers to the influence of stereotypical language on people's thinking and communication, can lead to unfair treatment of certain individuals or groups, including in academia, psychology, and philosophy. The use of male-centric language and Eurocentric perspectives are examples of linguistic bias in philosophy and psychology while perpetuating stereotypes and privileging certain languages or dialects are examples of linguistic bias in academia more generally. It is crucial to be aware of the power of language and strive to use language respectfully and inclusively to promote linguistic diversity and reduce discrimination. Research methods and teaching inclusive conversation techniques can be applied to understand and combat linguistic bias and promote linguistic justice. Future interdisciplinary collaborative research should continue to address the weaknesses in this area and explore implications for the benefit of all individuals and society as a whole.

It is important for individuals to be aware of the power of language and to strive to use language respectfully and inclusively (APA, 2021). By doing so, people can promote linguistic diversity and reduce discrimination. By promoting linguistic justice and equality, we can create a more inclusive and culturally responsive society that values linguistic diversity and recognizes the important role that language plays in shaping our lives and our world.

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