

Pre-Analysis Plan

One Language, One Vote? An Examination of the Effect of Language on Partisan Attachments and Voting among Whites and Latinos in the U.S.

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Abstract

The purpose of this experiment is to examine the relationship between language, partisan attachments, and political participation in the United States. In particular, the experiment tests whether having voting information present in English, as opposed to English and Spanish, affects behavior in a two-round voting game. We argue that having voting information in more than one language should increase partisan attachments and the probability of voting for Latino voters and non-Hispanic white Democrats, while resulting in a demobilizing effect for non-Hispanic white Republicans. The paper contributes to the literature on democratic representation and voting behavior of individuals who belong to groups with large immigrant populations through a unique two round voting game that links a voters informational environment, investment in institutions tied to voting such as political parties, and turnout. The pre-analysis plan includes a preliminary theory linking language choice to partisanship and voting, an outline of the proposed experimental design, the hypotheses to be tested, and the proposed empirical tests to be conducted.

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Introduction

As a nation, the United States does not have an official language. Unsuccessful efforts to make English the official language of the United States has failed at a federal level. However, thirty one states, along with many counties and localities, have adopted English as their official language.¹ Moreover, according to a study by Pew in 2016, 70% of Americans agree that being able to speak English is “very important for being truly American.”² Concurrently, the number of bilingual Americans is increasing. According to the 2015 Current Population Survey, 64.7 million people (about 20% of the total population) ages 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home.³ Given the strong link between language and national identity as well as the practical reality of an increasingly multilingual electorate, how do candidates and partisan based organizations navigate the trade-off between monolingual and bilingual campaigns and appeals? Additionally, what effect does monolingual, as opposed to bilingual, information provision have on partisan attachments and rates of political participation for voters in the U.S.?

A great deal of literature in American politics has examined how both Latino and non-Hispanic white voters respond to experimental treatments that vary the language of the appeal, English or Spanish. From the perspective of Latino voters, some have found that Spanish language ads increase voting rates of Spanish speaking Latino voters via radio ads (Panagopoulos and Green, 2011) and nonpartisan mailings (Abrajano and Panagopoulos, 2011). Contrastingly, others have found that monolingual, English speaking Latino voters actually punish candidates who use Spanish language campaign advertisements compared to an English language control group (Flores and Coppock, 2018). With respect to non-Hispanic white voters, exposure to Spanish has been shown to increase restrictive immigration attitudes only among Republicans (Hopkins, 2014).

Thus, while a lot of excellent work has been done examining how voters respond to information in English or another language, we know much less regarding how voters respond to information in English and another language. As a result, the literature does not consider how candidates and organizations appeal to voters during a time when the electorate is exhibiting increased levels of linguistic variation, which has the potential to weaken the close association between English language proficiency and national identity within the context of the U.S. Moreover, given the increasing ethnic and linguistic diversity present in the American electorate, it is important to understand how these

¹<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2014/08/08/the-growing-divide-over-official-english-laws>

²<http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/02/01/what-it-takes-to-truly-be-one-of-us/>

³<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/language-diversity-and-english-proficiency-united-states>

appeals affect voter behavior. To what extent do voters who support more restrictive immigration policies punish candidates and organizations who use bilingual campaign appeals? Do voters who are either immigrants themselves or have close personal connections to newly arrived immigrants exhibit stronger attachments toward candidates and parties that use bilingual campaign appeals? This project fills the existing gap on the relationship between multilingualism and political behavior in the United States by examining how voters, both Latinos and non-Hispanic whites, behave in a unique two-round voting experiment. The rest of the paper will include a theoretical section on language use, partisanship, and voter turnout. This will be followed by the experimental design, the hypotheses that will be tested, and proposed empirical tests.

Bilingualism and Voting Behavior

Much of the work on language choice comes from market research on advertising to bilingual consumers. Previously, scholars have examined whether advertising in a consumer's native language, second language, or a combination of both is most effective in improving consumer evaluations of a product (Luna and Peracchio, 2005; Krishna and Ahluwalia, 2008). Many of the hypotheses in the literature on advertising to multilingual consumers are derived from the Myers-Scotton Markedness Model which considers language choice as a way of communicating desired or perceived group memberships (Scotton, 1983). From the perspective of candidates and organizations soliciting support from voters, we argue that the decision to deliver a monolingual or bilingual message sends a signal to voters about desired group membership. More specifically, the choice to deliver a bilingual message signals that the candidate or organization views the increasing number of bilingual voters as an important bloc to target.

However, these actors must balance the potential benefits of garnering support among bilingual voters with the costs of losing the support of voters opposed to the U.S. becoming more linguistically diverse. Because English only messages have historically been the status quo for candidates and partisan organizations (Abrajano, 2010), bilingual messages should be marked as a signal that redefines "Americanness" to include voters who may speak another language in addition to English. For those who believe that English proficiency is central to American national identity, they may receive disutility from seeing information in English and another language simultaneously. Similar logic has been extended to those who are supportive of restrictive immigration policies. For example, a survey experiment with non-Hispanic white subjects found that exposure to Spanish increased

restrictive immigration attitudes only among Republicans (Hopkins, 2014).

We build on this work by examining whether non-Hispanic white voters respond differently to bilingual signals based on party with respect to issues outside the context of immigration. We are interested in what Stokes (1963) defines as “position issues,” or issues in which citizens disagree over desired outcomes. We expect bilingual signals to lead to partisan disengagement and demobilization for Republican members of the electorate. Compared to status-quo English only signals, we expect bilingual signals to lead to reduced investment in partisan organizations and this reduced investment to lead to lower rates of political participation. We argue that reduced investment is a result of the voter’s updated beliefs about the benefactors of the organization’s efforts. By sending bilingual messages, organizations are conducting outreach to and legitimizing groups, immigrants and/or bilingual citizens, the voter wishes to distance herself from. Therefore, she will receive disutility from investing resources in partisan organizations that could be kept for private gain and be less likely to take costly actions that would advance the goals of said organization. We expect the opposite to be true for non-Hispanic white Democratic subjects. Compared to monolingual messages, we expect bilingual messages to result in increased investment in partisan based organizations and this increased investment to result in a higher likelihood that a voter undertakes costly action to advance the goals of the organization sending the message.

With respect to Latino voters, placing language choice in the literature on minority representation and political engagement leads to the expectation that bilingual signals lead to increased investment in political institutions and the likelihood of voting compared to English ones. Those working in this area argue that voters are more likely to turnout when the candidate is a member of their ethnic or racial group (Gay, 2001; Philpot and Walton, 2007; Barreto, 2007). Others have modeled this more explicitly by assuming that voters care both about the individualistic benefits of a particular candidate, but also about the benefit other members of their group secure from their most preferred outcome (Jang, 2009; Fowler, 2006). We argue that this logic can also be extended to the informational environment a voter faces. If the informational environment is such that it is more representative of a voter’s in-group, she may be more inclined to invest private resources to ensure the success of that organization because she believes its efforts will more directly benefit her and other in-group members. Additionally, we argue that this increased investment is likely to translate into a higher probability of voting despite paying a cost to do so because voters view the organization as both descriptively and substantively representing their ethnic in-group.

Experimental Design

We plan to conduct a survey experiment that will be implemented by Qualtrics. Our sample will consist of 2,250 non-Hispanic white respondents and 2,250 bilingual Latino respondents. The sample will be balanced on gender and partisanship (Democrat/Republican). Before the experiment begins, respondents will be asked a battery of demographic questions, which can be found in Appendix A. Respondents will then be shown information about two organizations, Planned Parenthood and Human Life Action. In the control condition, this information will be presented only in English. In the treatment condition, this information will be presented in English and Spanish. The information was taken directly from the websites of both organizations and can be seen below:

Humanity Life Action

On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court in its *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions legalized abortion on demand. In 1974, the U.S. Catholic Bishops founded the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, NCHLA, to work to overturn *Roe* and establish the total protection of all human life in law. Today, the threats to human life, born and unborn, not only continue, but have expanded to include attacks on our freedom of conscience. It is wrong for government to force Americans to violate their religious and moral beliefs in respect for life. The need for concerned citizens to speak out is greater than ever. Human Life Action stands for the inherent dignity of every human life and the power of every American to raise his or her voice in defense of the vulnerable. When thousands upon thousands of people of good will raise their voices as one we are heard on Capitol Hill. We can - and must - help shape a public policy that protects life and liberty.

Planned Parenthood

For a century, Planned Parenthood has been one of the nation's leading providers of high-quality, affordable health care for women, men, and young people, and the nation's largest provider of sex education. Planned Parenthood health centers provide contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and lifesaving cancer screenings to millions of people in the U.S. With a presence in all 50 states and Washington, DC, Planned Parenthood has 56 affiliates, which operate more than 600 health centers. Globally, Planned Parenthood supports local partners in 12 focus countries, reaching over 1.5 million individuals with reproductive health information and services. Women, men, and young people from every community and income level view Planned Parenthood as their first-choice provider of care.

Figure 1: Control/Monolingual Description

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El 22 de enero de 1973, la corte suprema, con las decisiones de Roe v. Wade y Doe v. Bolton, legalizó el aborto a petición. En 1974, los obispos católicos de EEUU formaron la Comité Nacional para una Enmienda de Vida Humana, NCHLA, a trabajar para revertir Roe y establecer la protección total de toda vida humana a través de la ley. Hoy las amenazas a la vida humana, nacida y no nacida, no solamente continúan, sino también han ampliado para incluir ataques a la libertad de conciencia. Es mal que el gobierno obligue a los estadounidenses a violar sus creencias religiosas y morales en el respeto de la vida. La necesidad de que ciudadanos preocupados hablen en contra de esto es importante ahora más que nunca. Human Life Action representa la dignidad inherente de toda vida humana y el poder de todos los estadounidenses de elevar sus voces en defensa de los vulnerables. Cuando miles y miles de personas de buena voluntad elevan sus voces, son escuchados en el capitolio. Podemos – y debemos – ayudar a formar una política que protege la vida y a la libertad.

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Desde hace casi un siglo, Planned Parenthood ha sido uno de los principales proveedores a nivel nacional de servicios de atención médica accesibles y de calidad para mujeres, hombres y jóvenes, así como el proveedor más importante de educación sexual. A través de los centros de salud de Planned Parenthood y de nuestras correspondientes internacionales, apoyamos a millones de personas en EE. UU. y otros 10 países para obtener servicios relacionados con anticoncepción, exámenes y tratamiento de infecciones de transmisión sexual (ITS), y exámenes de detección de cáncer que salvan vidas. Planned Parenthood tiene presencia en 50 estados y Washington, DC, y cuenta con 59 organizaciones afiliadas, que dirigen aproximadamente 700 centros de salud.

Figure 2: Treatment/Bilingual Description

After reading this information, the experiment will contain three parts. In Part 1 of the experiment, respondents will be given \$5. They will decide how much of the \$5 to keep for themselves, x_1 , and how much to donate, x_2 , to either Planned Parenthood or Humanity Life Action. They must donate at least \$1. The purpose of Part 1 is to get a baseline estimate of how much each player would donate in absence of a voting decision.

In Part 2 of the experiment, respondents will again be given \$5. They will decide how much of the \$5 to keep for themselves, x_3 , and how much to donate, x_4 , to either Planned Parenthood or Humanity Life Action. They must donate at least \$1. This is done so that the voter has some material stakes in where the sum of money goes in the next round. After this decision, they will be randomly assigned to a group with 99 other participants. The amount of money all 100 participants donated, $\sum_{i=1}^{100} x_{4i}$, will be added together. Then, each participant will either vote for where they would prefer all of the money to go or abstain from voting. If they vote, a cost of \$0.25 is paid. If they abstain, the cost is not paid. One member of the group will be randomly selected to decide where all of the pooled money goes. If that person decided to abstain, a simulated coin flip will decide which organization receives all of the money. Heads will indicate the money will go to Human Life Action and tails to Planned Parenthood. If that person voted, then all of the money donated from all 100 group members will go to the charity that individual picked. Respondents are made aware of all of this information before they make the initial donation decision.

In Part 3 of the experiment, respondents will again be given \$5. However, this time, a computer will randomly decide how much of the \$5 will be kept by the respondent, x_5 and how much to donate, x_6 to either Planned Parenthood or Humanity Life Action. The respondent will choose which organization x_6 goes to. Then, the same procedure is carried out whereby the respondent will be put in a group of 100 and asked to vote or abstain as to where all $\sum_{i=1}^{100} x_{6i}$ of the money goes. If they vote, a cost of \$0.25 is paid. If they abstain, the cost is not paid. One member of the group will be randomly selected to decide where all of the pooled money goes. One of the three rounds will be randomly selected for payment.

1 Hypotheses

Based on the design outlined above, we plan to test the following hypotheses:

- On average, Latino voters and non-Hispanic white Democrats who are exposed to information in more than one language will donate more money in Round 1 compared to voters who

receive information only in English. We expect the opposite to hold for non-Hispanic white Republicans.

- The more a voter donates in Round 1, the higher her probability of voting in Round 2.
- The more a voter donates in Round 1 relative to the total amount donated, the higher her probability of voting in Round 2.

Empirical Strategy

To assess whether receiving information in English and Spanish versus just English results in differences in the donation and voting behavior of non-Hispanic whites and Latinos, we will run a set of OLS regressions. The first set will include all respondents:

- $D_{i1} = \beta L_i + \alpha R_i + \rho L_i * R_i + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_i$ (1), where
 - D_{i1} is the amount donated by individual i in Round 1
 - L_{i1} is the experimental manipulation, where 1 = bilingual information and 0 = monolingual information
 - R_i is the race of respondent i
 - X_i is a covariate vector for individual i that includes gender, employment status, education, household income, partisanship, and ideology
- $D_{i2} = \beta L_i + \alpha R_i + \rho L_i * R_i + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_i$ (2), where
 - D_{i2} is the amount donated by individual i in Round 2
- $V_{i2} = \beta L_i + \alpha R_i + \rho L_i * R_i + \theta D_{i2} + \phi L_i * D_{i2} + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_i$ (3), where
 - V_{i2} is whether individual i voted in Round 2. It will coded as 1 if they voted and 0 if they abstain
 - D_{i2} is the amount donated by individual i in Round 2
- $V_{i3} = \beta L_i + \alpha R_i + \rho L_i * R_i + \theta D_{i3} + \phi L_i * D_{i2} + \gamma X_i + \epsilon_i$ (4)
 - V_{i3} is whether individual i voted in Round 2. It will coded as 1 if they voted and 0 if they abstain
 - D_{i3} is the randomly chosen amount the computer donated on behalf of individual i

If bilingual information has a positive effect on donation decisions, we would expect β in equations (1) and (2) to be positive. If, on average, the effect is stronger for Latinos, as opposed to non-Hispanic white respondents, we would expect ρ in equations (1) and (2) to be positive. If it is the case that bilingual information is leading respondents to vote at higher rates on average, then we would expect β in equations (3) and (4) to be positive. Lastly, if bilingual information also leads to higher rates of voting conditional on a higher donation, then ϕ in equations (3) and (4) would also be positive.

A separate set of models will be run only for Latino respondents. Equations 1-4 will be replicated, but here the covariate vector X_i will include an index for language use (Questions 21-23 in Appendix A), an index for group consciousness (Questions 24-26 in Appendix A), and number of parents and grandparents born in the U.S. (Questions 19 and 20 in Appendix A). The treatment variable L_i will be interacted with each of these additional covariates to assess whether there are heterogeneous effects by factors that could interact with monolingual/bilingual campaign messaging to produce differences in donation and voting behavior. Lastly, a separate set of models will be run only for non-Hispanic white respondents. Equations 1 - 4 will be replicated, but in these specifications the treatment variable L_i will be interacted with partisanship P_i to test whether Republicans and Democrats respond differently to monolingual vs. bilingual campaign messaging. The treatment variable L_i will also be interacted with ideology (Questions 14 in Appendix A) to test whether conservative subjects respond differently than liberal ones.

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Appendix A

The following are the pre-treatment questions we plan to ask each respondent. A majority of these questions were derived from the ANES 2016 Time Series Study

1. State
2. County
3. Zipcode
4. Gender
5. Martial Status (Single, Married, Separated/Divorced, Domestic Partner)
6. Employment status (Full Time, Part Time, Not Employed)
7. Occupation (Executive/Management, IT, Doctor/Health Care Professional, Education/Educational Administrator, Small Business Owner, Management, Construction/Tradesman, Business Professional, Lawyer, Homemaker, Student, None of the Above)
8. Education level (7 point scale)
9. Date of Birth
10. Which race do you associate yourself most closely with? (White, African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Other, Prefer not to answer)
11. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin? (Yes/No/Prefer not to answer)
12. Household income (9 brackets, prefer not to say)
13. Other members of your household (DOB, Gender)
14. In terms of liberal, conservative, and moderate, how do you view yourself? (7 point scale)
15. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?
16. (If Democrat or Republican) Would you call yourself a strong Democrat [Republican] or not so strong Democrat [Republican]? / (If Independent) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or Republican Party?

17. In addition to being American, what do you consider your main ethnic group or nationality group?
18. In what state, country, or territory were you born?
19. Where were your parents born? Were they both born in the U.S., was only one born in the U.S., or were both born in another country?
20. How many of your grandparents, if any, were born outside the U.S.A.?
21. What language do you primarily speak at home with your family? Is it only English, mostly English, both languages equally, mostly Spanish, or only Spanish?
22. Comparing how often you speak in English or Spanish in your day to day life, would you say that you are generally speaking [English and little or no Spanish; Mostly English but Spanish at least some of the time; English and Spanish about equally; Mostly Spanish but English at least some of the time, or Spanish and little or no English]?
23. How much do you think that what happens generally to [insert racial group here] people in this country will affect what happens in your life? [A lot, some, not very much, or not at all / Not at all, not very much, some, or a lot]?
24. How important is being [insert race here] to your identity?
25. How important is it that [insert race here] folks work together to change laws that are unfair to them?
26. How much discrimination is there in the United States against [insert race here]?