

MEMO: I change a few structural, grammatical, and punctuation errors and revised my conclusion, in conjunction with that I also expanded on my experiences of diversity in my field or as came to this school to pursue my field. Also changed the title of the book to italics

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130: English

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### ***English: One of Many***

An important topic of discussion brewing within the english and Communication community focuses on how the english language has previously and is currently being taught within the classroom, stressing the importance of breaking through systematically white barriers expressed and reinforced through english. For example, should only one language be taught as a constantly required curriculum within schools? Should there be a standard for the "english language?" Is the process of teaching Multicultural and Ethnically Diverse children standard english a way of stripping them of their cultural beginnings, forcing them to recognize white english as the only language they should speak, think, or write in?

Highly decorated writer, teacher, and black language activist Dr. April Baker-Bell is one of the advocates leading the charge in the conversation that addresses these questions and educates readers and teachers with her book, "*Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*." Which focuses on how black language is a unique and cultural way of life that's nurtured over time and how its effectiveness, uses, and presence should not be belittled in the classroom setting. The book also focuses on how anti-racist language and practices should be embedded into the english curriculum and how "standard english" is a construct of a society in which the white male is dominant. In the first chapter alone, Dr. Baker-Bell describes her journey from a young child growing up with a love of black language to her time as a teacher and researcher dealing with the linguistic battleground in the classroom. "I credit my students for my entry into what Dr. G refers to as the "language wars..." I recognized that my students were communicating in a language that was valid and necessary at home, in school, and in the hood, but I was receiving pressure from school administrators to get the students to use the "Language of the school." Dr. Baker-Bell goes on to state that even between other teachers that acknowledge these everyday battles, relative conceptions about how to alleviate them were misguided or uneducated, as some were vehement that code-switching (a term used to define when a person transitions from their natural way of speaking to another that accommodates standard english or a white demographic), was the answer. However, as Dr. Baker-Bell argues, "If we as teachers truly believe that code-switching will dismantle white supremacy, we have a problem... Eric Garner was choked to death by a police officer while saying, "I cannot breathe." Would you consider "I cannot breathe" "standard english" syntax?" The "*Linguistic Justice*" writer ends the chapter with how she created this book and how its subsequent chapters can aid teachers, educators, and readers change their way of thinking about language and how to express it in any educational setting.

Like Dr. Baker-Bell, many organizations strive for the same goal, to challenge the discussion about language and create a more inclusive and diverse understanding of what makes language, one example is the CCCC. The CCCC or, "The Conference on College Composition and Communication," strives to guide the educational standards of english by writing policies and statements on educational issues at the college level. Following the previous topic of Black language, an example of the CCCC policy that seems to entangle with the essence of black language is their newly revised policy written on Ebonics. Originally drafted in 1998, the statement focuses mainly on the study and origins of Ebonics, and the impact it holds. In the document, Ebonics is explained as the "superordinate term for a category of Black Language forms that derive from common historical, social, cultural, and material conditions...The term "Ebonics" was created by Black psychologist Dr. Robert Williams in 1973 to identify the various languages created by Africans forced to adapt to colonization and enslavement (Williams, 1975)." Farther throughout the document they explore the expansive past and the origin of the Ebonic language and how it relates to the findings of past research and current social events of the black community.

When I read both these papers I got different meanings from both of them. For the chapter in Linguistic Justice, I was able to relate to the paper while finding more insight into how Black Language is an experience for how black people live their lives, and how it becomes a part of them. This is something that schools want to correct which, intentionally or unintentionally creates a dynamic where children are convinced that standard english is the language they should be using. Relating to my paper, I'm going to utilize most of the quotes I grabbed for the Chapter summary, as it can be used as a contrast to how black language was seen in the past, and how it correlates with the language in school in students personal life. Now onto the Policy on Ebonics written by the CCCC. For the most part, I was intrigued by how they wrote about it, mostly they denote its demeaning history and origin including the conception of the name. The policy also goes on to connect on how the black language is in conjunction with the problems that the Black community faces today both are relevant and should be celebrated instead of being put down because they're different. Originally I didn't like how the policy was phrased and structured, it still resembles someone who was looking from an outside perspective looking in and writing on the subject had they no idea what it felt like, but that's not to say it was all bad, as the formerly mentioned importance of Black language and Black people which was lacking in presentation but was a step in the right direction. I'll use the policy for its vast resource on the origins of ebonics and explanation on how it's different in different countries.

When I chose chico as my college, I, out of pure assumption and Inherent bias or experience on how the American school system is as a minority, was sure that it was a university that catered to caucasian students even though the school was dedicated to serving to Hispanic and Native American students, now don't get me wrong this is not to say that I thought the school had not made efforts to diversify their system and campus but I knew in some ways it was still lacking.

My first experience meeting an official representative from Chico state was when I enrolled in a Math Bootcamp that aimed to prepare the next year of Freshmen students for college math provided by the former. This was an encounter that took my thought and assumptions in a different direction as I got to meet the associate dean of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management, Seema Sehrawat. A woman of non-caucasian descent in a pretty high place of power, pretty cool right, now, even though it was over the span of a few zoom conferences, I was drawn in just by that fact she was able to not only attain but basically OWN a position of power despite all the odds stacked against her, that says more telling students that their school is a mixing pot of cultures and ethnicities, one that isn't thriving on the work of someone else's. Then, I touched down on University Grounds...everything did a 180. Out of the 19 professors currently teaching in Mechanical and Mechatronic engineering only 3 of them are of diverse ethnicity, 16% of the professors, and not one of them is Black, and according to CSU Chico's statistics on the ethnicities within the campus, the caucasian is still the highest in attendance with Hispanic or LatinoX in origin second and other minorities too far behind to call

a third. The diverse but hidden minorities create their own circles of the conference, even though they should be holding the conversation of how we make the campus more inclusive, they should in be those different department meetings making sure they and others are able to find their place in the college, where almost no one feels left out because they don't see those like them represented.

So if you ask me, "theres a whole lotta talking but not enough walkin"

#### MEMO:

This draft was an easy project, it felt more like an expression than an assignment, where innate thought swept through paper instead of mindless droning about a subject that I barely learned a day ago. Though that's not to say this paper was without problems like the fact that the paper source that I drew from had so many good pieces of information that I could barely choose the perfect one for the time. Or the fact that I didn't really know how to start the paper even though i had been given a great example and clear instructions.

#### Works cited:

Baker-Bell, A. (2020). Black language is good on any MLK Boulevard. In *Linguistic justice: Black language, literacy, identity, and pedagogy*. essay, Routledge.

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