

Breaking the English routine: opening polylingual avenues to postsecondary and higher education access

Z. W. Taylor

Abstract

Extant research has suggested United States (U.S.) higher education is more accessible and equitable toward Whites than toward English-language learners, international students, and students of color (Bernal, 2002; Lee & Rice, 2007; Lippi-Green, 2012; Yeh & Inose, 2003). In this essay, I argue issues of access and equity are partially owed to the Anglocentric, highly routinized, and luddite nature of U.S. higher education communication, policy, and practice. Moreover, I suggest that predominantly English institutions (PEIs) should explore performing nonroutine, highly technological work in order to both value and tap into the linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005) brought to the institution by students with diverse language knowledge in order to truly serve students from minoritized language populations. The essay highlights implications for linguistic equity and the practicality of polylingual institutional support.

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Received 10 April 2020; revised version received 27 March 2021; accepted 31 March 2021. Corresponding author: Z. W. Taylor, The University of Texas at Austin, the United States (zt@utexas.edu).

Longitudinal research has documented how international students (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yeh & Inose, 2003), English-language learners (Almon, 2015; Flores & Drake, 2014; Kanno & Varghese, 2010), and students of color (Bernal, 2002; Lippi-Green, 2012) are systematically discriminated against and excluded from the United States (U.S.) higher education system. Often, this discrimination is intersectional, as students, families, and communities of color face racialized and linguistic oppression, resulting in a denial of educational opportunities (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) argued this discrimination and exclusion stem from an institutional ignorance of linguistic capital, or the ‘intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style’ (p. 68). Elaborating on the concept of a register, or a unique variety of

language used in an idiosyncratic context for an idiosyncratic purpose, Yosso reasoned, ‘[j]ust as students may utilize different vocal registers to whisper, whistle or sing, they must often develop and draw on various language registers, or styles, to communicate with different audiences’ (2005, p. 79). This phenomenon is common not only in U.S. higher education but in educational contexts around the world: People learn languages and registers to access information and complete processes, such as learning about credit or interest to better manage one’s finances or learning a language to better converse with people in their native tongues.

Transgressing Yosso’s (2005) urgent call for a valuing of linguistic capital is recent research focused on the readability and language of U.S. institutional admissions materials and financial aid application instructions. Considering international students, research has found international graduate admissions materials have been composed above the 17th-grade English reading level (Taylor, 2017). Similarly, international undergraduate admissions materials above the 14th-grade English reading level, with 91% of U.S. institutions (n=335) providing English-only content on their institutional websites (Taylor, 2018b). Solely focused on Spanish speakers, another study found only 3.9% of 325 four-year U.S. institutions provided Spanish-language translations admissions materials for prospective undergraduates during the 2017–2018 academic year (Taylor, 2018a). Given Yosso’s (2005) call for an embrace of linguistic capital, these aforementioned studies empirically demonstrate that U.S. higher education does not communicate to diverse language populations, and thus, U.S. higher education has continued to devalue linguistic capital brought to institutions by students of color, English-language learners, and international students (Yosso, 2005). Arguably, many institutions of higher education across the globe tend to communicate in single languages, and if prospective students do not understand that language, they are denied access to that institutional information.

However, Taylor’s (2017, 2018a, 2018b) primary argument—that U.S. institutions of higher education ought to simplify and translate content from English to other languages—is not a novel one. For decades, higher education researchers have articulated the linguistic hurdles to U.S. higher education faced by English-language learners (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1986; Post, 1990; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008; Tierney, 2002; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002). These studies have found—time and time again—that English-language learning students and their parents have often called for bilingual postsecondary materials, such as admissions instructions and financial aid application guidelines, to overcome their linguistic hurdles (Astin, 1982; Gándara, 1986; Post, 1990; Tierney, 2002; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Yet, the language used to communicate U.S. higher

education information remains predominantly English. This essay seeks to answer the question: Why?

This argument-driven essay seeks to accomplish three aims. First, I will sketch the history of U.S. higher education as one that systematically excludes non-English speakers, expanding beyond common arguments of systemic exclusion in higher education including by race, gender, class, and ability status. Second, I will discuss nonroutine work and how institutions of higher education could alter their English routines to become more inclusive of non-English speaking students and their families. Finally, I argue that U.S. higher education's apparent devaluation of Yosso's (2005) linguistic capital is owed to U.S. higher education's English-focused routine work and the purposeful avoidance of nonroutine work (Rowan, Raudenbush, & Cheong, 1993) involving cutting-edge technologies and collaboration with minoritized language populations. Ultimately, I frame many U.S. higher education access and equity issues as symptomatic of predominantly English institutions (PEIs) whose foundation can be dismantled by embracing technology and the rich, linguistic diversity already thriving on U.S. campuses, benefitting students, families, and communities from diverse language populations.

A history of the English routine

The primary argument of this essay hinges on the notion that the majority of the work performed by U.S. higher education is routinized in English, producing a minoritizing effect on those who do not speak fluent English. Yet, decades of U.S. higher education research have clearly argued that institutions should embrace diverse language populations and translate access materials—such as website information related to admissions criteria and financial aid applications—and expand this knowledge base to students and their linguistically diverse families and communities (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1986; Martinez, Cortez, & Saenz, 2013; Taylor, 2018a). Differentiating between routine and nonroutine work is critical to understand this argument. However, it is equally critical to be aware of a long history of the aforementioned educational research calling for U.S. higher education to perform routinized polylingual¹ work.

Astin's (1982) study was of the first to examine the U.S. higher education achievement gaps between White, English-fluent students and L2² (English-language learning) students of color. Astin learned that L2 students often required

¹ I use the term *polylingual* to refer to an ability to speak and understand multiple languages, a personification of an institution of higher education.

² I use the term *L2* to refer to people whose first spoken and native language is not English within a U.S. educational context.

intensive bilingual programming to prepare for a U.S. higher education system conducted primarily in English, and parents of these students often lacked knowledge of the U.S. higher education system, leading both L2 students and their parents to seek translated higher education materials which would be easier to understand. However, L2 students and their parents often did not have access to translated content, even though their L2 student was academically prepared for postsecondary education (Astin, 1982).

Similarly, Gándara (1986) studied L2 students from predominantly Latinx backgrounds in California secondary schools and found many L2 students desired a postsecondary education but did not understand how to access the system through formal admissions and financial aid processes. Gándara reasoned that secondary schools did not work collaboratively with postsecondary institutions to share postsecondary information with L2 students and their families and communities, ultimately producing an education system that was ‘tiered’, ‘fragmented’, and did not ‘meet the needs of students’ (p. 267). In both Astin’s (1982) and Gándara’s (1986) studies, linguistically diverse students were attempting to access U.S. higher education, yet the authors clearly detailed a predominantly English system that systematically excluded non-native English speakers, a criticism that U.S. higher education discriminates across the intersections of race and language.

Comparing L1 and L2 student access to U.S. higher education, Post (1990) demonstrated that English-fluent students who successfully applied to and enrolled in a postsecondary institution often had an English-fluent parent or parents to guide them through the process. Post found White, L1, English-fluent parents were better informed about tuition costs and admission requirements at local community and four-year colleges than L2 parents of color, with L1 parents demonstrating a better understanding of postsecondary planning and how to engage with student loan and scholarship resources. Building upon this work, Ceja (2001) studied first-generation, L2 Chicano students pursuing U.S. higher education and learned these students were academically prepared for postsecondary education but often lacked information about the U.S. higher education system. Ceja (2001) argued that these L2 students experienced difficulty exploring different colleges and choosing a college of good fit because institutional content was made available in primarily in English, with institutions staffing English-speaking admissions counselors and financial aid advisors. Here, Ceja (2001) criticized the fact that L2 students were denied access to higher education information in their own language, seeing as the local institutions of higher education could employ polylingual admissions and financial aid counselors to translate this information for L2 students of color, their families, and their communities.

Tornatzky et al. (2002) built upon Ceja's (2001) study, exploring the college knowledge of L2 parents, asserting that, 'language barriers were an extremely important factor impeding acquisition of college knowledge' (p. 1). Of their cardinal implications, Tornatzky et al. (2002) argued that secondary schools should 'disseminate college knowledge to non-English speaking parents' (p. 23), as their study revealed secondary schools often did not engage with L2 parents due to perceived language barriers. Moreover, Tornatzky et al. (2002) urged that 'College application materials and descriptive literature, whether hard copy or available on Web sites, should be routinely provided in both Spanish and English', and '[a]ll college knowledge informational events, college nights, and open houses should be routinely staffed with bilingual Spanish speakers and translators' (p. 29). Continuing the criticism of U.S. higher education's English insistence, Tornatzky et al. (2002) also connected the idea of postsecondary-going behaviors to familial language barriers, as subsequent studies have found that if L2 students are not supported by their families and communities to pursue U.S. higher education, they are not likely to pursue the education on their own. Here, Tornatzky et al. (2002) were critical of the U.S. higher education system exclusion of entire L2 communities of color, framing the language barrier as a method of gatekeeping.

Recently, Martinez et al. (2013) evaluated postsecondary materials provided to Latinx L2 parents in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, finding, '[c]ollege-related bulletins and invitations to college-focused meetings that were sent home also "all came in English", and so Spanish-speaking parents were often left depending on their children to translate vital information' (p. 116). This finding echoes Tornatzky et al.'s (2002) research over a decade prior, finding that postsecondary access materials ought to be translated into a student's native language. Similarly, Gonzalez, Villalba, and Borders (2015) interviewed 15 Spanish-speaking immigrant parents of L2 students and found that very few secondary schools employed bilingual counselors or provided bilingual postsecondary information. In their study, one parent remarked, '[t]hey [secondary schools] should have Spanish counselors and offer assistance to parents when they go to school, because, for example, when I go to the meetings, I see some parents completely lost' (Gonzalez et al., 2015, p. 128). Here, the confusion directly speaks to how U.S. education system writ large must speak to students and their families, as families are often the deciding factor as to whether a student pursues further education or not (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Tornatzky et al., 2002). This willingness to speak to families and communities of underserved student populations may signal a culture shift in many systems of higher education toward community-focused education, if these systems truly wish to serve the underserved and speak to diverse linguistic populations who have been historically excluded from higher education.

In terms of embracing technology to increase L2 student access to U.S. higher education, Tornatzky et al. (2002) hypothesized L2 parents would be better able to access postsecondary information in the years after their study. The authors asserted:

Many of the access issues that are exacerbated by SES and language barriers dissolve through interactive media. As college Web sites get more and more language-friendly to Latino applicants, and as high-speed Internet access continues its penetration into Latino communities, many of the college knowledge problems described here will decrease. (Tornatzky et al., 2002, p. 27)

Nearly twenty years later and long after the widespread adoption of the Internet, Taylor (2018a) analyzed the Spanish translation and readability of undergraduate admissions materials on the institutional .edu websites of a random sample of 325 bachelor-degree granting institutions in the United States. Taylor found only 4.9% of undergraduate admissions instructions had been translated into Spanish, only 4% of institutional websites employed machine translation applications to provide polylingual content, and the average English-language readability of the materials was above the 13th-grade English language reading comprehension level. Here, U.S. higher education institutions may be producing content that is more friendly toward Latinx communities or other communities whose predominant language is not English. However, the higher education access materials mentioned by Tornatzky et al. (2002), Martinez et al. (2013), and others have remained predominantly English (Taylor, 2018a), despite advances in technology and decades of research calling for translation.

Despite a long history of educational researchers calling for polylingual, student-focused communication in U.S. higher education, little has changed over the last few decades. Dozens of studies have called for U.S. higher education to embrace polylingual communication as it relates to L2 students accessing postsecondary information and enrolling in postsecondary institutions. Yet, U.S. higher education remains a system whose entry is predicated upon its prospective students—and their parents—completing often complicated processes in highly idiosyncratic forms of English. Beyond U.S. contexts, perhaps systems of higher education in all countries should reflect upon their own linguistics practices and ask: Who are we not speaking to and why? From here, U.S. higher education could value the linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005) of L2 students and their families and

perform nonroutine work (Rowan et al., 1993) to render the system a more linguistically accessible one.

Routine work and valuing linguistic capital as nonroutine work

In an educational setting, Rowan et al. (1993) articulated the difference between routine and nonroutine work by asserting routine work ‘is managed by mechanistic forms of organization, whereas nonroutine work is managed by organic forms’ (p. 479). Elaborating, the authors contrasted the differences between mechanistic and organic forms of management, arguing, ‘mechanistic forms of management, characterized by high degrees of centralization, formalization, and directive leadership, are assumed to increase the efficiency with which workers perform routine, unvarying, and repetitive tasks’ (p. 480). Here, routine tasks are hallmarks of the Weberian (1978) bureaucracy which values assigned, official duties, a hierarchical structure of labor, specialized management, and the following of clearly articulated rules. Many researchers have defined U.S. higher education by this notion of bureaucracy, calling such a bureaucracy ‘burdensome’ (Bok, 2015, p. 340) but necessary due to the ‘massification in higher education’ (Austin & Jones, 2015, p. 53). As higher education systems have expanded across the globe, countless institutions of higher education have embraced a complex bureaucracy to manage increased student numbers and external operations, such as community-based programs, governmental relationships, and research enterprises (Bok, 2015).

Inversely, organic forms of management are ‘characterized by participative decision making, collaborative problem solving, and supportive leadership’ and are ‘assumed to provide workers with the information and support needed to cope effectively with the variability and uncertainty of nonroutine work’ (Rowan et al., 1993, p. 480). However, decades of research have defined U.S. higher education by its predominantly White institutions and their oppressive nature (Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2005), hesitant to collaborate with communities of color (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002) and unsupportive of minoritized language populations (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). This has resulted in an intersectional oppression experienced by L2 communities of color who suffer both racialized and linguistic forms of oppression and denial of educational opportunities (Yosso, 2005).

Consequently, what pervades U.S. higher education are English-centric linguistic hurdles to access and equity. Consider the U.S. postsecondary admissions process: A majority of U.S. colleges and universities require some form of standardized test and completed application as part of the admissions process, yet these routines have been found to be particularly discriminatory for students of

color and minoritized language populations (Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005; McDonough, 1994; Roderick et al., 2011). What actors across the U.S. higher education landscape have failed to realize is that these routines are—and always have been—predominantly English. The American College Test (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) are offered in English only, and popular consolidated application systems, such as the Common Application and Universal College Application, are also English-only. Moreover, to date, no U.S. higher education system accepts a polylingual college application essay or statement of purpose, even though the college application essay ‘has become one of the most important parts of the entire application process’ (Gelb, 2017, p. 7).

Granted, U.S. higher education has attempted to assuage these hurdles for minoritized populations, as some U.S. institutions have waived standardized testing requirements (Lash, 2015), and some states have started to pay for their students’ standardized test fees (Barnum, 2017). Similarly, some U.S. institutions no longer charge application fees (Strauss, 2016), seemingly rendering U.S. higher education more attainable for minoritized students. However, these interventions do not address the fact that minoritized students must still complete the college application, and this application is still written in an overly complex, idiosyncratic English, rarely translated into different languages (Taylor, 2017, 2018a). Once the student completes the application, they must still complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which has long been criticized as too complex, filled with unnecessary questions, and particularly discriminatory against low-income students and students of color (Walizer, 2018). Unsurprisingly, the FAFSA is English-only and requires the applicant to have advanced knowledge of complex financial concepts and access to technology, and resources, of which low-income students and students of color are often denied (Goldrick-Rab, 2016).

For U.S. higher education, the admissions and financial aid processes—essential for students to navigate in order to access the system—were not constructed to value linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005) brought by students and their support networks to these processes. As a language, English governs every postsecondary access procedure in the United States. As a result, predominantly English U.S. institutions have continued to serve predominantly English students to the detriment of minoritized language populations. For predominantly English institutions to become linguistically inclusive, these institutions could embrace cutting-edge technologies to disrupt their bureaucracies and dismantle an oppressive Anglocentric culture that pervades many international institutions of higher education outside of the U.S. as well.

Emerging technologies as nonroutine

Hage and Aiken (1969) discussed the role of technology and routine work by arguing technology is one variable to consider when evaluating how routine work is defined and performed by an organization. For Hage and Aiken, '[t]he interest in technology as an independent variable stems from the recognition that the work processes of an organization provide the foundation upon which social structure is built. Because of this, technology should influence the nature of that structure' (1969, p. 367). Although Hage and Aiken (1969) articulated this notion roughly fifty years ago, U.S. higher education's failure to embrace modern language technologies effectively minoritizes the diverse, non-English linguistic capital brought to an institution by an L2 student (Yosso, 2005).

For example, Georgia State University partnered with AdmitHub, a technology company that integrates conversational artificial intelligence with student-to-institution communication. By employing an automated, artificial intelligence text messaging system (known as a chatbot) to communicate with students, nearly 17% more prospective students successfully completed the FAFSA and nearly 15% engaged in student loan counseling, the largest single-year gains in Georgia State's history (Ravipati, 2017). Here, Georgia State embraced a nonroutine, modern language technology to disseminate postsecondary information with an efficient previously unrealized.

Although Georgia State's initiative and success is admirable and groundbreaking in U.S. higher education, businesses and hospitals have used artificial intelligence messaging services (chatbots) for at least fifteen years (Jenkins et al., 2007; Weerawarna, 2011), as foundational work in applied natural language processing and quantitative linguistics have now made it possible for computers to assess essays nearly as accurately as human beings and tutor students struggling in writing through a variety of educational activities and games (McNamara et al., 2014).

Additionally, machine translation technologies can trace their origins to the 1600s and became widely available in 1997 when the Internet search engine company AltaVista published Babelfish, which could translate 38 different language pairs to varying levels of human accuracy. Today, Google Translate can translate at nearly 90% human accuracy (Turner, 2016) across hundreds of language pairs. This translation is possible with the assistance of artificial intelligence and the Google Translate Community, a team of Google users who translate content and assess other machine and human translations (Lazzaro, 2017). Although modern language translation technologies are not yet 100% accurate (Lazzaro, 2017; Turner, 2016), an attempt to translate U.S. higher education into another language

sends an important message to minoritized language communities in the United States: We value your language, and thus, the linguistic capital you will bring to our institution (Yosso, 2005). Such technologies could be critical for U.S. institutions of higher education to facilitate postsecondary access for minoritized language populations. Yet, Taylor's (2017, 2018b) work argued less than 5% of four-year public and non-profit private institutions employed this freely-available technology during the 2016–2017 academic year.

For Hage and Aiken (1969), the extent to which an organization innovates its work through technology reflects the goals and aspirations of the organization. This innovation positions an organization within the larger social order, allowing customers, clients—or in education's case, students—to benefit from that innovation, such as humanity's collective benefit from pharmaceutical companies' advancement of COVID vaccines. This innovation begs the question: Does innovation serve the customer, client, patient, or student, does innovation serve the organization, or both? To date, U.S. higher education has only embraced technologies that consolidate information and processes—such as the wide implementation of the Common Application and Georgia State's chatbot—to make its bureaucratic, English routine work more efficient. This efficiency equates to an organizational benefit of innovation, not a student benefit of innovation. Nonroutine work would embrace modern technologies in addition to students' linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005), fundamentally changing the language of U.S. postsecondary access and serving students, not organizations.

However, it must be made clear that in a historical context, low-income L2 students and students of color are often denied access to high-speed Internet (Taylor, 2018b), resulting in these students being unable to access institutional websites for higher education information in the first place. Here, U.S. higher education and higher education systems around the world need not be responsible for providing expensive technology support to every person in every community to ensure access to information. Community-based organizations and governmental bodies should continue working to increase Internet access to underserved and rural communities, in addition to providing technological devices such as cell phones and tablets to low-income communities to increase access to information, including educational content. However, higher education institutions must hold up their end of the bargain and have translated, polylingual content ready for when access is made available to L2 populations. To accomplish this goal, U.S. institutions could learn to communicate and collaborate with minoritized language populations, recognizing and engaging with the linguistic capital already on campus. The dual embrace of emerging technologies and thriving linguistic diversity is key to solving

higher education's access problem, and collaboration will be the catalyst if equity is the main objective.

Collaborating with linguistically diverse people as nonroutine work

Higher education researchers have defined college admissions officers as advocates for 'the educational benefits of a diverse student body' (Horn & Marin, 2017, p. 19) who are often burdened with a 'great deal of pressure' to "meet institutional goals, particularly to increase revenue and prestige' (Bowman & Bastedo, 2017, p. 3). Similarly, financial aid administrators 'help students achieve their educational potential' (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 2018, para. 1) and the effectiveness with which they 'execute their jobs influences, in some way, student awareness of college opportunity and thus access and possibly success' (Woolf, 2012). Unfortunately, Taylor (2017, 2018b) explored the language of online admissions and financial aid material, finding that over 90% of four-year U.S. institutions communicate in English-only on institutional websites. In addition, scant research explores what languages admission officers and financial aid administrators speak and the importance of polylingual admissions and financial aid professionals, save for research suggesting U.S. higher education ought to staff more bilingual admissions and financial aid counselors (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1986; Post, 1990; Tornatzky et al., 2002).

Similarly, professional development resources and how-to guides for admissions officers (Behrend et al., 2013) and enrollment management professionals (Hossler & Bontrager, 2014) may be disregarding the potential impact of polylingual admissions and financial aid materials *and people*. As admissions officers, financial aid administrators, and other enrollment management professionals perform routinized, predominantly English work, research and professional development has perpetuated this culture of the predominantly English institution of U.S. higher education. Without articulating the phenomenon of the PEI, researchers have routinely criticized the oppressive nature of monolingualism in U.S. higher education (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; Taylor, 2017, 2018b; Yosso, 2005), asserting that students of minoritized language populations are forced to perform the role of 'language broker' (Pérez Huber, 2009a, p. 717) to matriculate through the higher education system. Extant research has already demonstrated that U.S. higher education institutions rarely communicate and collaborate with L2 communities of color (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1986; Post, 1990; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Perhaps, such cross-linguistic communication and collaboration is nonroutine (Rowan et al., 1993), and

thus, not performed. Moreover, institutions may feel it unfeasible—and it is—to translate entire websites into hundreds of languages and employ admissions and financial aid counselors who speak hundreds of languages. Yet, solutions exist.

Ahmed (2016) argued that higher education's emphasis on diversity—in its many forms, including race, gender, and language—is largely 'non-performative' (p. 1) meaning diversity-focused rhetoric must be paired with diversity-focused action, lest diversity work remain unaccomplished and unvalued. Ahmed elaborated:

A commitment is often understood as a performative: it is not describing or denoting something; a commitment "commits." But what seemed to be the case was that commitments were makeable because they were not doable: it seems you can make a commitment because commitments do not commit institutions to a course of action. Commitments might even become a way of not doing something by appearing to do something. Understanding the role or function of institutional commitments was to understand how institutions do not do things with words, or how institutions use words as a way of not doing things. (2016, p. 1)

Using Ahmed's logic, U.S. higher education routinely commits itself to diversity and inclusion through the use of English and English alone, with English only 'performing' and 'committing' to those who speak it. For Ahmed (2016), the PEI speaks English words 'as a way of not doing things' (p. 1), primarily including and valuing the rich linguistic diversity already thriving on U.S. campuses. Breaking the English routine and dismantling the PEI would involve U.S. institutions engaging with cutting-edge technologies and minoritized language populations to literally translate higher education, a move toward linguistic access, and thus, equity.

Breaking the English routine: ways forward

For predominantly English institutions to transform themselves into linguistically inclusive places of learning, these institutions could embrace the best of what modern technology and linguistically diverse people have to offer.

First, PEIs could embrace modern language translation technologies and provide polylingual institutional websites. Nearly twenty years ago, Tornatzky et al. (2002) suggested higher education institutions ought to translate their websites for broader and linguistically diverse audiences. However, as Taylor (2017, 2018b) found, few U.S. institutions embed the Google Translate application—or any other machine translator—into their institutional website, even though Google Translate can produce translations 90% as accurate as human translations (Turner, 2016) and are becoming more accurate by the day (Lazzaro, 2017). Moreover, machine translators are free: Budgetary constraints cannot excuse ignorance of this particular form of technology. Perhaps more importantly, an effort to disrupt predominantly English websites could send a message of linguistic inclusion, namely that U.S. higher education wants to value the linguistic capital brought to the institution by the student and their family (Yosso, 2005).

Following in Georgia State's footsteps, U.S. institutions could also ease the burden facing college admission officers and financial aid administrators by employing polylingual chatbots, specifically during the admission and financial aid application process. Taylor (2018b) argued many prospective students may struggle to understand higher education jargon, such as matriculation or financial affidavit, and given the undergraduate application volume of institutions such as the University of Texas at Austin (over 51,000 undergraduate applications in 2017; University of Texas at Austin, 2017), it is unreasonable to believe admission officers and financial aid administrators can respond to each and every student question in an accurate and timely manner. Modern language technologies could ease this burden, simultaneously proliferating access to higher education content for diverse language audiences. Philosophically, such a change would also suggest U.S. higher education is open technological advances and an embrace of linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005), promoting the notion that U.S. higher education is willing to adopt new forms of communication to better serve minoritized members of U.S. society. Moreover, the phenomenon of summer melt—i.e., students admitted to institutions but failing to enroll—has continued to be a stratifying one in U.S. higher education (Castleman & Page, 2014). Perhaps timely, polylingual interventions such as automated chatbots embedded into the admissions and financial aid applications can mitigate summer melt for minoritized language populations akin to the success experienced by Georgia State.

Beyond technology interventions, Yosso's (2005) notion of linguistic capital—linguistic value—implied the existence of community cultural wealth already on U.S. campuses. The traditional notion of social capital forwarded by Bourdieu (1986) suggested institutions bestow social capital on their members. Here, social capital is transactional, with the institution holding the capital and the

person receiving the capital contingent on institutional membership in some regard. Yosso (2005), however, argued people bring capital to institutions—including linguistic capital—thus enriching the institution and amplifying the institution's network. Recent reports have indicated over 60 million people living in the U.S. speak a language other than English in the home (Flaherty, 2016), with thousands of these people being English-language learners attending U.S. higher education institutions (Friedman, 2017). Here, English-language learners have already brought a wealth of linguistic capital to U.S. higher education institutions: U.S. higher education has not reciprocated this transaction, given the monolingualism of U.S. higher education present in decades of research (Astin, 1982; Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1986; Post, 1990; Tierney, 2002; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Taylor, 2017, 2018a, 2018b).

Taylor (2018a) suggested that former international students—who are now alumni—could be called upon to ‘translate small, but crucial amounts of international student materials into languages other than English’, (p. 166) as ‘a monetary gift to one’s alma mater is an admirable gesture, but facilitating a smoother, more transparent admissions process for future international students would be an everlasting and immeasurable contribution to an institution of higher learning’ (p. 167). For Taylor (2018a) and Yosso (2005), linguistic capital is already present within the postsecondary community, including prospective, current, and graduated students. Instead of viewing linguistically diverse alumni as mere donors in the tradition of academic capitalism, U.S. institutions could ask their alumni to share their linguistic currency with their alma mater by translating postsecondary information into a language a broader community could understand. Such opportunity also exists for higher education institutions across the globe, as international students pursue higher education in countless countries. Linguistically diverse students could help Chinese institutions embrace German-translated admissions instructions or help Italian institutions embrace Zulu-translated scholarship applications. Possibilities for linguistic equity, here, are endless.

In addition, U.S. institutions could increase their efforts to perform intersectionally-responsive hiring practices: This includes the recruitment, training, and retention of higher education professionals of color, especially those who can communicate fluently in languages other than English. A dearth of faculty of color has plagued U.S. higher education since its inception (Griffin & Reddick, 2011), and in addition to embracing more faculty of color on U.S. campuses, U.S. higher education could embrace linguistically diverse faculty and staff who can communicate and collaborate with minoritized language populations. To date, no research has addressed the intersectionality of faculty and staff of color and the rich linguistic diversity they bring to U.S. campuses across the country. Researchers in

higher education could pursue this line of inquiry, informing the practice of recruiting and retaining linguistically diverse faculty members to the benefit of linguistically diverse students.

Finally, U.S. higher education could explore alternative admissions and financial aid application procedures which value Yosso's (2005) linguistic capital, including language translation and simplification. In terms of admissions, extant research has helped promote the use of *testimonio* in LatCrit research (Pérez Huber, 2009b): U.S. higher education could value such forms of personal testimony during the admissions process to support and encourage minoritized language populations. Surely, opening the linguistic doors of higher education to minoritized students would not hurt the system of higher education, and in fact, such a move would strengthen and diversify the system, rendering it one that better reflects our 21st century globalized society. On any campus, students of minoritized language populations should feel that their culture—linguistic capital—is valued and celebrated by their future and current institution of higher education. Instead of forcing these students to conform to the language of the PEI, these institutions should break their English routines and learn to speak as their students do, lest their students feel that a pursuit of U.S. postsecondary education requires a rejection of their heritage and erasure of their language.

Conclusion

In this essay, I argued the access structures of U.S. higher education have become so thoroughly routinized in English that minoritized language populations are unnecessarily excluded from the system. Breaking this sense of an English routine would require predominantly English institutions to embrace languages spoken by their students, whichever language that may be. The same can be said for any higher education institutions with a dominant language structure: Do Bangladeshi institutions collaborate with French speakers? Do Russian institutions collaborate with Hindi speakers? Modern technology represents one path toward linguistic equity for L2 students, yet institutional reflection on *who* is on campus and *what* linguistic capital they already hold (Yosso, 2005) is a form of nonroutine work that U.S. higher education—and all higher education institutions—must perform. Ultimately, dismantling the PEI requires the PEI to speak different languages and nonroutine work that could be accomplished if only the PEI would listen to who is already speaking on college campuses across the United States.

Author biography

Dr. Z.W. Taylor is a researcher whose work has been published in the *Journal of College Student Development*, *Teachers College Record*, and *Higher Education Quarterly*, among others.

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