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A Scoping Review of Published Literature on the Linguistic Representation of Indigenous Peoples

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Abstract

Published research involving Indigenous Peoples is largely deficit-based, which can perpetuate stereotypes against Indigenous Peoples. We conducted a scoping review to understand what is currently known about the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples. We included peer-reviewed articles from all disciplines published between 2000 and 2024 on language use and discourse in the context of framing, bias, and/or stereotyping of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand. Of 1672 articles, 80 were reviewed and analyzed by mode of language, field of study, and time. A subset of the articles (n = 60) underwent a reflexive thematic analysis, from which we identified seven themes. We found that linguistic representations of Indigenous Peoples were disproportionately negative and involved deficit- rather than strengths-based discourse. Greater attention to linguistic representations of Indigenous Peoples is needed within healthcare and education, and future research should include language in historical documents and academia.

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It is well documented that settler colonialism across Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (collectively referred to as CANZUS) has, and continues to, inflict atrocious intergenerational harms on Indigenous Peoples (Paradies, 2016; Smallwood et al., 2021). One important factor that has contributed to the past and ongoing impacts of colonization is the language used to portray Indigenous communities. Often rooted in stereotypes, language is a powerful tool in the process of reinforcing colonial narratives and undermining Indigenous cultural knowledge and identity. The negative framing of Indigenous Peoples in policy texts, media, popular culture, and everyday conversations contributes to harmful deficit-based discourse (Fforde et al., 2013; Harding, 2006; Hyett et al., 2019; Kerins, 2012; Morstatter et al., 2018; Younging, 2018).

Deficit-based discourse involving Indigenous Peoples "describes a mode of thinking that frames and represents [Indigenous] identity in a narrative of negativity, deficiency and disempowerment" (Gorringe, 2015). Deficit-discourse can thus serve to negatively influence public perception and treatment toward Indigenous Peoples (Fforde et al., 2013). The widespread harms of deficit-discourse have been well-documented in various fields, including inequitable educational outcomes and health disparities (Bullen et al., 2023; Fogarty, 2018b; Shay et al., 2024).

The impact of language and discourse is particularly important within healthcare, where prejudice and discrimination can affect the treatment and health outcomes of Indigenous Peoples (Wylie & McConkey, 2019). Language can contribute to culturally safe or unsafe care (Jennings et al., 2018). For example, Indigenous patients often describe negative experiences of communicating with their healthcare provider, which can involve microaggressions and the use of jargon (e.g., Jennings et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2022a, 2022b). Research in this area demonstrates that Indigenous patients feel unheard, unsafe, and uncertain about important information related to their health (Jennings et al., 2018).

Published medical research about Indigenous communities is another example of the critical importance of language in healthcare. Ball et al. (2024) explain how narratives of individual deficiency and disempowering discourse are perpetuated in medical training and health systems when the health outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals are compared and reported without any mention of the systemic discrimination and structural barriers that lead to health inequities. Health researchers working with Indigenous communities toward improved outcomes thus become a part of a self-perpetuating cycle, in which they must emphasize problems and deficits to justify the research that addresses health inequities, leading to an oft-repeated narrative of deficiency that maintains those inequities (Chittleborough et al., 2023).

In recognition of this self-perpetuating cycle and the widespread impact of deficit-based discourses, researchers are increasingly calling for strengths-based

discourse (Wilson et al., 2020). In contrast to deficit-based discourse, strengths-based discourse emphasizes identifying and leveraging the inherent assets, resources, and capacities within individuals or communities with the aim of fostering empowerment, resilience, and positive outcomes (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2020; Shea, 2021; Silverman et al., 2023). Though specific examples of strengths-based language are difficult to find (Chittleborough et al., 2023), it is argued that language can challenge the dominant narrative and thereby contribute to addressing the ongoing impacts of colonization (Ball et al., 2024).

This expected impact would align with the idea that language reflects culture and identity. In other words, language plays a critical role in constructing our social reality: The language we speak, and our communication with others, affects our ways of thinking about the world and connects us with similar others (Echterhoff, 2012; Whorf, 1956). Our linguistic choices can reveal beliefs that we share with our cultural in-group members, which include biases such as stereotypes (Collins & Christianson, 2024; Collins & Clément, 2012). The Social Categories and Stereotypes Communication framework, for example, describes how language both reflects and maintains stereotypes about social categories through the content and form of both labels and descriptions of people and their behavior (Beukeboom & Burgers, 2019). This means that changing our language could also change our social reality—and thus how we see and treat members of other cultural groups. For Indigenous Peoples, this could translate to culturally safe care and better health outcomes.

Before we can identify necessary linguistic changes, however, we need to identify what representations of Indigenous Peoples currently exist. The goal of this study is to provide an overview of the role of language in deficit- or strengths-based discourse involving Indigenous peoples. To do so, we conducted a scoping review of the peer-reviewed literature on the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples.

Positionality

We acknowledge the traditional and ancestral lands upon which this team works across Turtle Island. The conceptualization of this article stemmed from the collective background, education, and experiences of our team. We recognize that the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples in colonial nations has predominantly been deficit-based, which we believe perpetuates negative stereotypes and marginalization. Leveraging our collective research and academic backgrounds, we sought to examine how the linguistic framing of Indigenous Peoples is discussed within published scholarly literature. Jessica Chan (JC) is a settler physician-researcher. Katherine A. Collins (KC) is a citizen of Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and social psychology researcher. Rebecka Lee (RL) has a background in public health and is of settler heritage. Janice Linton (JL) is of Scottish and English descent and an academic health sciences librarian specializing in Indigenous health research and knowledge synthesis. Maria Cherba (MC) is a settler communication studies researcher. Traci-lee D. Christianson (TC) is a settler social psychology graduate student. Amy

Shawanda (AS) is Anishinaabe Kwe and an Indigenous health scholar. JC, KC, MC, and AS are all early career researchers. Ellie G. Siden (ES) is a settler medical resident. Medina Wardman (MW) is a Cree-Saulteaux medical student from the Key Reserve in Saskatchewan.

As a team of Indigenous and settler researchers with varied expertise in Indigenous and public health, and communication, we bring our diverse experiences and perspectives to this important topic. Our distinct backgrounds and collaborative approach allow us to understand the nuances of bias in language within healthcare, including systemic and structural barriers to culturally safe care. However, as one settler researcher on our team led the reflexive thematic analysis, it is possible that linguistic representations that may be identified by Indigenous scholars may be categorized differently or missed altogether. To mitigate this bias, the analyst regularly consulted with the entire research team, which includes Indigenous scholars and an expert in Indigenous health research, throughout the analysis.

Study Design and Methods

The aim of scoping reviews is to comprehensively map and summarize existing literature on a particular topic. Given our broad research objectives, this scoping review applied the methodological framework by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) for a structured approach. Our review protocol is available on the Open Science Framework Registry (Siden et al., 2023).

Stage 1: Identification of Relevant Studies

Team members identified keywords and concepts around the themes of "Indigenous Peoples", "deficits/strengths", "discourse/language", and "bias/stereotypes". Interdisciplinary databases were selected, and search strategies were developed and carried out (JL and ES). Databases selected were Scopus (includes Medline and Embase plus substantial content from the social sciences, arts, and humanities), a comprehensive collection of databases indexed in EBSCOhost. These databases included: Academic Search Complete; CINAHL; Family & Society Studies Worldwide; Bibliography of Indigenous Peoples in North America; Business Source Premier; Criminal Justice Abstracts; Historical Abstracts; MasterFILE Premier; America: History & Life; SPORTDiscus; Canadian Reference Centre; Child Development & Adolescent Studies; GreenFILE; MLA International Bibliography; Women's Studies International; GeoRef; AgeLine; Library & Information Science Source; Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts; Social Work Abstracts; Peace Research Abstracts; Alternative Press Index; ERIC; PsycINFO; Legal Periodicals & Books. The Linguistics and Language Abstracts (LLBA) database was searched on ProQuest. See Supplemental File 1 for complete details of search strategies. Searches were carried out on December 11, 2022, and updated November 6 to December 9, 2024.

To identify all relevant publications by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, JL curated a list of scholarly Indigenous research journals that are not

consistently indexed in prominent bibliographic databases: International Journal of Indigenous Health, First Peoples Child & Family Review, International Indigenous Policy Journal, Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing Pimatisiwin, Journal of Indigenous Research, IK: Other Ways of Knowing, Witness: The Canadian Journal of critical Nursing Discourse, and Turtle Island Journal of Indigenous Health. The journals were systematically reviewed to identify relevant articles by scanning the tables of contents of issues 2000–2024. Reference lists of key publications were reviewed to identify additional articles.

Stage 2: Study Selection

Study selection involved several stages: An initial literature search, iterative refinement of the search strategy and inclusion criteria, and review of articles for inclusion. An initial set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was developed by the research team. Two reviewers (RL and ES) independently screened the titles and abstracts of 20 articles against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Through an iterative process, the criteria were refined and then applied to screen the remaining articles (Table 1). Subsequently, two reviewers (RL and MW) independently assessed the full texts. Reasons for exclusion were recorded. Throughout the screening process, results were compared, and any discrepancies were discussed. A third reviewer (JC) resolved any conflicts.

The initial search was limited to articles published between 2000 and 2022. Analysis of these articles took 2 years. As such, prior to publication, another search using the same strategy was conducted to identify articles published between 2022 and 2024. Two reviewers independently screened first the titles and abstracts (ES and MW), then full texts (MW and TC) against the inclusion and exclusion criteria and reasons for exclusion were recorded. A third reviewer (KC) resolved any conflicts. The search was also updated to include the Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA) database. For these articles, two reviewers (KC and MC) independently screened the titles and abstracts, then full texts, against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and resolved any differences through discussion.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English and French publications	Other
Date	2000–2024	Other
Population	Indigenous Peoples in Canada, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, or the United States (CANZUS) (First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Māori, Native American)	Other
Study focus	Language in the context of framing, bias, or stereotypes (strengths- or deficits-)	Other
Source	Peer-reviewed publications	Other

Covidence was used to manage the screening process and study selection. Study selection adhered to, and is reported as per, the PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018).

Our research focused on what is known in the academic literature about the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples. The search was limited to Indigenous Peoples in the CANZUS regions. CANZUS regions are Western settler nations, each carrying a historical legacy of colonial injustices inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples. We also only included articles explicitly addressing language within framing, discourse, or narratives, and excluded those that solely discussed language in terms of the language spoken (e.g., dialects).

Stage 3: Data Charting

One reviewer (RL for articles published between 2000 and 2022 and TC for articles published between 2022 and 2024) conducted the data extraction for the eligible full text articles. The data extraction form was developed by JC, RL, MW, JL, and ES and reviewed by AS, KC, and MC in an iterative process. It was piloted on five eligible full text articles and further refined to reflect the goals of the review, before being applied to the remaining articles.

The extracted variables comprised of descriptive study details, methodology, mode of language analysis, Indigenous involvement, and the presence of linguistic recommendations advocating for a strengths-based approach. Additionally, data relevant to discourse and framing of Indigenous Peoples was charted, capturing themes, explicit examples of language and their associated linguistic categories, and instances of negative or positive framing, alongside their implications (Supplemental File 2).

Stage 4: Data Analysis

From the articles included for analysis, those that offered explicit examples of language used to describe Indigenous Peoples were identified. RL extracted these examples from the articles published between 2000 and 2022 and coded them using a reflexive thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Byrne, 2022). The reflexive thematic analysis was guided by the following theoretical assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022): A constructionist (vs. essentialist) epistemology, critical (vs. experiential) orientation, both an inductive and deductive analysis, and latent (versus semantic) coding. RL then extracted the data items for coding and thoroughly engaged with the data. Initial codes were developed and used to generate candidate themes and subthemes, which were further refined in an iterative process. Final themes were generated after three iterations of coding and theme building. Periodic meetings were held with the whole research team to review analysis findings. The iterativee thematic analysis process is outlined in Figure 1 below.

In updating our search, TC extracted the data items and TC and KC categorized them within RL's originally developed themes. Due to the lengthy and subjective nature of reflexive thematic analyses, it was not possible to replicate or re-analyze

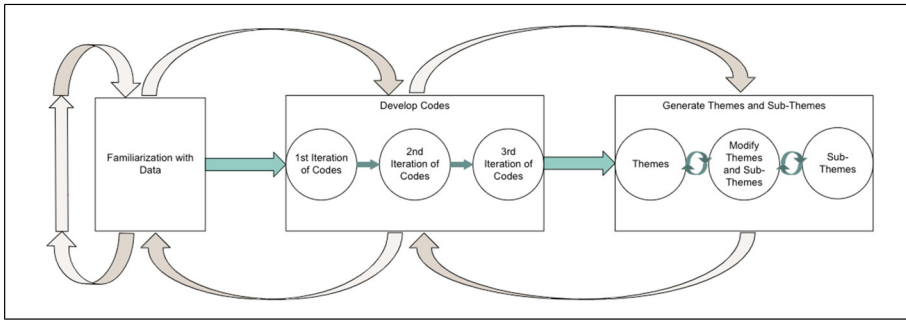

Figure 1. The steps of the iterative thematic analysis process.

the complete dataset. Instead, our goal was to see whether our existing themes were sufficient to capture the most recent work in this area. TC and KC discussed each linguistic example from the new articles and decided on whether and where they fit within RL's originally developed themes.

Results

We identified 80 articles for analysis (Figure 2). The findings will be presented in three sections: (1) an overview of all 80 studies, (2) a detailed thematic analysis of the original 44 articles, and overview of the additional 15 articles, that offered concrete examples of how language is used to describe Indigenous Peoples, (3) a temporal analysis of all 80 articles.

Overview of Studies

Among the 80 articles included for analysis, Australia hosted nearly half of the articles (n = 33, 41%; Figure 3). Canada followed with 19% (n = 15) of the articles. New Zealand and the United States contributed 18% (n = 14) and 11% (n = 9) of the articles, respectively. Germany contributed 4% (n = 3) of the articles, while Spain, Turkey, Papua New Guinea, Netherlands, Italy, and Ukraine each had approximately 1% (n = 1) of articles analyzed; of note, these authors were from non-CANZUS regions, but their research involved Indigenous populations from within the CANZUS regions.

The distribution of the Indigenous populations studied (Figure 4) closely aligned with the geographic origins of the authors (Figure 3). Most papers (n = 32, 40%) focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, reflecting significant attention from Australian authors (41%). Papers concentrating on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples comprised 19% (n = 15) of the total, which correlated with the concentration of Canadian authors (n = 15, 19%). The "Pan-Indigenous" category, representing papers that discussed more than one Indigenous group, and the papers focused on Māori each accounted for 15% (n = 12) of the total, aligning with the representation of

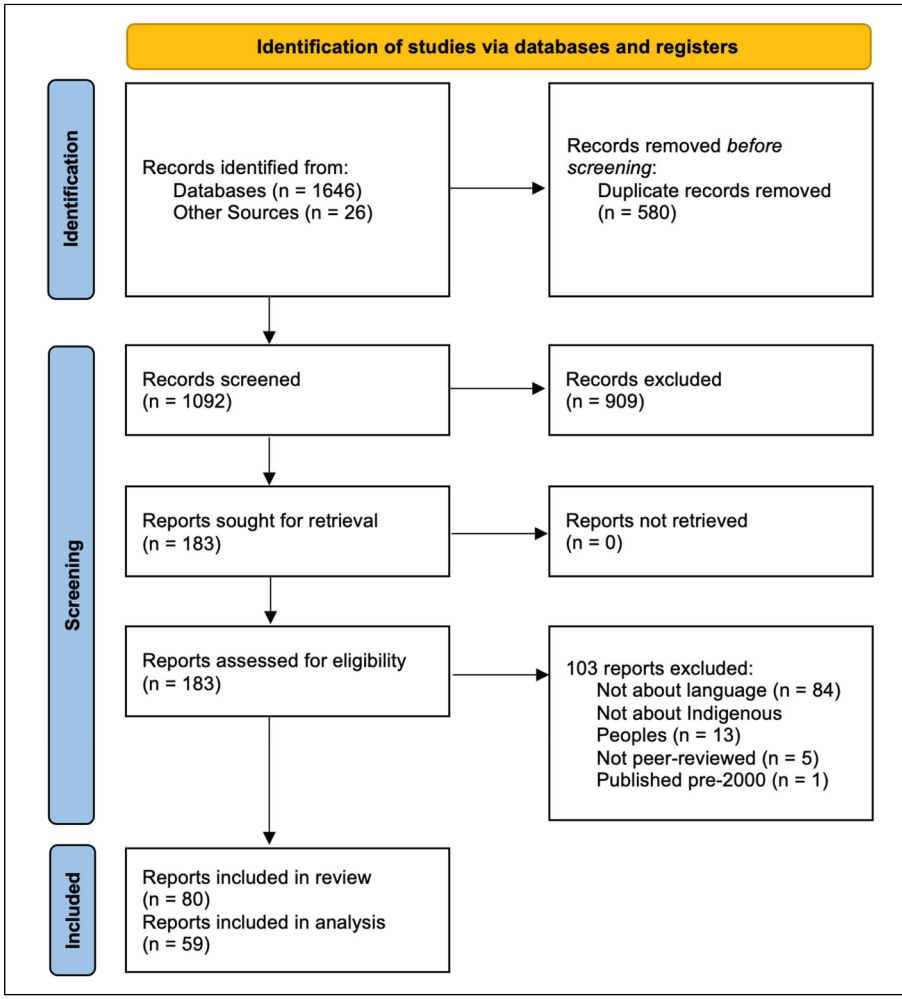

Figure 2. Study selection PRISMA chart.

New Zealand authors (n = 14, 18%). Similarly, Native Americans were the focus of 11% (n = 9) of the papers, matching the proportion of American authors (n = 9, 11%).

Thematic Analysis

Overview of Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Of the 63 articles from the original search in this review, 44 offered concrete examples of how language is used to frame and represent Indigenous Peoples. The 44 articles from the original search underwent a reflexive thematic analysis, which yielded 179 data items that were then coded. Seven

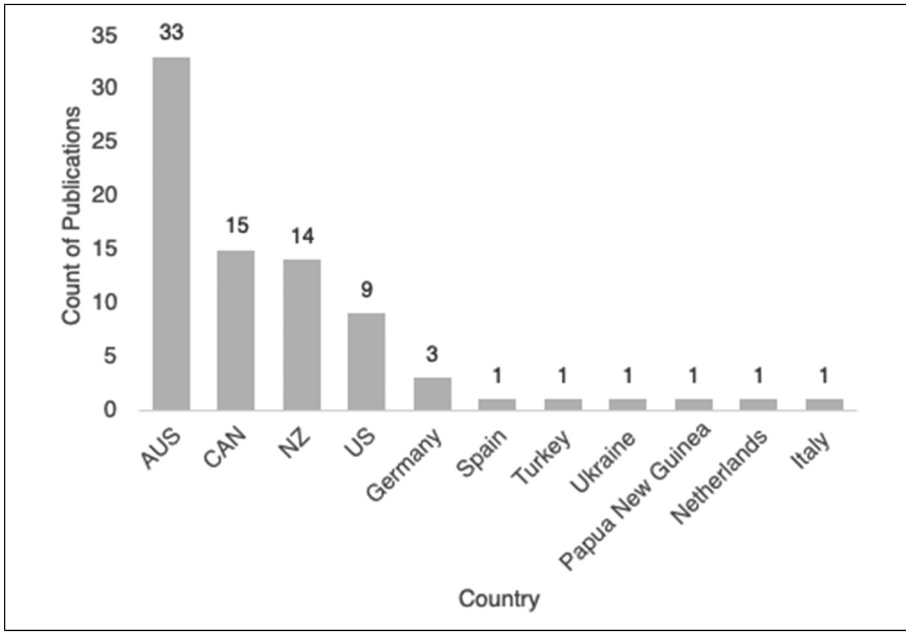

Figure 3. Distribution of geographic origins of authors among included articles.

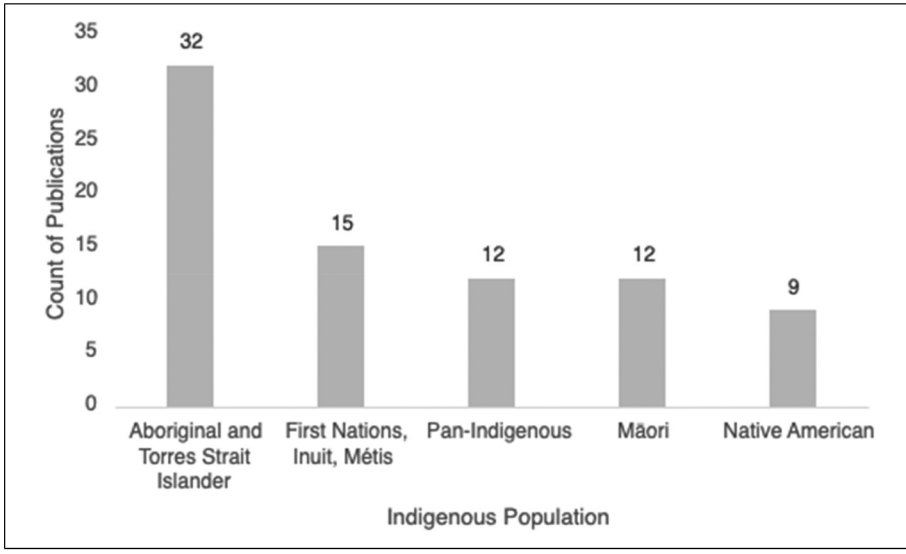

Figure 4. Distribution of Indigenous populations studied among included articles.
Note. The category "Pan-Indigenous" refers to articles that discussed more than one Indigenous population.

themes emerged, listed in order of prevalence: "Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention" (33.5%), "Stereotyping" (22.3%), "Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes in Explicit Language" (18.4%), "Othering" (9%), "Respectful Practices" (6.7%), "Revisionist History" (5.6%), and "Egalitarian Color-Blindness" (4.5%). Among the seven themes, "Respectful Practices" (n = 12, support from 4 articles) was the only theme that utilized strengths-based language, where the inherent values and capabilities of Indigenous Peoples were acknowledged. The remaining six themes (n = 167, support from 44 articles) were aligned with a deficit perspective, where language was characterized by framing Indigenous Peoples negatively, reflecting implicit assumptions, ideologies, or beliefs about Indigenous Peoples.

The most frequent theme was *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention*. This theme represents the settler perspective that Indigenous Peoples are inferior or in need of assistance, allowing settlers to assume a position of authority over them. This mindset and its ensuing interventions are upheld by pillars of settler superiority and the constructed perspective that Indigenous Peoples are problematic and inherently inferior, incapable, and requiring assistance (Carden, 2017; Howard-Wagner, 2018). Interventions can involve imposing control or making decisions for Indigenous Peoples, disguised as providing aid to Indigenous Peoples.

The *Stereotyping* theme represents the portrayal of Indigenous Peoples within wider society. It explores stereotypes, biases, and misconceptions surrounding Indigenous Peoples' history, cultural identity, and individuality. This theme highlights how Indigenous Peoples have been and still are subjected to oversimplified or distorted narratives that contribute to the continued oppression and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples (Betkowski, 2022; Ly & Crowshoe, 2015).

The *Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes* theme reveals how colonial attitudes manifest through linguistic representation. One pillar of this theme is the deliberate use of words to demean and dehumanize Indigenous Peoples. The second pillar of linguistic practices examines the under or overrepresentation of words and subtle terminology or phrasing that perpetuate negative stereotypes about Indigenous communities. These practices reinforce power imbalances between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, diminishing Indigenous identity and agency (Bray, 2022).

The theme of *Othering* uncovers the social and cultural ways that settler societies have used labels to exoticize, discriminate, and marginalize Indigenous Peoples. Consequently, the misperception that Indigenous Peoples are fundamentally different and inferior is maintained. Othering contributes to sustaining discriminatory attitudes, enabling settler imposition of exclusionary practices against Indigenous Peoples, reinforcing the dominance of settler society (Retzlaff, 2005).

The theme of *Respectful Practices* encompasses the acknowledgment of past and ongoing colonial harms in shaping the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples today. It reflects perspectives and practices that prioritize respect, acknowledgment, and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and their ways of being and doing. The low frequency of this theme suggests a potential gap—either a lack of academic scholarship focusing on respectful practices or a limited linguistic representation of respectful practices.

The *Revisionist History* theme explores how colonization and the settler agenda to assimilate Indigenous Peoples is depicted in a manner that sanitizes, glamorizes, and dilutes the violence and cruelties inflicted. Glamorizing involves portraying settler colonial conquests as triumphs, often diluting or omitting information about the conflicts inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples. Supporting narratives emphasize benevolent, harmonious, and triumphant aspects while neglecting the violence and oppression accompanying colonization (Mackay & Feagin, 2022). It examines the use of symbols, narratives, and myths to maintain the facade of the benevolent colonial state while obscuring the harsh realities of genocide, dispossession, and cultural erasure.

The theme of *Egalitarian Color-Blindness* examines the notion of disregarding differences between racial or ethnic groups in the pursuit of alleged equality across all identities. The alleged pursuit of equality can be weaponized to justify exclusionary practices and legitimize racist ideologies and actions (Robertson, 2015). It involves the failure to acknowledge colonial injustices and ongoing racial discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, thus reinforcing inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples (Fryberg & Stephens, 2010; Robertson, 2015).

In updating the search, we found an additional 17 articles. Of these 17 articles, 15 offered concrete examples of how language is used to frame and represent Indigenous Peoples and two did not (Bannister, 2022; Faulkner, 2024), yielding 56 additional data items. Though one of these articles provided 12 linguistic examples of stereotypical representations of Indigenous Peoples (Tosi, 2022), they were not intended nor interpreted by the researchers as straightforward negative representations. This article involved the analysis of media created by an Indigenous artist, who was creating a work meant to be interpreted as satire or irony. Thus, 14 additional articles and 44 data items were categorized into existing thematic categories and, of all 59 articles included in the analysis, only one article (1.69%) and 12 data items (5.11%) did not fit into existing themes. The numbers reported in Table 2 include all 59 articles with specific linguistic examples from the entire search period.

Themes Across Fields of Study. Across each of the seven themes (Table 3), the field of social science constituted over 70% of the codes, encompassing subareas such as racial studies, beliefs and attitudes, policy, literature, and linguistics. Within the themes of *Othering*, *Respectful Practices*, and *Revisionist History*, for example, 85% or more of the codes were found in the social sciences. Conversely, there was a relative scarcity of research on language that represented or involved Indigenous Peoples in healthcare and education. Among the 24 codes related to healthcare, which included subareas like healthcare practice, practitioner experiences, and healthcare policies and contracts, 9 (37.5%) reflected the theme of *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention* and 9 (37.5%) reflected the theme of *Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes*. In education, which focused on student experiences, education and research-related topics, the number of codes varied across themes but were most likely to contribute to the themes of *Stereotyping* and *Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes*.

Table 2. Themes in the Linguistic Representation of Indigenous Peoples.

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention (n = 70, 29.8%)	*"The communities are completely dysfunctional and in order to offer them any long-term hope you have got to intervene in a root-and-branch way, you've got to grab control of the communities, you've got to pursue the perpetrators, you've got to provide medical help for the children, you've got to staunch the flow of alcohol and you've got to instil responsibility in the dispersal of welfare payments" (John Howard, then Prime Minister, in Coorey, Hartcher, & Peatling, 2007 as cited in*Freeman et al., 2022, p. 11)	*"The required response was thus government intervention in the form of increased policing … The discourse of pathology (Moreton-Robinson, 2015 [as cited in Freeman et al., 2022]) and the reproduction of white sovereignty is very clear in the NTER [The Northern Territory Emergency Response] speech acts, evidenced by phrases such as the need 'to grab control of the communities'above."* (Freeman et al., 2022, p. 11)	Bednarek, 2020; Brockman & Morrison, 2016; Browne et al., 2018; Budarick, 2011; Burgess & Lowe, 2022; Campbell, 2019; Carden, 2017; Cenerini, 2017; Daniels-Mayes, 2020; Eggleton et al., 2022; Fforde et al., 2013; Fotheringham et al., 2021; Freeman et al., 2022; George et al., 2023; Godlewska et al., 2017; Hogarth, 2017; Howell & Ng-A-Fook, 2022; Lyubymova, 2019; MacDonald & Ormond, 2021; Mackay & Feagin, 2022; Manhire-Heath et al., 2019; Mesikämmen, 2013; Panagopoulos, 2021; Pedersen et al., 2022; Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015; Roy, 2013; Savvas, 2012; Simon, 2023; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Tang & Browne, 2008; Weir et al., 2024; Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020
	"Aboriginal culture is very interesting, I feel there should be greater amounts of tourism to show respect. (R[espondant] 135; score 9.1%)" *"The power struggles within different Aboriginal groups is holding many back from progress. (R117; score 34.1%)"* *"We imposed our culture and lifestyle upon them, forcing a change which they did not want…however they do not want to accept some of the help that is being offered. (R207; score 6.8%)"* (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 601)	*"Assimilationist in the assumption that progress and the only path to development lie with the settler way of life."* (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 601)	
	"Almost all of the contracts utiliized language such as 'communicate openly',	*"The reality of the relationship between Māori health providers and funders did not match*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	'good faith', 'not master and servant', and 'active partnership'" (Eggleton et al., 2022, p. e2492)	*the positive language reflected in the contracts. Instead, there was a power dynamic that imposed a top-down approach." "[It] highlights the mismatch between contract preambles and implementation and reflects discursive techniques designed to camouflage a lack of a genuine Te Tiriti O Waitangi relationship."* (Eggleton et al., 2022, p. e2492–e2493)	
	*"'children are subjected to imminent abuse, abuse that takes place on a regular basis' "(Farr, 2007, as cited in*Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015, p. 177)	*"The existential assumptions were that Aboriginal children needed protecting and their parents and communities were unable and/or unwilling to do this. Propositional assumptions suggested that white regimes of governance would protect the unprotected children. As in the justifying discourses, paternalism was a key concept."* (Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015, pp. 177–178)	
	"Power is further removed from grant recipients and a deficit narrative is maintained through the concept of 'earned autonomy' (IAS p. 22). If grant recipients meet expectations of implementation and reporting, then they will be 'subject to less monitoring and oversight' (p. 22). This is despite the recognition within the policy document that 'the majority of grant recipients	*"The assumption in this problem representation is that some recipients of funding do not have the capacity to exercise autonomy responsibly, and therefore the default position is to address unsatisfactory performance by excessive paternalistic oversight for all grant recipients."* (George et al., 2023, p. 8)	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	comply with their obligations' (p22)." (George et al., 2023, p. 8)		
Stereotyping (n = 49, 20.9%)	*"'They drink too much and get in fights' and 'Alcohol abuse. Drug abuse. Child abuse. Gambling addictions.' "(Nagle, 2018)* ,, as cited in Lyubymova, 2019, p. 4)	*" …the information about Native Americans is "based and guided by misperceptions, assumptions and stereotypes""* (Lyubymova, 2019, p. 4)	Atkinson, 2019; Bamblett, 2011; Brockman & Morrison, 2016; Brown et al., 2022; Budarick, 2011; Canel-Çinarbas & Yohani, 2019; Carden, 2017; Evans et al., 2015; Fforde et al., 2013; Godlewska et al., 2017; Lyubymova, 2019; MacDonald & Ormond, 2021; Manuel et al., 2023; Pack et al., 2016a, 2016b; Parezo & Jones, 2009; Savvas, 2012; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2022a, 2022b; Wilkinson et al., 2022
	"Extremely white" (Lyubymova, 2019, p. 4)	*"The example of such attitude is the 2018th Netflix series "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" that shows a contemporary urban Native American woman from New York City, who became "extremely white". The show teaches its vastly audience that a civilized Indigenous American who breaks all the stereotypes is a really White."* (Lyubymova, 2019, p. 4)	
	"Free education. Separate land for themselves. Aboriginals receive government funds. Aboriginals receive free university tuition. They can get government grants. They receive money from the government, they can also receive money from the band. Some can obtain a 'green card.'" (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 598)	*"This notion of Aboriginal advantage is … inaccurate, it denies and negates treaty rights and responsibilities, a longstanding government practice, and is a discourse that perpetuates racism."* (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 598)	
	"How about fighting the problem of alcoholism/drugs on the reservation with as much vigor." (Steinfeldt et al., 2010, p. 5)	*"A sense of trivialization and minimization of the issue represented [here]. This was encapsulated by a sense that the [University of North Dakota athletic teams'] nickname ['Fighting Sioux'] was insignificant in light of*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
		other more salient issues, and people should prioritize their concerns elsewhere. Thus, time and energy spent on advocating for removal of the Fighting Sioux nickname and logo should not be a primary concern among American Indians." (Steinfeldt et al., 2010, p. 5)	
	"…[doctors ask] 'How much do you drink?'…. I don't drink. They're assuming 'Yes'. But I love it because they say 'How much do you drink' and I say 'I don't'. A lot of people don't understand that, that I don't drink. Well 'how did you get cirrhosis of the liver?'… I find a lot of nurses don't really understand' (#4034 female, NAFLD, CP- A)" (Brown et al., 2022, p. 2564)	*'Many participants felt that health professionals made judgements or assumed that cirrhosis was equivalent to alcohol misuse, which potentially demonstrates a lack of understanding of cirrhosis among health professionals."* (Brown et al., 2022, p. 2567)	
Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes (n = 39, 16.6%)	*[NTERwould] '"tackle the problem of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Aboriginal communities' ('Action Howard had to take' "(Daily Telegraph, 2007* , as cited in Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015, p. 176)	*Homogenising discourses were constructed by the absence of particular words in the coverage of the NTER. The lack of quantifying words such as 'some' when referring to Aboriginal children, and 'alleged' before reference to child sex abuse, and 'remote' before reference to communities, implied alleged sexual violation of Aboriginal children was an actuality and ubiquitous in all Aboriginal communities"* (Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015, p. 176)	Adam & Urquhart, 2023; Bednarek, 2020; Bray, 2022; Budarick, 2011; Godlewska et al., 2017; Lindsay, 2010; Lyubymova, 2019; Macdonald, 2016; Manuel et al., 2023; Merskin, 2010; Ninnes, 2000; Pack et al., 2016a, 2016b; Parezo & Jones, 2009; Parkinson et al., 2022; Pedersen et al., 2022; Proudfoot & Habibis, 2015; Pyett et al., 2008; Retzlaff, 2005;
	"But there are definitely some officers who	*"This [conflict "between" local Aboriginal People*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	could benefit from some more cultural awareness training, particularly because of the history ***between*** *local Aboriginal people and police here."* (Bray, 2022, p. 518)	*and police] is positioned as having unfolded mutually between Aboriginal people and police. However, [this event] in fact involved 'a police massacre of many local Kalkadoon people in 1884', an event that cannot be described as reciprocal." "However, while many of the events being described are reciprocal in nature, they are rarely construed this way. In effect, while in events that are mutually cooperative, the agency of First Nations participants is often linguistically minimized…"* (Bray, 2022, pp. 518–519)	Wilkinson et al., 2022; Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020
	"Training" (Pyett et al., 2008, p. 181)	*"'Training' sounds like something that is done to animals, or domestic servants, while real education was only available to white people … We need to think about language and to use culturally appropriate and respectful language … Rather than offering training, we need to think about the two-way learning process possible through capacity exchange or sharing knowledge and experience."* (Pyett et al., 2008, p. 181)	
Othering (n = 16, 6.8%)	*"Aboriginal Community"* (Bednarek, 2020, p. 12)	*"'It is those who are labelled as a community that are represented as being outside the "unmarked" norm or even outside society' [36, p. 59].* (Bednarek, 2020, p. 12)	Bednarek, 2020; Bray, 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Lindsay, 2010; Lyubymova, 2019; Retzlaff, 2005
	"We used to have sleighs and horses, the horses would pull the sleigh and all of us	*"Using the label 'Indian' as a cultural insider can be seen as a marker of group solidarity and*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	would be lying there in a row ten little Indians and my mother put a thick heavy blanket on us. […] If you're obviously Indian, if you're dark skinned and you've got all the biological traits including your language […]." (Retzlaff, 2005, p. 613)	*as part of First Nation people's identities since they have long had definitions of 'Indianess' imposed upon them by the dominant society which eventually became internalized and thus accepted as part of their identity (Sawchuk, 1992*, as cited in Retzlaff, 2005, p. 613)	
	"*…are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Polynesian, Asian or Middle Eastern background*" (Bednarek, 2020, p. 10)	"*… group[ing] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with other identity categories … ha[s] the potential to contribute to 'the depiction of Indigenous people as 'other'".*"(Bednarek, 2020, p. 10)	
Respectful Practices (n = 25, 10.6%)	*"First Nations and Métis education goals and outcomes are not an 'add-on' but are integral to the planning and focus of the education sector as a whole" (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018*, as cited inWotherspoon & Milne, 2020, p. 9)	*"Acknowledging that the provincial education system "is not the sole expert," the policy framework commits the ministry to consultation with key stakeholders, including Indigenous organizations, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, for their 'expert opinion when it comes to educating First Nation students'(Government of Saskatchewan, 2018, p. 3)."* (Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020, p. 9)	Budarick, 2011; George et al., 2023; Godlewska et al., 2017; Maddox et al., 2022; Pedersen et al., 2022; Retzlaff, 2005; Weir et al., 2024; Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020
	"They've been victims of possibly one of the worst/ most racist governments to the indigenous population in the 20th century, that being the Government of Canada" "*Their rights have been suppressed by Canadian government."*	*"Students who hold the government responsible for past wrongs and for inadequate response to the needs of Aboriginal people, both in the past and today"* (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 602)	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	"The Government pushes them and their issues to the side, which makes living hard." (Godlewska et al., 2017, p. 602)		
Revisionist History (n = 13, 5.5%)	*"There was a cowboy, an Indian, and a Muslim standing at the edge of the world. The Indian said my people were once great in number but now are few. The Muslim said my people were once small in number but now are great. The cowboy said that's because we haven't played cowboys and Muslims yet. (A joke told on a local hip-hop radio station in Phoenix, Arizona, 2002)"* (Bird, 2004, p. 44)	*"[Cowboys and Indians] are symbolic of the white colonizer's claim of superiority and Indigenous Peoples' inferiority. Cowboys have remained, in the hearts of most Americans, an evocative representation of American values: love of freedom… and whiteness. Indians, on the other hand, have remained the savage, primitive, losing, dark-skinned, evil, antagonistic enemy. It was common for American soldiers to refer to enemy territory (free-fire zones) a 'ndian Country'and for American soldiers to brutally massacre Vietnamese while fantasizing they were killing Indians."* (Bird, 2004, p. 43)	Bird, 2004; Desai, 2014; Eggleton et al., 2022; Lyubymova, 2019; MacDonald & Ormond, 2021; Simon, 2023; Walter, 2023; Wilkinson et al., 2022
	"We gather together: thanksgiving, gratitude, and making of an American holiday", "Presenting the story of two cultures", "Plymouth/Patuxet is the place where the ancient traditions of gratitude in both the Indigenous and European cultures merged in the autumn of 1621, and a new holiday of gathering and giving thanks began" (Walter, 2023, p. 175)	*" [This] is the most obvious example of this [pluralist multicultural] trope, presenting, as it does, a tourist imaginary of friendship, harmony and brotherhood, as well as gratitude for a plentiful harvest."* (Walter, 2022, p. 174)	
	"Titles by Christina Gardeski (2001[, as cited in Desai, 2014]), Trish Kline (2002[, as cited in Desai, 2014]), Lola	*"Omitting [subsequent] voyages [beyond the first] sidesteps any discussion of conflict with indigenous peoples that might reflect poorly*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	Schaefer (2002[, as cited in Desai, 2014]), Mary Wade (2003[, as cited in Desai, 2014]), and Bauer and Dubois (2009[, as cited in Desai, 2014]) *contain almost identical story elements. All include the young Columbus as a dreamer, his longing to go to sea as an explorer, his determination to sail west to the Indies, his petitioning the Court and its granting of funds for three ships (always named), his long sea voyage, triumphant landing, and meeting with 'gentle' or 'helpful and friendly" natives he called 'Indians'. All end on a positive note extolling exploration and discovery."* (Desai, 2014, p. 187)	*on Columbus …readers are left with little concrete information about how Columbus's actions affected Native Americans and led to conflict … these works still reflect uncritically an imperialist ideology that takes weakness as an invitation to exploitation and resistance as an excuse to conquer."* (Desai, 2014, pp. 187–188)	
Egalitarian Color-Blindness (n = 11, 4.7%)	*"…you know I mean it's [Te Tiriti o Waitangi] part of our lives of everybody [sic] in this country. But um, I just prefer to treat everyone the same [P[articipant] 05]." [General practitioner receptionist]* (Manhire-Heath et al., 2019, p. 433)	*"notions of egalitarianism were also identified within participants' discourses, demonstrating the widely available belief that healthcare systems and services treat all patients equally. Such discourses were most commonly used in response to questioning about… the unique position of Māori as Indigenous peoples"* (Manhire-Heath et al., 2019, p. 433)	George et al., 2023; Manhire-Heath et al., 2019; Maydell et al., 2022; Pedersen et al., 2022; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Tang & Browne, 2008; Weir et al., 2024
	"Health care provider: It's interesting you are just targeting the Native population because my first thought, to be honest with you, was that here we go, we are	*"The sentiment expressed by the provider above is not uncommon among members of the dominant society who interpret state policies such as affirmative action as a form*	

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Examples	Explanation	Articles
	going to do more for the Aboriginals again. What about just doing it across the board for everyone? Why do we have to target these people so much? Make it across the board for everyone and look after everyone instead of just going for one particular group." (Tang & Browne, 2008, p. 117)	*of 'reverse discrimination' against the majority members. Warranting an argument for 'same treatment across the board' is the assumption that everyone has equal opportunity and the freedom to make free choices in their lives … Aboriginal populations [bear] the disproportionate burden of social inequity and ill health in Canadian society"* (Tang & Browne, 2008, p. 117)	

Table 3. Distribution of Themes Across Fields of Study.

	Themes, n (%)							
Area of Focus	Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention (n = 70)	Stereotyping (n = 49)	Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes (n = 39)	Othering (n = 16)	Respectful Practices (n = 25)	Revisionist History (n = 13)	Egalitarian Color-Blindness (n = 11)	Total
Social Science	57 (81.4%)	29 (59.2%)	27 (69.2%)	15 (94%)	22 (88%)	11 (84.6%)	9 (81.8%)	170 (72.3%)
Healthcare	9 (12.9%)	9 (18.4%)	3 (7.7%)	-	-	2 (15.4%)	1 (9.1%)	24 (10.2%)
Education	4 (5.72%)	11 (22.4%)	9 (23.1%)	1 (6%)	3 (12%)	-	1 (9.1%)	29 (12.3%)

Themes Across Mode of Language. The mode of language refers to the context in which language is used to discuss Indigenous Peoples. From the codes (n = 235), six distinct modes of language were identified:

1. Conversation (n = 92, 39.1%): Everyday language used in informal discussions, conversations, and interactions concerning Indigenous Peoples.
2. Media (n = 80, 34%): This includes language used within newspapers, television news reporting, radio broadcasts, movies, and literary works.
3. Policies and Contracts (n = 32, 13.6%): Language within official policies, agreements, and contracts related to Indigenous People, as well as official associated speeches and statements.
4. General Terms (n = 13, 5.5%): Data items that discuss the use of broad and general terms when referring to Indigenous Peoples, without explicit reference to a particular mode of language.

   Example: To use the term "Aboriginal" and "Native" in a respectful way in general, by capitalizing the term and to use it as a modifier rather than a noun; for example, "*'consultations with Aboriginal [P]eople' and not 'consultations with Aboriginals'"* (Retzlaff, 2005, p. 615).
5. Academic Language (n = 13, 5.5%): Refers to language used within academic scholarship, research articles, and educational resources.
6. Historical Documents (n = 5, 2.1%): Encompasses language found in official speeches, laws, policies, religious texts, and other documents from before the early twentieth century.

For the *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention* and *Revisionist History* themes, 43% and 54% of the codes, respectively, were based on language within media, as shown in Table 4. Within the theme of *Respectful Practices*, 56% of the codes were based on language used within policies and contracts. Most codes within the theme of *Othering* were split evenly between conversation, media, and general terms, and codes within the *Egalitarian Colour-Blindness* theme were split evenly between conversation and media. In the remaining themes, codes based on conversational language were most common.

The two predominant modes of language were conversation and media, which accounted for 8% to 80% and 12% to 54% of the codes across themes, respectively. However, relative to other themes, conversational language was most likely to represent the theme of *Stereotyping* while language within media was most likely to represent the theme of *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention*. Language within policies and contracts most represented the themes of *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention* and *Respectful Practices*.

There were also codes discussing the use of general terms involving Indigenous Peoples across five of the seven themes, although these were minimal. Notably, there was a scarcity of codes based on the language used within both historical documents and academia that involved or represented Indigenous Peoples.

Table 4. Distribution of Themes Across Modes of Language.

	Themes, n (%)							
Mode of Language	Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention (n = 70)	Stereotyping (n = 49)	Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes (n = 39)	Othering (n = 16)	Respectful Practices (n = 25)	Revisionist History (n = 13)	Egalitarian Color-Blindness (n = 11)	Total
Conversation	20 (28.6%)	39 (79.6%)	19 (48.7%)	5 (31.3%)	2 (8%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (36.4%)	92 (39.1%)
Media	30 (42.9%)	7 (14.3%)	11 (28.2%)	5 (31.3%)	3 (12%)	7 (53.9%)	5 (45.5%)	68 (28.9%)
Policies & Contracts	14 (20%)	-	1 (2.6%)	1 (6%)	14 (56%)	1 (7.7%)	1 (9.1%)	32 (13.6%)
Academic Language	3 (4.3%)	2 (4.1%)	4 (10.3%)	-	3 (12%)	-	1 (9.1%)	13 (5.5%)
Historical Documents	3 (4.3%)	-	-	-	-	2 (15.4%)	-	5 (2.1%)
General Terms	-	1 (2%)	4 (10.3%)	5 (31.3%)	3 (12%)	-	-	13 (5.5%)

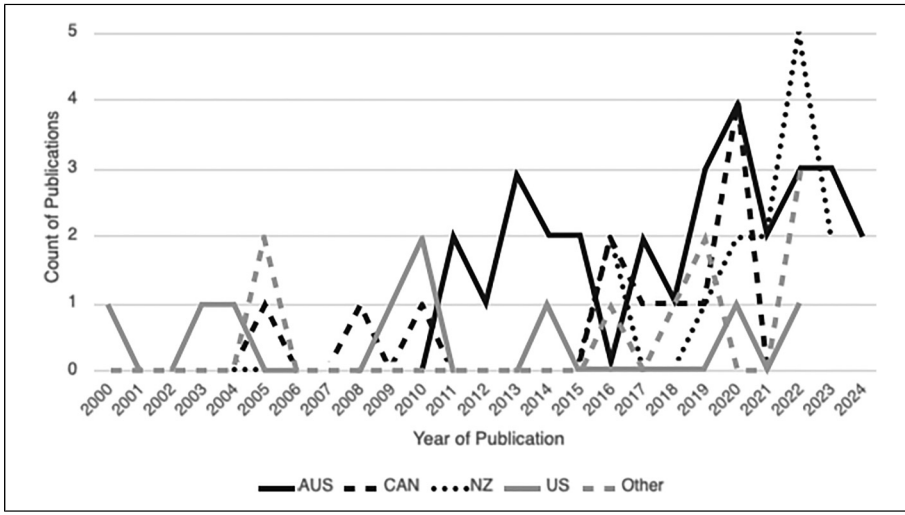

Figure 5. Distribution of geographic origins of authors among included articles.
Note. AUS: Australia; CAN: Canada; NZ: New Zealand; US: United States. Given that most research has occurred in the CANZUS regions, we have combined the remaining countries (Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Papua New Guinea, and Turkey) into an Other category to increase clarity.

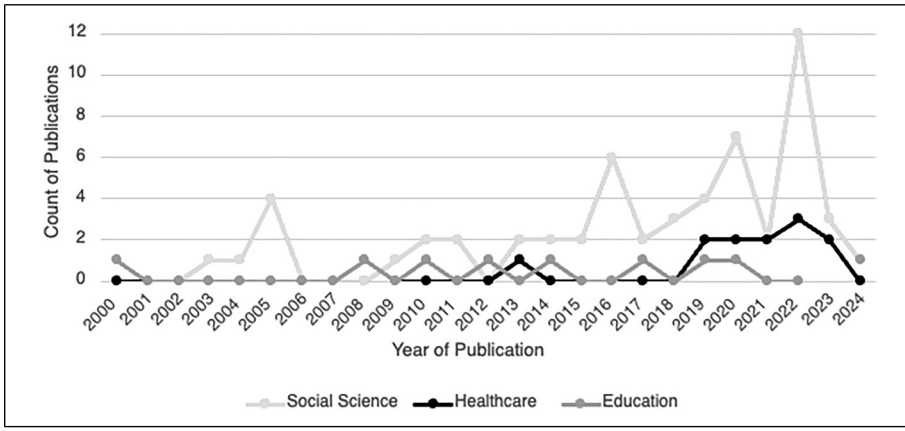

Figure 6. Temporal distribution of articles across fields of study.

Temporal Analysis

Over the past two decades, academic dialogue regarding the representation of Indigenous Peoples appears to be on the rise across different regions (Figure 5). A temporal analysis by field of study shows that most of this work (58 articles out of 80) has

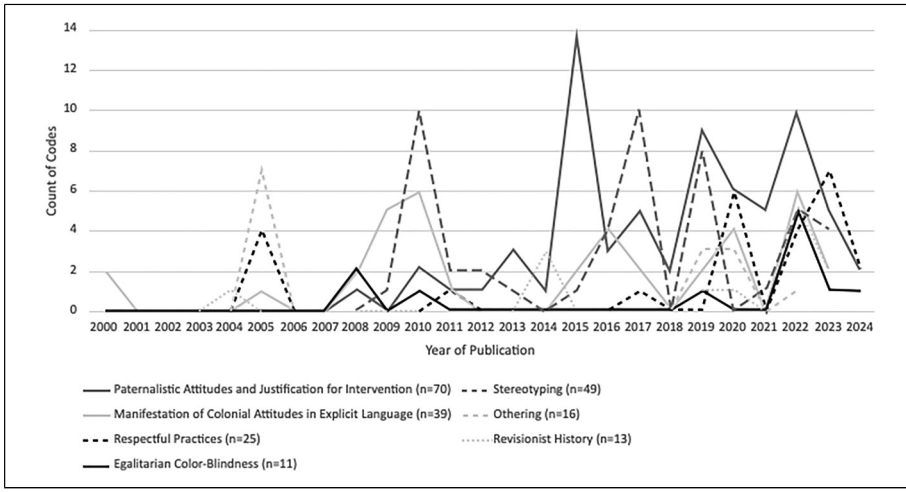

Figure 7. Temporal distribution of thematic codes.

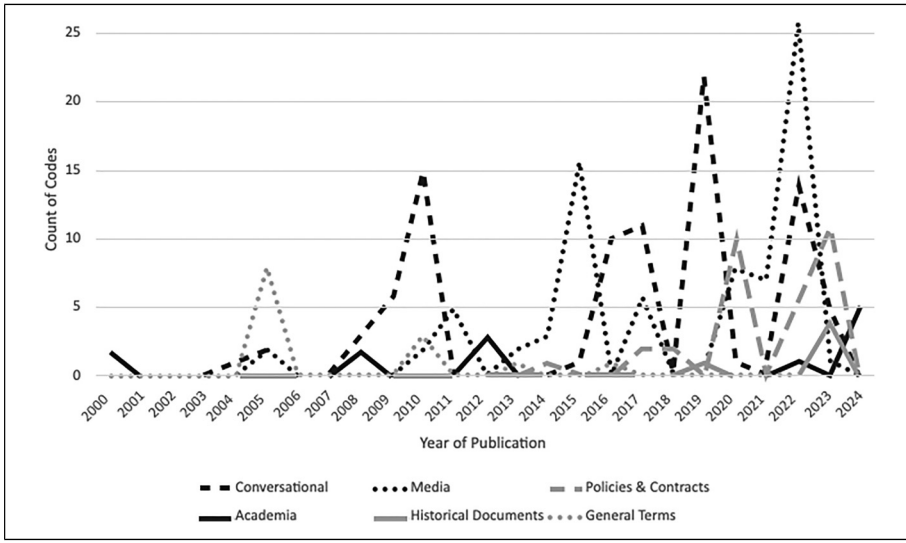

Figure 8. Temporal distribution of codes generated from reflexive thematic analysis across modes of language.

been published within the social sciences, and there has been an increase in the number of studies within healthcare in recent years (Figure 6).

We conducted an analysis of the frequency of themes and mode of language across time. As shown in Figure 7, there was no consistent pattern in the prevalence of specific

themes, but there is an overall increasing trend in most themes starting around 2015. A temporal analysis of modes of language indicates that most work has focused on the language used within media and conversation, with an increasing recent interest in the language used in government policies, and a very limited amount of scholarship discussing academic language and historical documents throughout the study period (Figure 8).

Discussion

In this scoping review, we assessed what is currently known within scholarly literature about the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples. We found that most research in this area was conducted within the Australian context and, correspondingly, focused on the linguistic representation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Canada was the second most common context with a corresponding focus on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

Further, temporal analysis showed a noticeable increase in the number of publications in Australia starting from 2011, and in Canada starting from 2016, which could reflect a similar early lead for Australia in the process of reconciliation compared to Canada (Department of Justice, 2021; Reconciliation Australia, 2021; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a). Overall, there appears to be more recent interest in this area across all countries represented.

Through a reflexive thematic analysis, we identified seven themes, which were analyzed by mode of communication, field of study, and time. Of these seven themes, six involved negative representations, which aligns with the broader scholarly discussion on deficit-discourse surrounding Indigenous Peoples (Fogarty, 2018b). Deficit-discourse portrays Indigenous Peoples negatively by focusing on deficiencies, making comparisons to a non-Indigenous standard, and often blaming individuals for the identified problem, all while ignoring the broader root causes from systemic factors (Fogarty, 2018b; Gorringe, 2015).

The consequences of deficit-discourse can be insidious. In support of this, the most common theme in our study was *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention*, which represented nearly one-third of codes. This type of discourse can enable settlers to assume authority and can pave the way for harmful policies and practices (Lovell, 2014). For instance, Fogarty (2018a) argued that the Australian Government's Northern Territory Emergency Response (intervention) was "premised on the complete failure" (justification) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities (p. 5). These policies and practices are presented as solutions to problems that are supposedly rooted within Indigenous communities themselves, which perpetuates stereotypes and has very real consequences for Indigenous communities. Both the proposed interventions and the reinforced stereotypes act to limit Indigenous agency, undermine self-determination, and perpetuate cycles of disadvantage (Fogarty, 2018a). Under this reigning discourse, then, communities are disempowered, oppressed, and thwarted as they work to assert their Sovereignty, ultimately maintaining the status quo.

These interventions, driven by deficit-discourse, are often justified by portraying Indigenous communities as inherently flawed. The language used to describe Indigenous Peoples has a profound impact on how readers perceive Indigenous Peoples (Bray, 2022) [*Manifestation of Colonial Attitudes*]. Further, labels used to identify Indigenous Peoples can be loaded with negative stereotypes, reinforcing a socially constructed "otherness" that separates Indigenous Peoples from the dominant society [*Stereotyping, Othering*]. The "othering", fueled by stereotypes and racist ideologies, can also manifest in harmful media archetypes that not only downplay historical injustices, but perpetuate white supremacy and Indigenous inferiority (Bird, 2004; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2020) [*Revisionist History*]. Further compounding this issue, the ideology of Color-Blindness erases colonial harms under the guise of promoting equality (Tang & Browne, 2008) [*Egalitarian Color-Blindness*]. In essence, these six themes of negative representation work together to construct and maintain a pervasive narrative of Indigenous inferiority. While across all studies analyzed, researchers consistently emphasized the detrimental impacts of deficit-discourse, a critical gap remains: None provided clear, concrete, actionable guidance on how to counter or dismantle the harmful linguistic framing perpetuating these narratives.

Notably, there was little research on positive representations of Indigenous Peoples, with only one theme of seven discussing *Respectful Practices*, representing 11% of codes. Respectful Practices, as defined in this review, are aligned with strengths-based approaches, which highlight the assets and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples in a culturally appropriate way (Fogarty, 2018b) and acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights, strengths, and knowledge systems (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2020).

For example, two education policy frameworks from the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan (Inspiring success: First Nations and Métis Pre-K-12 Education Policy Framework—Saskatchewan Ministry of Education) and Nunavut (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum—Nunavut Department of Education) demonstrate respectful practices. These frameworks explicitly state an intention to recognize and integrate Indigenous Knowledges in their processes and outcomes. Indigenous Ways of Knowing are not seen as supplementary, but as a cornerstone of education. The policies go beyond mere statements, by outlining concrete actions, such as requiring curriculum development to be co-developed with Indigenous communities and Elders (Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020). This prioritization of Indigenous Knowledge empowers Indigenous communities and ensures Indigenous voices are heard in shaping educational experiences for future generations. As another example, Budarick (2011) examined contrasting narratives of the 2004 Redfern Riot by Western media outlets compared to an Indigenous-run newspaper called The Koori Mall. While the coverage of the Western news media was typically deficit-based, as discussed, The Koori Mall provided information about the history, ongoing structural and governmental failures, and inequities faced by Indigenous Peoples, fostering a deeper understanding of the event through its place in the wider context. This aligns with strengths-based approaches (First Nations Information Governance Centre,

2020). Within strengths-based discourse, then, communities are empowered, honored, and supported as they work to assert their Sovereignty, ultimately challenging the status quo.

The analysis of "*Respectful Practices*" revealed a focus on acknowledging historical injustices and expressing an intention to integrate Indigenous knowledge through collaborative efforts within policy. However, it is crucial to acknowledge two key limitations. Firstly, the long-term impact of these intended outcomes remains to be realized and evaluated. As the legacy of settler colonialism demonstrates, policy intentions do not always translate into concrete actions or positive outcomes for Indigenous communities, as shown by Eggleton et al. (2022).

Encouragingly, a potential counter-narrative is emerging. Policies and contracts contained the highest proportion of articles discussing *Respectful Practices* (n = 14, representing 56% of the theme). This may suggest a possible nascent trend toward organizations and agencies recognizing the value of strengths-based approaches in policy development. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this potential trend is juxtaposed against a well-established legacy of negative framing and themes rooted in deficit-discourse. Further work is required to develop more strengths-based approaches and narratives such as these, ultimately aiming to shift the dominant discourse representing Indigenous Peoples away from its deficit-based perspective (Fogarty, 2018b). Moreover, while there were variations in the number of publications addressing discourse over time per country, our data demonstrated that all CANZUS states, with the exception of the United States, engaged in an increasing amount of this type of research since approximately 2015. This is an encouraging sign and demonstrates a growing collective effort among these settler-colonial states to address this critical topic.

In updating our search to ensure the relevance of our review, we evaluated 15 recent articles on whether, and how, they fit within our existing thematic categories. We found that our thematic categories sufficiently captured the majority of additional articles (93.3%) and data items (78.6%). In fact, there was only 1 article (1.69%), with 12 data items (5.1%) out of all 59 relevant articles, that did not fit within these themes. This article described the analysis of media created by Indigenous artists. Though they presented common stereotypes, similar to the ones found in other reviewed literature, they were interpreted as satire or irony based on context and identity of the author. These representations actually challenged stereotypes or presented a more nuanced characterization. Given this, they were not adequately captured by our existing themes. Future research should address the role of satire and irony in linguistic representations and perhaps explore the special case of representations of Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous people themselves.

Most of the work on the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples has been conducted within the social sciences, with a temporal analysis indicating an increasing trend. This suggests a strong interest and investment from scholars within this field in understanding the social, psychological, and racial dynamics, as well as power structures and cultural phenomena in the context of the linguistic framing of Indigenous Peoples. Although some work has also occurred within the fields of healthcare and

education, it was minor in comparison. As shown by the temporal analysis in Figure 6, scholars within education have what might be described as a sustained slight interest in the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples across the period of this review, while interest within healthcare may be increasing in recent years. The increased discussion about language in healthcare journals is important as it can support the current efforts in Canada and other countries to address negative framing and language in the medical environment. However, though the data on which to draw these conclusions is limited, the minimal research on the role of discourse in representing Indigenous Peoples in healthcare and education remains an important gap in knowledge considering the ongoing issues of racism, stereotyping, and lack of cultural safety within these contexts (Browne et al., 2016; Pilarinos et al., 2023; Shay et al., 2024). Moreover, other fields not represented within our review, such as environmental sciences, economics, and justice studies, all have a significant impact on how Indigenous Peoples are framed, yet there is a lack of research on their linguistic representation (Manero et al., 2022; Roosvall & Tegelberg, 2013; Watene, 2016).

When analyzed by mode of language, we found that most research involves the study of everyday language in informal conversations and interactions, followed by language in news and entertainment media. These modes of language were most likely to linguistically represent Indigenous Peoples as *Stereotyping* and *Paternalistic Attitudes and Justification for Intervention*, respectively. The former may reflect a general tendency for informal language to reinforce stereotypes, as research has shown that stereotype-consistent information is more likely to be both shared and understood by others (Kashima et al., 2007), contributing to a sense of shared reality (Haslam et al., 2002). The latter may reflect more strategic language use within news and entertainment media, given that, as discussed, this representation serves the function of justifying interference in the self-determination of Indigenous communities. Media is well-documented as a powerful tool for monitoring and influencing public perception, particularly during critical political junctures (Fogarty, 2018a). In both cases, specific linguistic representations serve particular functions but generally act to maintain the status quo. This research thus highlights the need to ensure that language, in all contexts, appropriately represents Indigenous Peoples, so that we can start challenging the pervasive deficit-based narrative and oppressive status quo. In support of this, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada specifically addresses the role of media in reconciliation, urging media outlets to reflect Indigenous voices and experiences with respect (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b, Call to Action #84). A similar call exists to shift current narratives away from deficit-based discourse, particularly within scholarly literature (Black et al., 2023).

In contrast, there were very few articles studying language used in academia and historical documents and this was consistent across time. Yet, these contexts have the potential to offer much insight. Historical documents can provide an understanding of how linguistic representations of Indigenous Peoples have evolved over time, perhaps relating these representations to current political, economic, and social contexts. Language in academic scholarship, research articles, and educational resources

are particularly important as they have a wide audience and the potential to impact the next, and future, generations as they rely upon these texts for learning and training. Thus, we argue that the language used within education and academic works remain under-scrutinized, necessitating further research to better understand how academic language, specifically, shapes the representation of Indigenous Peoples within this context. Notably, this gap was mirrored in our analysis by field of study, further emphasizing a substantial gap in this area.

This scoping review has a robust methodology, including a comprehensive and interdisciplinary search and rich qualitative analysis of a subset of those articles, which together provided a comprehensive overview of current work on the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples. However, there are some limitations that should be noted. First, we excluded non-peer-reviewed publications (e.g., gray literature, books) to both lower the number of articles included in the review and to focus on the primary sources typically accessed by scholars, to highlight a specific gap within scholarly literature. This likely limited our knowledge base, especially related to government and policy documents. We also acknowledge that many literary works published by Indigenous scholars on the topic of discourse were also less likely to be included in our review, given that these types of works are often under-represented in the peer-reviewed literature (Monovo et al., 2021). However, our search strategy included Indigenous research journals that are not consistently indexed in prominent electronic bibliographic databases, allowing a higher chance of capturing such works. Second, while reflexive thematic analysis allowed a richer understanding of linguistic representations of Indigenous Peoples, it is also understood that themes developed by one analyst may differ in significant ways from themes developed by another as the analyst becomes intimately familiar with the data (Byrne, 2022). This methodology means the results are not (and not intended to be) reproducible. To encourage a thoughtful reflexive approach, the settler analyst on our team was mindful of their own positionality, regularly consulted our team of senior researchers, and was supported in their interpretation throughout the analytic process.

Conclusion

This scoping review provides an overview of research on the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples. It demonstrates that Australia is at the forefront of this work, that conversational and media language are typically studied, and that studies from the social sciences dominate this area. This review also demonstrates that current research on the linguistic representation of Indigenous Peoples is disproportionately negative and involves deficit-based, rather than strengths-based, language. Although this is an important knowledge base to develop, there is wide acknowledgement of the harms of deficit discourse, with limited guidance on how to counter or avoid it. We call on future research to highlight positive linguistic representations of Indigenous Peoples and to focus on defining, identifying, and providing specific concrete guidance for strengths-based language. We also identify specific gaps that may provide valuable insights in future research, including the study of historical

documents and academic language, as well as the study of this topic within healthcare, education, and all other disciplines not represented in this review.

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Supplemental Material

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Rebecka Lee (MPH, University of British Columbia) is an uninvited guest of Chinese heritage and is of settler descent. She is a public health professional dedicated to community-based health promotion and advancing health equity for BIPOC populations.

Janice Linton (MLS, University of British Columbia; she/her; Scottish/English, settler descendent) is a faculty librarian at the Neil John Maclean Health Sciences Library, University of Manitoba, specializing in Indigenous Health, systematic and scoping reviews for knowledge synthesis. Grateful to live as a friend and guest on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininewuk, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis Ms. Linton has several years' experience learning to support wellness and equity for Indigenous Peoples.

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Traci-Lee D. Christianson (M.A., University of Saskatchewan) is an Applied Social Psychology Ph.D. student at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research interests include the social psychological processes related to social and health equity. This includes the communication, and thus the perpetuation of biased beliefs, about Indigenous Peoples.

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Ellie G. Siden (MD, University of British Columbia) is of Polish/English heritage and is a settler descendent. She is a second year Internal Medicine resident with the University of British Columbia and intends to pursue a fellowship in Geriatrics.

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