



“Outsider Within”: Lessons Learned about SLHS and Race Scholarship

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Abstract

This paper describes how race and racism impact the production and dissemination of knowledge in the speech, language, and hearing sciences (SLHS). In order to explain the consequences of racialized practices on Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC) scholarship, the peer review process is critiqued using the expanded psychosocial model of racism (Neville et al., 2012). We discuss the ways in which racism and white privilege operate hegemonically in the construction, distribution, and reproduction of knowledge by marginalizing the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and interpretive frames of scholarship produced by BIPOC scholars. We provide specific recommendations for addressing barriers in the peer review process that hinder critical scholarship examining racism and other forms of marginalization.

Keywords

Racism, peer review, publication, higher education, speech-language-hearing sciences

Positionality Statements

Positionality statements can be found at the end of the article.

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The American Medical Association (2020) has officially recognized systemic racism as a public health threat. In the field of Education, it has long been recognized that educational inequities cannot be understood without investigations of the relationship between race and education (Lynn & Dixson, 2021). Research focused on critical studies of race and scholarship by Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) researchers is essential to the construction of knowledge. Such scholarship is particularly relevant to understanding the impact of racism on education and healthcare. These critical perspectives are especially urgent in fields that are predominantly white¹ and lacking in critical science paradigms, including critical race research. One such field of study is Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences (SLHS; Pillay & Kathard, 2015), the professional domain of the authors of this paper.

Across disciplines, scholars engaging in critical race scholarship face significant, persistent, and pervasive barriers to funding, conducting, sustaining, and publishing their work (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Hendrix, 2005; Kubota, 2020). Challenges to disseminating scholarship that critically analyzes oppressive systems and structures are not a new phenomenon. In the late 1980s, Patricia Hill Collins, one of the leading Black feminists in the United States, wrote about the importance of *outsider within* perspectives in disciplines or areas of scholarship that seldom consider the priorities, needs, experiences, or viewpoints of BIPOC scholars. While she

wrote about this from the perspective of a Black woman producing scholarship in sociology, her discussions about the importance of “outsider within” perspectives are salient and relevant to the experiences of marginalized scholars in SLHS. Specifically, Collins (1986) wrote about the importance of advocating for the type of scholarship needed to expose, analyze, and transform systemic structures and ideologies that devalue communities of color. Unsurprisingly, these same systemic structures and ideologies make it challenging to disseminate works that seek to expose and confront them. As Stockman (1995; 2007) noted, the scientific community exerts its own socio-political constraints. In the SLHS, white scholars occupy positions or roles in which they possess significant power in deciding the following:

- what topics of scholarship are relevant and important,
- how research on cultural and linguistic diversity, equity, and justice should be discussed or investigated;
- when and how findings from such work should be disseminated, and
- what scholarly efforts merit recognition or funding.

This power also means that white scholars decide who get to be the narrators and experts in their discipline. They determine how the behaviors and practices of those from marginalized communities should be observed and interpreted.

¹ The authors utilize lowercase spelling for *white* based on work by Charity Hudley et al. (2022) who note that "white doesn't represent a shared culture and history the way Black does, and also has long been capitalized by hate groups." In short, the

terms Black and white are not parallel in their social, cultural, and historical context, development, or use; the difference in capitalization highlights this reality.

When faced with these realities, many marginalized scholars in our discipline, including the authors of this paper, have found themselves experiencing psychological stress, burnout, and mental exhaustion resulting from having to deal with racialized practices, ableism, and cis- and heteronormativity in personal and professional interactions (Muñoz et al., 2022; Smith, 2008). For BIPOC and other marginalized scholars, this type of stress is a pathway to career dissatisfaction that can chip away at our desire to interrogate those marginalizing institutions, structures, and practices (Corbin et al., 2018). However, as Collins (1986) notes, those who are “in touch with their marginality in academic settings” can use their *outsider within* status to produce “distinctive analyses of race, class, and gender” and other social markers (p.15).

We know that there is a community of BIPOC professionals whose experiences in our discipline have been painful. Their experiences with language, communication, literacy, disability, and/or healthcare do not match the narratives about communication and difference that the SLHS discipline has become very comfortable in upholding (Duchan & Hewitt, 2023; Horton et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). For our field to be capable of promoting justice and equity, we believe that there needs to be a space for scholastic paradigms and orientations that center the knowledge and perspectives of those who have been marginalized. By doing so, we can discover new knowledge about communication and disability and generate implications for the development of social and political systems that promote the interest of communicators with disabilities in ways that are socially just. Scholarship for clinical decision-making that is centered on marginalized communities affects the practices provided. For example, when practitioners use evidence-based practices

grounded in white ways of knowing, services can further harm already marginalized communities (Khamis-Dakwar & Randazzo, 2021).

The authors of this paper are using our *outsider within* status, and scholarship outside the field of SLHS to discuss issues relevant to researching systemic forms of oppression and exclusion within SLHS. We aim to understand how oppression, defined as unequal power and exclusion and social negation serve as cultural-political barriers to critical scholarship production by researchers from BIPOC and other marginalized communities.

In this paper, we focus on race by providing an overview of racism as ideology and practice, and by discussing the ways in which racism and white privilege operate hegemonically in the construction, distribution, and reproduction of knowledge. There is a specific focus on how racism in scholarship dissemination may obstruct opportunities for professional growth by marginalizing the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and interpretive frames of scholarship produced by BIPOC scholars. Finally, we will offer recommendations for addressing racism in scholarship dissemination (specifically as related to peer review) that can facilitate the implementation and maintenance of necessary and relevant paradigms capable of addressing systemic inequities.

Race and Racism as Ideology

Racism has been described as a “complex and historicized global system of domination” (Menashy & Zakharia, 2022 p. 467). As many scholars have noted, existing social structures have been formed and shaped by colonialism and imperialism, mechanisms of domination undergirded by white supremacy (Mills, 1997; 2015). In order to eradicate racism and its impact on our

everyday lives, it is important to understand its nuances, complexities, and roles in marginalization and inequity.

The expanded psychosocial model of racism described by Neville et al. (2012) is a useful framework for understanding how structures and ideology maintain systems of privilege for white racial groups while upholding systems of oppression and exclusion for those from BIPOC communities. They specifically stress the importance of recognizing and understanding *white privilege*, i.e., social stratification along ethnic/racial identity markers that has created a system that noticeably disadvantages BIPOC individuals while providing unacknowledged privileges and advantages to whites. As noted by Neville et al., white privilege differentially benefits whites, occurs at macro and micro levels, affords protection from racial discrimination and positions whiteness as the norm for guiding values, beliefs, and behaviors in society. Therefore, solutions to ameliorating the consequences of white privilege and racism will likely have an impact on other forms of oppression due to the intersectional nature of “isms” (Liu et al., 2021).

Within the Neville et al. (2012) model, white privilege and the oppression and exclusion of BIPOC communities are carried out and expressed via five types of racism: cultural, institutional, individual, interpersonal, and color-evasiveness.² The authors describe *cultural racism* as the underlying assumptions informing the development of society or how individuals are socialized within that society, particularly as related to assumptions regarding the racial superiority of whites (i.e., white supremacy). Cultural racism is the broadest expression of racism and guides

ideals of beauty, intelligence, and morality, and exerts its influence on knowledge discovery and production (i.e., epistemological racism). *Institutional racism* is defined as race-based mechanisms or racialized practices that operate within social institutions to maintain white privilege and systemically oppress and exclude BIPOC communities (i.e., redlining practices, admissions testing, tracking in K-12 schools). *Individual racism* is described as attitudes and beliefs about people of color rooted in stereotypes, generalizations, and white superiority. Individual racism can be overt, aversive, symbolic, or internalized. *Interpersonal racism* is the act or expression of individual racist attitudes and beliefs that occur when a BIPOC individual and a white person interact with one another. Finally, *color-evasive racism* is a belief system in which members of society or institutions actively ignore, purposely avoid, or fail to acknowledge the role of race and racism in shaping inequitable outcomes of those who identify as BIPOC.

These various types of racism are used to reinforce white supremacy and maintain white privilege. Operationalizing racism in this fashion may allow scholars to see how racism can impact the climate in which scholars of color engage in the process of research. To counter its impact, the scientific community needs to engage in actions that seek to make visible the impact of racism on scholarship produced by researchers of color. Table 1 provides a summary of the various types of racism identified by Neville et al. (2012). In the proceeding sections, we elaborate on how each of these types of racism can silence and devalue the work of BIPOC scholars in the SLHS.

² Terminology differs from Neville et al. (2012), who used the term *color-blind racism*. The term *evasive*

emphasizes agency associated with this type of racism and removes the ableism inherent in co-opting the word *blind* (Annamama et al., 2017).

Table 1

Summary of Racism Types

Type	Description
Cultural	Race-based assumptions
Institutional	Racialized practices that perpetuate white privilege
Individual	Overt: blatant, direct, and observable attitudes, beliefs, and practices Aversive: subconscious negative attitudes and beliefs about BIPOC Symbolic: stereotyped ideas about BIPOC rooted in white supremacy Internalized: negative beliefs and attitudes about one's own BIPOC group, while idealizing the practices and belief of mainstream white society.
Interpersonal	Covert and overt racist acts or expressions in interactions between people from different racial backgrounds
Color-evasiveness	Overlooking the role of race and racism as an underlying factor in accounting for differential outcomes for BIPOC community members

Note. This table was created to represent information found in Neville et al. (2012).

Cultural Racism and Epistemology

Cultural racism, as the broadest expression of racism, bestows economic, political, and social power along the lines of racial identity (Hyter, 2022; Neville et al., 2012). It is bidimensional in that it relies on cultural ethnocentrism of the racialized group with power, and cultural imposition of the racialized group with the least amount of power (Scott, 2007). Because cultural racism has served as the foundation of societal formation and development in the United States, it is implicitly transmitted in our historical and daily discourse, contexts, and

activities. Cultural racism is the tool which maintains white privilege and produces a dynamic of exclusion for BIPOC individuals who center the values, beliefs, and practices of their own cultural communities.

Cultural racism within the context of knowledge discovery and production is epistemological racism, which poses a significant barrier to race scholarship and scholarship produced by researchers of color. Epistemology is concerned with how and why one acquires knowledge and how one determines or operationalize what is valid knowledge. Epistemologies evolve from the

social history of communities and groups. Across the globe, the historical practices of colonialism, imperialism, racism, and white supremacy have shaped science (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Such influences have resulted in a skewed perspective of what constitutes “legitimate forms of knowledge.” The normalization of racism and white supremacy during knowledge discovery and production results in the persistent exclusion, devaluation, and marginalization of scholarship by BIPOC scholars, and the reduction of BIPOC scholarship as being simply personal experiences (Almeida, 2015).

Although there was an earlier clarion call (see Stockman, 1995; 2007), in our discipline to consider the influence of sociopolitical contexts on scholarship production, scholars have only recently begun to acknowledge that the speech, language and hearing sciences is oriented towards a preference for white Eurocentric frameworks and models of inquiry that limit our ways of knowing (Abrahams et al., 2019; Hyter & Salas-Provance, 2023; Pillay & Kathard, 2015). In other fields, scholars have expounded on the shortcomings of white Eurocentric frameworks and models (Kubota, 2020). There has been a recognition that such frameworks and models prioritize individualism, universalism, dichotomous thinking, and the false belief that scientific endeavors are neutral (Collins, 1986; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). These frameworks operate in tandem to ensure that alternative, collaborative, and collectivist approaches to knowledge construction are viewed with suspicion (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). They also serve as hegemonic tools that reinforce orientations that position difference as negative or aberrational, and intersectional dynamics as the type of variability that complicates and confounds scientific discovery

(Collins, 1986; Kubota, 2020; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008).

Institutional Racism and Educational Hegemony

Institutional racism creates marginalizing contexts for carrying out scholarship on racism in many disciplines (Flores 2016; 2018). The practices and policies within many of our social institutions create or contribute to inequitable outcomes for individuals and communities of color (Neville et al., 2012); nowhere is this more salient than in the United States educational systems. Higher education, a critical context for the construction and dissemination of scholarship, is wholly influenced by historical and current social structures. A recent example is the adoption in several states of legislation that links performance funding for state universities to laws designed to curtail college level instruction and teaching about white privilege, and racial and gender oppression (Flaherty, 2022). Clearly, the practice of knowing and knowledge construction are not free of social influences making academic and research contexts fertile soil for hegemony.

In almost every definition of hegemony, three primary concepts are used to operationalize the term: dominance, power, and inequality. Hegemony has been described as the ways in which a dominant perspective or ideology is upheld by those in power (Fairclough, 2010; Gramsci & Buttigieg, 2011; Gramsci, et al., 1971; Racine, 2021). Hegemony facilitates the establishment of expected and acceptable norms for a society while also suppressing alternative ideologies (Guziec, 2016).

Higher education systems are rooted in classist ideologies of Eurocentric frameworks for teaching and learning (hooks, 1994) that reinforce assumptions of white superiority,

while devaluing the identity, beliefs, and practices of those from BIPOC groups (Henao, 2017). Eurocentricity is seen in the content of the curriculum, desired classroom dynamics, and orientation to work and learning (Ladson-Billings, 2013; Zaidi et al., 2016). As such, from the very earliest entry into higher education, scholars of color receive the first of many lessons on expected and acceptable norms for experiencing success in the academy. These expected and acceptable norms for how to think, write, talk, and act have been based on the behaviors and practices of white Eurocentric culture. For scholars of color and those carrying out work on racism or other forms of systemic inequity, these norms can create a negative climate for developing scholarship that critiques race, diverges from white Eurocentricity, and focuses on topics in the margin of the established canon.

Critical scholars in education (Freire, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; 2013; 2016; Zaidi et al., 2016) have described how educational contexts replicate cultural hegemony through instructional practices that embody underlying assumptions about the world and one’s place in the world. In K-12 and higher education contexts, the curriculum and the history of the curriculum has been primarily Eurocentric (Ladson-Billings, 1998; 2016; Privette, 2021).

Educational hegemony and institutional racism are not endemic issues to the United States. International scholars have a long history of acknowledging the nature of race in critiques of colonialism and the limitations of Western epistemologies for the construction of knowledge that can benefit the global majority and all of humanity (Nyoni, 2019). As such, there has been an increased focus on decolonizing research processes and knowledge production in SLHS. Decolonization is necessary for establishing a pluralistic network of researchers who seek to develop

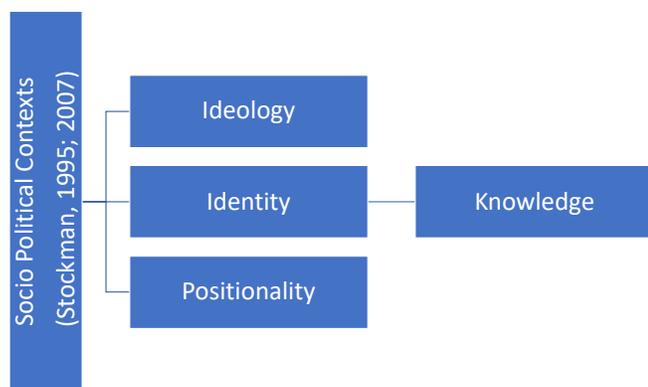
and sustain practices and policies that eliminate inequities in systems that serve and support individuals with communication disabilities (Mbembe, 2016; Pillay & Kathard, 2015; Wylie et al., 2013).

Individual Racism, Identity, Positionality, and Barriers to BIPOC Scholarly Productivity

Stockman (1995; 2007) notes that the construction of knowledge develops from external and internal sociopolitical contexts of the scientific community. Figure 1 (below) depicts how the external sociopolitical context, such as white supremacy, informs ideology the United States culture, practices, and beliefs). Racism as ideology exerts its influence on the construction of knowledge and development of scholarship through an individual’s racial identity and positionality. Identity and positionality underlie one’s observations, experiences, and interpretation of experiences within broader society and micro-communities. As such, a researcher’s identity and positionality are relevant since they impact choice of topic to be studied, questions formulated, methodological approach, analyses, and interpretation of results. SLHS professionals have not interrogated or critiqued how *individual racism* might inform these processes and what it means for white scholars to do and carry out research on communities of color. Nor have SLHS professionals acknowledged the role that race, and individual racism plays in shaping the experiences and perspectives of scholars and how they approach their research.

Figure 1

Schematic of Sociopolitical Contexts on Knowledge Discovery and Dissemination



To address challenges faced by scholars of color or others from marginalized backgrounds who attempt to carry out race scholarship, it is also important to highlight the relationship between identity, sociopolitical contexts, ideology, and positionality in the construction of knowledge. Sociopolitical contexts of relevance are overt or explicit practices of white supremacy and discrimination that can create psychosocial stressors and career roadblocks for BIPOC in academic contexts but are less likely to occur given current social norms (Neville et al., 2012). However, other contemporary forms of individual racism continue to impact the lives of BIPOC scholars. Symbolic racism, or the stereotypes that people have regarding different BIPOC communities may inform how researchers study the communication and language behaviors of racial/ethnic groups. For example, at the individual level if a researcher buys into negative stereotypes regarding the parenting practices and parental involvement of poor African American families, then it is highly likely that some aspect of their research design examining the relationship between environment and communication outcomes will be deficit oriented. This may occur for white researchers, as well as BIPOC researchers who have internalized racism, or hold similarly negative beliefs and attitudes about their own cultural community. Aversive racism can prove to be even more damaging

since individuals can outwardly state their belief in racial equity yet remain unaware of their subconscious or implicit biases towards BIPOC individuals and their scholarly endeavors and accomplishments.

We suspect that individual racism may explain why there have been few opportunities for scholars of color to produce scholarship that offers an alternative to hegemony, white supremacy culture, and false or incomplete narratives about the capabilities of BIPOC communities as it relates to communication and learning. We are also concerned that the absence of race scholarship in SLHS and the erasure of BIPOC voices and contributions will continue despite the ostensible “racial reckoning” that began following the George Floyd murder in May 2020 (Chang et al., 2020; Daugherty, 2020). The internal community of SLHS must acknowledge that race matters and is an important consideration in understanding scholarship production of researchers of color.

From a critical perspective, one’s racial identity is not necessarily internally or self-defined (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). Racial identity is a socially and historically constructed concept that has been used to stratify persons and determine how various groups or communities are humanized (or dehumanized) and afforded privileges (or disadvantages) within a society (Ladson-Billings, 2013; Pierce, 2014). As a result of this racial stratification, BIPOC individuals are often situated within the context of otherness. In contrast, white people do not need to be racially identified, nor are their values, beliefs, or practices explicitly defined (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). For individuals from BIPOC communities, this means that one’s personal and professional accomplishments are usually defined and evaluated within the context of whiteness. The questions that BIPOC scholars ask, the way that they go about answering

those questions, and how they interpret and write up the findings of their research may be disregarded, co-opted yet infrequently cited, or considered less rigorous when the work does not align with white, Eurocentric, frameworks of positivism, or when the work offers up an alternative to white supremacy notions of how communication, literacy, and thinking are acquired and practiced. Unlike their white peers, scholars of color will have to utilize additional socio-emotional resources to process and respond to *individual racism* in their personal and professional lives (Horton et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2022).

Interpersonal Racism and Color Evasiveness as Barriers in Dissemination of Race Scholarship and BIPOC Endeavors

Sociopolitical context also exerts its influence on the internal scientific community and plays a role in the dissemination of research in academic journals. Reviewers and editors in SLHS, who are predominantly white, have perspectives on content and scholarship influenced by their own identity and positionality. This means that their perspectives on the content, frameworks, methodology, and interpretation of findings is not wholly objective but rather is mired in epistemological racism and operates hegemonically to reinforce white norms of scholarship production. Hence, though rarely visible, race matters for white scholars. It plays a role in shaping the experiences and perspectives of white scholars about what is important, relevant, and rigorous scholarship. As such the way that scholars review research is informed by interpersonal racism and persistent color evasive racism.

Recall that interpersonal racism occurs in the daily interactions between two or more people from different racialized backgrounds

and is usually expressed as racial microaggressions (Neville et al., 2012; Sue & Spanierman, 2020). These racial microaggressions can appear during the peer-review process and can take the form of microassaults, insults, or invalidations. Furthermore, color-evasive racism as practiced by those who believe that race is no longer a factor in the differential outcomes of people of color (Annamma et al., 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2018) can have a significant impact on the dissemination of race scholarship and dissemination of work by BIPOC scholars. Both types of racism are expressed in a preference for passive writing voice, and a coagulation of paternalism and calls for “civility” when BIPOC scholars explicitly discuss racism in their scholarship (Castagno, 2018).

Racism in Peer Review

The dissemination of scholarship is reliant on the peer-review process to assure theoretical and scientific rigor. Though the specifics may vary, peer review is expected to be “confidential, objective, and thorough” (ASHA, n.d.) However, the peer-review process, conducted by human beings who exist in a social world, is inherently shaped by the same ideologies guiding our institutions. Those who serve as reviewers enter the process not as neutral individuals removed from the racialized practices of society but as scholars with their own positionality. As such, the various types of racism discussed earlier may influence the acceptance or rejection of scholarship. Ethics, copyright, and expectations of confidentiality inherent in the peer review process create obstacles to directly addressing historical bias experienced by BIPOC scholars. With Table 2 we exemplify in general terms how racism may occur in scholarly engagement and production.

Recommendations For Addressing Racism in Peer Review

To minimize or eliminate racial bias and inequities in scholarship dissemination, journal administrators and editorial boards cannot ignore how racism informs the peer review process. Addressing inequities requires specific countermeasures to subvert the systemic nature of racism inherent in the traditional peer review process. In this section, we provide recommendations that could be used to support revolutionary changes to publications for all scholars but particularly for BIPOC scholars.

Editor and Reviewer Positionality Statements

Positionality statements clearly identify the perspectives that writers and reviewers bring to their work as a researcher/author and reviewer (Holmes, 2020). To write a positionality statement one needs to engage in critical self-reflection and recognize and identify their own biases and how those biases may reflect in their writing or review.

Prioritize Increasing Diversity of Editors and Reviewers and Interdisciplinary Peer Review

Diversity of racial and ethnic representation among journal editors and reviewers should be a priority. By diversification, we do not mean primarily what Ahmed (2012) refers to as the “feel good” variety in which racial and ethnic affiliations act as aesthetic stand-ins for substantive widening of perspectives. Rather, it is necessary to identify reviewers and editors with critical and diverse ways of constructing and reporting knowledge to move away from an entrenched Eurocentric definition of scholarly rigor.

The social science discipline of sociology has a longer and stronger history of employing criticality, as well as racial literacy in their reviews. Enacting interdisciplinary review panels offers several benefits. First, it will encourage journals to recognize and value diverse forms of scholarship while also widening the pool of reviewers with the relevant expertise. An interdisciplinary peer review fosters a process that acknowledges

Table 2

Exemplification of Different Types of Racism in the Peer Review Process

Cultural	Institutional	Individual	Interpersonal	Color-Evasiveness
<p>White Eurocentric based paradigms of knowledge discovery results in discipline specific preference for “scientific method” as the only legitimate process for knowledge discovery and assumptions that the statistical quantification of human behavior is objective and value-free</p>	<p>Guidelines and criteria for how to evaluate quality of a manuscript prioritizes white Eurocentric colonized frameworks of inquiry, resulting in the rejection of work informed by critical social theory or decolonization.</p>	<p><i>Overt:</i> Reviewers and editors who desk reject a manuscript/proposal for methodological reasons because study lacks a white control group or the content of the manuscript critiques white privilege.</p> <p><i>Aversive:</i> Scholarship for, about, or by BIPOC researchers is “othered” when viewed through the subconscious lens of white supremacy leading to the devaluing of work by BIPOC.</p> <p><i>Symbolic:</i> Reviewers assume that BIPOC scholars are poor writers and researchers who are unable to engage in methodologically rigorous studies</p> <p><i>Internalized:</i> BIPOC reviewers with internalized racism may not value scholarship centered on racial ethnic communities and may demonstrate a preference for paradigms and methodology aligned with white orientations to knowledge discovery</p>	<p>Racial microaggressions at all stages of research inquiry (conference participation, peer review, etc.).</p> <p>Calls for “civility” when BIPOC scholars explicitly discuss race and racism in their scholarship (i.e., Angry Person of Color)</p> <p>Questioning the tone of manuscripts written about race and racism.</p> <p>Comments by reviewers invalidating the impact of racism.</p> <p>Negative comments by reviewers about inclusion of experiential data.</p>	<p>Editors selecting reviewers without expertise in topics about race, equity, and justice, or BIPOC communities to review a manuscript on those topics.</p> <p>Editors failing to consider the racial positionality of reviewers when selecting editorial board members of a journal.</p>

expertise in issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The lack of diversity within SLHS means the burden for reviewing falls on already overtaxed scholars of color or scholars with a passing understanding of these issues. Second, an interdisciplinary cadre of reviewers might also eliminate the presumption of a universal paradigm for research. Third, inviting reviews from differing perspectives and areas of expertise allows for a fair critique of the totality of the paper.

Editor and Reviewer Training focused on Improving Racial and Decolonial Literacy and Decreasing Publication Inequities

Editorial boards should institute education for editors and reviewers focused on racial and decolonial literacy before these individuals have the responsibility for reviewing and ushering a manuscript through the editorial review process. Racial literacy is a critical practice of “reading, critiquing, and rewriting of race” (Croom et al., 2019; Croom, 2020, p. 24). Decolonial literacy is the practice of revealing and deconstructing institutions and systems that were established within the context of imperialism and continue to be maintained, regardless of gains made across the world for civil and human rights and the cultural and linguistic pluralism of the global majority (Nyoni, 2019). Improving editor and reviewer racial and decolonial literacy introduces race and social consciousness into the review process and can increase the likelihood that decision-makers can actively recognize and manage marginalizing practices. Editors should have the authority and responsibility to instruct authors to ignore biased feedback, reframe comments to focus on elements that improve the quality of the manuscript, or, when necessary, replace biased reviewers.

Additionally, barriers could be minimized if managing editors collected data to monitor publication inequities. Journal editors can monitor progress by collecting data on race, topics, and submission and publication rates. Finally, surveying authors about their experience with the review process can assist in identifying the impact of racialized practices that occur due to implicit and explicit racism.

Recognizing Scholarship on Equity, Racism, and Social Justice as Legitimate Areas of Inquiry and Discovery that Require Reviewers with Expertise

Equity and social justice are often conflated with diversity in SLHS; yet these concepts are not the same. A person’s work in *diversity* does not translate to expertise in *social justice* (Ahmed, 2012). It is essential that editorial boards identify reviewers and editors who possess the necessary knowledge, recognize these areas of expertise, and consider them when assigning manuscripts to review. Furthermore, because this is such a new and growing area in SLHS, it is imperative that reviewers be able to offer informed and constructive critiques that can strengthen a manuscript. When reviewers lack knowledge about the literature base or expertise on critical frameworks, the feedback provided may do more harm than good.

Conclusion

Scholars of color in SLHS experience several barriers to getting their work accepted for publication. Many of these obstacles are the result of deeply entrenched hegemonic practices that maintain white privilege and marginalize how BIPOC scholars frame and communicate their scholarship. In this article,

we offer specific examples of how race and racism influence the production and dissemination of scholarship in the SLHS. We believe that the above recommendations would be useful in facilitating an equitable peer review process and building systems and structures that support the development of a larger evidence-base on racism and other forms of oppression in the SLHS.

Positionality Statements

The authors of this paper believe it is important to acknowledge the positions from which they addressed the themes presented in this paper. They are members of the Equity Action Collective (EAC) of Speech Language and Hearing, a group which seeks to advance social justice and critical scholarship in speech, language and hearing sciences and clinical practice. The authors are academics who teach and publish on topics related to cultural and linguistic diversity and social justice. Individually we identify with groups and viewpoints that have been marginalized by systems of oppression in the United States and within academia. The authors’ individual positionality statements are presented below.

RaMonda Horton

I am a Black cisgender woman, born and raised in the southeastern United States. My work is influenced by critical reflection and scholarship on how race, gender, ability, and class and their intersection are examined, explored, and experienced in academic contexts.

Yvette D. Hyter

I am a cisgender Black woman in my mid 60s who was raised by parents who took part in the great migration in the U. S. I witnessed the racism endured by my parents, and have experienced racism in my daily life and in my chosen discipline, speech-language-hearing sciences. This history has influenced my thinking, and approaches to research and clinical practice, which focuses on critical science and qualitative research. I recognize my privilege in the way society supports by gender identity and age, while at the same time I am often marginalized for being a Black woman in an overly white discipline, using critical science in a profession focused on positivism, and employing qualitative research and collaborative work in a field focused on individualized outcomes and quantitative research.

Valerie E. Johnson

I am an African American, cisgender woman who was raised in a middle-income household. I grew up in various parts of the world as the child of an Army officer. I recognize that I have experienced and witnessed various forms of racism which may influence my views on the intersection of language, race, and power. In my early childhood, I quickly learned that language could identify you as a member or nonmember of a community or region. I also learned that there were factors other than language that could situate to the margins, especially in predominantly white spaces. My scholarship has always been grounded in advocacy, social justice, and equity for the young Black voices that were silenced for the language that they spoke. I continue to be motivated to shine a floodlight on the systemic policies that continue to plague the discipline of speech, language, and hearing sciences in an effort to transform the discipline.

Reem Khamis

I am a Palestinian, cisgender, woman who grew up in Nazareth, and moved to the United States to pursue her education. My lived experiences as Palestinian within Israel are characterized by experiences underlined by systemic inequity and discrimination in housing, education, health care, political, and economic institutions along feelings of estrangement on the stolen land of our people. Through this experience, I learned the value of community based alternative institutions for the growth of the oppressed and as a resistance tool for state-controlled institutions.

Growing up, education and professional development were depicted as departures from my community. I was the only Arab student in my class in my bachelor's, Masters, and doctorate studies and most of my learning was focused on languages and cultures less relevant to my background. Now, I have become a professor teaching in one of the whitest professions in the U.S. With every interaction I have with a BIPOC student, I recall my own experience as the lone Arab student in my program. I reflect on the harmful ways that I was described, stereotyped, and excluded both explicitly and implicitly by professors and peers alike. I see the light and the innovation in these students and what they will bring to the profession given that they understand the professional and moral need to advocate for other BIPOC students and faculty. The solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, for example, is consistent with my scholarly work in that it is informed by the work on African American English and studying the social status of linguistic variation within discriminatory supremacist systems. My experiences with education instilled in me the belief in community organizing alongside accomplices from all walks of life.

Maria L. Muñoz

I am the cisgender bilingual (Spanish/English) Mexican-American daughter of immigrants raised on the west coast of the United States. I have been educated in and worked in predominantly white spaces throughout my life. As such, I experienced at an early age being dismissed for being both bilingual and brown. My personal and professional experiences as a woman of color have influenced my pedagogy and my approach to research. My scholarship has focused on understanding and improving the experiences of students and faculty of color in communications and disorders and the clients who access clinic services. As an author, reviewer, and reader, I have experienced the bias and marginalization that can influence the dissemination of scholarly work.

Benjamin Munson

I am a Queer, masculine-presenting person who is 51 years old at the time of writing this. I have experienced the privileges of being White and masculine-presenting throughout my career in academia, and my life outside of academia. As of the writing of this paper, I serve as a department chair and as program director for clinical training programs in audiology and speech-language pathology, two professions in which SDP is pervasive and often unacknowledged. I am motivated by the responsibility to transform those disciplines to be more equitable and to actively combat linguistic discrimination.

Brandi L. Newkirk-Turner

I am a Black woman raised in the north U.S. and living in the south U.S. with an increasing need to speak out about racism, especially anti-Black racism. Years of having to ignore micro-aggressions (particularly in my doctoral program), navigate in unwelcoming spaces, and negotiate my beloved language (i.e., African American English) has unleashed a commitment to be a strong voice in every space in which I find myself for anti-racism and justice. I am currently a professor and administrator at a Historically Black University in the deep south. Recognizing the historic underrepresentation of Black students and students of color in graduate-level speech-language pathology and audiology programs, I have a commitment to address underrepresentation and unwelcoming learning spaces by calling out inequitable practices and dismantling the systems on which they are built.

Betty Yu

I am a cisgender, bilingual Taiwanese-American who immigrated to a small town in Iowa at nine years of age knowing only a few words in English. I spent most of my later childhood in a small town in the California Central Valley. I have been educated and employed in predominantly white spaces, with many racialized experiences from being seen as “the permanent foreigner,” “the honorary white,” and other complex and conflicting adopted and imposed racial identities. My scholarship focuses on the use of discourse and conversation analysis to examine the intersectional effects of race, disability and language statuses.

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