Attitudes towards Non-Native English in the United States: an Analysis of Second Language

Speakers and English-Only Policies.

By

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Honors Thesis

Appalachian State University

Submitted to The Honors College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science

June, 2017

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on how attitudes in the U.S. towards native English, non-native English, and other languages affect and reflect the population that speaks them in an effort to record the attitudes and experiences of bilingual native and non-native English speakers particularly relating to their interactions with native English speakers and their feelings about and identification with English and the other language(s) they speak. 25 recorded in-person and videoconference interviews were conducted with native and non-native English speakers in and around Boone, North Carolina that focus on how these individuals interact with English and other languages within the United States.

My findings suggest that bilingual L1 English speakers, particularly Anglo Americans, are more highly valued by American society than Americans who may have greater levels of fluency in their languages, but are non-native English speakers, and that this linguistic discrimination is supported by modern racial attitudes and the resulting racialization of linguistic and cultural characteristics in the United States.

Note from the Researcher

It is always important to note why and how a subject is worth researching to the researcher. As a future Spanish teacher, I felt it was necessary to try to better understand the experiences of non-native English speakers within the Unites States, specifically in my home state of North Carolina, where I plan to teach. If I am to successfully use the language and teach it to other English speakers for use, I need to have a decent understanding of what implications being a native speaker of something other than English can bring. As a

white American who knows English as my native language, and Spanish as a second language taught to me in the traditional classroom manner, I understand that my experiences with language within the United States may be dramatically different than someone who speaks Spanish (or another language) natively, and had to learn English either through the school system or through life experiences. This series of interviews conducted in Boone, North Carolina aimed to glean a better look at the different ways our fellow Americans have interacted with the predominantly English-speaking world around them. While the data presented in this study may not be statistically significant due to sample size, it is significant because language affects every aspect of the lives of these individuals.

Purpose and Structure

Academia often buries individuals in the quest for numbers. Data is collected, percentages are assigned. It's measurable, quantitative, and efficient, but tends to be cold and clinical. At the same time, some researchers have argued for the importance of qualitative research alongside quantitative studies, especially in regard to the collection of narratives and case studies (Maxwell, 2012; Oday & Killeen, 2002; Strickland,1999). While the limited scope of most case studies and small scale research projects don't often result in field-changing data, they can provide more insight into human trends like behavior patterns and common lines of reasoning. By looking deeper, we can collect a more nuanced set of data that can be used to make more meaningful connections between experiences and the social mechanisms affecting them. These nuanced connections are underlying societal forces that go unnoticed and unnamed in everyday society.

With this thesis, I hope to identify and corroborate common themes and trends that underlie the linguistic interactions of American L1 English speakers, defined in this study as Americans who learned English as their first language, and Non-native English speakers, who may speak English at a native level currently, but did not learn English as their mother tongue. I will also use the term Anglo Americans to refer to American L1 English speakers who are perceived to be and/or identify as racially "white," because, as described below, one of the findings of this research is that racial identity and linguistic identity interact in ways that made it difficult to discuss one without considering the other

I started my investigation as a prod into linguistic attitudes and practices in the U.S. While I expected the bilingualism of non-native English speakers to be valued in a lesser capacity by the American public versus the bilingualism of native English speakers who learned another language in a formal setting, I also found that skin color affected these often nativist experiences in a significant capacity. My findings suggest that bilingual L1 English speakers, particularly Anglo Americans, are more highly valued by American society than Americans who may have greater levels of fluency in their languages, but are non-native English speakers, and that this linguistic discrimination is supported by modern racial attitudes and the resulting racialization of linguistic and cultural characteristics in the United States.

In order to stop this discrimination, it is necessary to understand the dynamics that fuel societal prejudice, and the effect that this system has on individuals. I will first explore the structured elements of American society that allow, encourage, and justify discrimination, especially pertaining to culture, race/ethnicity, and language, through a

sociolinguistic lens. I will then present my study of the attitudes and experiences of bilingual native and non-native English speakers particularly relating to their interactions with native English speakers and their feelings about and identification with English and the other language(s) they speak.

This study itself consists of 25 recorded in-person and videoconference interviews of native and non-native English speakers in and around Boone, North Carolina that focus on how these individuals interact with English and other languages within the United States. Four non-Hispanic Anglo Americans were interviewed for a cultural comparison. The ultimate goal is to see how attitudes in the U.S. towards native English, non-native English, and other languages affect and reflect the population that speaks them.

1. Theoretical Frameworks and Previous Research

1.1 Theories of Sociolinguistics

There are many theories on whether how we use language affects societal structures, or whether societal structures create the dynamics that we must use language to navigate, and the interplay between the two has yet to be resolved. The study of these interactions between society and language is called sociolinguistics, and a basic tenet of sociolinguistics is that language and society actively affect and change each other to at least some degree. (Wardhaugh, 2006) A changing social dynamic might call for a change to the language, like the current linguistic shift towards gender neutral titles in occupations.

Because of the great number of women in the workforce, and the growing number of people who fall outside of the traditional male/female dichotomy, gendered titles such as actress, stewardess, policeman, and salesman are being replaced with gender neutral terms like actor, flight attendant, police officer, and sales person. The way that language is used might also change social interactions because it changes the way in which we interact with the world; this is called the Whorfian Hypothesis. From this sociolinguistic viewpoint, the use of the term "male nurse" leads us to believe that it is so abnormal for a male to be a nurse that we must add his gender to the job title for it to make sense. The implication of this word structure is that nurses should be female, and this wording shapes our perceptions of what a nurse should be.

Sociolinguistics, as a whole, seeks to find these sometimes subtle connections between language and society in order to understand how both of these elements interact to affect interpersonal communication (Wardhaugh, 2006). This literature review will focus on the specific elements of sociolinguistics that affect bilingual individuals in the United States: American linguistic culture and ideology, language education, and the role of race and language in identity. As of 2015, language minorities (those who do not speak English as their native tongue) make up 21% of the American population (United States Census Bureau, 2016), which means it is more important than ever to analyze the ways in which the current monolingual majority navigates the political and social circumstances surrounding non-native English speakers in the United States.

1.2 American Linguistic Cultures and Ideologies

The terms "linguistic culture" and "linguistic ideology" refer to popular ideas and opinions about language, which may or may not have any basis in fact. (Schiffman 1996). Barker et al. (2001) say that the research points to a changed perception in the United States regarding the vitality of English, especially by white, monolingual Americans. Demographic shifts away from an Anglo majority has many fearing that what has always been the unofficial norm will change, creating a linguistic culture favoring perceived unity through ideologies of monolingualism. Barker et al. (2001) cite two interconnected theories that explain why Americans turn to English-only policies in times where the social and political norms are changing. The first theory is that many Americans rally around English as a marker of national identity and support English as a marker of patriotism and pride in one's country, the second is that insecurity in the status of the language leads people to act to make it secure. They write, "When members of language groups sense that their vitality is low, or when another language group threatens it, group members may feel their social identity to be negatively valued and act to change their situation or that of other groups" (Barker et al., 2001). In this case, that change is making *only* English the language of the land. In the United States, the monolingual majority has de facto institutional control, meaning that a monolingual linguistic ideology becomes the norm in politics, media, and education.

Both linguistic insecurity and nationalistic sentiments have fueled the English-only movement. Increased patriotic and nationalistic sentiment usually come with movements to reaffirm and strengthen national identity. Insecurity in a national identity also usually comes with movements to reaffirm and strengthen national identity; so determining which of the two is the motivating factor is a moot point that leads to a great deal of circular reasoning. It is, however, agreed upon that during large waves of immigration into the United States, both of

these sentiments, nationalism and insecurity, tend to increase. Since the 1980s, the percentage of immigrants in the United States has been steadily increasing (Migration Policy Institute, 2016, October 18), and the reaction to this, whether based in nationalism or insecurity, has been a move to legislate language.

Those who are pushing for official policies that only support English in education, policies, and community resources are called assimilationists. According to Schmidt Sr. (2002), assimilationists typically agree that it is an immigrant's personal responsibility to learn the language, as it is in their best interest since a greater capacity to communicate in English will allow them to participate more fully in American society. Those who hold to this assimilationist language ideology also believe that support for multiple languages on an official level will harm national unity and lead to the balkanization of the United States through unnecessary ethnolinguistic conflict. From their perspective, one national language is the only way to ensure that all have equal rights since it is the only way to ensure that all can communicate. In short, assimilationists say that English is, and always has been, the language of communication within the United States, and that status quo should not be changed lest the entire foundation of the American identity be challenged. (Schmidt Sr. 2002)

Individuals espousing a pluralistic linguistic ideology and culture generally have the opposite understanding of the issues previously mentioned. Although many pluralists believe that English should, and will, continue to exist as the *lingua franca* in the United States, they see officiating it as the sole language of our country as discriminatory towards those with lower English proficiencies, and isolating speakers of minority languages from the mainstream into which they wish to integrate (or into which other Americans wish them to

assimilate). Underlying a pluralistic linguistic ideology is also the understanding that assimilationism is often exclusionary and may reflect deeper racial or ethnic prejudices.

While it may seem far-fetched at first to equate having an official language to racism, Schmidt Sr. (2002) explains that the underlying assumptions of assimilationism ignores the historical context of language in the U.S. and how it intersects with race in the modern era. He argues that although "English has always been the *dominant* language of the country... it cannot be asserted unproblematically that the United States is an English-speaking country" (Schmidt Sr., 2002, pp. 145-46). Many minority languages became part of the country through the processes of conquest and annexation, meaning these communities had little or no say in becoming American as the American identity was forced upon them. Minority linguistic communities were often incorporated into the country only to be assigned a status lower than citizen due to their language, and culture, as well as their skin color and appearance. While skin color is not something that can be changed, many of these communities were subjected to policies that attempted to change and anglicize their languages and culture. The forced assimilation of the American Indian tribes and the African slaves are the most salient examples. For centuries American linguistic culture and ideology mandated that African and American Indian languages were inferior and should be abandoned in favor of English, parallel with ideologies of racial inferiority.

Many assimilationists argue that although this was a horrifying part of our past, it has nothing to do with the present state of the nation. Their argument is that we cannot change the past so we should ensure that rights are equal in the present instead. However, Schmidt Sr. (2002) argues that due to the nature of social structure, which allows the majority to create the norm, and assign the minority to the lower social stratification of "abnormal", our

history of racialization cannot be forgotten. These norms, a colonial social hierarchy, created by those who have historically had the most power in the United States-- rich, white men-- privilege those who fit the white norms. He says, "Both those who are advantaged by racialization (e. g., European Americans who are normalized as the prototype for Americans) and those who are disadvantaged by it are to some significant degree bounded by history" (p. 152). By this he means that everyone who participates in American society is automatically given a slight advantage for fulfilling the qualifications of "normal" (European features, light skin), or put at a disadvantage with the status of "abnormal" ("foreign" features, dark skin). Schmidt Sr. further argues that "because language is only one of several markers used in U. S. society to racialize Latinos, Asian/Pacific Americans, and Native Americans, as well as African Americans", speaking English would only partially relieve the status of "abnormal" or "other" (p. 152). No matter the degree of English proficiency, minorities are placed at a social disadvantage through racialization and identities ascribed to them by the white majority.

Many Americans are blind to this process of racialization, just as they are unaware of the linguistic ideologies that may inform their views. Both racial and linguistic privilege can thus go completely unnoticed. Indeed, many Americans only become aware of such privileges when they perceive them as threatened. Dover, Major, and Kaiser (2015) suggest that this effect is so strong that many whites see pro-diversity statements as threats to their prestigious group status, equating less bias against minorities to more bias against whites. These statements signal to white men that they are "unwelcome or undervalued" (p. 65), resulting in an identity threat based on perceived indications that they may be effectively othered from a society in which they currently hold a high-status position because of their identities. The existence of a perceived threat even from seemingly benign diversity

messages, such as a poster indicating that "a company values all types of people", indicates a mentality of rightful entitlement over minority groups, and reveals the discriminatory heart of the social order (Dover, Major, and Kaiser 2015).

Similar processes of racialization are used to assign social values to individuals through linguistic stereotyping, where listeners ascribe traits to a person based on the way their speech sounds. Rubin (2012) claims that these "speech-linked stereotypes include judgements about speakers' ethnicity, social status, enthusiasm, confidence, intelligence, academic success, and even their physical height" (p. 12). In this way, the listener creates a social identity for a speaker, and an accompanying social stratification without ever necessarily seeing them or knowing anything about them. But Rubin also claims that linguistic stereotyping can work in reverse. In reverse linguistic stereotyping, "listeners attribute a speech style to a speaker based not on what they hear, but on what they believe is the speaker's social identity" (p.12). This means that listeners often "play-up" or even completely imagine accents that would sound mostly average if the individual had heard the speech and not known who it belonged to. This is because humans use patterns to understand speech; what we expect to hear is how we interpret the audio input. If an individual is "supposed" to have an accent, the human brain fills in the gap and creates one.

This may also explain why some people have greater difficulty understanding "accented" speakers, even if others feel they are completely intelligible. Although many times it can have to do with familiarity with the accented form of speech, intelligibility is something that is generally a shared experience for listeners (Munro, Derwing, & Holtby, 2012. p. 238). Without cognitive interference, like reverse linguistic stereotyping, an utterance that one speaker of a language can understand can be understood by most

speakers of the language, whether or not the speaker is an L1 speaker. What Rubin (2012) and Munro, Derwing, & Holtby (2012) have shown is that social prejudices can affect how humans relate to and understand those marked as "other". This can happen before the individual has spoken through linguistic stereotyping or despite high levels of L2 English proficiency through reverse linguistic stereotyping as the listener ascribes various social identities and social status markers to the speaker. Rubin (2012) concludes by reminding readers of the purpose of his research, "with the ultimate goal of mitigating (if not erasing) negative prejudices that arise simply because certain speakers' talk mark them as the "other.""

This perception of otherness can also be used to perpetuate stereotypes about non-native English speakers more generally. In 2005, Stephanie Lindemann published a study evaluating how undergraduate students at one university in the United States perceived non-native English. Her study sought to discover how native speakers of American English constructed social categories for those who speak English from outside of the U.S. Her findings support those of Rubin (2012) and Munro, Derwing, & Holtby (2012), in that almost all speech outside of Europe or Western Europe was stigmatized by the participants. She notes that, "China appears to be the major representative for Asia or the Far East, as does Mexico for all of Latin America. In contrast, no one country appears to stand for (Western) Europe; France, Germany, and Italy are described with approximately equal frequency" (p.197). Mexico and China were also both mentioned as getting the most "wrong", and have recently had large, salient immigrant populations within the U.S. No country in Africa appeared in the most frequently mentioned countries, with many describing the entire continent as one speech area. She concluded that these social categories are

constructed "based on familiarity, immigration trends, and sociopolitical relationships (especially as portrayed in the popular media)" (Lindemann, 2005, p. 210).

1.3 Language in Education

Although bilingual education has recently come into the political spotlight, it wasn't always so controversial. According to Goldenberg & Wagner (2015), the first bilingual school in the United States was established in Virginia in the early 17th century, over 100 years before the country declared independence from Great Britain. By the beginning of the 20th century, Goldenberg & Wagner (2015) estimate that over 1 million children were receiving bilingual instruction in elementary schools, over 6% of the nation's elementary aged children at the time. In the 2013-14 school year, English Language Learners (ELLs) made up 9.3% of our elementary school population nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), yet "at most around 3 percent of the elementary grades population" were enrolled in bilingual programs at their elementary school during this school year (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). This means that at least 6% of elementary students are receiving instruction in a language that is not the language that they use at home.

Many would argue that this is not a problem. If one only looks to state legislation pertaining to bilingual education, these percentages may even indicate success. In the state of California, Proposition 227, arguably the most well-known English-only initiative, pushed its stated goal that "all children in California public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible" (California Voter Information Guide. n.d.). This proposition passed in 1998, meaning that California students who are ELLs are typically only offered limited services in their home language, and only as a transitional measure until they are

able to somewhat participate in a class taught "overwhelmingly" in English (Legislative

Analyst's Office, 1998, June). The vast majority of language acquisition research, however,

has indicated that a monolingual approach for proficiency in a second language (in this case

English) is not very effective (Barker et al., 2001).

The American Psychological Association has even taken a stance against

English-only educational policies, stating that "English immersion approaches may lead to

lower levels of achievement, English proficiency, and psychosocial development" and that

"bilingualism may lead to higher levels of cognitive development" (American Psychological

Association, n.d). Although both of these statements include the qualifying phrase "may

lead", it is made clear that bilingual education is not detrimental to the ELL, and produces

results equal to, if not better than an English-only approach with the added benefit of greater

linguistic competency in their home language. Although some short-term benefits can be

observed in lower elementary school, English-only education is associated with higher

dropout rates and lower levels of English proficiency by high school for ELLs (Goldenberg &

Wagner, 2015).

Schmidt Sr. (2006) explains that historically, through education, white Americans

have ensured the subservient status of Peoples of Color, many of whom are also linguistic

and cultural minorities, by:

> the simultaneous provision of inferior, truncated and segregated public education in
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> the dominant culture and language, together with the disparagement and denial of
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> their own cultures and languages, [which] amounted to a cultural foundation virtually
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> designed to perpetuate their continued exclusion and subordination. The triple
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> message delivered to minority youths (and their parents) was clear: 'You are a

member of an inferior race and you have an inferior culture; if you want to better yourself you will learn our culture and language; still, because you are inferior, we don't expect you to do as well as one of our own.' (p.149).

This harsh assessment juxtaposes with the ubiquitous myth of the Great American Melting Pot that claims any immigrant can have a real shot at the American Dream. This myth models the ideal American Immigrant as someone who sheds their language and culture to "melt", or assimilate, "into the "wider" American society, understood to be the white, English-speaking facet of U.S. society" (Barker et al., 2001). Unfortunately, due to the continual racialization of minorities in the United States, this melting will always leave a distinctive marker of "otherness" for being unable to meet the societal norm of whiteness. Schmidt Sr. (2002) says, "Racialized groups who give up their cultural practices (e. g., language) in hopes of complete assimilation find themselves without some of the cultural resources that might be useful in combating racialized domination" (p. 152). Since many Latinx immigrants maintain their culture and language as markers of personal and social identities, they are frequently perceived as a threat to the melting pot.

Skerrett (2009) discusses the myth of the melting pot and how it is institutionally perpetuated through public school curriculums that emphasize literature based in the (white) European/Anglo-Saxon canon simultaneously as "our common literary and cultural heritage" and "significant works in American cultural history" (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2001, as cited by Skerrett, 2009), setting up anything outside of this canon as "other" and "insignificant". This "insignificant", or low-status, knowledge devalues the culture and knowledge of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural minorities, perpetuating the historical educational discrimination shown by Schmidt Sr. (2002) and institutionally ensuring the

subordinate social status of the culturally "abnormal". Skerrett points out that within this framework, "students' diverse languages and cultures were not valued as intrinsically worthy of academic study" (p. 9). Instead, their cultures and languages were proffered as "potential bridges" for increased mastery of English. The implications of the Massachusetts educational policy analyzed by Skerrett were "that the English curriculum possessed the capability to develop in students an "American-ness" that was defined in terms of commonality and not difference" (Skerrett, 2009, p. 9), implying an institutional perpetuation of the harmful color-blind ideology of assimilationists.

1.4 Intersection of race and language though identity

These racialized, constructed social categories are the backbone for many restrictive immigration policies according to Hartman, Newman, and Bell (2013). Although blatant hatred and discrimination towards minority groups is no longer widely accepted in American society, the authors suggest that "white, non-Hispanic Americans have adopted a 'coded,' race-neutral means of expressing prejudice toward Hispanic immigrants,"(p 143) and "that the focus within popular political discourse on the ''illegality'' and ''threats'' of immigrants may indeed serve as a coded means of expressing antipathy toward specific immigrant minorities" (p. 145). In modern racism, the authors explain, whites express prejudice by indicating that non-white groups do not comply with the cultural standards and moral ideologies of "Americans". Although the underlying sentiment is that these groups are "abnormal" and "other" in comparison to the idealized American, the complaints will never mention skin color, even though this one of the major unifying factors of these groups and usually the most visible. Instead, they attack the characteristics and actions of the group that are perceived as threatening to the social hierarchy under the guise of protecting American

values. Their study showed that "white Americans take significantly greater offense to transgressions like being in the country without legal documentation, working illegally and not paying taxes, and rejecting symbols of American culture and identity, when the perpetrating immigrant is Hispanic rather [than] non-Hispanic" (pp. 160-161). They suggested "that it is by and large the Hispanic identity of immigrants—not their behavior—that matters most in driving public opposition to immigration" (p. 144) This means that while the anti-immigration sentiments that many white, non-Hispanic Americans harbor may not appear to be racist at first glance, the reasoning behind these feelings and opinions shows roots that are deep in the colonial social hierarchy of the U.S., with the Anglo American at the top of the social hierarchy.

Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano (2008) consider these sentiments to be in line with an ideology of Racist Nativism, which they define as:

the assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be People and Immigrants of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites, or the natives, to dominance" (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solorzano, 2008).

In a 2010 study comprised of *testimonio* interviews from undocumented Chicana university students, Huber examined the retold experiences under a lens of Racist Nativism. She found that

"Racist beliefs were often tied to constructions of undocumented immigrants, who were perceived as a threat to the well-being of the U.S. and its "native" citizens…. It

was clear in these discussions that references to undocumented immigrants were about undocumented Mexican immigrants (Huber, 2010)."

Her findings were later corroborated by Hartman, Newman, and Bell (2013), who drew similar conclusions about the greater implications of racist nativism and its role in the construction of social categories and hierarchies through policies that actively exclude immigrants, especially those who are undocumented, and relentlessly remind them of and reinforce their subordinate social status.

These racialized assimilationist messages are ubiquitous in a wide array of public forums from education to popular culture, and play major roles in the way that individuals from minority groups internalize messages that they are not as socially worthy, or that they do not fit into American culture. In response to their negatively valued social identities, individuals often employ one of three strategies to increase their social worth. The first is assimilation, abandoning markers of their minority group(s), like language, dress, or food, in favor of traits and practices from the majority culture. This is a common response to high levels of personal discrimination (Ruggiero, Taylor, & Lambert, 1996). The second strategy is social creativity, where individuals use their linguistic/cultural divergence to create a social/cultural identity within an alternative counterhegemonic community. An example of this is the thriving black cultural community of the early 20th century, with a culture of creativity that existed parallel and underneath the white culture of the time. The creation of a healthy subculture helps individuals create a place of belonging, even if alienated from the main culture. The third strategy of social competition often emerges after a strong subculture has been established, where the minority group attempts raising their social status in order to achieve a status that is equal to or greater than that of the majority culture. The Civil

Rights Movement of the 1960s and the modern social justice movement are examples of social competition, with demands of equal rights and fair treatment at the forefront of the cultural changes. (Barker et al., 2001)

These strategies are only necessary to create suitable social identities for those who feel devalued. Social support, or lack thereof, can have significant consequences on the social identity of a minority individual or group (Amason, Allen,& Holmes, 1999). Barker et al. (2001) suggest that the language of education also has strong implications for a child's social and cognitive development and achievement. Children forced to learn monolingually through their second language have been shown to exhibit poorer second language acquisition, which can contribute to the "inferiority complex" that often stems from the constant reminder of the students "inferior" culture and language. Attitudes toward language use and promotion can wholly affect the esteem and social identity of minority language groups, because "language is not just a tool for communication or a system of symbols; it is a component of culture in which social identity is embedded" (Barker et al., 2001). If one's language is devalued, one's social identity is too.

Huber (2010) indicated that frequent discussions about undocumented immigrants (that indicated Mexicans specifically) and continual exclusion from government-run social and educational programs continually reinforced the internalized ideology of racist nativism in the participants. These ideologies and practices are propped up by the "Latino Threat Narrative," which portrays Latinx peoples and cultures as a threatening "invading force", displacing those who "belong" (p. 89), a theory supported by Hartman, Newman, and Bell, 2013. Such socially pervasive narratives were perpetuated by "white teachers, professors and college peers" (p 91), serving to reinforce/further internalize these racist nativist beliefs

among the students due to the seeming ubiquitousness of this viewpoint. As a result, "The women in this study expressed feeling uncomfortable, discouraged, fearful and isolated throughout their educational trajectories….. these women learned, form a very early age, the social construction and negative perceptions of undocumented Latina/o immigrants in the U.S." (p. 89). It is clear that these feelings of otherness were perpetuated by the public schools which these women attended, implicating that even teachers had substantial negative impacts of these women's feelings of self worth.

Since language is such a crucial part of identity (Barker et al., 2001), Goldenberg & Wagner (2015) argue that "bilingual education can have positive effects on inter-group relationships, identity, and self-esteem" (p. 31). By institutionally supporting an ELL's native language through public education, they are allowed to maintain an important part of their personal identity without sacrificing social self worth. The research of Clément and Kruidenier (1985) implies that this increased sense of acceptance by the majority language group can actually help to **acculturate** ELLs. Because language learners who have a positive view of native speakers of the target language have increases in intergroup contact and greater motivation and confidence in learning their second language, they may learn English quicker and may be more prone to use it at lower levels. They also found that a fear of **assimilation** within the language learner has the opposite effect, as those who are fearful of losing their culture and language may wish to remain immersed in them.

The difference between assimilation and acculturation is subtle in this context, but important. Goldsea, an online resource for the Asian-American community says that "assimilation is allowing one's original culture to be overridden by the dominant culture. Acculturation is acquiring the capability to function within the dominant culture while

retaining one's original culture" (Goldsea, 2008, April 1). Many assimilationists fear that allowing acculturation will allow for generations of new Americans to completely forgo learning English, creating a cultural rift so wide as to prevent communication between the two sides (Schmidt Sr. 2002). This fear is completely unfounded as by the third generation (the grandchildren of immigrants) English dominance or even English monolingualism is the norm (Alba, 2005, February 1). Alba's 2005 analysis compared the current patterns of mono and bilingualism in first, second, and third generation immigrants to historic rates and found that "not only is competence in English close to universal among the U.S.-born children and grandchildren of today's immigrants, but even among those groups where bilingualism persists, the predominant pattern by the third generation is English monolingualism."

This ability to fully participate in American society while protecting one's cultural identity, the ability to acculturate, is arguably one of the goals of bilingual education. If this is the case, then why is there such a big push for English-only policies? To be succinct, "the root of the contemporary conflict over language policy in the United States is not language as such, but political identity." (Schmidt, 2002, p 158). Goldenberg and Wagner (2015) connect this national political identity to "anti-foreign-language and anti-immigration rhetoric that peaks during periods of increased immigration" (p. 30). They say that these types of nativist reactions stem from "fears that the use of languages other than English in school will somehow fracture the national identity" (p. 30).

What the assimilationist have forgotten is that our national identity is already fractured by racialization. While the prototypical American is imagined as white, there cannot be a unified national identity that is not exclusionary for an increasing number of Americans. While 4th and 5th generation Americans are often referred to as "Asian-American" because of

racial features, white children of immigrants are typically only considered "American" as long as they don't have a recognizably non-native accent. Schmidt (2002) reminds us of the absolute power of the majority by posing a similar situation, "You may assert, for example, that I am obviously a Latino, whereas I may firmly insist that I am 'simply an American'. Who is correct?" (p. 156). The reality of these situations is one of race and power. Since Anglo Americans hold the greatest amount of cultural and institutional power, they make the final decision. Schmidt reminds us that "*Racialization* is a social process whose point is inequality. No one is tagged as racially "other" unless that act reduces the "other" to an excluded and/or subordinate position in reference to the person doing the tagging" (p. 158). And while this racialized social stratification exists in The United States, minority groups who forfeit a part of their identity for the pacification of those who deem difference as social deficit will always suffer. Bilingual and multicultural education hopes to be part of a long term solution to this suffering.

2. The Present Study: Rationale and Methods

2.1 Intentions and Rationale

The intention of this research is to gain insight into the language experiences of bilingual individuals in the Boone community. Face to face or video-conference interviews were chosen, as a study about nuanced speech experiences necessitated a manner of collecting these experiences where the researcher could clarify participants' responses and ensure a nuanced understanding, which is often difficult to obtain through written word. These interviews also allowed for greater perspective into participants' individual stories and life experiences, and elicited more natural responses from the participants. The goal was to glean a more complete picture than what a written survey could paint, encouraging personal storytelling and explanations of viewpoints, and highlighting the qualitative nature of this study.

This study should be treated as a collection of case studies, in which the reader does not extrapolate the data collected to generally similar situations without heavily considering the limited nature of the sample size in number, geographical location, level of education, age, and gender.

2.2 Participants

Respondents were recruited utilizing resources centered around Appalachian State University, such as email lists for International Students, email lists for students of language at Appalachian State, presentations at multicultural clubs, and postings on Facebook

classifieds pages for Appalachian State and the surrounding area. Only 3 of the participants were not students or staff at Appalachian State; these individuals are instead permanent residents in the Boone area. Subsequently, most of the individuals interviewed were under 25 with at least a partial college education, although no formal collection of these data points was attempted. 19 of the 25 participants were female, and 6 were male. One female participant was excluded from the data sets because accurate data could not be drawn from her interview due to file corruption of the video.

After responses were cataloged, the participants were placed into one of the five categories below.

Table 1. "Participant Categorization"

English First	The participant was born in The United States or moved here before the age of 10. The first language that the participant learned was English; their parents primarily spoke to the individual in English as a child.
Spanish First	The participant was born in The United States or moved here before the age of 10. The first language that the participant learned was Spanish; their parents primarily spoke to the individual in Spanish as a child.
Simultaneous Acquisition	The participant was born in The United States or moved here before the age of 10. The participant simultaneously learned both Spanish and English as their "first" language; their parents used a

	combination of Spanish and English when speaking to the individual as a child.
Late Immigrant	The participant moved to The United States after the age of 10 with an intention of long term residency (for this study, two or more years). Their first language may or may not be English.
International Student	The participant is attending Appalachian State University, and is not/has not been a permanent resident of The United States. Their first language may or may not be English.

These categories were chosen as to best correlate with response/thought patterns. While Late Immigrants to the U.S. and International Students studying at Appalachian State University may both experience struggles related to the English language, the length of stay and populations these individuals interact with differ greatly, lending them to have drastically different answers to questions involving their experiences. The same is true for Late Immigrants and Spanish First individuals, who usually have learned English at different ages and in different circumstances, as well as those who spoke English First rather Spanish First, who started learning a second language for vastly different reasons.

2.3 Study Design and Interview Questions

Interview questions focused on the interviewee's language usage within the U.S., their language learning experiences, and their perceptions of American culture in relation to

language. The intention of the questions was to allow each individual to share common parts of their language experiences, creating a collective multifaceted tale of individuals within and around the Boone community who are able to speak more than one language at a conversational level.

The 20 questions listed below were selected for use in the interviews. Questions 6, 13, and 15 had clarifying sub-questions that were sometimes answered by participants in the original answer. Questions 6a, 12, and 17 were only asked to applicable participants at the interviewer's discretion; these questions are highlighted to emphasize the optionality.

1. What languages do you speak?

2. What is your first language?

3. When and how did you learn your second (and possibly 3rd, 4th) language?

4. How often do you speak each language?

5. In what situations do you speak each language?

6. How well do you speak each language, and which languages do you speak with near-native ability?

    a. How do you think your limited proficiency has affected you? Or has it?

7. Was it difficult for you to learn your second language? Why or why not?

8. Was learning a second language necessary for you? Why?

9. Do you think prejudice or bullying based on English proficiency is a problem in

America?

10. Do you think prejudice or bullying based on foreign/non-native accents or dialects is a problem in America?

11. Have you ever experienced prejudice or bullying because of your accent or proficiency?

12. How do you think your accent and/or limited proficiency has affected your life? Job opportunities? Profiling?

13. How do you feel about each of the languages you speak?

    a. Do you have an emotional connection to any of these languages?

    b. Would you consider any of the languages more prestigious than others?

14. How do you think others feel about these languages?

15. Do these languages appear in your community (in the U.S.) through media such as music, radio, television, newspapers, ads, etc?

    a. How often?

    b. How are they portrayed in the media?

16. How is the way you speak a part of who you are?

17. If you could speak with a standard American accent, would you? Why or why not?

18. Do you think the way you speak is compatible with being completely accepted by American society as a whole?

19. If you could tell American society one thing about non-native English speakers, what would it be?

20. Do you have any comments or experiences you would like to share that involve you or others and the way that person was treated based on their speech?

During the interviews, several shortcomings of the questions were noted.

Question 18 confused several of the participants, especially those with lower levels of English proficiency. According to readability-score.com, the text has a Flesch-Kincaid reading ease of 45.1, meaning that the text is best understood by high school graduates and college level individuals. Due to this shortcoming, the question was often rephrased and clarified mid-interview, usually being rephrased as "Do you think that most Americans would accept you with the way that you speak right now?"

Questions 6a and 12 often mirrored each other, and were not asked to everyone that they were relevant to. They should have been more strongly worded as to point the interviewer and the interviewee towards more concise and polar answers.

Questions 13 and 16 were too abstract. Participants often weren't sure of the intention of the questions, and due to the abstract and emotional nature of the questions, further explanation or examples of how the interviewer would answer the question for herself often muddled the original intentions of the questions. Many of the responses to these questions were not direct answers to the question, and may have been considered evasive if it wasn't clear that the questions weren't completely understood.

Question 11 was not specific enough and respondents answered about their experiences with accent or proficiency in any of their languages.

Overall, the questions failed to consider those with lower proficiencies of English or aural understanding in their phrasings and structure.
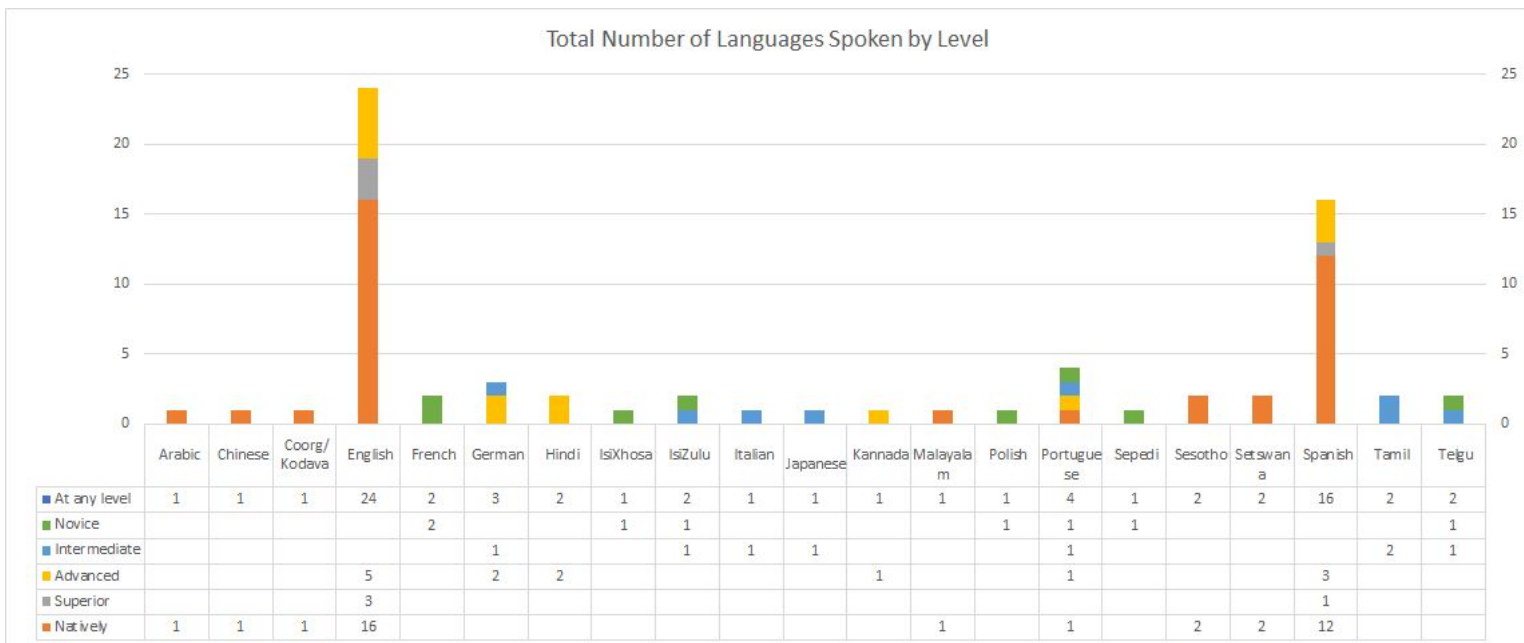
3. Results

The purpose of these interviews were to gain both qualitative and quantitative data about second language use in Boone, NC. Due to variability in answers given by participants, and different understandings about the type of response warranted, quantitative data was only drawn from select questions. These questions and data sets are illustrated below. For a spreadsheet of participants and quantitative questions, see appendix I. Results from questions with qualitative answers and their implications will be discussed in the Discussion section.

Due to the limited nature of this study in size and scope, statistical analysis was not performed on this data.

Question 1: What languages do you speak?

Every participant spoke English, as the interviews were conducted in English, with occasional clarifications in Spanish when necessary. The majority of participants spoke Spanish as their first language. This is not surprising considering Spanish speakers are the most salient minority language group within the U.S. (Barker et al., 2001).

Figure 1. "Total Number of Languages Spoken by Level"

Total Number of Languages Spoken by Level

	Arabic	Chinese	Coorg/Kodava	English	French	German	Hindi	IsiXhosa	IsiZulu	Italian	Japanese	Kannada	Malayalam	Polish	Portuguese	Sepedi	Sesotho	Setswana	Spanish	Tamil	Telgu
At any level	1	1	1	24	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	16	2	2
Novice					2			1	1					1	1	1					1
Intermediate						1			1	1	1				1					2	1
Advanced				5		2	2					1			1				3		
Superior				3															1		
Natively	1	1	1	16									1		1		2	2	12		

Question 2: What is your first language?

The greatest number of participants (13) spoke Spanish as their first language. Six (6) participants spoke English as their first language, and 2 participants spoke Sesotho and Setswana as their first languages. Note that the number of first languages exceeds the number of participants. This is due to the multilingual nature of countries such as India and

South Africa, where participants' parents spoke to them in more than one language from birth.

Figure 2: "Native Language"
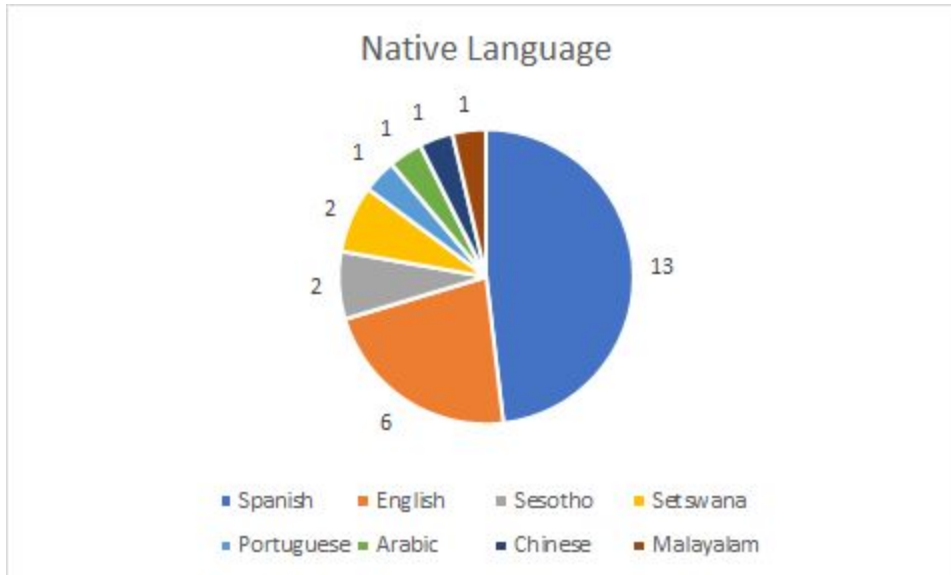
Question 3: When and how did you learn your second (and possibly 3rd, 4th) language?

Some participants may have responded with more than one answer, i.e. someone may have learned English through both secondary school and experiential methods, like immersion in a society that speaks the language or traveling.

Figure 3: "Method of Learning Non-Native Language(s)"
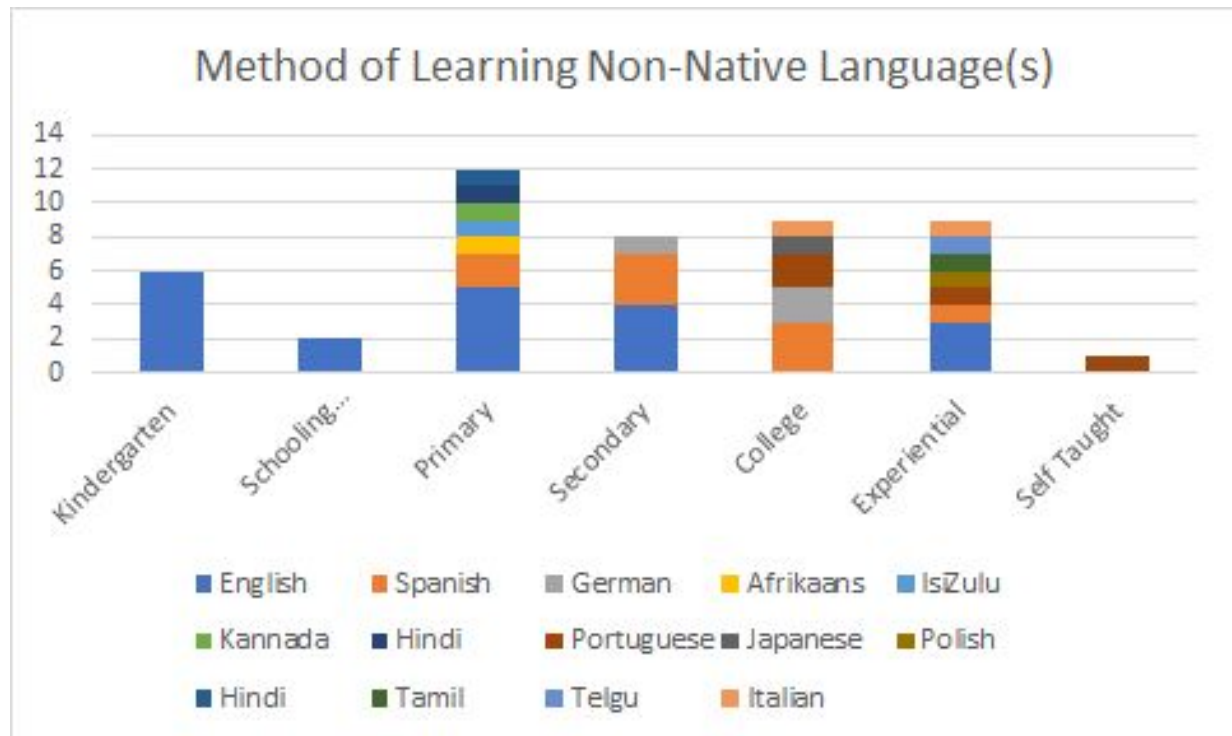
English learning by early immersion in school was separated into the categories of

"Kindergarten" and "Schooling (outside of US)" to highlight the difference between those

who learned English in the generally monolingual United States, versus those who learned

English through an immersion school outside of the United States, where monolingual

English is not the norm. Six (6) participants learned English through some sort of immersion

in kindergarten or first grade, and two (2) participants started learning English through some

sort of immersion in their schooling outside of the U.S. at a level equivalent to American

kindergarten or first grade. Five (5) participants learned English through primary school,

meaning that they learned English as a foreign language during schooling before the age of

12, and four (4) learned English in secondary school, or schooling before attending a college

and after primary school. Three (3) participants included experiential learning as a major

factor in learning English, all of which were late immigrants. See Table 1 for the complete data set.

Table 1: "Method of Learning Non-Native Language(s)"

	English	Spanish	German	Afrikaans	IsiZulu	Kannada	Hindi	Portuguese	Japanese	Polish	Hindi	Tamil	Telgu	Italian
Kindergarten	6													
Schooling (ou	2													
Primary	5	2		1	1	1	1				1			
Secondary	4	3	1											
College		3	2					2	1					1
Experiential	3	1						1		1		1	1	1
Self Taught								1						

Question 6: How well do you speak each language, and which languages do you speak with near-native ability?

The four (4) most common languages were German, Portuguese, Spanish, and English, with all participants speaking English. 16 participants spoke Spanish at an advanced level or higher, while only four (4) participants spoke Portuguese at all, ranging from novice to native. German was spoken by three (3) participants, two at the advanced and one at the intermediate (low conversational) level. English (16) and Spanish (12) were the two most common languages spoken natively, with all other instances with two (2) or less native speakers.[1]

Multiple languages from the multilingual countries of India (Hindi, Tamil) and South Africa (Setswana, Sesotho, Afrikaans) were spoken by two participants each, with French, a

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[1] The language levels used are based on the ACTFL language proficiency guidelines (ACTFL, 2012).

commonly learned second language, the only other language spoken by more than one participant.

See figure 1 for all languages spoken by participants broken down by level.

Question 8: Was learning a second language necessary for you? Why?

21 of 23 participants said that learning a second language was necessary for them. Some participants responded with multiple reasons. Nine (9) said that their native language was not the common or official language of their country, and therefore needed it to survive or attend school. Seven (7) said that they had to learn their second language for opportunity or a job, while three (3) said it was required for graduation from a university. Four (4) respondents said that it was necessary but declined to elaborate. Only two (2) participants said that learning a second language was a choice for them; both are English First participants.

Table 2: "Was learning a second language necessary?"

Yes		No	
For opportunity or a good job	6	It was a choice	2
Native language was not the common or official language of country of residency	9		
Parent choice	2		

Requirement for graduation	3		
No elaboration	4		

Question 9: Do you think prejudice or bullying based on English proficiency is a problem in America?

Nine (9) participants said that prejudice or bullying based on English proficiency is not a problem in America, two (2) saying that Americans are helpful or welcoming, three (3) saying they had never seen or experienced it, and four (4) citing the language barrier, not ill intent, as the problem. 13 participants said that it is a problem in the U.S., with seven (7) having seen or experienced it, two (2) citing the political climate as cause or example, two (2) saying it is worse or more common for those with accents, and two (2) saying it is more of a problem in some locations. Two participants responded somewhere in the middle, citing bullying as a childhood problem, and heightened prejudice from the older generations overall.

Table 3: "Prejudice or Bullying based on English proficiency"

Yes		No		Maybe/Mixed	
Seen or experienced it	7	Just a language barrier	3	Maybe/Mixed	2
Depends on location	2	Americans are helpful/welcoming	3		
Especially with accents	2	Haven't personally seen/experienced it	2		
Implicit prejudice	1				

Political climate	2			

Question 10: Do you think prejudice or bullying based on foreign/non-native accents or dialects is a problem in America?

Six (6) participants thought that prejudice or bullying based on foreign/non-native accents or dialects was a problem in America, and five (5) thought it was not. One (1) participant was undecided and one (1) said it depended on the accent of the individual.

Table 4: "Do you think prejudice or bullying based on foreign/non-native accents is a problem in the U.S.?"

Yes		No		Undecided		Depends on the accent	
No explanation	3	No explanation	2	Undecided	1	Depends on the accent	2
It's not as much of a problem as proficiency	2	Not in their experience	2				
It's worse because the speaker is proficient	1	As long as you speak English well enough to communicate	1				

Question 11: Have you ever experienced prejudice or bullying because of your accent or proficiency?

Five (5) participants of the 20 who answered question 11 said that they had experienced prejudice or bullying based on their accent or proficiency in English or Spanish. 15 participants said they had not experienced prejudice or bullying based on their accent or proficiency. One participant said she had not been bullied or discriminated against because of her accent or proficiency, but because of her Hispanic appearance and last name; another participant said she had not experienced any discrimination because she doesn't appear to be Hispanic.

Table 5: "Have you ever experienced prejudice or bullying because of your accent or proficiency?"

Yes		No	
In Spanish	1	Only based on appearance and last name	1
In English	4	No explanation	8
		Only complimented on accent	3
		Because she	1

	doesn't look hispanic	
	Only lighthearted teasing	2

Question 13b: Would you consider any of the languages you speak more prestigious than others?

14 participants did not consider any of the languages they spoke to be more prestigious than another language. Nine (9) participants did consider one language they spoke to be more prestigious. Six (6) of the participants said that English is the most prestigious, with five (5) of those citing its global use as the reasoning.

Table 6: Would you consider any of the languages more prestigious than others?

No		Yes	
No, no explanation	2	Yes, Coorg/Kodava	1
No, but English is more useful	5	Yes, English	1
No, but society says English is	3	Yes, English, because it is global	5
No, but Spanish is gaining prestige	1	Yes, IsiZulu	1

| No, language is for communication | 2 | Yes, Spanish | 1 |

Question 14: How do you think others feel about these languages?

Several individuals gave multifaceted answers that were counted in more than one category, meaning the total number of responses appear to be greater than the total number of respondents.

Seven (7) participants said that they thought others valued English, where only five (5) said that they thought others at least somewhat valued or accepted Spanish. Four (4) participants said that Spanish is valued only as a second language or that others don't want to hear native speakers use Spanish in public, while two (2) said that they didn't think Spanish was valued at all.

Table 4: How do you think others feel about these languages?

Value English	7
Somewhat value/accept Spanish	5
Don't value Spanish	2
Don't value German	3
Embrace only the "exotic" languages	2

Most don't know/don't know much about my language	3
All bi/multilingualism valued	1
Spanish is valued only as a second language and/or don't want to hear native speakers use Spanish in public	4

Question 17: If you could speak with a standard American accent, would you? Why or why not?

Of the 24 participants, question 17 was not applicable to 9 participants. The remaining 15 participants were split one to two, with five (5) participants saying they would change their accent to speak with a Standard American English Accent, and 10 saying they would not.

Table 7: "If you could speak with a standard American accent, would you?"

Yes		No	
Yes, no elaboration	3	No, no elaboration	8
Yes, to speak as fluently as possible	2	Probably not	2

Question 18: Do you think the way you speak is compatible with being completely accepted by American society as a whole?

Every participant said they thought their accent is compatible with being completely accepted by American society as a whole, with six (6) casting doubt as to whether or not it would be completely accepted, and one (1) saying they are only accepted in English.

Table 8: Do you think the way you speak is compatible with being completely accepted by American society as a whole?

Yes	17
Yes, mostly	2
Yes, probably	2
Yes, possibly	2
Yes, in English	1

4. Discussion

There were several noticeable trends and themes that emerged from the interviews. Participants from multilingual societies (South Africa, India, Spain) were more likely to know

more languages, and know them at higher levels. They were also more likely to have spoken more than one language from early childhood or primary/elementary school age.

English speaking participants from Spanish First, English First, and Late Immigrant categories noted that the Spanish speaking community in the U.S. is typically more welcoming towards those trying to learn their language than the English speaking community is with newcomers. English First participants also cited praise for learning a second language, while Spanish First and Late Immigrant participants said they were expected to know their native language plus English at a very high level. A.P., an English First participant, explained "every time I tell someone I speak Spanish they go 'Oh, that's super useful'..... I've always been lauded for speaking Spanish." At the same time, N.V., a Spanish First participant, spoke of her father, who immigrated to the United States from Nicaragua, "just because you have an accent, people tend to like, look down on you... My dad speaks English perfectly fine, but he has an accent, so people assume that he's not as intelligent as he actually is."

Both Spanish First and English First participants referenced negative stereotypes being associated with the Spanish language and the Hispanic culture in the American media. Stereotypes were found from family friendly TV shows, like George Lopez, to an M rated video game, Grand Theft Auto, and the bilingually explicit rapper Pitbull. Two Late Immigrants mentioned pervasive stereotypes; with J.R. mentioning typical employment positions for Hispanics on TV and in movies as maids and gardeners, and M.S., mentioning cultural costumes like a Mexican sarape and sombrero. While several participants noted the growing number of Spanish language channels and shows, they also recognized that this media isn't consumed by those who are not already Spanish speakers.

Two Spanish First participants told how they were quiet when they first started elementary school because they had not yet learned to understand or speak English. D.S., the Simultaneous Acquisition participant, spent his last two years of high school quiet to avoid discrimination. V.A. immigrated to rural North Carolina from Mexico before her senior year of high school, and was known as the quiet one in her classes for both of those reasons.

Accents were a contested subject. English First participants were not asked question 17, as they were already speaking with native American accents (although some were not Standard American English[2] accents). Question 17 was also not asked to 5 of the 6 Spanish First participants, because they did not have a discernable non-native accent in English. Late Immigrants and International Students were split, but with the addition of the lone Simultaneous Acquisition and Spanish First participants with "non-native" accents, they leaned heavily towards keeping their current accents. 10 participants said that they would "probably" or would choose to keep their accents if they had the opportunity to speak in Standard American English, SAE, while 5 participants would speak in SAE if they could, two citing increased fluency as motivation. Overall, International Students were more likely to say they wanted to keep their accents versus speak SAE, six to two, respectively. Late Immigrants, on the other hand close to speak SAE three to two.

Questions of language prestige were similarly divisive, with members from all groups (excluding the single member Simultaneous Acquisition group) having participants on both sides, either considering one language more prestigious, or claiming linguistic equality. The final tally was 10 yes to 13 no, with six (6) of the yes' being attached to English's status as a

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[2] Standard American English refers to the dialect of American English that is "unaccented" and that is typically shown as the ideal form of English within the professional and academic realm.

global language, and five (5) of the no's admitting English as the most useful language. Three participants also noted English as an international language or the current lingua franca. A.P., an English First participant, called English "the diplomatic language of our century."

Many of those who had not experienced bullying/prejudice based on their accent/dialect were aware that it was a problem, with only six (6) of the 25 participants having experienced it firsthand, while 13 expressed concerns about this behavior. International Students tended to hold the belief that linguistic discrimination was not a problem, or that it was simply something they had not noticed, with all eight (8) participants in this category responding with one of the aforementioned answers, while all of the English First, Simultaneous Acquisition, and Spanish First participants indicating that it is a problem. Late Immigrants were split, with three (3) indicating linguistic discrimination as a problem, and two (2) in disagreement.

N.C., a Spanish First participant, said, "I think there is, for example, communities that don't embrace other cultures. I think anybody who has an accent can be bullied." A.R., also a Spanish First participant, spoke of her experience working in a Mexican restaurant:

> A lot of my coworkers are grown adults who have families and who work full-time all day, every day to be able to sustain their families here. They have done their best to have a general grasp on English so they can understand what you're saying, but obviously sometimes they hear words and colloquial things that they're not going to understand. And people get pissed off at the restaurant, you know?....because they don't want to have to put in the effort to try to communicate with somebody who is going out of their way to try to... serve them, help them through their dining

experience and has to cross that language barrier.

S.G., an International Student, spoke very highly of Americans, saying, "I think the American people are so open minded and try to help you when you have a problem." In providing examples of American helpfulness, she shared, "I have a lot of classmates who told me, 'If you want, I can meet with you and help with your homework' or something like that." Although this very positive response shouldn't be ignored, it is important to remember the context of these interactions. Many of the interviewed International Students may have experienced lesser levels of discrimination due to sheltered interaction that has almost exclusively occurred within a college campus or town, and mainly with those who actively and voluntarily participate in the international community.

Communication and understandability issues were often cited as the reasons behind unpleasant interactions in English from the International Students and from some Late Immigrant participants. When asked if she had ever experienced discrimination, L.A., a Late Immigrant who has only lived in areas with prominent universities, said, "when I first got here we wanted to rent a house and we weren't able to speak English that well, so there was [a] misunderstanding because of the language barrier. I've suffered because of this only." A.Z., an International Student, cited communication issues as the main problem when asked question 9 about prejudice or bullying based on English proficiency,

I wouldn't say prejudice, but sometimes if your English is not good enough.... [the native speakers] will have a tendency not to speak to you. But that's not like because... they don't like you or something, they just-- it's just natural to speak to people who can understand you. Like you talk to people who have the same interests as you 'cause you have something in common to talk about, but if you

cannot speak English very well, clearly that causes problems.

Another International Student, T.M., responded similarly to question 9, explaining, "I wouldn't say bullying per say, but I would say people run out of patience for some people." He then recounted a story about a group of International Students at a noisy bar:

> So one of them that I was with was from a Spanish speaking country, and he had a very thick Spanish accent, and I think the person at the bar struggled to hear what he said. He either struggled to hear what he said or he misunderstood what he said and he just gave up or lost patience with him and went to someone else.

T.M. stressed that the issues he had observed were more in line with communicative stresses rather than discriminatory intentions.

Conversely, participants who spoke Spanish natively, whether Spanish First, Simultaneous Acquisition, or Late Immigrants, often said that they avoided speaking Spanish in public due to judgements by L1 English speakers, particularly, Anglo Americans. I.Z., a Spanish First participant, shared what she considered to be a typical interaction with American L1 English speakers,

> If you have like me and two other friends, and we were just speaking Spanish... other people will like-- sometimes they just get curious, which is normal... and then other people get like weird. 'Why don't you speak English if you know how to speak English? Just do it.' Like yeah I can, but I can also speak Spanish, and we're just deciding to do it right now. You know? Just how you would choose to use a fork over a spoon...

D.S. even went as far as to change the accent he uses for daily speech to avoid

these hassles and discrimination. While it's not uncommon for those who do not speak in Standard American English (SAE) to seek to do so, he has learned to use African American Vernacular English (AAVE, colloquially referred to as Ebonics) and at least one variation of the southern dialect of American English to be better accepted and understood by the rural areas of North Carolina in which he's lived after leaving his home state of Texas in 11th grade.

When I first moved to North Carolina, my accent was-- people would tell me I sounded like Speedy Gonzalez.... You always hear things like go back to where you came from or whatever. And then if your accent is not good enough, like your accent automatically gives you [up]. So when I go to drive thrus, since they can't see me in the drive thru, I'll speak southern. And then it's perfectly fine. And then if I go in there and I speak in my regular accent, or what I feel is how I really speak, 'Uh excuse me sir, I didn't quite understand what you said,' and that kind of stuff.

Many cited skin tone or perceived region of origin to be overt factors in these forms of linguistic discrimination. K.B., a Spanish First participant, referred to the double standard for foreign accents within the U.S., pointing to areas with mostly white, native English speakers as more accepted by Americans; an observation in line with Hartman, Newman, and Bell (2013).

If you're from England, Australia, obviously you have an accent. You don't have the American accent, obviously you speak English. Some people will be like, 'Oh, you know, okay he's British. What's up mate?' Or something. They kinda make fun, like you know, but they get impressed. But I've seen sometimes when it's like a Hispanic person that's trying to learn the language, or like someone who immigrates from

some country around from Africa and is trying to learn the language, some people make fun of them.... Sometimes I just feel like people who are too biased, that see the way they dress, the way they look, the color of their skin, they just automatically judge, you know? So I think that it is an issue. It's not just about the accent, I just also think it's the way you look, and yeah, if the person is biased, yeah it becomes a big issue.

R.B., an English First participant, referred to skin color, instead of the type of accented English spoken, as an important factor.

Skin color, I think plays into it... I think if a French person were to come to the United States, have broken English, and they were a white French person per say... I've seen this happen and be perceived as 'oh your accent is so cute,' but then since we have then, a more of an influx of Latino immigrants, and their skin tends to be more brown, then I think that plays a role.

Although it was not linguistic discrimination, L.A., a Late Immigrant participant from Saudi Arabia, stopped wearing her hijab when she moved to Boone because of how she was treated while wearing it, and the visible pro-Trump/anti-immigrant sentiment that became overt and aggressive during the 2016 presidential elections. She said,

When I was wearing my hijab, some locals here, not the students... they would like give me that look which means... you know, you're different or something. I mean, even when I'm wearing my hijab, I'm not like hiding something inside.

M.S., a Late Immigrant from Mexico, also reported feeling "othered" after the election of Donald Trump into office, but admitted that race and her country of origin were major factors

that are being used against her, not just her language or culture:

> Prejudiced people were, like, accepting of us; we thought that. But now with these elections, it makes us feel like, personally-- just not being about Donald Trump, just being about people-- like they're not really accepting of us for who we are... We're coming over, and they're not accepting that we're trying be a part, and help be a part of this country.... we're hurting people's feelings just being here.

> Really, it's just racism, it's just came back to us. Like slapped us on the face, because we thought that we were more acceptable now... but with this election, like the way that people really thought... it's not really the feeling that we wanted to know.

Even still, many said that Spanish (and possibly other languages) are becoming more accepted in the U.S., especially within the younger generations. M.S., who moved to the United States from Mexico when she was a freshman in highschool, has now lived in the Boone area for over 10 years. When asked if discrimination and bullying based on English proficiency is a problem, she said, "I think it's getting better... it's doing much better than back in the day when we started school." M.S. also said positive things about the many who work to help those without high levels of English proficiency navigate in the English-speaking reality of The United States, "there's a percentage that tries and they don't care [that we're Hispanic and not native English speakers]. They're like 'oh yeah, I'll try' you know? 'I'll try.'" I.Z., also responded that the younger generation tends to be more helpful and accepting, saying their attitude was "we all speak different things, you know. Like try to understand somebody."

Everyone in the study said that their English was likely to be accepted by American society as a whole, or at least not actively rejected by it. No one reported feeling completely

outcasted because of how they spoke, as they've had at least some source of support from individuals or community resources. This, however, is based on the responses of 25 individuals who were proficient enough in English to be interviewed in the language, and individuals with less complete understandings of English may feel more isolated and rejected as a result of difficulty communicating.

Mexican American participants, in particular, felt torn between the two linguistic communities, often feeling at least partially excluded from both. A.R., a Spanish First participant, told of a torn identity as a child.

Growing up, I wasn't Mexican enough for the other Mexican kids.... And then to other white kids, I wasn't white enough to be friends with them. They would say things like 'I'm glad you're not one of those Mexicans' .....I didn't understand why that's not a normal thing to be hearing as a kid... like why it's not an okay thing to be hearing...

I wasn't, like, enough of one to be completely with one or enough of another to be a part of the other. So like other Latinx kids saw me as a white kid, and the other white kids saw me as a Latinx girl. So it was like, I was, like, kinda transgressing both I guess.

D.S., N.C., and K.B. expressed similar sentiments, and D.S. and M.S. both told of the similar identity question for their daughters, who felt more American than Mexican. M.S.'s daughter questioned the label of "Mexican" since she was born and raised in the United States. M.S. responded with frankness to the situation, "my daughter will be like 'I'm American here', but [Americans] will not accept that or see her really like an American. They will see her like [a] Mexican." D.S. described a similar scenario as the driving force behind his imminent move back to his home state of Texas, "My daughter... she always asks me why she doesn't have

yellow hair, and that she hates Spanish... So that's why I'm going back [to Texas] 'cause that way she'll see...other people that look just like me... like, hair and skin color... and they speak Spanish so then... I guess she'll accept herself a little more."

Luckily, N.C.'s story has resolved in empowerment. She was the only participant who grew in the U.S. to be enrolled in a bilingual program during elementary school that wasn't strictly transitional. Her Spanish language development was supported for 6 years while she was learning English, and even still expressed a sense of partial belonging to both groups growing up instead of wholly fitting in, but things are changing for her.

I guess I'm coming of age now for real. So now I'm embracing that I'm bilingual, I'm Chicana, like this is who I am. So it's part of me, right? I'm too white for like, true Mexicans. I'll never be them, right? I don't live there, I get it. And here in the U.S., well I'm not blonde and white with like a white picket fence so I'm always like *the other*. I used to feel very in the middle, and stuck. Like I'm not enough for either English or Spanish, but now I've come to embrace, like no well, there's like a huge group of us and we're both. We're not one or the other. And that's who I am.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Study

The results of this study have revealed and corroborated several theories related to speakers of native and non-native English within the U.S. D.S. reported utilizing the principle of linguistic stereotyping (Rubin, 2012) to be better understood in situations where the listener could not see his face. Several speakers of Spanish reported avoiding speaking their native language in public, citing the reactions from Anglo Americans as negative,

lending supporting evidence to Hartman, Newman, and Bell's paper about commonly expressed "coded" prejudice against Hispanics (2013), and Huber's examples of the pervasiveness of racist nativism (2010).

Notably, none of the International Students experienced discrimination based on accent or proficiency and only one conceded that discrimination or bullying *might* be a problem within the U.S., versus those who grew up in the U.S. and speak a second language, or even later immigrants, most of whom said that discrimination or bullying based on proficiency was a problem, even if they had not personally experienced it. Participants who are long-term residents of the U.S. (English First, Spanish First, Simultaneous Acquisition, and Late Immigrants) are more likely to have been exposed to this negative aspect of American culture in some form such as personal interactions or media representations.

This study was limited in scope but points towards many avenues for further investigation within the topics of linguistic discrimination, the effects of bilingual education, and public opinion concerning multilingualism. While the qualitative data obtained is relevant, it would be complemented by a study that would obtain more significant quantitative data as well.

A large scale public opinion study involving both mono- and multilingual individuals would help to place many of the quantified results in perspective. This information would be especially useful in determining the prevalence of linguistic discrimination and the perception of this linguistic discrimination in the mono- and multilingual factions of our society. This research could easily be conducted through online or telephone surveys.

This research is important to language educators because we often fail to consider

how race and language intersect to affect the daily lives of our students. Racist policies and rhetoric like English-Only initiatives harm our native speakers of minority languages and take away opportunities for greater fluency from English native speakers.

An approach to bilingual education that emphasizes the social and cultural importance of minority languages while maintaining the necessity of English as the language of national communication would foster greater academic success in ELLs and allow them gain a greater sense of linguistic community to combat inevitable discrimination. This approach should also result in a chain response of greater acceptance of speakers of minority languages by allowing native English speakers to enroll in these bilingual programs, lessening the cultural stigmas attached to the languages and increasing feelings of solidarity between minority language speakers, who would no longer be relegated to apparent ethnic minorities and thereby lessening the forces of racialization. These culturally equalizing effects of widespread bilingual education could potentially be amplified by the intellectual and cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism, implicating a smarter, more just American future if we can only cede whiteness as the defining trait of Americanism.

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Appendix I

Appendix I can be accessed online and downloaded by clicking on the link below.

https://goo.gl/I5f1w5