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**Adapting to College Life: An Ethnographic Study of the Linguistic Challenges Faced by
Domestic Black Immigrant Students at Bridgewater State University**

Johnson (Carter) Remy

Submitted in Partial Completion of the
Requirements for Departmental Honors in Anthropology
Bridgewater State University

12/21/18

Dr. Diana Fox, Thesis Advisor

Dr. Badiane Louise, Committee Member

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Table of Contents

Cover Page	1
Acknowledgement.....	2-3
Table of Contents.....	4-5
Abstract.....	6
Chapter I	
Section I	
Foundation	7-8
Introduction to study.....	8-9
Research problem and hypothesis	9-11
Section II-Literature Review	
Linguistic foundation.....	11-12
Anthropology foundation.....	12-13
Gender foundation.....	13-15
Chapter II	
Section I – Methodology	
Methods for assuring protection of human subjects (IRB)	16-17
Sample & approach to data collection	17-19
Chapter III	
Section I – Data Analysis and Findings	
Student perspectives overview	20
Male participants; findings and attitudes.....	21-22
Female participants; findings and attitudes.....	22-23

Additional Findings--Seeking help at the <i>Academic Achievement Center and Writing Studio</i>	24-25
Faculty perspectives	25-27
Administrators' perspectives	27-29
Analysis and additional findings.....	29-32
Section II	
Limitations and future studies	
Limitation.....	32-33
Future Studies.....	33
Chapter IV	
Section I	
Conclusions and recommendations	34-39
Appendix	
Appendix A: Glossary: linguistic terms used and terms of interest.....	40-42
Appendix B- Consent forms	
Appendix B-1 Student consent form.....	43-44
Appendix B-2 Faculty consent form.....	45-46
Appendix B-3 Administrator consent form.....	47-48
Appendix C - Interview Questions	
Appendix C-1 Individual student interview questions.....	49-50
Appendix C-2 Individual faculty interview questions	51
Appendix C-3 Individual administrator questions	52
Appendix C-4 Follow up interview questions.....	53
Bibliography.....	54-57

Abstract

This linguistic qualitative ethnographic study sought to understand whether domestic and international, Black, English second language learning (ESL), immigrant students, who have completed their first year of college at BSU, perceive themselves as linguistically prepared for college life. Linguistic preparedness is critical for successful participation in the classroom and completion of required work. The research seeks to identify and analyze the programs BSU has established to assist this population in their adaptation to college life and in acquiring linguistic proficiency. The study employs a multi-tiered methodology beginning with semi-structured interviews with diversity administrators, ESL and Global Language faculty, informal interviews and interactions with members of the domestic and international, Black, ESL, immigrant population as well as interviews with research informants that are/were staff members of important resources at BSU, followed by rapport-building, participant and naturalistic (non-participatory) observations; semi-structured interviews with male immigrant students, female immigrant students who completed their first year of college. Selected by purposive sampling, the resulting case study of Bridgewater State University with respect to linguistic readiness for ESL immigrant students will offer emic (insider) perspectives of students' own linguistic preparedness and contribute to a further understanding of the role of gender in linguistic readiness in the Black immigrant student population. Results offer insights into this population and generate recommendations that cater to struggling ESL students.

CHAPTER I:

Section I

Foundation

The moon is shining, the stars glimmering. In the midst of a soccer game on the beautiful island of Haiti, following the funeral of a senior citizen in the community, momentarily I am mesmerized by the beauty of the night. Turning back to the game, I look across the field to see who is open, so I can make my next cross as our team is down one. Unable to do so, I swiftly and beautifully dribble my way through two guys of the opposing team followed by a diagonal pass to find my teammate. My teammate with one hand in the air yells, “blode mwen ouvri, banm pass lan” telling me to pass the ball, jokingly cussing at me saying that he is open as I was in the middle of performing my move to lose my defenders. Our attack is cut short as one of the defenders anticipates the move and sweeps the outgoing pass. Again, my teammate shouts and jokingly cusses at me in Haitian Creole for not passing the ball much sooner and quicker. I retort, yelling as loudly as I can “ou pa tap fe anyen avek boul la”, telling him that he won’t do anything with the incoming pass.

Growing up in Haiti as a kid, I never imagined being able to speak another language other than Haitian Creole let alone seeking to be linguistically competent in more than one language. However, my life course has offered me this opportunity, emigrating to the US at age 12, I faced the challenge of becoming competent in English, so I could be successful in school and life. Thinking back on that soccer game all those years ago, I realize that part of the fun of the game was the banter with my peers in a comfortable setting. This is what linguistic anthropologists refer to as a “speech community” (individuals who share specific rules for speaking and

interpreting speech in a community) (Salzmann, et al, 2015, 266). Studying anthropology has allowed me to think about my past and my current challenges through the lens of the many speech communities I navigate in daily life, and it is because of my personal experience that I realized others face a similar struggle. This research highlights these struggles that are significant because the immigrant population deserves to be a focus of all universities' student success efforts. At Bridgewater State University, while the student success is highlighted as one of the university's strategic goals, the specific definition of student success is not readily available to students on the BSU website; my research indicates that it is student-oriented, defined as learning and applying knowledge and skills through a vast array of curricular activities, degree completion, and post-degree educational goals. (<https://www.bridgew.edu/the-university/strategic-plan>, accessed: January 2018).

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

As a continuation of a linguistic ethnographic in-house BSU Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) grant-funded study that sought to understand whether Black immigrant, ESL men who have completed their first year of college at BSU, perceive themselves as linguistically prepared for college life, this project adds to the existing data by seeking women's perspectives. In other words, the ATP project became a basis for the current project, which is an ethnographic study that seeks to understand whether Black immigrant, ESL women who have completed their first year of college at BSU, perceive themselves as linguistically prepared for college life. The project then compares data and analyses from the ATP project with the current data. The research seeks to identify and analyze the programs BSU has established to assist this population

(Black immigrant ESL students) in their adaptation to college life and in acquiring linguistic proficiency, followed by recommendations.

My goal is to understand if gender plays a role in Black immigrant students' process of becoming linguistically ready. The issue of linguistic readiness may not necessarily change for women students, but it might look different from their perspective. It is also possible that there may be Black immigrant students who identify as gender diverse, and if there are, issues of gender diversity may render even more complex the intersectional identities of race, ethnicity, immigration status and language proficiency. There are already issues of stigma and discrimination related to language, race and immigrant status. How gender weaves into this is critical to explore. Selected by purposive sampling, the resulting case studies will offer emic (insider) perspectives of students' own linguistic preparedness. It will also allow me to understand the role of gender in linguistic readiness in the Black immigrant population as well as offer insights into this population and generate recommendations that can cater to struggling ESL immigrant students.

Research problem and hypothesis

Bridgewater State University prides itself in catering to its students in helping them to become successful. According to BSU's Strategic Plan, the university's "primary purpose is to advance student success" (BSU Strategic Plan, 2017). To what extent is this goal achieved with respect to the population at hand, specifically Black male and female immigrant students? BSU has sought to help young men in particular tackle obstacles that hinder their capacity to excel, and in many ways, there has been success, most notably through BSU's Male Student Success interventions with respect to retention and graduation rates (interviews with administrators;

July/August 2018). However, there is always room for improvement, and my informal interactions with immigrant men and women ESL students suggest that the University has not focused enough on the linguistic challenges that this population faces linguistically. This has led me to look into the linguistic readiness of domestic and international, ESL Black immigrants at BSU and how the resources that the university offers impact their studies. A study related to my research was conducted by Mauro S. Dos Reis, during the spring of 2016. A former student from BSU, Reis researched the high school performance of Cape Verdean immigrant students who had migrated from Cape Verde to New Bedford. Reis's research adopted a linguistic perspective as she worked to figure out ways to better serve Cape Verdean immigrant students in their acquisition of ESL (Reis 2016).

This research offers what we in Anthropology refer to as an emic perspective, or a cultural insider's point of view, of male immigrant students' own linguistic readiness. I have analyzed the data I obtained from my observations of my study group—their emic perspectives—drawing from the linguist James Cummins' proposal of his lower and higher threshold levels that are needed in order to achieve linguistic competence, which I explain in more details below. In brief, these levels build on one another and are interdependent with each other, indicating that there are degrees of readiness rather than only two levels. Cummins outlines an introductory level and a fully competent level. This idea of stages challenged my initial thinking when I began the research. Initially, I shared Cummins' view. However, now after my research, I have determined that my data indicates that there are many stages of linguistic readiness and that they vary with each student's prior knowledge of English, as well as other factors such as individual attitude, the nature of the student's speech communities, and mentorship experiences. There is much more than simply stating that, yes or no, immigrant

students are, or aren't linguistically ready for college. Having said this, the current article does not detail Cummins' hypothesis or present challenges, but instead focuses on responses to interviews from all the study participants regarding existing services at BSU and the challenges of acquiring language proficiency for student success. Cummins was useful in helping me to think about stages of acquiring language competency.

Section II

Literature review

Linguistic Foundation

English is a language that is taking the world by storm—it is currently known as the world's "lingua franca"—the common tongue, since so many countries have adopted the language in many areas such as academia, business, and even everyday life. When immigrants speak English, myself included, we are often looked down upon: we face prejudice, are teased, and mocked for our accents, leading to shame and embarrassment. In a research study conducted by Maureen Snow Andrade in 2009, she found that non-native English speakers, including international students, are heavily challenged by academic language demands. One challenge is with their peers in the classroom. For example, their difficulties with English proficiency may prevent domestic and international students from working with them on projects for classes, due to "their weak writing or presentation skills" (Andrade 2009, 18). Non-native English speakers face two kinds of language proficiency struggles here in the United States. The first is what is referred to as "basic interpersonal communication skills" (BICS) where a student can be well versed colloquially. This means that language skills are developed enough for interpersonal communication with peers outside a formal classroom environment. The second is what is referred to as "cognitive academic language proficiency" (CALP) which is the ability to keep up

with the demands of academia (<http://esl.fis.edu/teachers/support/cummin.htm>; accessed 2/21/18). Immigrant students often struggle with keeping up with the demands of their CALP skills but more easily master their BISC skills.

Anthropological foundation

Linguistic Anthropology, the scientific study of language and its relationship to thought, semantics (meaning), and behavior, offers the theoretical framework that guides my study. According to the early 20th century linguist Edward Sapir who laid the foundation for the anthropological subfield of linguistic anthropology, "language is a guide to 'social reality'...human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity...but are very much at the mercy of the particular language that has become the medium of expression for their society" (Sapir, cited in Salzmann, et al 2015, 312). This understanding of the semantic role of language—the fact that the world around us is given meaning in large part through language, rooted in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, offers the linguistic anthropological theory that shapes my work. As indicated above, James Cummins is another linguist who has heavily shaped my work. One of his hypotheses proposed that there is a potential for levels of "linguistic competence" that need to be acquired in order to avoid cognitive loss and have access to cognitive growth (Cummins 1979, 229). He called this The Threshold Hypothesis, and in it, he highlighted two levels of learning. The lower level is not too rigorous and doesn't require significant mastery of cognitive language skills. However, the higher level needs to be attained in order to grow cognitively and perform well academically. The lower level varies according to a child's stages of development and academic requirements, but essentially the lower threshold of bilingual competence as Cummins refer to it, proposes that a bilingual child's competency in a language may be weak to the point where it impacts their interactions in an educational setting.

The higher-level builds upon the lower level and as immersion increases within programs in a second language, there should be cognitive benefits. Through the lens of these levels within the threshold hypothesis I was able to analyze the interviews and observation data. Previous studies have reported that bilingualism has had negative effects on scholastic progress. However, Cummins' research indicates that negative impacts can be largely resolved by addressing language proficiency through students' access to support and resources. Bilingualism itself isn't an obstacle to academic success; in fact, studies demonstrate that people who speak more than one language have increased capabilities in a number of areas such as thinking skills, cognitive functioning and more (Cummins 1976).

Gender foundation

The data collection for this thesis research focused on the linguistic readiness of domestic and international Black immigrant females, and results seem to indicate a relationship between gender and language acquisition experiences, potentially impacting their linguistic readiness. In the discipline of anthropology, the study of the relationship between language and gender began in the 1920s with Edward Sapir, the founder, along with Franz Boas, of the subfield of Anthropological Linguistics, in the United States. Sapir's 1929 publication, *Male and Female forms of Speech in Yana*. In the 1970s, with the rise of feminist anthropology and sociology there began a renewed interest in the relationship between language and gender in an effort to include women's perspectives in culture and society. The study of the relationship between gender and language in sociolinguistics is often said to have begun with Robin Lakoff's 1975 book, *Language and Woman's Place*, was critical in highlighting the relationship between language and sociolinguistics. These efforts continue today.

In one of Coates' recent sociolinguistic accounts, *Women, Men, and Language*, she explains that the reason why there was a lag in studying the connection between gender and language is that linguists in the past approached this topic through various perspectives such as "the deficit approach", which implied that women's use of language is deficient in relationship to men's use of language. Men's language use was regarded as the norm against which women's patterns of language use were evaluated. Another approach was "the dominance approach", which implied a stark linguistic difference between men and women stating that men's speech terms were dominant, whereas women's speech exhibited patterns of subordination. A third approach that researchers took was "the difference approach", pushing for the idea that men and women belong in opposite if not different linguistic subcultures (Coates, 8: 2016). Empirical conclusive data have led linguistic researchers to posit that women acquire language at a faster rate than men in early language learning. (Coates, 618; 2008). Moreover, regarding gender differences, it appears that women tend to use what are referred to as "uncertainty phrases" or "hedge phrases" and "tag questions". This indicates that women are more polite than men and often attempt not to impinge their views on others: "Uncertainty verb phrases, especially those combining first-person singular pronouns with perceptual or cognitive verbs (e.g., "I wonder if"), have been found more often in women's writing" (Mulac & Lundell, 1994) and speech (Hartman, 1976; Poole, 1979). "A related interpretation of women's use of hedge phrases is that women are more reluctant to force their views on another person" (Matthew, et. Al, 213: 2008). Additionally, one aspect of language use that plays a key role in language acquisition is positionality. Often times, women acquiring a second language, feel uneasy and are reluctant to speak according to my data (Norton & Mckinney, 84: 2010). However, immigrant women often do position themselves in different avenues that benefit them and ease them into learning a

second language. In a manuscript by Norton and Mckinney, the case of a Czech immigrant was introduced where the Czech immigrant in question, Martina, who was working at a fast food restaurant re-positioned herself as more than an immigrant to her co-workers: a mother figure (Norton & Mckinney, 84: 2010). Immigrant women take on roles in their new work and social lives that are often found in families such as mother figures, aunts, and so forth in order to not be dehumanized and looked down upon, as they are learning a new language. If anything, this self-conscious positioning allows them to be revered and helped in learning a new language, while it also reinforces gender roles.

CHAPTER II

Section I

Methodology

Methods for assuring protection of human subjects (IRB)

This project was very sensitive for each of the case study participants. The project was approved following the completion of the ATP project by the IRB, as various precautionary measures had to be taken. The first IRB application for the ATP project submitted was denied because the Board was seeking further clarification about the nature of the project with respect to the safety of the immigrant population. The second application submitted was again denied for its lack of emphasis on how the identity of the participants, especially the student participants, would be protected. The Board was worried about their identity being revealed and used throughout the research project even with pseudonyms. Most importantly the Board was concerned about the student participants' immigration status being revealed through the process of the research which required involvement of participants' speech communities and so consent forms had to be redrafted with greater specificity for their protection. This research includes participant observation, rapport building, community engagement and other forms of anthropological naturalistic observation. These processes are explained in detail below in the approach to data collection section. However, given the severity of the current immigration crisis, I, as the researcher, was not allowed to travel to the homes of the student participants. This restriction limited the many possible communicative strategies used in their respective speech communities that typically occur in the homes of the student participants. The IRB worries were understandable; however, the project start date was very time sensitive. The board did not give their approval until everything was thoroughly explained and carefully examined and it was just

in time to begin conducting field work which was about a week before I needed to do so. Following the ATP project, in order to continue this research into an Honors Thesis, an amendment form had to be submitted to the IRB once again to get permission to continue working with student participants. This time around, the amendment form was accepted with no issues.

Sample and Approach to data collection

To provide insight into the domestic and international ESL Black, immigrant student population via the perspectives of students, faculty, and administrators, this study, based on a critical paradigm, draws on a multitiered methodology. It begins with a literature data search, structured and open-ended interviews with diversity administrators, ESL and Global Language faculty, followed by rapport-building —continuous genuine and naturalistic dialogic interaction—participant-observation and naturalistic observations; structured and open-ended and formal interviews with four domestic and international, Black, male, immigrant students followed by four domestic and international, Black, female, immigrant students who had completed their first year of college at BSU.

Selected by purposive sampling, consent forms were created for each individual group with appropriate wording. I began by pursuing a literature-search of research conducted on ESL students about their struggles in the academic realm, followed by literature research of what intersectionality looks like when it comes to linguistic readiness, as well as the role of gender and its impact on English Language Learners (ELL). I then met with each student individually, interviewed, participated in some of their daily activities and observed all student participants in their respective speech communities, details, of which I explain below. After this participant-observation followed by interviews and rapport-building, I moved to stage two of my research;

conducting hour-long, in-depth interviews with seven administrators and faculty participants from Global Languages and English Departments. These were structured interviews that inquired into the nature of services offered at BSU for ESL/ELL immigrant students, as well as perceptions faculty and administrators held about these students' abilities and challenges. Following the recorded interviews and notes, they were then transcribed. My decision to focus on specific speech communities is informed by Sapir's linguistic anthropology insight, namely that the social context of speech shapes language use in terms of vocabulary and body language, for example. I wanted to understand how well students adapted, linguistically, to distinct speech communities. Once I transcribed the interviews, I then analyzed the data using Cummins' ideas to determine if their level of language represented the lower or upper tiers of linguistic readiness. This is how I determined that these two levels are inadequate to describe the range of levels I noted in my observations.

My sample comprised of students, administrators, and faculty. During the ATP project, I had a sample of four male Black male ESL immigrant students from different countries including Haiti, Jamaica, Cape Verde, and Ghana whom I interviewed and engaged in naturalistic observation and participant observation in their respective speech communities that they often navigate through—with the exception, as noted above, of their homes. My naturalistic participation and participant observation involved me spending a period of two months interacting with the student participants in different settings. For example, with one student, I attended a Church service in English at his Haitian Church and then asked him about his understanding of the sermon. With another student, I joined a game of soccer, paying attention to the verbal exchanges before, during and after the game, and also noting body language.

Following the ATP project, I had a cohort of four domestic and international, Black, ESL, female immigrant students from different countries as well including Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ghana, Guatemala. I also interviewed and engaged in naturalistic observations and participant-observation with the female participants in their respective speech communities, such as in their friend groups, the clubs and organizations that they routinely attend, as well their places of work that they often navigate through—with the exception, as noted above, of their homes. In addition, I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with the male participants. Given that diversity administrators are in charge of implementing the University diversity's vision, I was able to conduct additional interviews with diversity administrators during the continuation of this study after conducting follow-up interviews with the original participants previously involved in the study. Informal naturalistic observation and interviews were also conducted with four student female participants and additional administrators. Additional diversity administrators were also added to the continuation of this study.

As they linguistically navigate these communities, individuals engage in what linguistic anthropologists refer to as "code switching" (Salzmann et al, 2015, 313). Each community contains its own codes—patterns of speech represented by grammatical constructions, lexicon (vocabulary), kinesics (body language), as well as other variables including intonation, communication levels (loudness), and the proximity of one speaker to another (proxemics). I also interviewed three administrators from different department and offices, including the Office of Institutional Diversity and English Language Learning office. Interviewing the administrators allowed me to see how they view the programs created for student success compared to how the students view those programs, and whether they are useful to the immigrant students' academic growth from the students' point of view.

CHAPTER III

Section I

Data Analysis and findings

Student perspectives

The population at Bridgewater State University is very diverse. In a recent survey conducted by the University, the ethnic make-up population includes Asians, American Indian Hispanics, and more, although notably, the survey did not include African Americans, Latinos, Hispanics or Cape Verdeans by name (CIRP Freshman survey 2017). In addition, it is important to note that the University does not collect data on a student's immigration status, such as which countries domestic and international immigrant students are from, nor does the university specify percentages of ESL students. Moreover, even for ethnically diverse students who are counted, said population is rarely a focus of conversations about diversity with respect to linguistic challenges. The student participants were eager to be part of a project that would allow them to use their voice and speak for themselves. The student participants echoed many like-minded attitudes. They all agreed that as undergraduate students, immigrant, domestic and international students are expected to have a certain proficiency, in fact a level of mastery of the English language to succeed academically. They all mentioned how they had to seek language acquisition via unorthodox forms such as watching anime. For example, one participant stated, "Yeah a lot of big words I learned from anime, I learned a lot from Dragon Ball and movies" (interview July 1, 2018). Music was another unorthodox approach to language learning: "Cause like me personally, one of the reasons why I learn English was because of music" (Interview, Oct 16th, '18).

Male participants: findings and attitudes

Another sentiment offered was through the male participants, on some of the many resources that the university has to offer, as well as students' own perceptions of how they use those resources and whether they are helpful to the students. One resource that all the men participants referred to was the Academic Achievement Center. As many of us know this is a place where students go to receive help with their academic coursework. Within that Center, there are multiple different resources available such as the Writing Studio (WS), second language services, and more. The WS is a resource on campus that most faculty and administrators think is helpful to the student body, but which the student participants asserted was not helpful to them. This was the one resource that was mentioned through all the student participants' interviews as well as the professors' and one of the three administrator's interviews as well. The WS provides additional assistance, mainly with writing, to help students with their classroom assignments. However, the student participants saw the WS in a different light. One participant stated, "For me, I feel like it (the AAC) didn't help" said one of the participants (Interview with student participant, July 1, 2018). I quickly asked a follow up question: "Going to the AAC, do you see that happening with other immigrant students on campus where they've done the same thing that you have, stopped going to the AAC?" He replied, "Yeah definitely, most of my friends, from the same high school, sometimes we joke about our writing. You could ask why you don't go to the WS and they would say, 'nah I stopped going because every time I never get the help that I needed.' It's not only me" (Interview with student participant, July 1, 2018). This sentiment highlights that this issue is present amongst other students. Later, the student elaborated that "three or four people have said the same thing." This was a sentiment expressed across the board with all the student participants that I conducted observations with

and interviewed. For example, I asked one of the student participants if he felt like the WS molded his writing to help him achieve the level of writing he was seeking and his response was as follows: "So for the first semester, I went there, talked to them... they helped me with my writing and they told me it was fine, but then I brought it to the teacher and I got a low grade on it. That kind of stopped me from going back there, because I feel like they weren't much help" (Interview with student participant, July 2, 2018) Another student expressed that he was getting help with writing his papers when the tutor would make the corrections, but not with becoming a better writer. This indicates that the students perceive that they are not getting the help they need and that not all immigrant male students can be helped the same way. Also, it seems that the tutors themselves are not sure how to guide the students with these ESL challenges.

Female participants: findings and attitudes

The women participants echoed the same issues as the men with respect to the resources that the university has to offer to help their student population succeed such as the AAC and the WS. Three out of the four women interviewed stated that the WS was not providing adequate help to their needs. One woman participant noted "I always ask my friends to peer review my essays before I go to the AAC" (Interview, October 2018). She went on to say that "Every time I go to the AAC, it's not mostly about the ideology behind the paper but more the grammar and sometimes it's not enough because I want to make sure my process is being understood" (interview, October '18). This sentiment was repeated not only by the women but by the men as well. These interviews lead me to conclude that Black immigrant students require assistance in learning how to express complex ideas in English, not only a focus on grammatical corrections in their work.

The stark difference between the women participants and the men, is that women expressed that they were frequently silenced in their courses when attempting to speak. One participant explained that one of her professor even attempted to erase what they deemed to be their accent: “One thing that affected me is I took a public speaking class and the professor focused the class on getting rid of your accent and did it a speech where apparently, I was pronouncing a word with an accent, and this was a faculty member and so I was shocked cause Bridgewater is about diversity and it didn’t feel welcoming” (Interview, October 18th, ’18).

Women students expressed that their male counterparts are picked to answer questions when the professors asks, before women students are called on and that the male students seem to go along with this: “This sucks to say but the males tends to shut down the girls when they talk. When I would raise my hands, the professors would pick the males first. And the males would feel superior and feel like they’re right” (Interview, October 18th, ‘18). This echoes the findings in the gender literature section where males’ speech patterns are often regarded as superior than women’s. Not only is this the case, but when it comes to interactions in the classroom, the women participants noted that their male counterparts tend to speak more quickly and much more straightforwardly than the women who answer the questions on what they say is a much deeper level: “Guys are more like I want to say the same thing you said but, in less words, they add a little humor there when they can.” (Interview, October 16th, ‘18). Additionally, the women participants echoed the male participants explaining how acquiring English and being linguistically ready are also difficult for them. The difference lies in where women often feel a sense of uneasiness to speak or feel less than their male counterparts, and they try to make up for this in different ways. One woman participant noted that in the classroom when native born speakers “English is very much advance than yours you feel inferior because you cannot

elaborate on things as much as they do” (Interview, October 2018). Another noted “I tend to use Thesaurus. Come to try to sound fancy and expand my vocab. It’s better to get straight to the point and not trying to make up for not knowing English” (Interview, October 18, ’18).

Another interesting finding that highlights a difference between the male and female student participants, was that immigrant males tend to speak in their language of origin, even when acquiring a new language, whereas female immigrants tends to speak in the new language that they are acquiring even among themselves. Through the participant observation and interviews conducted with both groups, as a French and Creole native speaker, one of the women participant who is also from Haiti spoke to me in English throughout the interview process whereas when I interviewed one of the male participants we would go back and forth between speaking in English and speaking in Haitian Creole. At first, the participants stated that they are often shy to do so, but when they acquire a new beloved role within their newly found society, they speak in the new language. Moreover, when an immigrant is learning a new language or have learned a second language they don’t often have many opportunities where they can publicly speak in their native tongue as it isn’t the dominant language “At home I definitely speak Spanish but most of my everyday life, at school, what I work in the most, its English” (Interview October 16th, ‘18). Speaking English is a reflection of their feelings of belonging or their desire to belong and not be left out. Male students, on the other hand often revert back into speaking their native tongue with one another as it often allows a sense of comfortability. While I don’t know how widespread this observation is beyond the sample group, but I raise it as a point for future researchers to explore in greater depth.

Additional findings—seeking help at the Academic Achievement center and Writing Studio

The combination of the above factors regarding the kind of support students feel they do not receive, led students not to return and to give up easily. Other reasons that some students indicated include that they were shy in seeking help; others cited the lack of a cultural connection to their mentors, while others thought the aid they received was inappropriate to their needs. The context here, a foundation of the anthropological approach is critical: ESL students have frequently been ostracized, shamed and discriminated against for their accents; they have even experienced the assumption that they are not intelligent because of their accents: “They were told a story of themselves as struggling, less competent learners, while they were doing a task twice as difficult as the rest of their peers” (Lowenstein 2017). This history shaped their perceptions of their experiences, and as an ESL student myself, resonated with my own experience. With that said, the student participants also agreed that there needs to be a resource focused on immigrant students, if not a new one, an improvement on the existing services based on awareness of the experiences of this student population. Their reasoning, according to one participant is that “students of color, immigrants should be able to feel more comfortable. There should be more focus on the students, helping them prepare instead of just putting them in class.” (Interview with student participant, July 2, 2018). When asked what that resource would look like, their answers were as follows: “At least an office for immigrant students. Have people that can help you in writing, help you understand the language”. Another student, commenting on his own lack of comfort at the WS said, “Just make it more inviting.” When asked what he meant by that in a follow up interview, he explained “Sometimes you don’t really get the help needed, or enough time because there’s other people waiting.

Faculty perspectives

The faculty members were also big proponents and supporters of this project being done. All of the faculties saw the need that immigrant students are facing. One of the faculty members interviewed during the ATP project even empathized with the linguistic struggles of immigrants, something that the student participants noted that not all faculty members recognize: “Yeah exactly. If English isn't your first language, you'll have issues with grammar and syntax. So, we talk about different cultural ideologies that influence their writings. So, we try to be aware of cultural differences,” said one faculty member. “Often professors will go nuts and be upset about every grammatical error and penalize the student. It's like penalizing someone for having an accent” added the same faculty member (Interview with faculty participant: July 31, 2018). That faculty member understood the cultural differences of immigrant students and how that affects their work. Most professors expect their students, no matter their background, to be linguistically ready academically. “There's a belief that good grammar equals good thinking” (Interview with faculty participant, June 25, 2018). Another shared idea among the faculty was how strongly they believed that a student’s mastery of English will definitely affect his studies. I asked one of the faculty participants “Do you feel like the student's mastery of English has an impact on their writings?” to which the response was: “definitely” (Interview with faculty, July 31, 2018). Moreover, during follow up interview process with the faculty participants, they echoed that a student’s country of origin plays a huge role in their language acquisition and linguistic readiness, but most importantly in their writing as well. One participant noted:

“Especially Chinese and Japanese culture, it’s considered fine to plagiarize because they share everything; you don't have to say whose ideas it is, so often time they're found plagiarizing. Other cultures it's the integration when they write. So, in the Japanese culture, for example, it's the reader's responsibility to make sense of the text whereas in the USA

t's the writer's responsibility. So, if you're a writer in the States it's your responsibility, in Japan it's the opposite. So, we talk about different cultural ideologies influence their writings. So, we try to be aware of cultural differences. Another aspect particular in Latin x culture. Are things point first or not thing first. In the state, we tend to do a thesis at the beginning.” (Interview, July 31st, 2018)

These cultural differences are something that are often dismissed when helping students improve in their language and writing skills. Additionally, one faculty participant mentioned that male students tend to show more dysgraphia, which is having difficulties with spelling, poor handwriting, and issues with writing down what their thoughts in intelligible notes. Although considered a learning disability, this is present amongst many immigrant populations when they begin to acquire an additional language. Morphology-the study of words and their structure- was another important aspect of language that needs to be taken into consideration when helping immigrant students and their writing. Although the faculty participants did not echoed that not enough attention has been paid to gender differences and their impact on being linguistically ready one faculty participant noted that women are better at translating while another noted that one's economic background plays a role in acquiring an additional language: “If you identify as a female of a more affluent class, I think you have some confidence in those kinds of thing than if you identify as a female who's had to struggle” (Interview, November 15th, 2018). Therefore, the intersectionality of class and gender combined with immigrant and language status all play a role in a student's experience of acquiring linguistic readiness.

Administrator perspectives

Bridgewater prides itself on being student-oriented first and foremost. That is a viewpoint that all the administrators in the study shared. In regard to being student-centered, they all also

echoed how they are data-driven and those data, whether qualitative or quantitative, always involve the student population (from small-scale to larger-scale analyses) “I think the approach that BSU has, ‘one student at a time’, makes sense. It's an institution that is data driven, using analyses to best help our students,” said one administrator (Interview with administrator, July 16, 2018). “We look at the data from institutional research and student-driven” said another administrator (Interview with administrator, July 19, 2018). The administrators’ perspectives were that language has not been part of the many programs and research conducted or at the university itself, even linguistic issues in terms of the language that the university utilizes. This fact hinders an upcoming freshman student’s ability to fully comprehend the rules, regulations, and operation modules of the university, whether they are an immigrant or not.

One question that I asked of all the administrator participants was, “has language been part of the programs (At BSU)?” In response, one administrator stated, “It hasn't. Your project is making me realize we need to do that more.” Another administrator even pointed out that, “I've encountered language issues. For examples policies that are written by a lawyer. For a lawyer, it's easy to understand, but if I'm reading it and I have no notion how the law operates, I'll be lost”. “That's a really good question. I'm not sure that it [language proficiency] has been. Clearly, it has been to some extent,” added another administrator. Given the many students that Bridgewater caters to, this project has allowed them, the administrators, to look on a smaller scale at a population that was perhaps flying under the radar with an immense number of linguistic struggles. They understood that the immigrant population, in this case, the male immigrants, is an underserved population when it comes to linguistic readiness.

When it comes to intersectionality, the university is diving more into this area in order to cater to their student population more appropriately. One sentiment echoed across the

administrator participants is that this research project is provoking ideas and important issues that were not necessarily at the forefront of their minds: “You’ve given me a lot to think about,” said one administrator participant (interview, November 2nd, 2018). An additional sentiment shared is that there needs to be an emphasis on cultural professional development, or what is known in diversity training as multicultural competencies in order to help administrators, faculty and staff alike to connect, not only to domestic and international white students but Black immigrant students as well. The perception of the Black immigrant students is one that is often misunderstood. According to one administrator who works closely with both domestic and international immigrant students of color, “My biggest issue is trying to teach my peers about how language is different. That students of color are always angry or uneducated because they talk one way or have an accent or they’re not warm and fuzzy all the time. My biggest issue is trying to teach my colleagues the value of culture” (Interview, November 2nd, 2018). This quote underlines another stereotype not only of ELL/ESL students: that how they express themselves may not only be a matter of English language proficiency, but also is about cultural modes of expression. This is a significant insight that has long been part of the educational system’s concerns in the U.S., particularly with respect to “Ebonics” (otherwise known as Black English) the grammatically consistent, but differential use of language by African-American students (DeBose, 157-167; 2010) which often leads white educators to stereotype and disparage the intelligence of Black students due to bias.

Analysis and Additional Findings

In analyzing the data, this project has highlighted quite a few insights. As I studied the use of language of each of these participants, it was evident that they knew how to code switch among their peers in oral communication. For example, after the Church service, where the

student participated in hymns and spoken prayers, he reverted to the peer-to-peer conversational style of Haitian Creole that he and I use in our casual conversations. Another example was when another student participant switched from speaking to me in English to speaking in Cape Verdean creole to his co-workers after I interviewed him. This indicates they knew how to culturally code switch. In a nutshell this means that they demonstrated the ability to adopt behaviors that are normative in a given speech community in their respective form of language, such as being able to greet people in Haitian Creole and quickly switch to greet others in English using proper gestures and tonality. Given that many of them are polyglots (speakers of more than two languages), they followed the rules fairly well in their respective languages. I was able to determine this because the responses they received were not surprised or concerned, but matter-of-fact and sometimes led to ongoing conversation. Three out of the four participants use the lingua franca, as well as code-mixing as a mode of communication cross-culturally. For example, in one communicative event, where two of the study's participants and I, alongside our friends, were playing a game of pick-up soccer, more than one language was used simultaneously. We switched back and forth between English and Creole. Many of one of the participants' sentences sounded like this: "Map pran three thirty train lan" which in English translate to "I'm going to catch the 3:30 train". During the same event, one of the participants spoke Haitian Creole to me and English to a friend of mine in the same sentence. Thus, one finding is that oral code switching was successfully achieved in peer group conversations. A second finding is that code mixing was also normative in those same speech events.

From the analysis of the work conducted through the Honors Thesis, it appears that gender, economic background, country of immigration, and race play a huge role in the process of acquiring language which in turns affect the development of linguistic readiness in large part

because of what is referred to as “lived experience”: the day to day experiences of people as members of groups that shape access to opportunities and resources as well as biases and behavior. It appears that students of color including Black immigrant students cherish spaces that are specifically designated to support them, especially when in an uncomfortable situation, such as being at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). One such space, that that the university has in place that is utilized by Black immigrant students, domestic and international alike, is the Center for Multicultural Affairs (CMA). One administrator participant noted that the staff administrators at the CMA cater to students of color and act as a liaison between them and the rest of the university:

“I like to think that [CMA] assist students in learning how to advocate for themselves coming from first generation, underrepresented and underserved populations. It’s difficult sometimes for students on a campus predominantly with white students, to be comfortable in advocating for themselves. Sometimes [their] feelings of intimidation isolation--it fosters a sense of inability to advocate for themselves to get the resources that they need. The other piece is that we work very hard in retention efforts for students of color. There are programs that I’m involved with extending outreach to students from middle school. Sometimes [CMA] try to find students of color to speak to them so that middle school students and high school students can see themselves as college students and *our* students” (interview, November 2nd, 2018).

Moreover, I have also concluded, based on the emic views of the students that this is a population who are facing issues that are flying under the radar, so to speak. While Black males are a population who are focused on for success, Black male immigrants who are struggling with language skills, as a subset of this wider population is not targeted for academic success. During

one of my interviews with a faculty member, it was brought up that there's a course available, English 101e, for students whose first language is not English and need additional help with their writing beyond English 101. That course is a start, but there are much bigger issues that cannot be solved simply in a matter of a semester. Following that course, my research indicates that there's no way to truly track the improvements of these students for their linguistic proficiency. There are multiple resources available for other populations on campus, but when it comes to resources for black male immigrants, resources are very limited. Additionally, at present, there is no way to track the retention and graduation rates of Black immigrant students. This disables the capacity of the university to help this population.

Section II

Limitations and Future Studies

Limitations

This project is amongst many that are looking into how second language learners navigate through the many challenges they face when acquiring a second language, mainly English. However, this project is one the few that looks into the readiness of immigrant college students when it comes to English for this specific population. As the end of the project neared, I started seeing its many limitations. To name a few, the first limitation of this project was that the student participant sample was small and purposefully sampled. Another limitation of the project was that the environment to conduct field research and collect data was already controlled and pre-determined by the IRB constraints. An additional limitation was the timeframe which disabled me from conducting other forms of interviews. This is an important study where time is needed to conduct more research via different methods such as focus group interviews and

participant-observation immersion into each population. Nor was I able to observe the interaction of both groups together, (male and females) in the same space.

Future Studies

There are always two or more angles to an issue. As mentioned above, while this specific project was looking at the issue from the perspective of domestic and international Black, students, the next step is to look at it from other community perspectives such as the LatinX or the White immigrant community perspective. My goal is to understand how other aspects of intersectionality such as the race and gender diversity of other groups play a role in becoming linguistically prepared for university. All of the issues surrounding linguistic readiness highlighted in this study may not necessarily change for those groups of students, but they might look different from their perspective. For instance, while White immigrant students will not experience the same racial stereotypes as Black immigrant students, they may still be ridiculed for their accents. It is also likely that there may be immigrant students in other groups who identify as racially diverse; and issues of racial diversity may render even more complex the intersectional identities of race, ethnicity, immigration status and language proficiency, given potential variation across populations. How society's racial categories weave into this is critical to explore. Thus, I hope to continue this project through my graduate studies pursuing ethnographic research that seeks to understand whether other immigrants, ESL, gender diverse individuals who have completed their first year of college, perceive themselves as linguistically prepared for college life. I also hope to juxtapose the findings from the new communities to these findings, looking at the struggles that each population faces and the impact of these struggles on their linguistic readiness.

CHAPTER IV

Section I

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Findings of this study demonstrate that domestic and international, immigrant, ESL Black men and women who have completed their first year of college at BSU, still feel that they are not being provided with enough resources to help them to acquire the linguistic competence to be fully prepared for college. As noted above, limitations have included a small number of immigrant student participants due to time constrain of the study, combined with the in-depth nature of ethnographic research. Nonetheless, I shall conclude with some recommendations that I believe reflect the insights gained from the combination of student, faculty and administrator contributions.

- I. One of the many recommendations that can be made stemmed from one of the administrator interviews. That recommendation is **to host campus tours, or family orientation programs in a student's native tongue** for both the students and their parents. This would allow the parents to be able to get involved in the student's academic life.
- II. A second recommendation that I can make is for the writing studio to **revisit their training of their staff members to include empathy training**. As I interviewed a faculty member from the WS, they seemed to understand what being an immigrant student is about. They indicated specific awareness and empathy for immigrant students who suffer from self-esteem challenges regarding language use; however, to what extent does the entire staff appreciate the complexity of immigrant student issues, from emotions of inadequacy to skills needed? The importance of the anthropological

perspective is evident here in the distinction between language acquisition and language proficiency. Proficiency includes features of language learning that stem from Sapir's holistic approach to language as part of culture. Students are not only learning grammar, lexicon, morphology and semantics but cultural patterns of language use such as kinesics (body language) and proxemics (spatial distances between communicators) and the subtleties of tonality, volume, and other behaviors that accompany language. ESL/ELL learners would benefit from language trainers who themselves are trained in the **holistic nature** of language.

III. BSU collects data in many ways to help their students. The CIRP freshmen survey and the placement test are two main ways to identify immigrant students and their needs.

However, the process still needs adjustments. The CIRP survey includes questions that ask a student about their level of English and their level of speaking and writing skills.

However, the answer choices may not be as clear or well defined where some students may choose a category that doesn't necessarily describe their skills or mastery. A few

questions are needed that point more directly to **whether students speak and write English as well as first language learners**.

IV. A fourth recommendation emerges from one of the faculty members that I interviewed who explained that the students felt as if their work was being red-penned, both in the classroom and at the WS. This means that they would go over their work with them, cross out what's wrong and tell them how and what they should write rather than helping them understand why what they originally wrote was wrong in the first place. Therefore, the nature of tutoring must teach students using "**focus correction**". Focus correction is used by **establishing rapport**, an understanding of who that student is and builds a

relationship with the student. Determining the level of linguistic readiness is part of the focus of the rapport building. In this way, tutors will be able to understand why students are making the mistakes they are and how each student can be helped to see their mistakes and the best way to fix them. A few professors including my advisor and a professor that I interviewed use focus correction rather than red-penning. By the end of next semester in my honors thesis work, I will be able to provide the administration with a chart that includes levels of language proficiency development that can be used as a guide for tutors and professors who have immigrant students in their classes who are ELLs.

- V. Language acquisition and linguistic readiness do not only entail writing eloquently and in an appropriate format. They also entail oral presentation skills, being able to professionally code switch from one university setting to another (such as working with a group of students on a project to participating in a classroom discussion), and much more. BSU currently offers a 101e writing course that allows students, mainly immigrant students, to work on their writing skills. The university also hosts a remedial course in math that helps students brush up on their math skills. However, there is not an equivalent course that helps students with their speaking skills. **I would recommend the university to add a 101e public speaking.** Salem State University, also part of the Massachusetts State University system, already offers public speaking courses to help ESL immigrants acquire English language proficiency. This course would help immigrant students at BSU in becoming linguistically ready not only through writing but also through speaking. It would also help them cope with the emotional challenges of

shyness, biases toward accents, and how to adapt to culturally relevant practices (e.g. eye contact and body language, which differ significantly from culture to culture).

- VI. **It is crucial that faculty and tutors understand the emotional profile of many ELL/ESL students.** Students in the study group report that because of their language proficiency challenges, there is often the unacknowledged assumption that the students are not as intelligent, and they are often spoken to in louder tones than to other students. This is a subtle form of discrimination that alienates ELL/ESL students and reinforces feelings of inadequacy. A **handbook or tips for faculty and tutors that identifies the profile and how to assist students by boosting confidence** is also recommended.
- VII. The university conducts many surveys, including retention and graduation rate surveys; however, Black immigrant students are often left out. In order to understand in greater depth their struggles and to evaluate further, beyond what this study has identified, the adequacy of support for this population, I urge **the university to design one or more research tools to complement and expand the focus of this study.**
- VIII. The university's definition of **Student Success should be easily accessed on the website**, so that all students, including the population of this study, are able to evaluate their own views of their own success vis-à-vis the university's definition. Students need to be able to determine the relationship between the two and identify support systems they need to access to attain success as the university defines it.
- IX. One final recommendation is to conduct further research into the immigrant population at the university and ultimately see if **a program can be developed for undergraduates modeled after the graduate writing fellows program**, which pairs a struggling student with a strong peer and a faculty member to strengthen their writing. This can be a

resource tailored to focus on immigrant students like the student participants have mentioned throughout their interviews, in terms of a new resource or to better an already existing one. This program for graduate students is fairly new but has seen a lot of success. Something of that nature can definitely be of use to undergraduate immigrant students.

As immigrant students are increasingly growing in numbers in higher education, the topic of their linguistic readiness, as well as associated issues that are faced by immigrant students, is starting to be an essential conversation especially in higher education. The naturalistic observations and participant-observation conducted with the student participants have demonstrated that immigrant students, especially Black male immigrant students, still struggle linguistically. Part of goals of this research was to analyze the programs that the university offers and see whether or not they provided adequate help to assist this population—Black, domestic and international, immigrant, former first year, male students—in their adaptation to college life and in acquiring linguistic proficiency. The field work conducted with my student participants, combined with the interviews with the faculty and administrators, has echoed the attitudes that the programs that the university offers do not fully cater to their linguistic needs.

Bridgewater is a university that prides itself on diversity as well as the success of its students. However, one of the many student populations that attends Bridgewater is facing significant linguistic struggles. It is my hope that this research will inspire the university to take a deeper look by addressing the above recommendations and see how they can best help this population. Becoming linguistically ready is an ongoing battle, especially with detailed writing such as verb tense agreement and noun-verb agreement, which are issues for many immigrant ESL students.

In my own experience, as a member of this population, there have been individual professors who have been willing to help me, but no systematic program where I can partake with experts in ESL writing who can train me. This was the kind of work I've had to do as a former first year student at BSU. I've come from afar as I faced many challenges with my writing skills and becoming linguistically ready; however, I still have a long way to go. This situation is also the case for others who are part of this population —Black, domestic and international, immigrant, former first year, male students at BSU, as they are still struggling in becoming linguistically prepared to tackle academic writing and feeling comfortable in the speech community of the classroom. Academic success is not divorced from the emotional struggles created by the stigma of discrimination that ESL students experience. BSU, as an institution that pride itself in diversity, has an opportunity to further its strategic goals through this attention.

Appendix A: Glossary: linguistic terms used and terms of interest

Bilingual: people who can speak two languages

Code-mixing: the embedding of various linguistics units such as words or phrases and clauses

Code-switching: the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two different grammatical systems

Communicative Strategy: the shift in a language to fit the nature of a speech community

Cognate: A word related to another by descent from the same ancestral language

Creole: A pidgin that has become the first language of a speech community

Creolization: Process of expansion of a pidgin to other language functions

Decreolization: speakers of creoles who uses the standard language over the creole

Dialect: Form of a language or speech used by members of a regional, ethnic, or social group

Diglossia: the use of two distinct varieties of a language for two different sets of functions.

Ethnography of communication: The nature of communicative behavior in the context of culture

Ethnopoetics: Study of the poetic aspects of discourse

Ethnoscience: Lexical classification of the social and physical environment of speakers of a language by means of its vocabulary rather than the relationships of grammatical categories.

Frame (or performance): face-to-face interaction that participants do when speaking that determines the frame or reference in which the exchange is to be interpreted and understood

Idiolect: An individual's speech variety

Kinesics: The study of body language

Language Shift: Adaptation of a new language into a native tongue

Lexicons: A person Vocabulary

Lingua franca: A language agreed upon as a medium of communication by people who speak different first languages

Linguistic competence: The knowledge of the grammatical rules of their mother tongue, acquired before adulthood

Loanwords: Borrowed lexicons

Multilingual: The ability to speak more than one language

Morphology: Study of words and their structure (Linguistics)

Neurolinguistics: Branch of linguistics concerned with the role the brain plays in language and speech processing.

Norms of interpretation: The judgement of what constitute proper interaction

Paralanguage: Characteristics of vocal communication considered marginal or optional and therefore excludable from linguistic analysis
of speech for purposes of an ethnographic analysis

Passive/Receptive Bilingualism: The ability to understand a second language but not being able to speak it.

Polyglot: People who can speak several languages fluently

Pidginization: Process of grammatical and lexical reduction of a language

Proxemics: The study of cultural patterning of the spatial separation individuals maintain face-to-face encounters.

Rules of interaction: Communicative activity of members of a speech community that knows what is and what is not appropriate

Semantics: The study of meaning

Sequential bilingualism: a person becomes bilingual by first learning one language and follow up with another

Simultaneous Bilingualism: Learning two languages at the same time

Sound Symbolism: The presumed association of sound and meaning

Speech Act: Minimal unit of speech for purposes of an ethnographic analysis

Speech Area: An area in which speakers of different languages share speaking rules

Speech community: Those who share specific rules for speaking and interpreting speech

Speech Event: Basic unit of verbal interaction

Speech situation: The context within which speaking occurs

Voice characteristics: Speech through which one talks

Voice qualifiers: tone of voice and pacing of speech and variation in intensity or volume

Appendix B-(B-1) Consent forms
Bridgewater State University Informed Consent Document for Student participants

Title of Research: Adapting to College Life: An ethnographic study of the linguistic challenges Faced by Domestic and international, Black, immigrant Students at Bridgewater State University

Researcher(s): Carter Remy, J1remy@student.bridgew.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Diana Fox, Anthropology, D1fox@bridgew.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Bridgewater State University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her/them any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the bottom of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep. If you would like to know the results of the study upon its completion, please let the interviewer know.

1. **Nature and purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this study is to assess perceptions of linguistic readiness of domestic and international, Black, immigrant students at BSU and to evaluate whether programs offered by the university meet the needs of the students.
2. **Explanation of the Procedures:** You will be asked to commit to focus group(s) interview(s) where the researcher will be conducting participant and naturalistic observations in a maximum of three of your speech communities for a period of 7-10 days. You will be asked to engage in interviews and follow-up interviews, which will be recorded using the researcher's cell phone voice memo function or an audio recording device. Recording(s) will take place during interviews and follow up interviews.
3. **Discomfort and Risks:** There may be discomfort expressed by members of your social groups at the presence of the researcher. Discomfort may include but not limited to: Being seen in a different light by your peers, worrying about how the information you disclosed to the researcher may be used, worrying about what will become of the data acquired from the observations post-research. If you or any other member of your social group wishes to stop the observations and/or interview you may do so at any time. The researcher will seek to mitigate discomfort by sharing any written results prior to a final written or oral presentation of the research to all interviewees for feedback and editing suggestions
4. **Benefits:** This study is important to science, society and the university as well as future immigrant students in meeting not only their educational needs but as well as helping them navigate the U.S cultural barriers following their transition from their home country

5. **Confidentiality:** Your information will be kept safe on the researchers' cell phone device, that is password protected and the audio device that the researcher will use. All audio materials will be destroyed after each interview is transcribed, following the completion of the final project. Any data acquired (Written or recorded) will be kept confidential between the researcher and the researcher's advisor. No data or records will be distributed to any party(ies) (Local, state or government) whatsoever or in any format. All data (Written or recorded) will be destroyed upon completion of the research. The researchers will attempt to protect confidentiality; however, the nature of the data makes it potentially identifiable. A pseudonym will be used so that all student participants' names remains protected. There will be no physical, mental, or verbal risks involved in this research

Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

By signing below, I am indicating that I understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a research protocol, and I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the potential and unknown risks.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date:

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date:

Any questions, comments, concerns, regarding the conduct of the project, questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or research related to injury, should be brought to the attention of the IRB Administrator at (508) 531-1242 if you do not feel comfortable addressing the researcher.

Any questions, comments, concerns about the conduct of this research project should be brought to the attention of the principal investigator: Dr. Diana Fox at d1fox@bridgew.edu if you do not feel comfortable addressing the researcher.

Appendix B-2
Bridgewater State University Informed Consent Document for
Faculty participants

Title of Research: Adapting to College Life: An ethnographic study of the linguistic challenges faced by domestic and international, Black, immigrant students at Bridgewater State University

Researcher(s): Carter Remy, J1remy@student.bridgew.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Diana Fox, Anthropology, D1fox@bridgew.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Bridgewater State University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her/them any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the bottom of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep. If you would like to know the results of the study upon its completion, please let the interviewer know.

6. **Nature and purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this study is to assess perceptions of linguistic readiness of domestic and international, Black, immigrant students at BSU and to evaluate whether programs offered by the university meet the needs of the students.
7. **Explanation of the Procedures:** You will also be asked to engage in interviews and follow up interviews at appropriated public locations such as café's, your office or any cafeterias, at Bridgewater State University. As a faculty member you will be asked for a 30-45-minute interview with possible follow up interviews which will be recorded using the researcher's cell phone voice memo function or an audio recording device. Recording(s) will take place during interviews and follow up interviews.
8. **Discomfort and Risks:** If you experience any discomfort regarding any of the questions asked, and if you wish to stop the interview you may do so at any time. Upon the completion of the research, any and all data (written or recorded) acquired from the interviews will be destroyed. Discomforts may include, but not limited to, worrying about how you the interviewee, as a faculty member, may be represented in the research, worrying about how the information you gave may be perceived, worrying about your credibility as an administrator at this university. The researcher will seek to mitigate discomfort by sharing any written results prior to a final written or oral presentation of the research to all interviewees for feedback and editing suggestions.
9. **Benefits:** This study is important to science, society and the university as well as future immigrant students in meeting not only their educational needs but as well as helping them navigate the U.S cultural barriers following their transition from their home country.

10. **Confidentiality:** Your information will be kept safe on the researchers' cell phone device, that is password protected and the audio device that the researcher will use. All audio materials will be destroyed after each interview is transcribed, following the completion of the final project. Any data acquired (Written or recorded) will be kept confidential between the researcher and the researcher's advisor. No data or records will be distributed to any party(ies) (Local, state or government) whatsoever or in any format. All data (Written or recorded) will be destroyed upon completion of the research. The researchers will attempt to protect confidentiality; however, the nature of the data makes it potentially identifiable.

Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

By signing below, I am indicating that I understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a research protocol, and I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the potential and unknown risks.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date

Any questions, comments, concerns, regarding the conduct of the project, questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or research related to injury, should be brought to the attention of the IRB Administrator at (508) 531-1242.

Any questions, comments, concerns, about the conduct of this research project should be brought to the attention of the principal investigator: Dr. Diana Fox at d1fox@bridgew.edu

Appendix B-3
Bridgewater State University Informed Consent Document for
Administrators participants

Title of Research: Adapting to College Life: An ethnographic study of the linguistic challenges faced by domestic and international

, Black, immigrant students at Bridgewater State University

Researcher(s): Carter Remy, J1remy@student.bridgew.edu

Research Advisor: Dr. Diana Fox, Anthropology, D1fox@bridgew.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Bridgewater State University. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him/her/them any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have. If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the bottom of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep. If you would like to know the results of the study upon its completion, please let the interviewer know.

11. **Nature and purpose of the Project:** The purpose of this study is to assess perceptions of linguistic readiness of domestic and international, Black, immigrant students at BSU and to evaluate whether programs offered by the university meet the needs of the students.
12. **Explanation of the Procedures:** You will also be asked to engage in interviews and follow up interviews at appropriated public locations such as café's or your office at the university. As an administrator member you will be asked for a 30-45-minute interview with possible follow up interviews which will be recorded using the researcher's cell phone voice memo function or an audio recording device. Recording(s) will take place during interviews and follow up interviews.
13. **Discomfort and Risks:** There may be discomfort expressed by members of your professional groups regarding the research. If you wish to stop the observations and/or interview you may do so at any time. Upon the completion of the research, any and all data (Written or recorded) acquired from the observation will be destroyed. Discomforts may include but not limited to worrying about how you the interviewee, as an administrator, may be represented in the research, worrying about how the information you gave may be perceived, worrying about your credibility as an administrator at this university. The researcher will seek to mitigate discomfort by sharing any written results prior to a final written or oral presentation of the research to all interviewees for feedback and editing suggestions
14. **Benefits:** This study is important to science, society and the university as well as future immigrant students in meeting not only their educational needs but as well as helping them navigate the U.S cultural barriers following their transition from their home country.

15. Confidentiality: Your information will be kept safe on the researchers' cell phone device, that is password protected and the audio device that the researcher will use. All audio materials will be destroyed after each interview is transcribed, following the completion of the final project. Any data acquired (Written or recorded) will be kept confidential between the researcher and the researcher's advisor. No data or records will be distributed to any party(ies) (Local, state or government) whatsoever or in any format. All data (Written or recorded) will be destroyed upon completion of the research. The researcher(s) will attempt to protect confidentiality; however, the nature of the data makes it potentially identifiable.

Refusal/Withdrawal: Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

By signing below, I am indicating that I understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in a research protocol, and I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the potential and unknown risks.

Participant Signature: _____

Date:

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date:

Any questions, comments, concerns, regarding the conduct of the project, questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or research related to injury, should be brought to the attention of the IRB Administrator at (508) 531-1242.

Any questions, comments, concerns, about the conduct of this research project should be brought to the attention of the principal investigator: Dr. Diana Fox at d1fox@bridgew.edu

Appendix C-(C-1) Individual Interview questions

Student Interview questions

1. What's your major?
2. Is English your first language? If not, what is?
3. How many languages do you speak and what are they?
4. What language/s do you speak at home?
5. What settings do you find yourself facing challenges that you think are the result of language difficulties?
6. Please describe some of the most significant challenges you have faced as a student at BSU after your first year at the university?
7. Are you aware of the programs that the university has in place to help students succeed academically? If so, what programs?
8. Have you participated in any academic success programs? If so, which ones and when?
9. If you answered yes to question 7, can you please explain the impact of these programs on your perceptions of your own work as a student? Please be specific about which program/s and how they impacted you.
10. Are you aware of student success programs that are not specific to academics but instead support immigrant students on campus? If so, which ones?
11. If you answered yes to question 9, please identify and explain the programs you participated in and how they impacted you.
12. Do you believe being a woman have had an impact on you learning English? (if identified as one)

13. Do you see a difference between your interaction in the classroom and your male peers interaction?
14. Is there support you believe you still need? If yes, please explain.
15. Do you find yourself struggling with writing? If yes, please explain.
16. Do you feel like the high school you went to prepared you for college? Explain.
17. Before arriving to the States, did you learn English? If yes, how and when?
18. If yes, to the previous question, did you communicate in English prior to being in the States?
19. If yes to questions 15 and 16, do you think your study of English has had an impact on your studies? How?

Appendix C-2 Individual interview question

Professors/Faculty interview questions

1. How long have you been teaching at BSU and what courses do you teach?
2. What are the most significant problems you have faced with teaching new languages to students?
3. Have you taught immigrant students? If so, in what capacity? What have been the challenges? Achievements?
4. Do English language learning (ELL) students reach out to you with problems in learning English? If so, what kinds of challenges do they face?
5. Do you feel like students' level of mastery of English has an impact on their academic progress? If so how? If not why not?
6. What advice do you have for students/ have you given students to help improve their linguistic readiness?
7. Do you feel like professors have adequate resources to help the population of immigrant students?
8. Are you able to see your students, mainly immigrant students, use code switching? Do they write like they talk?
9. How do you think BSU can best help the immigration population of ELLs and ESL learners?

Appendix C-3 individual interview questions
Administrators' Interviews questions

1. What is your job description and how long have you been in this position at BSU?
2. What do you work on at BSU with respect to student success?
3. What populations of students are you focused on in your work?
4. What are the achievements of your programs and how are they measured?
5. Has BSU seen any setbacks in terms of the goals established for student success? If so, what are they and what are the overall challenges BSU faces in achieving student success goals?
6. Has BSU focused on the immigrant population in terms of student success? If so, how? If not, why hasn't this been a focus?
7. How do you think BSU should cater to the immigrant population?
8. Has language been a focus of BSU programs? If so, how?
9. How does Bridgewater define student success?
10. Have immigrant students reach out with concerns regarding your area of expertise? If so, please explain.

Appendix C-4

Follow-up interview questions

Faculty, administrator, and research informants' follow-up interview questions

1. How does Bridgewater take into account/cater to the diversity amongst its student population?
2. Do you think, as a scholar, someone's gender has an impact on their language acquisition?
3. Being a member of this university, do you see a difference to how the university caters to its male population than its female population and other folks on the gender spectrum?
4. As a professor here at the university, when you grade your students' papers, is there a difference to how the females and males write?
5. Along those same lines, how do you see Bridgewater addressing intersectionality?
6. Do you see them being from different countries and of different genders, does that have an impact with how they interact with you in the classroom? Their skill levels?
7. I know that the university keeps track of retention rates and graduate rates, do you see a difference in both retention and graduation rates amongst Black, domestic and international, immigrant females versus Black women that were born in the United States?

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