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Benjamin Archer April 10, 2023

Overt and Covert

Linguistic Disconnect within Campus Tour Guide Discourse

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Abstract

Linguistic Disconnect within Campus Tour Guide Discourse

By Benjamin Archer

Prior research characterizes the campus tour as a critical variable in determining where a student will apply or enroll (Hesel, 2004; Secore, 2018). This has translated into motivated universities across the United States, such as Emory University, funneling resources into evolving campus tour experiences (Rathemacher et al., 2011). Comprised of two undergraduate campuses, Emory College of Arts and Sciences and Oxford College, university-originated literature characterizes students from Oxford as inferior using discourses that mystify and perpetuate social stereotypes. It is worthwhile to contextualize this potential disconnect between the undergraduate campuses within the tour guide organizations, which consist of populations of students who have linguistic and semiotic authority in how they portray each campus within the university.

This study examines undergraduate campus tour guides' role in connecting prospective students and their families to the university during the campus tour. In particular, the study surveys the differences in tour-guiding practices within a large university's distinct undergraduate college environments. Using Said's (1978) *Orientalism* applied to Jensen's (2008) construction of identity politics, I first analyze the extent to which linguistic discourses socially separate the two distinct undergraduate environments within the university. I then assess if Oxford College students are linguistically "othered" by students from the larger, more commonly known Atlanta campus through interviews with campus tour guides from both undergraduate campuses.

The results of the current study provide insight into the language encouraged and sometimes enforced in tour guide training manuals, which support othering Oxford students from the university. Interview responses from Oxford students reveal a unique intra-campus pride and emphasize independence, specifically that Oxford students do not aspire to assimilate completely into the larger university environment. These findings provide an additional lens into the multi-dimensional construction of Emory as a university, suggesting that the community of a small liberal arts college survives within large research institutions. Furthermore, observations from tour guides across the university demonstrate the power of authenticity and honesty that harmonizes with other research about the impact of campus tour guides.

Keywords: Campus tour guide, othering, discourse, interviews, liberal arts college

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Introduction

Transitioning from high school to college can bring about a range of emotions. Happiness, joy, and excitement that you are leaving home and becoming a young adult. Anxiety, doubt, and dread as you enter a new and unfamiliar environment. With so many schools, how can you be sure you have made the right decision? How will you know you have made the right choice? Universities worldwide, especially in the United States, have programs for prospective students and their families to come to campus and partake in that are designed to promote the school and its offerings. Campus tours, mock classes, and overnight sessions are among the many opportunities that students can take advantage of during their college search. By doing so, prospective students not only gain more information about the schools they are considering applying to but also garner a better sense of what life is like as a student at the university. One such example of a university that strives to promote itself to prospective students is in the suburbs of Atlanta and the exurb of Oxford, Georgia: Emory University.

Emory is an R1-level research institution that has consistently ranked in the top 25 best colleges nationwide, with acceptance rates as low as thirteen percent, according to U.S. News rankings ("2022-2023 Best National University Rankings," 2022). Students worldwide study hard and immerse themselves in extracurricular activities, hoping they can one day attend such a prestigious university located within a major metropolitan area booming with career opportunities for the business and arts-savvy. Emory prides itself in its medical and health sciences programs: the School of Medicine, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, and Rollins School of Public Health. Steps from the Center for Disease Control, or CDC, Emory students and faculty also have convenient accessibility to contribute to ground-breaking research that can change the world. Emory is a very attractive school for the academically talented

looking to succeed professionally, which is important to the demographic of interest, the undergraduates. In the Class of 2021, 89.9% of the university's approximate 15,000 students graduated, and over 90% of the 8,000 undergraduate students had confirmed plans after graduation, 100% job placement and 97% for nursing and business schools, respectively (*Retention and graduation*, 2022; Office of Undergraduate Admissions, 2022).

Many do not know that the university's undergraduate structure is unlike any other in the country; Emory has two undergraduate campuses: Emory College and Oxford College. Emory College, the more well-known of the two, is located in Druid Hills, a suburb of Atlanta, and features sprawling marble buildings with terra cotta roofs spanning the campus's 631 acres (*US News*, 2022). Emory College contains almost 6,000 undergraduate students, roughly 84% of the Emory University undergraduate population. The remaining students start their Emory journey 38 miles east of Atlanta at Oxford College. Oxford College is the original campus of Emory, and the smaller undergraduate campus comprises only first and second-year students. With a significantly smaller population of under 1,100 students, the average class size is 19, and 99% of classes have fewer than thirty students (*Emory University Office of Undergraduate Admission*, 2022). Oxford College attracts students who seek a tight-knit community centered around an intensive liberal arts curriculum. Students at Oxford College have early access to leadership positions on campus that would typically be prioritized for upperclassmen. Additionally, the small class size allows for greater collaboration among students and their professors, which may lead to research assistant roles and a jump start on publication for those interested in academia and the research fields.

While both campuses have pros and cons depending on the person applying, a prospective student may apply Early Decision (ED) to one or both campuses of Emory. The

Common Application for high school students applying to colleges recognized Emory College of Arts and Sciences in conjunction with Oxford College fairly recently. According to email correspondence with Dean of Enrollment Kelly Lips at Oxford College, "Students could apply to both campuses with one set of documents in 2008. Prior to that, students could still apply to both campuses using the Common Application, but Emory and Oxford were listed as separate institutions." This streamlining of the Common Application was established within the last decade because the option for ED to Emory College and Oxford College is extremely rare as an ED agreement is binding and almost always applies to only one school per round according to The College Board's guidelines.

From an admissions standpoint, Emory and Oxford College demonstrate a rare opportunity for those set on attending the university as an undergraduate. Given the unique structure of Emory as a dual campus undergraduate system, it is worthwhile to survey the university's history. This will provide the necessary context that explains how Emory came to be and how the creation of the presently named Atlanta campus set a precedent for Oxford College to become not only its own campus but, as the results of this thesis suggest, how history shaped Oxford's distinct identity under the Emory umbrella.

Historical Overview: From Oxford to Atlanta

Oxford is the original home of what eventually became Emory University. In 1836 by brothers Asa and Warren Candler, Emory was founded in Oxford, Georgia (Harris & Usher, 2008). It was not until almost a century later, in the early 1900s, that Emory would undergo a massive transformation. Asa Griggs Candler purchased land in Atlanta and moved Emory College to occupy this new space, leaving the Oxford campus at the mercy of whatever purpose or organization required the land. Candler was also a business tycoon, having founded the Coca-

Cola Company in 1892. Using his earnings from the lucrative Coca-Cola, Candler donated a generous $1 million to aid in Emory's expansion into Atlanta in 1914, essentially reframing its identity as an Atlanta-based institution. Known as the "million-dollar letter," Candler's donation began the gradual transition of Emory as an institution into the Atlanta area, eventually catalyzing the forgetfulness of the Oxford campus as a member of the Emory umbrella (*Asa Griggs Candler*; Moon, 2000).

1915 marked a significant year in Emory's history, for it was then that Emory began its move to Atlanta. As mentioned above, what was known as Emory College, founded in Oxford, Georgia, would be transformed into a university with the generous Candler-Coca-Cola donation (Bullock, 1936, p. 291). During the construction of the Atlanta campus in 1915, the Oxford campus rebranded itself as the Emory University Academy, modeled similarly to the Philips Academy and Philips Exeter Academy schools as the state of Georgia attempted to improve public schools (Moon, 2003, pp. 27-28). Emory University Academy introduced a college-level curriculum in the mid-1930s, repossessing its original status in higher education, this time called Emory Junior College at Oxford. Emory Junior College at Oxford existed as a two-year college program until 1947, when Emory leaders reorganized the curriculum by integrating secondary and post-secondary education, much like the University of Chicago. The result was the U.S. South's first accredited four-year junior college that combined the latter half of the high school curriculum (at an accelerated level) with the first half of college material, still under the same name (Moon, 2003, p. 85).

The title "Oxford College of Emory University" did not exist until the early 1960s when Dean Virgil Eady advocated for inter-campus unison under the grounds of extended financial help for the original campus. The grounds for this unification were largely due to financial

concerns from enrollment shortages. However, Eady wanted the Oxford campus to be a part of Emory University, not what he called "a quasi-independent college *at* Oxford" (Moon, 2003, pp. 110, 116). At the same time, Emory relocated to Atlanta, but the purpose of the Oxford campus was to be an integral component of Emory University, functioning as a two-year liberal arts program with similar aspects to Emory College's model of education (Moon, 2003). Since the inception of Emory as a school, and later as one of two campuses, the Oxford space underwent physical and institutional renovations between 1836 and 1915 to become what is commonly known as "the Oxford campus" or "Oxford College," even "Oxford College of Emory University."

Although Oxford College remains a separate campus in conjunction with the Atlanta campus, over time, the popularization of Emory College has developed a collective memory among students (prospective or otherwise) that the Atlanta campus is the only if not the more desirable, campus within Emory (Ganga, 2021; Broun et al., 2022). With one campus of Emory seen as superior to the other, students at the more densely populated campus may be perceived or perceive themselves as the norm, inadvertently excluding students at a smaller, more rural campus which can be problematic. This notion of one as superior creates and perpetuates many discourses on and off campus, which excludes Oxford College students from the broader Emory community. When passed around by students at both campuses, such discourses solidify the collective stereotype that Oxford is somehow a lesser campus and linger in the atmosphere, framing the Atlanta campus's superiority as the norm to anyone looking at Oxford from the outside. Oxford becomes cast as a "second choice," a "back door," or even a "failsafe option" that pales in comparison to Emory College, so much so that "Emory" refers only to the larger campus.

One Emory

In September 2018, former Emory President Claire Sterk and former Provost Dwight McBride enacted a campaign entitled "One Emory" to achieve "even higher aspirations of academic excellence" through various unification measures across the university. Namely, faculty would work "across all of Emory's departments, colleges, and professional schools to create best practices and identify issues that impact students" via sharing resources and streamlining curricula (Emory News Center, 2018). The strategic framework of One Emory revolved around four main pillars, each with its own mantra. However, these pillars collectively served one purpose: To make the university appeal more unified to prospective students. From a monetary perspective, "One Emory" demonstrates a united front within the university while projecting itself outward toward its future, students who will eventually become donors and/or members of the board of trustees and investors. "One Emory" largely exists in the background of students' minds because it does not affect them in their daily lives. However, the framework acts as a medium of administrative promotion and rejuvenation of university resources allocated to improve Emory internally.

For this thesis, we evaluate "One Emory" based on its linguistic implications regarding the undergraduate populations of Emory College and Oxford College. Therefore, even though "One Emory" remains active as an administrative ambition, it manifests differently in students' minds. Many refer to "One Emory" as a justification for unequal access to campus resources between the undergraduate campuses, wherein Oxford College students will call out administrative hypocrisy by citing that "One Emory" does not exist due to unequal resources such as course offerings, transportation, and social opportunities.

The first pillar, Faculty Excellence, sought to "foster a culture of eminence that attracts and inspires scholars of the highest order" through various Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)-centered hiring practices of faculty (*Engaged for Impact,* 2018). The university allocated $75 million to "support inclusive, cross-disciplinary, targeted hiring and faculty retention" through a faculty distinction fund (*Engaged for Impact,* 2018). One of the goals of the first pillar was to hire a diverse faculty who could teach "interchangeably across the university, from Oxford College to Emory College to the Rollins School of Public Health," which one could argue would boost the university's presence from socially conscious, liberal audiences (Emory News, 2018). Hiring faculty who conduct research and teach across the university expands research opportunities, providing a seemingly limitless array of networking and other profession-based advantages for students, particularly prospective students looking to attend a pre-professional university.

Secondly, the "Academic Community of Choice" pillar served to "cultivate a thriving campus and a compelling student experience" by becoming more inclusive and accessible financially. For example, the university vowed to increase graduate student support by "devoting more than $40 million during the next five years to increase the base stipend support provided to Ph.D. students…" effectively boosting the Laney Graduate School programs' value for current and prospective students interested in taking the master's or Ph.D. route. A key to my argument lies within this second pillar because One Emory supposedly "transform[s] Emory's undergraduate campus life experience to create a connected, living, impact-oriented intellectual community" (*Engaged for Impact,* 2018). However, as this thesis argues, Emory's undergraduate experience is anything but connected in the sense that Oxford students do not have access to the

same social, and even sometimes academic, opportunities that Emory College students have until, at the minimum, their third year.

The third and fourth pillars, entitled "Innovation Through Scholarship and Creative Expression" and "Atlanta as a Gateway to the World," respectively, dealt with academic and social research pursuits to give back to Atlanta and the global community. The third provided (yet again) more financial support to research in the sciences and the humanities through two task forces that help the university "address 21st-century challenges", which one could interpret as balancing the external STEM-heavy stereotype with comparable humanities focuses. The final pillar claims to prioritize "Atlanta Studies" because Emory wants to be a "go-to source for scholars and policymakers on all things Atlanta" (*Engaged for Impact*, 2018). Whereas the university may have intended to attend more to public policy or political research through this pillar, the description comes off quite imperialistically. It gives the reader the impression that Emory is trying to perhaps redirect social influence on itself instead of educating the Atlanta community as a whole.

Ultimately, the framework "One Emory" boldly claims to unite not only the undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools but also solidify the Emory connection within Atlanta. While benevolent in essence, the desired unification of "One Emory" does not explicitly relate to its undergraduate population, which is one of the most important groups to recognize from an administrative perspective, as every college and university is comprised majorly of undergraduate students. The obscurity surrounding "One Emory" concerning the undergraduate population, if at all, reveals an idealism on behalf of the Emory administration intended to boost morale and appeal to the world of academia and research. The university enacted the framework as part of a multi-year plan, yet, from a student perspective, "One Emory" is commonly used by

Oxford students in reference to perceived inequalities between campuses and within the Emory community as a whole. As a result, Oxford student dissatisfaction with their experience is often scapegoated through the "One Emory" framework, and many students at the Oxford campus convey a certain level of conflict with their experience at what they may believe is the inferior or secondary campus.

Oxfordism

Whereas administrative efforts seem to at least try and unify the two undergraduate campuses of Emory University, it is clear that from the point of view of some students (especially Oxford students), these efforts fall short. In my experience as an Oxford alum, the starkest differences between the two campuses I observed were in the academic and social opportunities allotted to Oxford students, particularly concerning the Atlanta campus. Largely due to the size of the campus, academic offerings such as double majoring or research positions are advertised as easily accessible. However, Oxford College has much fewer courses available per semester than ECAS. While most students understand the potential restrictions that come with attending a smaller campus, some Oxford students have coined their academic and social plight as a product of their status as students on the original campus, ergo they have coined the term "Oxfordism" to identify how they believe they are treated as lesser than ECAS students at the "main campus (Broun et al., 2022). Similarly, Oxford students sometimes feel like they are missing out on the social life of Emory since all university-wide events occur at the Atlanta campus, not to mention that ECAS is closer to the city of Atlanta. However, it is important to note that not every Oxford student, me included, feels this way. Therefore, Oxfordism, regarding this project, is a contextual tool that does not establish a concrete narrative but considers the possibility of one in which Oxford students feel socially isolated from their ECAS peers.

The first instance of the term applied to the circumstances described above occurred fairly recently in an editorial piece in Emory's unofficial newspaper, *The Emory Wheel.* While the *Wheel* is a largely unreliable source since its content is not sanctioned by the university, the sentiment that persists is one of disenfranchisement from the perspectives of current Oxford students and Oxford alums who have matriculated at Emory College. For example, the students featured in this piece, ironically all first-year students at the time of publication and did not wholly understand the Oxford experience, complained about the lack of course options and accessibility compared to their Atlanta campus counterparts. Specifically, they cited "inadequate resources" such as shuttle services, flexibility within the curriculum to major across disciplines, and the rigidness of the General Education Requirements, or GERs, all of which they claim to limit their potential at Emory. According to the Wheel article, "Unlike the main campus… Oxford students are not privy to the same privileges their peers in Atlanta are afforded, and Emory shouldn't pretend they are," which established Oxford as an inferior campus and lackluster social environment for Emory students.

Whereas a different article in the *Wheel* written by Davis (2022) in February described a more general feeling of isolation due in great part to the COVID-19 pandemic, the April *Wheel* editorial published by Broun and colleagues just a few months later villainized Oxford College and victimized its students by portraying the students as unaware of these inequalities within the university (2022). Furthermore, the article from Broun subjects anyone affiliated with Oxford College to potential conflict as students at the larger Emory University body because the feelings of a few unhappy students create a larger tension between campuses, ignited by the *Wheel*.

This editorial received backlash from Emory students (regardless of their campus of origin) because it portrayed Oxford as an unsupportive environment to its students, hindering their ambitions to double major and take advantage of the Atlanta campus opportunities. However, this article took an extreme stance against the university and was not received well by students, likely because its publishers and contributors were second semester first-year students who needed an outlet to vent their frustrations (Broun et al., 2022). Oxford certainly is not for everyone; the small and rural environment may help some thrive, but for students who sought a larger setting and did not get into Emory College, this campus is anything but home (Broun et al., 2022).

Despite a lack of generalizability, "Oxfordism" reveals underlying campus politics that have existed for years. Some students feel that "Emory and Oxford are not the same schools," resulting from various discourses that contribute to Oxford students feeling left out or excluded from the Emory community. A few prominent discourses will be discussed in this thesis, all of which contribute to the overall sentiment of exclusion and isolation on behalf of Oxford College students. Specifically, how students at Emory University, regardless of campus or origin, describe Oxford as its separate campus and in relation to Emory as an institution.

In order to effectively analyze this phenomenon, we must reevaluate Emory from the point of view that the university itself depends on most: Prospective students. Given the assumption that most Emory students are familiar with at least portions of the university's history, or at least the presence of the Oxford campus, a key point of interest in this study is the extent to which non-Emory students, specifically future Emory students, are aware of or have preconceptions about the Oxford campus, if at all. A perfect method of examining the lens of prospective students and

their families, those on the outside looking in who want to experience Emory, is from that of the campus tour guide.

The key focus group of this thesis is campus tour guides, partly due to their influence as a guiding force in representing their respective universities to families. My interest in the subject stems from personal observations of a distinction and discrepancy separating the Oxford campus from the larger Emory bubble. However, I want to answer the following: To what extent does this anti-Oxford narrative permeate the admissions side of Emory? Do prospective students know about these discourses? How much do they know about Oxford at all?

Literature Review

The Campus Tour

To determine any possible problematization of linguistic relationships between Oxford College and ECAS, we must shift our focus to the Emory University campus tour guide organizations, the population of student representatives entrusted with promoting the university to students and their families. Since the university's primary goal is to market itself to families whose children want to attend (for apparent financial gain through students, alumni, and investors), the best method, therefore, is utilizing student voices who embody Emory and can successfully "sell" the school (Spoon, 2006; Secore, 2018).

While colleges and universities have robust events for the pre-college population, the campus tour is arguably the most important and defining factor in a student's interest in a university. For this thesis, the terms "campus tour" and "campus visit" are more or less the same; a "visit" usually implies some form of a tour (if not a formal walking tour, often self-guided or virtual), and a "tour" implies physically walking around campus under a university-affiliated representative (Klaunig, 2005). There is overwhelming evidence that, for prospective students, a

campus visit has a tremendous impact on their views of the university. In a study conducted by the higher education services company Arts & Sciences Group, 65% of the 500-student sample indicated that campus visits influenced their application decision (Hesel, 2004). Additionally, 33% claimed advice from current students or graduates from the school, and 80% of students partook in a formal campus visit for their first-choice school. While most would interpret the above statistics as obvious since students are inclined to participate more in university programming to show demonstrated interest, it is important to note that in the same study, 76% of students answered that the campus visit made them more *or less* interested in their first choice, and the same was true for 63% of second-choice schools (Hesel, 2004). Two more studies provide important insight into the value of the campus visit: In 2007, Edventures surveyed almost 8,000 high school juniors and seniors, and 71% said a campus visit was their most trusted source of information in the college search process (Ashburn, 2007). Furthermore, a study conducted two years later, in 2009, sampled 1,100 random high school seniors who had completed the college search process and made admissions decisions concluded that "visits to college were, by far, the most important factor in a student's decision about where to apply" (Cohen, 2009).

We can see that the campus visit is beneficially two-fold from the student's point of view. Applicants want schools to get to know them via demonstrated interest and signing up for tours. Also, they want to see whether or not they like the campus and if they will be comfortable if they choose to apply to or attend the school they are touring. This relationship has resulted in the campus visit being called "the golden walk" or "golden mile" because of the opportunity for prospective students to evaluate whether or not they could potentially see themselves, aiding in the decision process to apply or enroll (Secore, 2018, p. 154; Miller, 2012; Hoover, 2009). The

campus tour is an experience offered by practically all colleges and universities that engages prospective students with the physical and academic spaces of the institution. The tour itself is standardly a walking journey around campus followed by brief explanations and fun facts about buildings, academic offerings, and extracurricular activities that students partake in. Families can volunteer to experience an informational session with the university's administrators, for example, the Deans of Admission or counselors overseeing applications in a specific region of the country or world.

While campus visits are indeed influential and helpful to the student(s) applying, the campus visit can be approached in three distinct dimensions: The students (as mentioned above), the families (especially the parents), and the university itself. This three-dimensional approach to campus visits explains not only the exorbitant amount of funding that goes into campus admissions programming but also the social status that campus tour guides, the focus of this thesis, hold in the eyes of their employers. While many students fund their own education, it is often up to the student's families to pay tuition. As such, universities may cater aspects of the campus visit toward them. For example, Parks (2005) observed that, in some tours, universities used a tactic to separate parents from their children during the tour. If all the parents were in a designated group, the student representative could cater more to their needs and address their questions. At the same time, a different tour guide would answer student responses without potential judgment from families, such as the social scene, Greek life, and other non-academic inquiries (Spoon, 2006). Universities will go to great lengths to suit the needs of prospective families: In a 2011 report of the University of Rhode Island Admissions Advisory Committee, board members discussed how competing schools had funded various renovations and improvements to welcome centers, admissions offices, and centers of Student Life to improve

the aesthetic of the university to students and their families. The facilities that students would interact with needed to be comfortable and accessible (i.e., large enough to hold groups, welcoming, sustainable) since first impressions are of the utmost importance (Rathemacher et al., 2011). It is in the university's best interest to wow those who visit campus because the students admitted and enrolled become the alums who donate to the university's endowment or become members of the board of trustees. Either way, universities profit from their students, so the first impression is another example of the mutualistic nature of college admissions.

It is also important to consider campus tour guides' role in the university. As a tour guide, a student undergoes an intense selection process that often involves interviews, simulated touring experience, and mentoring from other guides and the university admissions team (Spoon, 2006). The training that campus tour guides undergo involves learning university facts (important dates, course offerings, statistics, etc.) and, as Spoon describes, gradually implementing their own personal "flair" into their tours (p. 10). No campus tour is the same because no tour guide is the same; each tour guide has their own experience and interests. This authenticity aids the campus visit experience for families seeking personal experiences and personality over bland fact-stating (Spoon, 2006; Steinberg, 2009).

A study by Qian & Yarnal (2010) interviewed 16 campus tour guides at a large northeast college and surveyed participants on their experiences in the role. The researchers hypothesized that "knowing how campus tour guides feel about the activity can help the university administration better recruit, train and retain volunteer tour guides. Better recruitment, training, and management of the tour guides, Qian and Yarnal posit, will benefit not only university applicants but also the university itself…" (p. 128). Researchers found various psychological, social, and communal benefits to being a campus tour guide. The results supported the study's

hypothesis: More than half claimed they had a higher self-image (i.e., confidence in themselves and their skills as university representatives). A quarter felt they had more pride in the university. Lastly, half attributed the ease of making friends to their job on campus. Campus tour guides not only have social clout in the eyes of prospective students and their families but also among the university because the administration entrusts them with the immense responsibility of promoting the school (Magolda, 2000). For any school, the role of the tour guide is highly prestigious because, according to higher education scholars, student tour guides are the closest thing families have to the university. Tour guides link prospective students with the university and provide them temporary access to ask questions and share experiences. A tour guide's importance lies in their agency to direct prospective students toward away the university, but a lousy tour can divert them, according to scholars in the field (Hoover, 2009). Given the high social standing of tour guides, from the vantage points of both the university they attend and prospective students and families, we can situate these student leaders as an extremely influential force. They represent the university and dictate whether or not a prospective student enjoys the campus visit and, ultimately, if they will apply to or attend the school (Mass, 2016). Campus tour guides have the power to "present the university in a positive light and to build a good impression," which brings in more applicants (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). We can therefore postulate whether the findings from the above works can be applied to ourselves by examining the tour guides within Emory.

Previous scholarship around the campus tour confirms that tour guides are integral to the college admissions experience. Furthermore, works such as Qian & Yarnal (2010) investigate the degree to which tour guides recognize themselves as an important element of many prospective students' application and enrollment decisions. With this prior knowledge, it would be a valid

assumption that many universities believe their tour guides are successful if the goal of tour guides is to bring in as many applicants as possible. However, a high applicant pool is only one component of a top-tier university and is likely most relevant from an admissions standpoint. While as a tour guide, I viewed my role not as a recruiter of students but rather as an informative representative who shared his experiences as an Emory student for those interested in applying. My experiences as a tour guide align with prior literature, specifically with the communal and social benefits of being a tour guide; I felt prideful in my ability to share my story with others, as I felt that I could bring prospective students into the Oxford College community for a short time they were on campus or visiting virtually. One of the many appeals that tour guides explain to families is the sense of community that students, especially first years, feel or will feel throughout college. Through campus tour guides, universities strive to demonstrate a sense of unity, whether it be an immersive first-year experience or a robust alumni network.

Transitioning to the community-building role of the campus tour guide, most assume a primary objective is to make prospective families feel connected to the university while touring. As a school representative, a tour guide's responsible for describing their experiences while answering questions about the student experience, which aids in a prospective student's ability to visualize themselves more accurately at the school. However, not every student who tours Emory University leaves wanting to apply or enroll due to a multitude of personal factors since each student has a specific set of criteria they need to succeed at a college. What is important, though, is how the tour guide speaks about the university while giving tours rather than what they talk about (Okerson, 2016). The way tour guides describe the school they attend has a tremendous impact as the tour's content leaves a lasting impression on students and their families, often weighing in the student's decision to apply or enroll at the school.

As prized student representatives, immense linguistic power is instilled within campus tour guide practices, as these select groups of students can attract or divert applicants from attending the university. Therefore, understanding if and how tour guides establish community is vital to examining the current study. Suppose tour guides can effectively promote a community to families on-campus visits. In that case, the university benefits just as much because its institution can be viewed more positively in the eyes of a larger audience. However, the converse is also true: A tour guide who presents their university in a way that excludes a group or groups of students may leave a negative impression on the school as a whole and, at an extreme, instill exclusionary mindsets into the next generation of students.

Othering

Identifying a community and, more importantly, how one sees themselves as a member of a community can be contextualized historically through the philosophy of identity construction. Quite paradoxically, the construction of the self has been interpreted through a philosophical theory known as "othering," in which a person knows themselves and constructs their identity based on differentiating characteristics of those around them. This framework poses an interesting argument when applied to the history of (dis)unification of Emory University and Oxford College. Given the influence of campus tour guides on prospective students' perceptions of the university, "othering" may provide reasoning for the supposed linguistic disconnect between the undergraduate campuses. I am interested to see if Oxford College and its current and former students have felt historically left out of the Emory community and why some have expressed a feeling of second-class citizenship compared to Emory College students. Although various discourses may be the catalysts of this minimization of value, we can conceptualize the

process through term othering as it explains the philosophy behind and methods of to what extent Emory University has marginalized the Oxford community.

Othering, in this context, refers to how one group socially and linguistically makes itself superior to another, thereby institutionalizing a hierarchy of dominance. The theory's origins can be traced to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, in which academics postulate that the relationship of dominance between the two parties constructs the self as a product of the other. According to Hegel, someone cannot identify themselves as themselves without the presence (and later, the comparison) of someone else. Humans cannot understand themselves as beings unless they have another or an "other" to separate from. While philosophical in nature, othering has sociological and psychological backgrounds as well. Dervin (2015) explains the psychological implications of othering in the following:

> Othering is viewed as an ordinary process that everyone experiences: In order to exist, one needs to make sense of other people, thus one other them—as much as they other the rest of us. Othering is only possible through the hyphenation or the nexus of self and other in discourse. In order to other, one needs to compare self to another, or one's group(s) to (an)other group(s) and vice versa (p. 2)

As we see here, humans make implicit judgments about whomever we compare ourselves to by othering ourselves or another person. It is important to note that to other someone does not always indicate negative connotations; in its most basic sense, othering is simply a method of identity construction. However, in specific populations such as Emory campus tour guides, we problematize and examine what humans do with othering, the stereotyping and malicious juxtaposition of themselves compared to those around them.

As previously mentioned, othering exists not solely in philosophical scholarship and is much more than an abstract idea. Othering in practice can be seen throughout history, particularly via colonization and status. The most famous example of othering comes from

Said's *Orientalism* and the exotification and fetishization of "the Orient" (1978). In postcolonial writing, the Orient (presently the Middle East) is portrayed as a place of wonder filled with strange, exotic people who mystify researchers and become fascinating research subjects (Jensen, 2011). The people of the Orient are labeled as subhuman research material, which then situates their home as inferior to that of researchers from the West. According to Said, the "representation of the Orient, amongst Occidentals, has historically been defined by what the Occident is not… the Orient has been portrayed as undeveloped, passive and immature while the Occident has been represented as advanced, pro-active and mature" (Said, 1978 as cited in Gillespie, 2007, p. 580).

The relationship between the Orient (presently the Middle and Far East) and the Occident (the Western world, most likely European or at least Eurocentric) shows how the previously abstract tenant of othering has adapted a historical lens. The othering of the Orient still exists today, for example, within the tourism industry. Gillespie (2007) studied tourists in Ladakh, India, where he observed interactions and perceptions of and by Ladakhi people. The tourists, many of whom were Israeli, would comment on various behaviors and minute details of the Ladakhi people as if their home nation was not a tourist destination (Chapter 5, pp. 101-154). While Gillespie's documentation of othering the tourism industry has some parallels to the focus of this thesis, the campus tour guide is a slightly different entity. Students and their families visit colleges intending to see what life could be like as a student there, whereas the generic definition of tourism in Gillespie (2007) does not incorporate the future living component. This distinction is important because in contextualizing the campus tour guide experience, it is best to ignore any preconceived beliefs from the tourism ideology. Campus tour guides are representatives of the

university and do not work for monetary incentives, and the role of the prospective student is informative (Quian & Yarnal, 2010).

Shifting focus back to Emory, there are various examples of othering within the university. Concerning Oxford College students, a variety of discourses exist that deny Oxford students of their identity as Emory students and exclude them from the community at large. These discourses are as follows: Emory College has been referred to as the "main campus," which is problematic as the presence of a main implies the existence of another, which is inferior or supplementary. Oxford College is seen as a "sister institution" to Emory College, and although the sibling referential is not hierarchical in nature, Oxford is grouped as a part of Emory College as opposed to the university in totality (Bartlett & Eisen, 2002).

Emory University has two tour guide organizations, one for each campus. At Oxford, tour guides are called Student Admission Ambassadors, and the organization is abbreviated as SAA. In my experience as a tour guide in SAA, the words used to describe Oxford differed from Emory College, namely "academically equivalent but environmentally and geographically distinct" (*2021-2022 manual,* Section 4, p. 10; *SAA manual,* p. 11). Oxford was frequently mentioned as the origin of Emory University because Oxford is Emory's birthplace. However, in the Emory Student Ambassador group, or ESA, Oxford is only discussed in the context of Emory's history and not treated as an equal partner, if not an institution at all. The concept of othering applies here and provides a robust framework for interpreting the role of tour guides at this unique campus. Furthermore, these discourses strengthen the argument of "Oxfordism," which previously raised skepticism since the Emory Wheel publication is not affiliated with the university and is unpredictable and not extremely credible.

In order to connect othering and campus tours, it would be worthwhile to investigate what practices of othering exist within the campus tour. As tour guides invite families to walk around campus and experience the college or university for themselves, prospective students hear the tour guide's input on campus life and the student atmosphere. The tour's contents are important as what the tour guide says about their time at the university, whether positive or negative, models the student's impression of the school they are touring. However, what happens *during* the tour is most interesting as it directly pertains to othering as a consequence of tour guide discourse. While families pay attention to what the tour guides say during a tour, they may not realize how much they subconsciously take in *how* the tour guide talks about their experiences (Mass, 2016, p. 55). Investigating these deeper layers of tour guide practices will help shape the current study's analysis of, within the Emory University tour guide organizations, if othering exists between ECAS and Oxford College.

The personality and interests of the tour guide play a large factor in the experience students will have while touring. More importantly, who a tour guide is and their relationship with the school may determine what they highlight to prospective families or what they neglect to discuss. As supported by results in Qian & Yarnal (2010), universities recruit tour guides from all areas of academic and social interests with a shared desire to represent the school to demonstrate diversity. A caveat of this multi-faceted diversity is that tour guides may talk about one aspect of campus light in a positive light and gloss over another, which brings a variety of subconscious biases that are then transplanted onto the families who are touring.

A tour guide's language while touring and its influence can be potentially harmful depending on what they do and do not talk about. An example of such tour-guiding behavior comes from a study by Magolda (2000) in which the researcher observes a campus tour by tour

guide “Mark” at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. During the tour, Mark inadvertently others certain population of Miami University students by essentializing what he deemed as important:

> When discussing the multitude of co-curricular opportunities available to students, Mark singled out two mainstream political organizations-Associated Student Government and the Black Student Action Association--whose stated purposes are to represent Miami students. Mark’s mere mention of these two governing student organizations legitimized them and implied that these organizations are two “normal” ways to influence campus policy. Excluded from the list is, for example, the large, highly visible, active, and controversial Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance, which also represents students. This organization ended up on the proverbial “cutting room floor” of the tour commentary (p. 38)

Even if he was unaware of his language prejudice, anyone on Mark’s tour could surmise he either did not know or did not care about some campus groups and instead focused on the more popular options. What Mark talks about and how he talks about Miami University demonstrate that, despite personal differences between each tour guide, a tour guide has immense power in how they represent the university and characterize its individual structures.

Magolda also problematizes how Mark discusses student life on campus. By promoting the interest of a specific demographic of students, he leaves a negative impression of the school as a whole. For example, Mark chooses to highlight campus spots like the Recreation Center and talk about how Miami students frequent the uptown, perhaps unintentionally conveying a “work-hard-play-hard” message to families. While innocent and not intentionally harmful, Mark prioritizing campus social life gives the impression that Miami University is home to a specific demographic of students and neglects those who do not fit into his prescribed norm. As a result, a prospective student may think that a normal student at Miami University is “of traditional age, heterosexual, unmarried, interested in dating, attending college full-time, prone to consuming alcohol, and living on campus,” which is likely not Mark’s intention but nonetheless negatively

impacts any prospective student not interested in this normalized social environment (Magolda, 2000, pp. 38-39).

Mark's tour serves as a compelling case study in my analysis of Oxford College tour guides. While the majority of Oxford students enjoy their time in their unique environment, there is a loud minority of students who, as discussed earlier, complain about being stuck at Emory's secondary campus. While a university would hope they hire tour guides who are enthusiastic about the university, many families can pick up on overly positive sentiments and see through the facade, which plays into authenticity as prospective students care more about a tour guide's honest opinions than a catered sales pitch (Steinberg, 2009). Mark's tour also reinforces the insight that "how the tour guide speaks is often more important than what they are speaking about," as pointed out by Okerson (2016). Magolda's experience with Mark's tour showcases how Mark (assumingly unintentionally) portrays Miami University in a "work-hard-play-hard" light based on the places he shows tour groups and how he discusses certain groups on campus, which can drastically impact a student's likeliness to apply or to attend the school (2000). As one can see, the observations of tour guide practices from Magolda (2000) align perfectly with the othering of students at Miami University and the social power tour guides hold.

Now that the connection between tour guides and othering on the tour itself has been established, we turn our attention back to Emory University and dive into the focus of this thesis research. This thesis examines Emory University's two-campus undergraduate system through the lens of othering, using the role of a campus tour guide as a genesis of anti-Oxford College discourse. The tri-pronged approach to tour guide identity, that of the prospective families, the university, and the guides themselves, establishes the tour guide as an authority figure on campus and in the eyes of the university they work for. While othering originates as a philosophy, this

thesis reexamines othering as a language ideology, specifically anti-Oxford College discourses that campus tour guides recognize and respond to.

Methodology

Introduction to Methods: Discourse Analysis

The current study undertakes two related but distinct discourse analyses when analyzing the extent to which Oxford College is othered by Emory University, specifically within the tour guide population. The first, a textual analysis, surveys the training manuals used by the two tour-guide organizations: ESA and SAA. The textual analysis evaluates the presence of othering discourses that promote the Oxford isolationist ideology that students across the university are aware of. The second analysis consists of semi-structured interviews with tour guides from Emory University. In these interviews, I ask tour guides about their experience in the role and how they view their position as a tour guide and university representative. By asking the guides about their touring experience, I aim to discover what they are trained to talk, and not talk, about regarding the university. Do ESA tour guides acknowledge Oxford College as a part of the Emory University community? And most importantly, how do ESA tour guides talk about Oxford and Emory colleges compared to SAA tour guides?

As this study deals with the concept of discourse, we must first distinguish "little-d" discourse from "big-d" Discourse, both of which are important for the current study. Gee (1996) defines Discourse as the following:

> A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts' of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network,' or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (p. 131)

Similarly, discourse (little d) can be explained as Discourse but more intimately. A discourse usually exists between people and within a conversation, but discourses are usually products of the larger, more archetypal Discourse. The discourses in question all center around the Oxfordist narrative (See Section 2.02), but the degree to which they explicitly other Oxford College and its students vary. In my experience as a former SAA tour guide, we were instructed to describe Oxford as "academically equivalent but environmentally and geographically distinct" compared to the "Atlanta campus" of Emory College. The "Atlanta campus" is a form of combating the "main campus" label given to Emory College. We will also problematize the referencing of Emory College as "Emory" compared to "Oxford" because by eliminating the secondary "college" label, Oxford becomes even more marginalized from the Emory community. Ultimately, the use or presence of these terms enforces the anti-Oxford ideology, which can be measured qualitatively in the textual and interpersonal discourse analyses. Secondly, we define the term "tour guide" as any Emory University student who either works or has worked in one or both tour guide organizations, the Emory Student Ambassadors (ESA) or Student Admission Ambassador (SAA) organizations.

By comparing these two different types of discourse, I aim to find a pattern of implicit anti-Oxford College rhetoric that perpetuates the social Discourse that Oxford students feel that they are not completely Emory students and thus are relegated to second-class citizenship in the eyes of the university. Across the two qualitative analyses, I expect to see Oxford College as a part of Emory University's history and little mention of Oxford within the Emory College population. I expect the textual discourse analysis to differ greatly between the two campuses because the tour guide practices of each college contain different locations and talking points. Additionally, I expect the ESA manual to encourage avoidance strategies for tour guides when

prompted with questions about Oxford College, such as framing the answer to benefit Emory as a university or switching topics altogether.

Statement of Reflexivity: Background of the Researcher

Before commencing with the studies, it is important to recognize the role of the researcher. I am a proud Oxford alum who worked in SAA for two years, including during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. I enjoyed my Oxford experience, and as a researcher, I am aware that many Oxford students do not feel the same way. This statement of reflexivity often exists in anthropological studies. It serves to explain that, despite the researcher's best efforts, there may be lingering bias because the researcher is familiar with the project and has a stake in the results (Magolda, 2001). This project is meant to be informative and inspire reform within both tour guide organizations, should the results deem necessary. While inspired and grown from anti-Oxford sentiments that others and I have experienced, this project is not meant to paint Emory University in a negative light and discourage students from applying or attending the university. I really have enjoyed my experience at Emory, at both campuses. I urge anyone reading this thesis to consider Oxford College a valid option. However, I understand that Oxford (and Emory as a whole) is not for everyone, which is perfectly fine. I chose this thesis topic because I had experience giving tours at Oxford and wanted to analyze Emory University and Oxford College discourse through the tour guide lens. This thesis is an academic research piece but is ultimately an undergraduate project, and the study's results should not be interpreted outside the context it originated in.

Textual Analysis Methods

I studied the training manuals for tour guides at the Atlanta campus (ESA) and Oxford campus (SAA). I collected three manuals, two ESA, and one SAA. I am combining the tour

manuals with various Oxford College-specific media pieces, such as the *Emory* Wheel articles discussed earlier (See "Oxfordism") that perpetuate the othering of Oxford College from Emory University.

Each manual was in pdf format and consisted of roughly 40 pages divided into sections by content. Each section pertained to various aspects of the tour, usually chronologically, e.g., introductions to spots along the tour route to closing remarks. At the end of each manual was a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and featured potential questions that tour guides may be asked, some of which are described as "difficult questions" and will be discussed in more detail later. At the bottom of each major section in the ESA manuals was a section for tour guides to answer comprehension questions such as "Think of a time where you ___" or "Talk about an experience with ___," intended to fuel thoughts and inspiration if needed.

ESA training manuals were obtained by contacting friends currently or formerly in ESA. How I obtained these materials was without concrete administrative approval. Therefore, the manuals I will dissect are from the academic years 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 and do not include the most recent manual. Attempts were made to retrieve the latest ESA manual formally, but I was not allowed to view the 2022-2023 manual due to "confidentiality reasons."

Since I was already familiar with the SAA training practices and had experienced ESA tours, I had various expectations going into the textual discourse analyses. I expected the ESA manuals to describe Oxford College as the subject of "difficult questions" and recommend that tour guides use the "I have a friend" strategy to answer the question politely. In my experience as an SAA tour guide, transitioning from Oxford to the Atlanta campus was one of the many "difficult questions" families might have asked because current Oxford students had not gone through the process themselves. More importantly, the question could have been framed in a way

that isolates Oxford students and portrays them as transfer students instead of a "transition" or "matriculation process," two terms aimed to reframe the narrative that Oxford students transfer or reapply to Emory College.

The SAA manual was similarly formatted to the ESA manuals but included a formal introduction about the role of tour guides and was more personable. Instead of facts and mandates for training, many key points in the manual were followed by practical advice to the tour guides. In the SAA manual, I expected similar results in "difficult questions." However, I also expected to see more authenticity training practices and more emphasis on storytelling than reciting memorized facts and statistics. I did not expect ESA to discourage storytelling, as any successful campus tour requires a level of personability (Spoon, 2006; Miller, 2012). Instead, I expected less emphasis on storytelling since the Atlanta campus has much more content to get through on a standard tour, so there is less time to stop and talk about personal stories. Ultimately, I expected to see similarities in the strategies recommended to tour guides. However, I predicted the reframing of questions would differ depending on the organization: ESA would use more direct reframing and adhere to the manual and training, and SAA would employ personal stories and authenticity.

Interview Participants & Materials

I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of ESA, members of SAA, and administrative. The total population of students (n = 18) consisted of current Oxford students (n = 12) and current ECAS students (n = 6). A small percentage of ESA tour guides of ESA had not been Oxford students (n = 2), and one current ESA student was an Oxford alum who did not tour in SAA (n =1). Some Oxford continuees, who were in SAA, were also in ESA (n = 3).

Participants in ESA were recruited via pre-established connections and word of mouth, then by formal email (See Appendix A).

I attempted to interview one of my former coordinators in SAA, who is a current ESA fellow. An SAA coordinator and ESA fellow occupy more or less the same role: Coordinators, always Oxford sophomores and fellows, usually ECAS upperclassmen, schedule and staff admissions programming events and are responsible for training the new class of tour guides. Three SAA tour guides I interviewed were current coordinators, and two SAA continuees in ESA were SAA coordinators. When I spoke with my former coordinator, they directed me to their superior for permission, but he decided to prohibit further interviews between the remaining ESA members and me as ESA tour guides were instructed to refrain from making formal statements.

Despite presenting proof of IRB review and sharing the study's goals, the ESA administration barred me from interviewing more tour guides in their organization. However, ESA permitted me to interview them in a thirty-minute Zoom interview, which I will reference as a point of comparison and contrast in the current study. I did not anticipate interviewing administrators either in ESA or SAA, but SAA provided me with their training manual and a complete staff list, whereas ESA blocked the research and diverted the focus to themselves. One may interpret their defensiveness as a strategy of reclaiming control of any potential negative implication of the study, but the study is designed to depict the experiences and stories of Emory University campus tour guides regardless of campus.

It should be noted that when I reached out to SAA coordinators and administrators, I received approval from the Deans of Enrollment Services and obtained the 2022-2023 SAA manual and an Excel sheet of all current SAA members with their contact information. If the

"One Emory" mantra holds up, one may wonder why one tour guiding group was unwilling to share their materials with a student researcher while the other was gracious and generous. However, I was a member of SAA for two years and was not involved in ESA, which could be a potential justification (for "One Emory," see Section 2.01).

Interview Protocol

Each interview lasted no longer than one hour and was recorded via Zoom for audio transcription purposes. I formulated two sets of questions, one for current ESA members and one for current SAA members (See Appendix B). Regardless of tour guide organization, the questions were drafted to naturally draw out tour guide experiences and views on their role, which would have ideally brought up any insight they had with tour guide training and even the stigma surrounding the Oxford campus. ESA tour guides who had toured the SAA organization were asked questions from both sections as needed. Not every tour guide was asked every question because the conversations would often go on tangents, so some questions had follow-up questions that were sometimes asked. Having a list of interview questions with room for flexibility allows for a loosely structured interview where different themes can emerge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 98). Nonetheless, the interview questions centered around the role of the tour guide, interspersed with questions about the tour guide's own experiences and what they enjoy talking about.

Before recording the interview, tour guides were asked to present a pseudonym the researcher would use in the study. By assigning a pseudonym to themselves, any information disclosed in the interview would remain anonymous and untraceable as possible while functioning as recognizable to each participant. Some participants did not choose a pseudonym; thus, their real first names were assigned to other participants to maintain anonymity.

Firstly, I introduced myself to the participants and summarized the prospectus of the current study. Tour guides were told that the study aimed to examine the role of campus tour guides in the university, specifically their impact on prospective students and within the university. Upon recording, tour guides were asked about their year, intended areas of study (majors, minors, etc.), and what extracurricular activities they participated in to establish rapport and generate demographic information. Drawing inspiration from observations in Quian & Yarnal (2010), campus tour guides encompass various academic and extracurricular interests, suggesting administrators of tour guide organizations want to recruit a diverse population of students to represent their respective universities. I asked tour guides what attracted them to Emory as prospective students and to which campuses they applied and/or visited during their college search process to gauge to what extent their college criteria parallels that of data from surveys of prospective students (Hesel, 2004; Hoover, 2009, pp. 2-3).

Shifting the focus to the tour guide role, I briefly summarized prior literature on the importance of the tour guide and asked participants how long they had been working as a tour guide, what the training was like, and then transitioned into the campus tour. Tour guides were asked to describe a "standard campus tour," specifically what route they take, what they talk about while touring, and their favorite campus spots or university points to share with families. During this point of the interview, tour guides discussed various strategies they use while touring to remember statistical information or necessary facts they learned in the manual or routines they established to give as much information in a productive manner. Participants were then asked to reflect on their role within the context of the university and to what extent they felt that tour guides impacted the university and connected families to the university during the campus visit. Lastly, tour guides were asked if they consider Emory University a community, who they believe

fits within the Emory community, and who does not. The final two questions were designed to approach othering without directly introducing the linguistic disconnect between Emory and Oxford colleges. See Appendix B for the complete list of questions and follow-up questions used.

As mentioned before, the questions differed slightly between ESA and SAA tour guides, especially relating to those who worked in both organizations. For example, ESA guides who were at one point in SAA were asked about the similarities and differences between the two training programs. Additionally, ESA guides who were SAA continuees were asked about their experiences touring in SAA and what was similar and different about touring practices within each organization. Lastly, SAA tour guides were asked if any of their extracurricular activities met or took place on the Atlanta campus. It should also be noted that all tour guides were asked what attracted them to Emory; by asking about Emory as a whole and not Oxford specifically, I tried to minimize any linguistic priming and present the question as generally as possible.

Key Findings

Overview

In lieu of a results section, observations from the current study will be presented via predominant qualitative themes that emerged through the textual and interpersonal discourse analyses. Each theme contains textual and interview findings, which will subsequently be compared and contrasted with prior literature and my personal experiences. Due to the small sample size and difficulties recruiting ESA participants, the current study's findings are unlikely to be generalized. Thus, I urge those reading to consider this study in the context of the personal stories of the individuals interviewed. There may be connections between participants'

experiences and my own or between participants and prior literature. However, these findings cannot and should not be generalized to all campus tour guides.

The Tour Guide Lexicon

Two prominent discourses of answering questions appeared in both the manuals and interviews and were used as strategies to answer various questions: The "I have a friend" and "academically equivalent but environmentally distinct" discourses, which can be abbreviated as IHAF and AEBED respectfully. At a basic level, a lexical item is a linguistic unit that contributes to a person's overall lexicon or mental vocabulary. The ESA and SAA manuals emphasize the use of various lexical items that act as references and tools for tour guides to use during touring. First, we will examine IHAF in the ESA manuals, then the SAA manuals, and finally in the interviews. This structure will apply to all central themes moving forward.

"I Have a Friend…"

Interestingly, IHAF was presented in an almost identical format in the SAA manual as in ESA, with minor differences that will be discussed soon. Principally, ESA recommends utilizing IHAF in response to questions a tour guide may not know the answer to or does not feel comfortable answering. For example, IHAF could be applied to "questions regarding [your] experiences [you have] not had at Emory… these stories are meant to highlight aspects of Emory that you may not have experience with, but others do!" (*Tour guide manual*, Section F. p. x; *2021-2022*, Section E p. 11). A tour guide particularly well-versed in the humanities may be asked a question about research in the sciences or vice versa and could answer with IHAF since they may not have experience in the area but knows someone who does. IHAF can be utilized in practically any circumstance, regardless of whether the tour guide has experience or knowledge of the subject. Suppose the tour guide presents their knowledge on a subject. In that case, they

can reinforce or supplement it by saying they also have a friend who partakes in the activity or academic area, thereby answering the asker's question twofold. The ESA manual recommends utilizing IHAF throughout the tour by including a "Notes and Anecdotes" subsection after each major tour stop for ESA tour guides to record their experiences or their friends' experiences so that they may reference these notes while rehearsing a tour (*ESA 2021-2022*). IHAF also helps the tour guide maintain professionalism while ensuring the asker's question is at least partially answered because "someone" at Emory that the tour guide knows or knows of can answer the specific question or has experience in the area. The phrase effectively answers difficult questions by pulling in experiences that may be outside the tour guide organizations but still exist within the university.

As mentioned above, IHAF was presented almost verbatim in the SAA manual. IHAF presented as a story that tour guides can use for the same reasons as ESA: to answer and supplement questions with the experiences of tour guides and their acquaintances. We see in the ESA and SAA manuals that IHAF works to provide evidence for what the tour guide may lack in readily available knowledge or experience but also supports the experience they do have. In the ESA manuals, however, Oxford College is not exempt from IHAF: The "Oxford College FAQ" section of the manual acts as notes and anecdotes for ESA guides to answer questions about the Oxford campus, and some answers include IHAF, such as "I have a friend who only applied to Oxford/I have a friend who applied and was accepted to both campuses and decided to go to Oxford" in response to the question "Do students go to Oxford because they got rejected from Emory College's Atlanta Campus?" In this instance, the ESA tour guide answers a tourgoer who may unknowingly subscribe to the anti-Oxford narrative of second-classness with an alleviating

response that validates the Oxford experience and segues nicely into describing the key differences between the two campuses (*ESA 2021-2022,* Section 4 p. 6).

When discussing IHAF in their interviews, tour guide responses paralleled to the manual guidelines. Tour guides referenced IHAF when mentioning questions they had limited experience on. A prime example of someone utilizing IHAF is Sheva in the following quote:

> "So, you never lie. I always try not to talk as if I am a part of a group or an identity that's not my own. I always preface it when I get a question about diversity by saying I am a cisgender, white female, heterosexual. I don't know what it is like to be an LGBTQ person at Emory, but from my friends who are LGBTQ, I've heard that there are so many resources with the office of LGBTQ life…."

This perspective mirrors that shared by others (Table 1) in the study who answered questions from families and claimed they knew someone who could answer that question or had experience with the topic. Both manuals prohibit lying to families when answering questions and sharing information about Emory, so it is fitting that IHAF would supplement such behavior because instead of lying or making up stories, tour guides can reference a peer to partially answer a prospective student's question (*SAA manual,* 5; *2021-2022 manual,* Section E p. 11).

The "friend" tour guides would often refer to is an admissions counselor or administrator, usually in response to financial aid or application and enrollment-specific questions from families. One example comes from Sage, a first-year SAA tour guide who describes her experience facilitating some questions using IHAF:

> "They told us that you can answer honestly, which I've been doing, but then always reroute it to a positive, or say, 'this was my experience, but my friend has this different experience.' So that's what I try to try to do other than kind of redirecting it into a positive. Sometimes they told us if we're asked a difficult question, we can just say, 'I don't feel comfortable answering this' or 'I can point you to a friend or someone more knowledgeable."

Tour guides are prohibited from answering any question relating to the intimate aspects of their college experience, for example, how much financial aid (if any) they receive from the university

or what grades and/or test scores they applied to the university with. As a result, ESA and SAA tour guides can redirect questions about administrative or admissions content to their "friend," the counselor, a professional more comfortable discussing finances and admissions with families. During the interview with ESA administration, admissions counselor Simon responded similarly to the students I interviewed. He began by discussing ESA's emphasis on honesty:

> "We first really emphasize honesty, do not ever lie. Do not ever say something that's not true. Do not ever try, and taint, or misinterpret, or miss, you know, misrepresent. Don't ever misrepresent facts. You always want to try and essentially leave a good taste in your mouth. Speak to your own experiences. We want them to speak to their personal experiences and those of their friends that they've heard."

Simon, a tour guide in ESA previously, references the non-scripted nature of the campus tour and alludes to how the IHAF strategy reverberates through the training manuals into the numerous tours that these ambassadors go on. Simon also referenced the connection between tour guides directing families with finance or admissions-related questions:

> "We encourage tour guides not to speak for admission counselors because they are not professionals in the area. Any of those questions, they're welcome to pivot those to us because we'll be able to best answer their question most accurately."

Simon's responses largely support the student-specific examples of Sage and Sheva: IHAF is a bidirectional tool that tour guides can use when answering questions, which sometimes includes the admissions offices if a question crosses the threshold a tour guide can answer.

It goes without saying that IHAF is a highly versatile term. Using the phrase "I have a friend" serves a myriad of purposes for the tour guide that helps them either navigate unfamiliar territory or provide supplemental information to their toolbox of experience. Both training manuals recommend using IHAF to answer questions and talk about any topic during the campus tour. Contrastingly, IHAF seems to be used by ESA differently than by SAA when the topic of discussion is the Oxford campus. However, this is to be expected to a certain extent as many

ESA tour guides do not have experience with the Oxford campus and thus must rely on IHAF to effectively answer questions of families interested in one or both campuses of Emory.

"Academically Equivalent but Environmentally Distinct"

A similar observation manifested between the two tour guide organization manuals regarding our following discourse: "Academically equivalent but environmentally (and/or geographically) distinct," or AEBED. Often in reference to the Oxford campus, this abbreviation helps tour guides of both campuses refer to one another without casting any connotation on the campus being described. In theory, ECAS and Oxford are as the acronym describes: Academically equivalent, since both campuses are undergraduate campuses of Emory University and in theory have the same academic offerings, but environmentally distinct, as one campus is in rural Oxford, Georgia, and the other in the suburbs of Atlanta. If an ESA tour guide is asked about Oxford's answers with IHAF, their answer implicates neither Emory College nor Oxford, as the answer centers around the tour guide.

According to the manuals, the function of AEBED is similar to IHAF: Bidirectional reference. AEBED can be used by the tour guide to describe how Oxford is different from ECAS and vice versa while highlighting the academic similarities available to all Emory students. For example, An ESA tour guide who did not attend Oxford College may need help to talk extensively about the transition from Oxford College to Emory College. Therefore, an ESA member can claim AEBED, which, for the tour, maintains the connection between the two campuses enough to please whoever asked the question (See Table 2). It is worth noting that in the ESA manuals, AEBED is not given any unique caricature or emphasis; however, in the SAA manual, it is spelled out in all capital letters, "ACADEMICALLY EQUIVALENT BUT

ENVIRONMENTALLY DISTINCT," which overtly describes the need to associate Oxford to Emory University as much as possible for SAA tour guides (p. 11).

Associated with AEBED is the emphasis on the word "transition" regarding students graduating from Oxford and moving to the Atlanta campus. Both ESA manuals have described the process where students "automatically transition to the Atlanta campus" to complete their undergraduate in Atlanta (*2021-2022*, Section 4 p. 19; *2019-2020*, Section 4 p. 5). While this term is politically correct and generally accurate, some students from Oxford College do not matriculate to the Atlanta campus due to professional circumstances that do not require the traditional four-year degree. Labeling an Emory student's latter half of their undergraduate experience as a "transition" may indirectly enforce the social stigmas surrounding Oxford students; however, there are limited alternatives. The SAA manual also explicitly references another phrasal strategy, "two ways in, three ways out," to describe entrance into Emory via Oxford or Emory College and undergraduate graduation from Emory College of Arts & Sciences (ECAS) or the business and nursing schools (*SAA manual*, 11). In my experience as an SAA tour guide, the words used to describe the Oxford-to-Atlanta move included "matriculate" and "graduate," among others. Hence, "transition" is acceptable and does not require reform. One participant discussed the distinction of "transition, not transfer" when asked if she had any other information of importance to share, so the former lexical items and thematically related content are certainly open for further research.

Using IHAF and AEBED as a rhetorical strategy suggests that tour guides utilize the referential device to answer a question as completely as possible. However, IHAF and AEBED often work in tandem and could be combined to further other Oxford students. One example of

tour guide dissent with AEBED comes from Aidan, a senior in ESA who attended Oxford College:

> "Just saying it's academically equivalent and environmentally distinct doesn't make anyone interested in touring [Oxford]. I always talk about it because I am Oxford, but also, I know a lot of Atlanta campus kids who are just from the Atlanta campus don't talk about Oxford at all. They're supposed to mention it, but most of them don't talk about it at all."

Aidan brings up an intriguing point about the semantic usage of the above discourses: Defining either campus with AEBED does not necessarily mean anything concrete. One would assume that labeling an undergraduate campus as such would not have any repercussions as AEBED acts as a null phrase. However, one must keep in mind the dominant nature of ECAS and the "main campus" narrative that influenced Oxfordism (See "Oxfordism") in analyzing this quote.

Another example comes from Jake, a senior in ESA and former SAA coordinator. Jake describes how he did not develop AEBED (among other discourses such as IHAF) naturally but was instead trained to frame Oxford in a specific lens during his time in SAA:

> "Talking about Oxford, about how it was academically equivalent but environmentally distinct. That's not something I came up with. That's something they told me in training."

Jake and Aidan's qualms with AEBED and the general treatment of the Oxford campus in the broader tour guide discourse of Emory are quite helpful to this project. Focusing on AEBED, an SAA tour guide saying the Oxford campus is academically equivalent but environmentally distinct may connect the campus to the Atlanta campus. However, an ESA tour guide using AEBED produces or reinforces the connotation that Oxford is just as the acronym describes: Different.

Interview responses about both discourses, broadly similar to my own experiences, differentiated within the discourses, which was dependent on the campus group the tour guide represented. An Oxford using IHAF most likely uses the strategy to describe how the Oxford

College experience is similar to ECAS. On the other hand, an ESA tour guide could use IHAF to masquerade a relationship with someone who attends or has attended Oxford College, thus answering a question as if they had experience with Oxford. An ESA tour guide utilizing IHAF to talk about Oxford may further exoticize and mystify the Oxford environment because, without providing satisfactory answers to a prospective student, the tendency to acknowledge the Oxford environment becomes gradually less necessary to a student touring the Atlanta campus.

Regarding AEBED, we see a similar pattern where both undergraduate campus organizations use the strategy but for potentially different reasons. ESA tour guides can use AEBED to quickly touch on the Oxford campus and then redirect the focus back to the ECAS tour. In contrast, SAA tour guides may utilize AEBED to alleviate anticipated stressor worry from families about being in a different environment from the stereotyped "main" Emory Atlanta campus. Participant responses, especially ESA tour guides who have experience with Oxford, expressed dissatisfaction at the use of the discourses above, especially AEBED, because if ESA tour guides tend to respond to Oxford-specific questions with AEBED, they may not feel the need to learn about Oxford and the only information most prospective families would receive is that Oxford is separate but equal from ECAS.

Ultimately, the culmination of IHAF and AEBED discourses, with the support of other phrases, demonstrate how versatile campus tour guide speech can be, especially within the two undergraduate environments. SAA guides may use IHAF and AEBED more sympathetically, perhaps to connect Oxford to ECAS, compared to those in ESA, who use the two discourses more strategically to stay on track during the tour. It would be worthwhile to keep IHAF and AEBED at the forefront of our minds as we move on to the types of questions tour guides

experience, specifically how they address them and to what extent they use similar or different linguistic strategies.

Categorizing & Answering "Difficult" Questions

A second major theme throughout both discourse analyses is the concept of "difficult questions that guides are often asked while touring. Before addressing the tour guide's perspective about difficult questions, it must be mentioned that the administrative bodies of ESA and SAA are actively trying to evolve from the notion that these questions are "difficult" and are instead nuanced or common. The 2022-2023 SAA manual divides questions into two categories, "tough questions" and "common questions," typically asked by prospective students and their families (*SAA manual,* pp. 37-41). When asked about how ESA guides approach difficult questions, Simon clarified that the new ESA manual (to which I was not given access) did not include such a section:

> "We don't have a difficult question section of our manual. That's something that we've evolved away from difficult questions to calling them nuanced questions because they're not difficult. They're not difficult to answer. Sometimes people just need to have a little bit more of an explanation to fully understand the context."

In line with what Simon said above, one participant in SAA named Ben had a similar view on the de-challenging of questions:

> "I don't really think there is in a sense a question that is difficult because it implies that, in some way, you're going against it. I don't know something that's unusual to talk about. I don't really take that approach in my tours. If anything, if they ask a question that is kind of incisive and hard-hitting, I love that. I love an ability to talk about the college in maybe a way that I haven't explored before."

Ben, an SAA coordinator (sophomores in charge of training and supervising SAA members under the administrators), challenged the term "difficult" and invited the obscure and even invasive nature of some topics students and their families may ask on tours. Despite efforts to

relabel this genre of questions, for the current study, tour guides were asked about difficult questions, and this thesis will maintain the "difficult" term for consistency purposes.

The idea that a question could be difficult, nuanced, or otherwise raises an important question for this research: What makes a question "difficult" or tough? In my experience as a tour guide in SAA, a difficult question usually pertained to something I felt uncomfortable answering or felt I should not explain in detail. For example, if a student asked me about my financial status and aid package from Oxford, I utilized divergence strategies and referred the family to an admissions officer. Parents often asked what high school test scores or grade point average (GPA) I had. While innocent in theory and stemming from a desire to be enrolled into Oxford, these questions were very personal, and I did not want or have to answer them. Non-financial or admittance-related questions revolved around social life on campus and the party scene (or lack thereof since Oxford is a dry campus). ESA did not have a "difficult questions" section of the 2019-2020 or 2021-2022 manual. It is unclear if the 2022-2023 ESA manual had a specific section dedicated to answering "nuanced questions" because no updated manual was available. The 2022-2023 SAA manual's section about answering "tough" questions contained an array of hypothetical situations might find themselves in, such as "when you don't have an answer," and included appropriate responses an SAA tour guide would use like "I'm not sure about that, I will look into it and can follow up with you." (*SAA manual,* 41). It is important to note that IHAF (see previous section) was listed as a "basis for [a tour guide] to talk about anything," so again, we see discourses of interest used to satisfy different roles for the campus tour guide (41). Considering the overlap of IHAF and other discourses in the context of difficult questions, it is unsurprising that the interview findings highlighted similar strategies.

Participants from ESA and SAA tended to categorize difficult questions along similar topics, which were almost identical to those I experienced as a former SAA tour guide. Participants mentioned questions about the social scene on campus, financial aid, test scores and high school GPA, and overall general negative aspects of life at Emory from a student's perspective, such as mental health resources (See Table 3). When asked about the strategies that tour guides use to answer these difficult or nuanced questions, Simon replied with what he believed was a key ethos of ESA:

> "We talk with our trainees and with our tour guides about how to really decipher what someone's trying to really understand rather than sometimes answering specific questions. Because, again, when you have that kind of prior knowledge, you're able to then pivot the conversation. We want our tour guides to speak to their personal experiences and those of their friends that they've heard and really answer, try to see what the person is trying to get at, and how they're able to really answer their question most effectively."

One can see that authenticity, to the extent that tour guides can answer questions while maintaining their integrity and protecting the university's reputation, is one of the most important characteristics a tour guide can have. While still presented in a positive light, honesty was a commonality throughout the interviews with ESA and SAA tour guides. On questions about parts of Emory that tour guides dislike or are dissatisfied with, participants mentioned that, despite what they may think, their coordinators and the administration had trained them to answer questions honestly and not tarnish the university. Some strategies for answering difficult questions, in addition to honesty and transparency, included ending each answer by promoting the university or circling back to what tour guides did like about the university. Aidan rattled a list of his various complaints with specific aspects of the university but then stopped himself and talked about how he had to reframe his comment in the context of Emory's evolving and the institution's development:

> "So, we're not supposed to… with really negative aspects of Emory, of course, we won't lie and say, 'Emory is great. But if it comes to it and someone asks, 'What's your least favorite part of Emory?' You're always supposed to do it in a frame of Emory's getting better. Emory is improving."

Despite a tour guide's primary role as a student, they are ultimately an employee of the university, and there is a level of professionalism required to be a tour guide or any student worker on campus for that matter. However, Aidan was certainly frustrated that he could not wholeheartedly share his views on campus improvements as a tour guide. Rather, he felt somewhat censored, if not encouraged to sugarcoat the university to families. Further research is needed in this realm because I, too, am interested in tour guide perspectives on the "negative" elements of Emory and, specifically, how tour guides approach talking about what they do not like about the school. Some participants talked about intrinsic pressures to represent the university in a positive light while touring, which is to be expected given their professional status as university representatives (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). Unfortunately, I did not have a large and diverse enough sample to present significant findings on these additional topics. For a complete list of participant responses to answering difficult questions, see Table 4.

Participants frequently referenced their training via the manual or their coordinators and prioritized honesty above all. One example that stands out is Solveig, a sophomore in SAA and Coordinator. When asked what her goals are while touring and in training tour guides, Solveig elaborated on the importance of honesty and transparency as an Oxford student:

> "We try to tell the Tour Guides that as well in training as much as possible. We're not selling Oxford. We're not selling Emory. We're obviously trying to give a positive professional experience. But I feel like if a student comes on a tour, and they come away thinking they love Oxford, but you've given them a dishonest view of Oxford. I feel like that doesn't really help anyone because they come to Oxford, and they don't like it because they have this inaccurate view. I think that would just be a bad situation. It's better that everyone gets an honest view."

I was pleased to hear Solveig's perspective, especially how she strives to promote honesty when she trains tour guides in the first-year class. Despite the professionality component of being a student representative, it seemed like tour guides prioritized transparency with families above all, which is refreshing since higher education is, at times, a business.

Whereas the previous section of discourses, such as IHAF and AEBED, directly impacted how tour guides referred to the Oxford campus as a valid and inter-Emory experience, one could surmise that ESA views Oxford College as one of these difficult questions to answer on tours at the Atlanta campus. This phenomenon could be due to a variety of reasons: Perhaps an ESA tour guide has limited experience with Oxford, so, as mentioned earlier, they could use IHAF or AEBED to circumvent the difficulty. However, labeling Oxford College as a "difficult" question for ESA, or the transition from Oxford to ECAS in the same context, may perpetuate the narrative that delegitimizes Oxford as a campus within the Emory institution. In the introduction of the "Oxford FAQ" section, the 2021-2022 ESA manual advises the following:

> "Please avoid getting too deep into talking about Oxford and distracted from the tour. Instead, encourage families to visit the Oxford campus. Defer specific questions for after the tour. The following FAQ is meant to supplement your knowledge in case you are asked about the Oxford campus." (*2021-2022 Ambassador training manual*, Section 4 p. 6)

While not intentionally malicious, an impressionable ESA tour guide may view this FAQ section as a stratagem of avoiding Oxford-specific questions. The framing and organization of the mock questions are intended to mimic an oblivious student or parent, such as the previously referenced question about Oxford students being rejected from the Atlanta campus (See "IHAF). It is unlikely that someone would ask that question verbatim, but this section is part of a training manual. Trained ESA tour guides may internalize the questions they might be asked and develop their own biases toward Oxford College since their training manual essentially primes them to

expect a certain question or viewpoint. Interestingly, one of the participants interviewed, Aidan, expressed skepticism about AEBED because they felt as if AEBED exposes a lack of Oxford-specific understanding:

> "We're largely not supposed to talk about Oxford because, well, if you want to go to Oxford, you can tour Oxford. I don't think you should spend the entire tour time at Oxford. But if they don't know it exists, why would they want to tour it? And if they don't, understand what it is. Why would they want to tour it?"

Despite not being a tour guide at Oxford, Aidan has gone through the matriculation process and has an outside-looking-in perspective in ESA. As a result, Aidan, and other SAA continuees in ESA can see the drawbacks of utilizing discourse strategies when responding to questions on tour.

We cannot attribute the genesis of Oxford othering to ESA, but we can problematize ESA's discouragement of recognizing this equally valid campus of the university and encouraging ESA tour guides to not "get distracted" from the tour indirectly others Oxford students. Even if Oxford is not the focus of an ECAS tour, an ESA tour guide who replies to Oxford-specific questions with IHAF, AEBED or blatantly neglects Oxford inclusion may give the impression that Oxford is a different, even lesser, environment compared to the Atlanta campus. Regardless, the manual's suggested omittance of Oxford College in the ESA manuals more concretely devalues the importance of ESA tour guides discussing Oxford while giving tours and answering questions. An ESA tour guide may look at their training manual and think they do not need to talk about Oxford on tours since the manual claims that Oxford is a supplementary element of ECAS tours. Other participants, particularly those in ESA who were SAA continuees, felt similarly about the one-sided nature of campus connection (See Table 5). On ESA tours, Oxford College was only referenced within the context of Emory's history. Tour guides in ESA mentioned specific talking points they would speak about at certain buildings or

hot spots on campus. On the ECAS quad, ESA tour guides describe the history of Emory University and reference Oxford College as the "original campus," which is present in the ESA manuals (*2021-2022 manual*, Section 5 p. 21). However, mentioning a unique living campus with students inhabiting it solely as a memory of the university's past others Oxford students until extinction. Participants from ESA or who were currently in ESA mentioned Oxford as a talking point in reference to the Candler brothers and moving from Oxford to build the new campus in Atlanta, not including much else unless the tour guide was a former SAA member.

Following this dialogue among participants, ESA participants who were Oxford continuees or in SAA made a point to reference Oxford during their tours, likely more than ESA guides. However, the current study only interviewed two ESA non-Oxford participants, so more data would need to be collected before making such a claim. Furthermore, the current study is qualitative and cannot make overarching conclusions about the colleges or universities. Nonetheless, it is clear that tour guides at Emory University acknowledge the genres of difficult questions they may be asked, and their training practices provide methods for resolving the ambiguity or difficulty present within these questions. While the strategies for answering difficult questions vary from tour guide to tour guide, ESA students who attended Oxford College strive to mention their alma mater during ECAS tours. Given this study's sample demographics, it is unclear if ESA tour guides would do the same.

Tour Guides and Connections to the University

Since the beginning of this thesis, it has been established that the tour is one of, if not the most important, aspect of the campus visit. Taking it a step further, the campus visit is one of the quintessential parts of the college admissions process for students and their families. In recognition of the weight these programs have on future students, administrations at universities

nationwide pour millions of dollars into training programs, hospitable student centers, and improving campus aesthetics to appear more desirable for the next class of students (Rathemacher et al., 2011; Miller, 2012, p. 1). According to Secore, "a campus visit is essentially a sales and marketing device for prospective students and serves as a powerful stratagem influencing the student's decision-making process," bolstering the importance of a successful campus tour (p. 152; Hoover, 2009). Secore reemphasizes this point when citing Mass's (2016) claim "for visitors. [tour guides] become the face of your institution. for better or worse. It cannot be emphasized enough: the tour guide can …lead a student to decide that your institution is not an option" (p. 55). Given the overwhelming sentiment that the tour guide is an impactful force in the minds of prospective families, one must ask themselves the following: What are the goals of the tour guides while giving campus visits? One may think that, in the eyes of the university, the tour guides' goal must be to attract as many applicants as possible and garner the most positive attention for themselves and Emory. However, both discourse analyses suggested a more holistic, authenticity-forward focus sprinkled throughout the training manuals and interviews.

The ESA manual promotes storytelling, specifically how it is used to "create a narrative surrounding Emory, with a heavy focus on [their] experiences as a student… While the manual includes many important facts and figures, tours should be a lively and interactive experience. Personal stories make a big difference to visitors. Stories about experiences will make the tour more engaging and relatable" (*2021-2022 manual,* Section D p. 10, Section E p. 11). This sentiment was repeated in the interviews with the ESA administration, particularly with Grace, one of the directors of recruitment and talent:

> "The manual is just facts. These are the facts. But how a student shares that fact really goes into what's very personal to them, the friendships that they've established, how

> they've maneuvered and gotten to know all the different layers of the university. There's nothing scripted about that. And that the fact that it's not scripted is actually very intentional. We help the students kind of share their story in those unique ways."

Grace's point here is optimistic but also expected. I predicted that, especially since the organization had been so restrictive with sharing materials with me, they would provide prototypical answers about the role of tour guides. Despite the small and SAA-heavy sample size, I found the student responses the most helpful and representative of the tour guide organizations. The SAA manual showed similar opinions on the impact of student voices, stating that SAA members were important to the college because "the campus visit is the single most important factor for high school students who are making this monumental decision. [Tour guides] are facilitating the single most important factor that students consider" (*SAA manual,* p. 2). Since it is clear that the training organizations prioritize the importance of the tour guide role as much as prior literature on the subject, I was interested to see how the tour guides viewed themselves as a representative of their college and Emory as a university.

Anyone who has gone through the college search process can easily identify the differences between a campus tour and an information session. An admission representative usually conducts information sessions and consists of the statistics and admissions deadlines, often buttering up families with promises of holistic review and study abroad opportunities. While admission representatives and the information sessions are indeed important, there will always be a barrier between prospective families and the admissions counselors because counselors are full-time employees of the university and read applications; they decide who is admitted and who is not. The tour guide, however, provides an informational yet authentic and personable feel, which is the true gem of the campus visit for most prospective students. When asked why student representatives are important for a university, participants in the study, both

ESA and SAA, favored their role over that of the informational session counselors. According to responses, student representatives provide a more realistic, day-to-day glimpse into life as an Emory student. For a complete list of responses, see Table 6.

Participants answered similarly to the previous question when asked if they view their role as impactful to the university. However, responses here differed slightly, as participants focused more on tour guides' connection with prospective families. The consensus was that, even for a short time, a tour guide could connect a student and their family to the college and give them an insider's perspective into their lives if they were college students themselves. Daisy, a sophomore in SAA, mentioned how effective the tour guide's job is in developing a diverse perspective for students interested in Oxford:

> "It really puts like a human perspective into, like, what's going on, especially with how, at least with Oxford, how we do our tours. It's a lot of personal stories. By putting a picture in their mind of 'Oh, this is what I do.' It kind of draws them in, and it basically puts them in your shoes. It elevates the idea from just a university to get an education to a time that they can experience themselves."

The visualization aspect is crucial for a high school student looking at colleges because if they cannot see themselves on the campus, they will seldom apply, much less enroll and attend (Klein, 2004 as cited in Spoon, 2006, p. 15). Participants reflected on moments when first-year students and their parents would come to them on admitted students' day or at move-in and say that they chose Emory College or Oxford College because they had such a positive touring experience. Michaela, a sophomore in SAA, described the impact she has had on families she toured in the past:

> "I have had a surprising number of people, and even their parents, tell me that I was the reason why their son or daughter chose Oxford after a tour that I did."

Similarly, another participant named Drake reflected on how, when he was touring schools, he got to know his tour guide, and the tour guide he had was a big factor in his decision to enroll at

Oxford. Drake talked about how a tour guide is a great resource for students to interact with during and after touring the school, specifically how assured he felt knowing he would recognize the familiar face of his tour guide when he stepped on campus as a first year:

> "You can ask them questions, and also, they're there for you when you're, assuming their freshmen, or they're there when they're sophomores for you. For example, the tour that I had, I became close with [the tour guide], and he helped me run for SGA (Student Government) and helped me make my flyers and stuff like that. He gave me some good advice for Oxford and for clubs. It was nice knowing somebody there."

These memories seemed to be the most meaningful to participants, and they felt like those moments were the most impactful to themselves and the university (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). The interview responses suggest that the benefits of being a tour guide serve not only the families but also the tour guide because the tour guide feels a sense of pride and fulfillment in knowing that their personal and professional experiences help prospective students find their home at Emory. See Table 7 for a list of responses to questions asking about the tour guide's impact.

Finally, results from the study showed a pattern of informative purpose rather than attractive. Grace, the ESA director, touched on the importance of being satisfied in a college during the search process:

> "I think, in such an incredible way, they learn how to feel comfortable speaking to people that may be completely unlike themselves and find ways to bring them in and to make them feel comfortable. They may not agree. This may not be a fit for them. If a family walks away from a campus experience and says, 'No, I actually need a little bit more of this to be challenged or to feel like I find my fit,' that's a win as well on a campus tour."

The SAA manual also emphasizes the importance of finding the right fit, citing that for many students, ECAS may be a better fit:

> "Remember that Oxford is not the right fit for every student, and that's okay. Encourage prospective students to find the best match for them; maybe that's us, maybe it's Emory College." (p. 3)

It is clear that, from an administrative and textual side, a goal of the organizations for the tour guides is to be honest and give an objective picture of Emory. Thankfully, the students themselves seemed to agree with these tenants. One of the SAA tour guides reflected on an experience in which she toured a prospective student who had been homeschooled and was looking to expand her horizons to a larger student body since she had spent her formative years in an environment very similar to Oxford. Yashna, a first year, told me how she tried her best to convey to this prospective student and her family that since she had experience with a small, intimate setting, she may be happier at a larger campus like Emory College. When asked if she felt pressure to sway the girl to Oxford, Yashna asserted that even though she is a tour guide at Oxford, she wants each person she tours to find what school is best for *them,* regardless of campus or even school. Yashna's response supports the SAA manual excerpt above, as her goal during tours is not to sell Emory or Oxford but rather to provide as clear a picture as she can of what life is like as an Oxford student.

Whereas I expected a portion of tour guides to talk about their role as university employees and any pressure they may face promoting the university to everyone, most tour guides I interviewed were adamant that their decision to be an ESA or SAA ambassador stemmed from a love for the university. They felt their purpose was to provide an authentic experience to families instead of convincing every student to apply to Emory. Those who mentioned pressure or expectations to be positively levied that by saying they do not always feel that pressure because they can genuinely say good things about the university without lying or resorting to discourse strategies. I did not anticipate honesty in finding the perfect fit for a student. However, many tour guides' responses reflected a goal of being objective and providing accurate information so prospective students can get as complete a picture as possible.

Discussion

The findings of both textual and interpersonal discourse analyses demonstrate promising contributions to campus tour guide identity construction. In discussion with previous studies, ESA and SAA tour guides held themselves to a high standard regarding their extracurricular involvement; many were involved in various clubs, community organizations, and even academic research besides being a tour guide (Qian & Yarnal, 2010). Participants referenced their own college search experiences, and a common theme was the importance that their college visits played in their decisions to apply and enroll at Oxford and Emory, which agrees with previous statistics detailing the sheer magnitude of the tour guide as an influential figure (Hesel, 2004; Miller, 2012; Spoon, 2006). Furthermore, interviews with the ESA administrators provided insight into the motivations and goals behind training tour guides, specifically the importance of recruiting diverse students to reflect more universally on the university (Rathemacher et al., 2011). In these regards, the current study contributes to previous literature on the role of college and university campus tour guides by bringing a contemporary perspective to studies that have not been generally updated since the early 2000s.

The current study, however, could have provided more substantial contributions to the theoretical frameworks posited by Said (1978) and Jensen (2011) concerning othering. Reasons for this conclusion likely stem from a lack of representativeness in sample size: Unfortunately, due to recruitment restrictions from ESA administrators, I could not interview as many ESA tour guides as desired, particularly non-Oxford-affiliated ESA tour guides. As a result, the current study did not have nearly as much of a quasi "control" group of ESA tour guides who did not have previous experience with Oxford College or SAA and could speak more objectively on the touring experience and the relationship between Oxford and ECAS during tours. Of the six

current ESA members I interviewed, three were previously in SAA, and one more was an Oxford continuee, so only two ESA interviewees were ECAS students since their first year.

Literature on othering in a touring environment was limited to Gillespie (2007) and certain parts of Magolda's (2000) analysis of Mark's campus tour. Gillespie (2007) focuses on the Middle East's tourism industry and preconceptions that support the exotification and eventual fetishization of the Orient, which provides a loose framework to examine othering (Said, 1978). Magolda's observations during Mark's tour are, therefore, a source that can be most closely compared to, as it details one person's speech and behaviors (2000). However, Magolda's analysis is limited to one person on one tour, which cannot be generalized to all tour guides at the university of study, Miami University, Ohio, not to mention the population of this study, Emory University. Additionally, the interviews were after the fact and restricted to participants' recollections and thoughts, not behaviors. Magolda went on a campus tour and detailed active observations, whereas the current study enacted passive and verbal observations (2000). Nonetheless, the above sources provided a satisfactory background and functioned well in constructing a flexible but detailed lens to observe the current study's findings.

Other themes deserve mentioning and would be pertinent to further discussion. Specifically, SAA and Oxford continuees in ESA demonstrated significant pride in their identities as Oxford College students. Many SAA participants, when asked if they felt connected to Emory, claimed that their Emory experience was at Oxford, and thus they did not feel connected to ECAS but rather to Oxford. A few SAA tour guides acknowledged a disconnect between the two undergraduate campuses. This raises the question of whether Oxford students truly want to be assimilated into the Emory environment or are satisfied with being othered to a certain degree and claiming their linguistic independence from the institution. The term "main

campus" and its problematic implicature were referenced in SAA interviews, and one ESA tour guide said "main campus" before correcting themselves in an interview. While "main campus" as an ECAS label was a primary discourse of interest prior to data collection, effective SAA and ESA training may have inhibited usage. Similarly, a discourse of interest before and during the beginning phases of data collection included referring to ECAS as "Emory" instead of Emory College or "Atlanta campus." While anticipated, the present function is likely that of convenience and accessibility since outside the SAA environment, an Oxford student may be more likely to use an Emory/Oxford distinction than an Oxford campus/Atlanta campus since the former is shorter and less linguistically burdensome.

Similarly, my background as a researcher may have impacted participant responses. I am an Oxford and SAA continuee passionate about my identity as an Oxford student. Many participants I interviewed, especially those in ESA, were aware of my role as a researcher and likely had an idea as to the core questions of the research. During debriefs, many participants remarked how they assumed the research questions revolved around the linguistic disconnect between ECAS and Oxford or about the plight Oxford students feel concerning their relationship with Emory University. Interview questions (see Appendix B) were drafted and revised to minimize semantic priming. For example, questions about connections to the college were phrased as "Emory" to ensure generalizability and present ambiguity, which would allow objective responses. Interview questions about ECAS were phrased using the label "Emory College" and not "Atlanta campus" or other subjective terminology.

The current study also contributes to conversations within Emory University, particularly about the unique status of Oxford College students. While the population sample is limited to campus tour guides, as they have linguistic authority and influence in how Oxford is portrayed to

prospective families, the findings of this sample size convey a powerful message that requires more attention. SAA tour guides and continuees expressed discontent concerning the stigma surrounding Oxford students before and after transitioning to the Atlanta campus. These stressors, combined with pre-existing student literature and external sources that label Oxford College as a "sister institution" or "satellite campus," directly others this environment (Eisen & Barlett, 2008; Ganga, 2021). These labels act as indirect forces of othering to impressionable students seeking more information on the Oxford campus, if not Oxford students themselves, who may already be experiencing linguistic prejudice. Therefore, it is imperative that, to establish a substantial claim that Emory University tour guides other and feel othered by harmful Oxford-specific discourses, a balanced sample be presented.

If the current study is to be replicated or expanded upon, the researcher strongly suggests bypassing sampling restrictions. Given this project's timeline, I could not seek departmental assistance to communicate with ESA and gain approval for interviewing more ESA participants. As mentioned earlier, multiple efforts were made to connect formally with ESA and share the beginning stages of research; however, further research was ultimately prohibited. While the interview findings from the ESA administration were valuable as a baseline point of comparison to tour guide responses at times, detailed interviews with current ESA members would have provided not only a less skewed sample but also more support if similar results were found. Given the unanticipated contribution of the ESA administration (as a substitute for ESA tour guide interviews), the study might have benefited from interviews with the SAA administration for more direct comparison and analysis of campus tour guide discourse at a training level. The same can be said for SAA coordinators and ESA fellows; if all SAA coordinators and ESA

fellows were to be interviewed, such data would more strongly support evidence from the current study about tour guide training practices.

Further research is certainly needed on this topic, if not for educational purposes, then for potential reform within the Emory University tour guide organizations. It is no understatement that, among the Emory populations, this study has significant implications. From an academic perspective, the discourses utilized by campus tour guides contain the power to reconceptualize the Oxford College experience and, even more importantly, to resituate Oxford as a living, breathing experience comparable to ECAS. It would be worthwhile for those interested in Oxford College, Emory College, and Emory University to consider the current study's findings as a starting point in promoting better communication between the campuses.

Afterword

I want to thank all participants for their contributions. For those whose interview data is not presented in the Tables, please know that your perspectives and experiences were invaluable. A longer, more extensive ethnographic analysis of SAA experience would have included more data. I am grateful for each participant's dedication to tour guiding and passion for Emory University. To the ESA administration, I would like to acknowledge your contributions as well. I may not understand the extent to which "confidentiality reasons" manifested in the blacklisting of resources, but I urge you to consider the potential that the study's findings show as a whole. ESA and SAA tour guides proudly represent Emory, and your training seems exceptionally effective and impactful to families. If, in the future, ESA or SAA would like more correspondence, please reference this project. It is not meant to expose or vindicate any organization; the project was born from my experience and love for Emory, all of Emory.

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Table 1. *IHAF*.

Aidan (senior, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"We're supposed to give like 'I have a friend' stories. That is **one of our main goals during our tours**, not just to give facts and statistics but as many 'I have a friend' stories as you can or personal stories. I think it's beneficial, because **people are able to see that and just get a better feel for that school** and be like 'is this a fit? Is this the way this person describing it? Do I feel excited to come here?' And that's really the goal that tour guides have."
Sheva (junior, ESA)	"I never lie, and **I always try not to talk as if I am a part of a group or an identity that's not my own**. So, I always preface it, I always talk about my friends who I know have experiences, but what I would say is, 'I don't know that personally, but I do have a friend who is involved in that or does this.' And **when you have a big network of students who are involved in different things it's really easy to pull their different experiences**."
Sage (sophomore, SAA)	"They [SAA] told us that you can answer honestly which I have been doing but then **always reroute it to a positive**, or you know, say 'this was my experience, but my friend has this different experience.' So that's what I try to try to do… Sometimes they [SAA] told us if we're asked a difficult question, we can just say like, 'I don't feel comfortable answering this or I can point you to a friend."
Solveig (sophomore, SAA coordinator)	"I have a friend, that's really helpful if there's an area where I'm not really involved, but, like I have friends who are it kind of **helps us through the gaps** where, like maybe I don't have the personal experience, but I know someone else does, and that means I think that's helpful for the families, because that way **they're not getting just my perspective**. They have some other students [experiences] which I imported."

Table 2. *AEBED and Oxford.*

Jake (senior, SAA coordinator, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"Talking about Oxford, about how it was academically equivalent, but environmentally distinct. **That's not something I came up with. That is something they told me in training** they were like 'this is a great way to talk about this."
Max (senior, ESA)	"**Emphasize that it's really a choice that each student should make individually**, and that **there's not one that's better or worse in terms of academic experience** or anything like that, but that they're distinct. So that's why we say academically equivalent but distinct."
Aidan (senior, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"Just **saying it's academically equivalent environmentally distinct doesn't make anyone interested in touring** [Oxford]. I always talk about it because I am Oxford, but also, I know a lot of Atlanta campus kids who are just from Atlanta campus don't talk about Oxford at all. **They're supposed to mention it, but most of them don't talk about it at all**, because that is a reoccurring issue that they [ESA] have is talking about Oxford and reminding people to talk about and mention Oxford."
Abby (first-year, SAA)	"The whole thing is academically equivalent, environmentally distinct, like **we do emphasize that you're in a completely different place, and we often do like make comparisons with the Atlanta campus**, so I feel like that's definitely a variable of it. But I feel like. There's also the knowledge that the students here do end up on the Atlanta campus."

Table 3. *Types of difficult questions asked.*

Aidan (senior, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"I think one of the prototypical difficult questions would be about you know, like **partying, or drugs or alcohol**, that's definitely like something that has it's come up a few times in my tour. There's definitely some **encouragement to avoid explicitly mentioning anything** that you do, you know, outside of campus **that wouldn't make the university reflected on in a good light**."
Max (senior, ESA)	"Any of those about like drugs, alcohol, or things like that. Where you, you know **I have to kind of tip toe the line**…The admissions offices are comfortable with you **monitoring what you're saying while trying to be as honest as you can**."
Sheva (junior, ESA)	"We're always told that, **like if anyone asks personal information about us and our admission to Emory**, we never have to answer those type of questions because that's confidential information. **I don't make decisions on who gets in,** so I always feel like referring them to the admissions Counselors is the best way to go. Ask the Admissions counselor, who is probably going to be the one admitting you. I think that, like difficult questions, we never tell anyone to lie on tours like we just want to **tell you our Emory story**."
Abby (first-year, SAA)	"But I guess for me **difficult questions are more so things that I've never encountered before**. So, for example, on my tour today, someone asked me how the transition from Oxford to Emory was and what resources were available, and I had some points that I could point out to them in terms of the community base, but other than that, **I had never been asked that question before, so I wasn't fully confident in providing any more information**."
Claire (sophomore, SAA)	"If they ask about **anything with like parties** or things like that, they don't really want us to talk much about that, they want us to say like directly, like, '**if you are looking for a party, you can find one. But a party won't find you**.' That's kind of something they fed us."
Julia (senior, ESA, SAA continuee, former SAA coordinator)	"I think the hard ones to answer are the ones that ask about **things that maybe you're not the most passionate about with the University** yourself. And so, for me, if it's something that the answer may be negative, **I try to follow it up with something that's like positive."**

Table 4. *Strategies for answering difficult questions.*

Jake (senior, ESA, SAA continuee, former SAA coordinator)	"In training you spend a lot of time talking about difficult subjects and difficult questions… I was taught how to answer questions on a tour and reflect well on the university. **There are just little things that you say or don't say.** You're not lying. You're not being dishonest. You're just manipulating the way. You say something to make it sound better, and to reflect better on the school"
Aidan (senior, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"Of course, we don't lie, but if it comes to someone asks like 'what's your least favorite part of Emory?' **You're always supposed to do it in a frame of 'Emory's getting better, Emory is improving**."
Logan (sophomore, SAA)	"**Not being overly positive, but like avoiding certain topics**. And that's where, like the difficult questions part can come in. I feel like to an extent, because my coordinators and trainers are all pretty laid back, and they're always like **don't lie, talk about what you know, keep it real**." "I think I'm generally happy enough with Oxford, and like and optimistic enough that I don't really feel pressure. **I enjoy Oxford and so I'm positive about it when I'm talking with people**. I guess there is a sort of expectation that, you know, **you're the face of Oxford**, and you want to… You want people to enjoy it to some extent."

Table 5. *How Oxford fits into ESA tours (if at all)*

Max (senior, ESA)	**"We use terminology that is kind of given to us.** Usually, we talk about Oxford in the context of history. How I was told to do it when I was getting trained was to use it when you're talking about the Candler library, and you say who Candler is, kind of that history. And then that is a natural transition into you know, the money that was given for us to build the Atlanta campus and how both of the campuses operate. In terms of specifics about Oxford **we're supposed to mention** class sizes as kind of a collegial atmosphere, and the opportunities for students to get more directly involved in leadership earlier."
Beth (senior, ESA, SAA continuee)	"When we were going through [ESA] training. There was like maybe, a paragraph or a page on this PowerPoint that talked about Oxford like 'oh, like there is also Oxford campus like you should go take a look, go take a tour there,' which I guess **it's not the job of an Atlanta campus organization to talk about Oxford College**, but like maybe spend a little bit more time talking about like 'oh, it's where, like the campus originally started **like the beginnings of Emory happened here**' like a few specific maybe, like Oxford traditions or something I don't know. **I feel like there is a way to plug it a little bit better."**
Julia (senior, ESA, SAA continuee, former SAA coordinator)	"**At Oxford we had a major emphasis on the connection to the Atlanta campus**, whereas, like Atlanta campus doesn't have that major focus on connection to Oxford. **We do mention Oxford, exists, but it's not like 'Oh, this is also reflected on the Oxford campus,'** whereas that was something that we would talk about Oxford."

Table 6. *The tour guide compared to admissions counselors.*

Sandy (sophomore, SAA)	"**Consider the audience. Your audience is students. So, you want to have students to tell them their story**. You have to be a student to really live their lives. You are going to live on this campus, and you want that, like real experience to be shared with the prospective students."
Lisa (sophomore, SAA coordinator)	"There's something so personal and so important about having that current experience, that current like information. I think **it's more relatable to the prospective student because they can see themselves there.** Also, it's important for the families of expected students because they get to see like, oh, once my child gets here, they'll have opportunities to be involved on campus, and not just doing their work and being bored and stuff like that."
Max (senior, ESA)	"**You see student reactions when they are in the info session, and when they're on the tour** because you have the person who works for the University, who is a full-grown adult talking to the student about how great the university is and then you have another student someone who's only a couple of years older than them, maybe even only a year older than them. If you're a senior in high school and you've got a freshman tour guide talking to them about their experience, **you have someone who has just gone through the same process that you're going through**."
Sheva (junior, ESA)	"**If you just had the admissions counselor is giving their presentation it's been let's, say, like 20 years since they've been in college, and actually experienced it as a student**. And so, I think that in that amount of time college experiences have changed. Students and university structures have changed, and so I think that, having representatives who are currently living that period of their life and especially at the University, that their tour guides for is really beneficial, because **it just give us like a closer look at what everyday life is like on that campus** and it also can connect relatively closer between, like a high school student and a college student than a high school student, and like a working professional. **There's a relatability when you have college students**, and also just like sort of understanding, because you've been in their shoes recently."
Beth (senior, ESA, SAA continuee)	"I think the **students have valuable insight, valuable experiences, and just a different understanding of the school** than even like the admins or the people who are on the boards and they can give a really good account of what they've gone through."

Table 7. *The tour guide's impact on families and the university*

Michaela (sophomore, SAA)	"I feel like being able to talk to a tour guide for an entire hour about like what we're doing, students are actually going to the school and seeing a student, and understanding what their life will likely look like. That helps tremendously, **giving like an actual human element to the university.**"
Claire (sophomore, SAA)	"I think a lot of kids go to tour, and it impacts in some way. Whether it's like 'I need to go here, and I could see myself here' whether it's 'I think this is absolutely not for me.' I think both of those are impactful because of students who come here and don't want to be here, they'll transfer out. They're not going to donate. **It's important to find students that are a correct fit for what Emory is, what Oxford is, all of it**."
Daisy (sophomore, SAA)	I think it really puts like a human perspective into what's going on. Especially how, at least with Oxford, our tours are a lot of like personal stories. And so, by putting a picture in their mind of 'oh, this is what I do' it kind of like draws them in, basically puts them in your shoes. And **in a way, it elevates the idea from just like a university to get an education to a time that they can experience themselves.**"
Aidan (senior, ESA, Oxford continuee)	"**It more humanizes Emory rather than it just being an institution**. You really get to kind of get a personal feel for it."
Yashna (first-year, SAA)	"Honestly, I never really thought about it like that. It's more about the impact that I have on people for me. I honestly, **I've never actually thought about impacting the University**, which is kind of crazy that it's. This is putting things in perspective for me. But **I absolutely love all the families that I meet and like. That's the reason I wanted to do this so bad**, because I saw the small impact that I might have made on families with kids in high school."

Table 8. *Finding the right fit*

Sheva (junior, ESA)	"I think of it as like maybe this tour will help families decide whether Emory is the perfect fit for them or not, and like. **Sometimes it's not always about selling Emory, like we are not trying to like to get every single person to come to Emory**. It's about giving them the information, and for them to decide whether Emory is the right school for them or not."
Solveig (sophomore, SAA coordinator)	"I do really want to give families like as informative and experience as possible. I think we try to tell the Tour Guides that as well in the training as much as possible. We're not selling Oxford. We're not selling Emory. We're obviously trying to give a positive professional experience. But I feel like **if a student comes on a tour, and they come away thinking they love Oxford, but you've given them like a dishonest, view of Oxford. I feel like that doesn't really help anyone**, because, they come to Oxford, and they don't like it because they have this inaccurate view. I think that would just be a bad situation. So, it's better that everyone gets an honest view."
Abby (first-year, SAA)	"I think **what I'm trying to portray is just the fact that if you come to this school and you feel like it's right for you, you can be as comfortable here and as happy here as I am now**. And just sort of portraying that the energy and general community of this school, at least from my perception, is widely positive. So, **I try to just bring that positivity and happiness that I feel into the conversation, and whether or not they feel like they relate with that and feel like they can find that isn't up to me**. But for me, my job, and what I'm trying to do through the tour is just express to them all this college can do for me, and in hopes that maybe it can do the same for them."
Ben (sophomore, SAA coordinator)	"For me, **touring is just connecting with students who are interested**. I remember when I was in in their shoes, and I was taking all these different campus tours and you'd get some great ones, and you get some awful ones. I'd been interested in a couple of colleges, and then I take a tour there and the tour guide is just lifeless, and that and that kills the college. It kills the idea that you have in your head at the same time a really great tour could invigorate you. So, for me it's about trying to communicate the experience that I've had at Oxford. And again, that's very individual. But I feel like I speak to all the things that I've been able to do, and the friendships I've had, the connection with professors."

Appendix A

Email Recruiting Script

Participants not recruited by word of mouth (friends and classmates who the researcher knew were a member of the tour guide organizations) received this email. All email correspondence was conducted through university-sanctioned Microsoft Outlook email addresses with the emory.edu domain:

Dear [INSERT FIRST NAME]

Greetings!

My name is Benjamin (Ben) Archer, and I am a current senior in the College of Arts & Sciences pursuing Honors in the Linguistics Department. I am interested in the language of campus tours, and I was wondering if I could schedule a time to meet with you and discuss your experiences as an admissions ambassador at Emory University.

I plan to interview the following populations: Emory College Tour Guides and Oxford College Tour Guides Each interview should not take longer than one hour and can be conducted in person or via Zoom. The interview audio will be recorded, but I assure you that no confidential information will be released. These interviews will serve as crucial evidence for my honors thesis that examines campus tour guide discourse and how the university promotes itself to prospective students through student representatives.

Given your experience, I believe you would contribute to my study. Please email me at your earliest convenience at ben.archer@emory.edu with any questions you may have. Once you have accepted the offer to be interviewed, we can schedule a session. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Benjamin

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Questions asked to ESA and SAA participants. Note that the researcher did not have a separate list of ESA administrative questions but rather asked similarly framed questions to the list below. Questions contained one or more follow-up questions but not all were asked:

Atlanta Campus Tour Guides

1. Pseudonym
2. What is your year and (intended) area of study?
3. What attracted you to Emory?
    a. Did you have a preference of campus (i.e., did you apply to/visit both campuses, how much consideration did you give to each campus?)
4. What extracurricular activities besides tour guiding are you involved in?
5. How long have you been working as a tour guide?
    a. If you were a tour guide at Oxford College, how has your experience differed from touring at Emory College, if at all?
    b. Is there any overlap in training or practices in ESA and SAA?
6. If you would briefly describe what a standard campus tour is like.
    a. Where do you go on campus?
    b. What do you talk about while touring?
    c. What are your favorite places to show tour groups?
7. Do you feel like your role as a tour guide greatly impacts the university?
    a. Why is having a student tour guide important for a university?
    b. In your experience, do tour guides help prospective families feel connected to Emory?
8. Do you feel connected to Emory?
    a. How does Emory foster community among its undergraduates?
9. Is Emory a community?
    a. Who do you feel like is a part of the Emory "community" and are there any groups of people who aren't?

Oxford College Tour Guides

1. Pseudonym
2. What is your year, and (intended) area of study?
3. What attracted you to Emory?
    a. Did you have a preference of campus (i.e., did you apply to/visit both campuses, how much consideration did you give to each campus?)
4. What extracurricular activities besides tour guiding are you involved in?
    a. Are they all at Oxford or are you involved in anything at Emory College?
5. How long have you been working as a tour guide for Oxford?
6. If you would briefly describe what a standard campus tour is like.
    a. Where do you go on campus?
    b. What do you talk about while touring?
    c. What are your favorite places to show tour groups?
7. Do you feel like your role as a tour guide greatly impacts the university?
    a. Why is having a student tour guide important for a university?
8. Do you feel connected to Emory?

    a. Is Emory a community?
    b. How does Emory foster community among its undergraduates?
9. In your experience, do tour guides help prospective families feel connected to Emory?
10. Is Emory a community?
    a. Who do you feel like is a part of the Emory "community" and are there any groups of people who aren't?
11. Do you plan to be a tour guide at Emory College?
    a. If not, why not?