In the wake of the Oakland Ebonics controversy evidence of linguistic bigotry against Blacks and Latin@'s in the United States was revealed in schools and society, including linguistic harassment of English language learners on the job. This presentation is multinational, based on studies of alternative forms of linguistic discrimination against low-income populations in the United States, Jamaica, France, and South Africa. Evidence of discrimination in schools, perpetuating racial and/or socioeconomic disparities in educational achievement exists in each of the preceding countries. Studies of linguistic profiling in the United States reveal overt discrimination against Blacks and Latin@'s in housing markets across the nation; that is, based on experimental collaborations with fair housing agencies in states that have large non-white populations. Beyond legal considerations derived from evidence of racial discrimination in housing markets, Spanish speakers have occasionally been fired because of language usage; that is, where employers have insisted on "English only" work environments that deny Spanish speakers usage of their mother tongue; such policies may be in conflict with the first amendment. Litigation pertaining to Latin@'s and Blacks for whom English is not native are ongoing, based on claims of linguistic harassment in the workplace; that is, where racist remarks by employers resulted in hostile work environments for non-white employees, especially if they were not native speakers of English. Although South Africa now has eleven official languages, linguistic, educational, and occupational preferences still favor fluent speakers of English and Afrikaans. Disparities in educational achievement and occupational opportunities in that country show some striking similarities and noteworthy differences to instances of linguistic profiling in the United States.

Experimental bilingual education programs in Jamaica seek to close educational achievement gaps that reflect long-standing socioeconomic class and racial divisions on that island nation. Linguistic discrimination and educational attainment in Jamaica has more to do with economic status than with race. Evidence of racial discrimination in France has less to do with French fluency, and more to do with family heritage. Parisians of African descent tend to speak fluent French, however, their names often belie their religious background and African heritage. The Parisian suburbs that are home to many Parisians of African ancestry have witnessed disproportionately high rates of unemployment, riots, and an inability to relocate or obtain housing in middle class-to-affluent Parisian neighborhoods.

The grammatical content for linguistic stimuli in all of the United States housing discrimination studies remained constant. As such, evidence of linguistic profiling has nothing to do with grammatical or semantic differences between mainstream Standard American English and vernacular African American English or Chicano English. Race alone does not account for this discrimination; rather, racial background and linguistic heritage combine to account for bias against Black and Brown callers who are fluent native speakers of vernacular African American English or Chicano English as the case may be. Some corresponding legal implications and relevant court cases will be discussed at the conclusion of this presentation.