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Linguistic Attitudes about Bilingualism: Implications for Teachers and Administrators

Abby Curry

Description

This study was designed to assess the linguistic attitudes of bilingual students at Providence College. After reviewing previous studies on this topic, the examiner created a thesis that positives attitudes about bilingualism as a child create positive attitudes about bilingualism as an adult. The examiner has a background in elementary and special education as well as Spanish, and the study was conducted through the lens of both of these subjects. Overall, the participants exhibited a generally positive attitude about bilingualism, and there was a noticeable correlation between the celebration of bilingualism as a child and the celebration of bilingualism as a college student. The majority of participants also emphasized the importance of their bilingualism in a professional setting. This study, although limited by the number of participants and survey format, offers valuable insight for faculty and students at Providence College into the linguistic attitudes of their

Method

Direct approach: Participants are being asked directly about their linguistic attitudes.

Survey

A survey of linguistic attitudes about bilingualism was created using the website surveymonkey.com.

Outreach

The survey link was sent to various groups on campus, such as BMSA, Campus Ministry, and bilingual peers of the examiner.

Analysis

A spreadsheet was created to analyze patterns in the responses of participants. Five participants in total responded to the survey.

Study Questions

1. **What languages do you speak?/¿Qué idiomas habla?**
2. **Within that language, are there any specific varieties that you use?/¿Cuál variedad habla?**
3. **Growing up, how many people in your household spoke a language other than English?/¿Cuánta gente en su casa habla un idioma distinto del inglés?**
4. **Did you go to a bilingual school? If not, were there opportunities for you to use a language other than English?/¿Fue usted a una escuela bilingüe? Si no, ¿había oportunidades a usar un idioma distinto del inglés en la escuela?**
5. **How did your teachers treat your bilingualism?/¿Cómo trataron sus maestros su bilingüismo?**
6. **Has your time at PC changed your attitude towards your bilingualism?/¿Ha cambiado su actitud hacia el bilingüismo mientras ha estado en PC?**
7. **Do you find ample opportunity to use your bilingualism at PC? If so, list where. / ¿Hay oportunidades para usar su bilingüismo en PC? Si es así, enumere dónde.**
8. **Have you taken any language classes at PC? If so, how did your professors treat your bilingualism?/¿Ha tomado clases de idiomas en PC? Si es así, ¿cómo trataron sus profesores su bilingüismo?**
9. **Overall, do you see your bilingualism as an asset or a disadvantage? Please explain. / ¿En general, ve su bilingüismo como un obstáculo o una ventaja? Por favor, explique.**

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Notable Patterns	Each participant speaks English and Spanish; one participant also speaks Georgian and Russian.	Two participants responded: one speaks Salvadorian Spanish, one speaks Colombian Spanish.	Four participants stated that their families spoke Spanish at home.	Two participants attended a bilingual school. One participant did not, but used Spanish in their schooling.	All gave different responses for this question.	Two participants stated that their time at PC improved their attitude towards their bilingualism.	All participants answered yes.	All participants had taken Spanish classes.	All participants saw their bilingualism as an advantage.

Conclusion

All participants saw their bilingualism as an advantage. Many also stated that their bilingualism was a large asset in their future professional careers. Additionally, based on the responses from participants there is a seemingly direct connection between the celebration of bilingualism in elementary school and the celebration of bilingualism as a college student/adult. This study produces implications for teachers and administrators of bilingual students. Specifically, elementary school teachers should be vigilant about promoting positivity surrounding bilingualism, as their words and actions serve as a standard for their students to meet. Opportunities for students to use their bilingualism are imperative, as well as representation of bilingual characters in classroom literature. Teachers should involve bilingual families during this process to close the home/school gap. College administrators also play a

Limitations

- Only five participants responded to the study.
- The study was completed through a survey, rather than a face-to-face interview.
- Participants were from one university, and results do not reflect attitudes of all colleges in the United States.