Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition – JSMULA
Vol: 13 Issue: 1 715-729, 2025
ISSN:2147-9747

Heritage Spanish in the Bronx: linguistic attitudes & identities

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Received : 31.01.2025
Accepted : 26.03.2025
Published : 30.04.2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15532287

Abstract

Current sociolinguistic practices and applications tend to approach the object of study, and the subsequent conclusions drawn, from the perspective of the scholar(s), with little-to-no consideration of the linguistic attitudes and ideologies of the population under study. Heritage Spanish in the U.S. is one such example where there is a lack of research centered directly on these speakers' ideologies, attitudes, and views. This paper addresses this deficit by way of a close examination of heritage Spanish speakers' sentiments concerning the canonical terminology and ideology that is meant to describe them as Spanish speakers. Participants (N=45) were recruited from Spanish heritage language courses at Bronx Community College (BCC). Data stems from a questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended questions concerning linguistic identities and attitudes. The study's primary research question was: does a collective ideology exist amongst this population with respect to their own Spanish and the linguistic labels with which they identify as language users? There did not appear to be an absolute uniform ideology amongst the participants, but we did observe notable patterns, several of which call into question the validity of commonly held linguistic beliefs about this population.

Keywords Spanish in US, linguistic attitudes, linguistic identities, sociolinguistics, Spanish in NYC, heritage languages, Spanish heritage speakers

1. Introduction

Spanish in the U.S. has been an area of increasing interest over the past two decades. Much research has been undertaken on this language variety and its population, from sociolinguistic perspectives centering primarily on the linguistic aspects of the language (e.g., Viner, 2021, 2019, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2017, 2016; Otheguy and Zentella, 2012; Martínez Mira, 2009; Montrul, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2003; Gragera, 2002; Acevedo, 2000; Lynch, 1999; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Ocampo, 1990; Torres, 1998; Lantolf, 1978), to studies with a focus on the identity of the speakers, i.e., Heritage Spanish Speakers (HSS) and the variety of Spanish they speak (e.g., Dones-Herrera, 2015; Torres, 2011; Alarcón, 2010; Otheguy and Stern, 2010; Edstrom, 2007;

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Mikulski, 2006; Rothman and Rell, 2007; Valdés, 2001; Zentella, 1997). While these studies are crucial with regard to the advancement of our knowledge surrounding complex ideas such as the general function of language, phenomena associated with languages in contact, socially constructed identities based on language use, linguistic attitudes and ideologies, etc., there exists a tendency in this type of research to approach the object of study, and the subsequent conclusions drawn, from the perspective of the scholar(s), with little to no consideration placed on the thoughts and opinions of the population under study. That is, studies like these are often so focused on theory and the terminology used to describe their findings and/or positions, that the information is rendered inaccessible to the very population under question. Moreover, much time and energy is often placed on arguing for this label over that label when referring to the study subjects, while never actually examining what these very subjects have to say on the matter. For example, *Spanglish* and other labels concerning identity such as heritage speaker, bilingual, native speaker, etc. are frequently dissected under a very critical lens, either in favor of or in opposition to the given term/label, based exclusively on the scholar's position. Indeed, a handful of studies have looked at the predominant beliefs of HSS regarding some of these ideas (e.g., Dones-Herrera, 2016; Ducar, 2012; Beaudrie, Ducar and Potowaki, 2014; Alarcón, 2010; Rothman and Rell, 2007), but we submit that work in this area is lacking. As such, the present paper aims to contribute to the growing body of work surrounding HSS in the U.S. by way of a close examination of HSS sentiments concerning the canonical terminology and ideology that is meant to describe them as Spanish speakers.

In regards to the population under study and the assessment instrument utilized to gather data, the HSS consist of students enrolled in various sections of a second-semester Spanish heritage course at Bronx Community College (BCC) who completed a questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The overarching aim of this study is to explore the linguistic identities and attitudes held by this student population in order to answer the study's primary research question: does a collective ideology exist amongst this population with respect to the Spanish that they themselves speak and the linguistic labels with which they identify as language users (e.g., native, bilingual, fluent, heritage, etc.)? Based on both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data collected, the answer to this question will then be compared to the prevailing notions and theories ascribed to HSS in order to determine whether or not they coincide. Additionally, we tackle questions concerning this population's experiences with regard to the study of Spanish in an academic setting. That is, we examine HSS views on the study of a formal variety of Spanish by way of questions such as: is academic Spanish similar to these students' home Spanish? Does the study of academic Spanish stir up feelings of insecurity and/or inferiority with regard to their own Spanish? What about the learning experience worked for them and what did not? etc. Interpreting data stemming from these questions provides the potential to better understand obstacles surrounding heritage pedagogy from the perspective of the HSS in order to better serve this student population.

1.1. Designations and labels in literature

As was briefly mentioned in the introduction section of the present study, research surrounding HSS is a growing area of interest, and not only in terms of linguistics, but also social, political, and economic considerations. Indeed, the increasing interest centered on this population is logical given the substantial presence of Spanish speakers in the U.S. The most recent U.S. Census Bureau report (2017) estimated a population of 57.5 million Hispanics residing in the U.S., which accounts for nearly 18% of the nation's entire population and is the largest minority group in the country. Moreover, only Mexico, with over 115 million Spanish speakers, surpasses the U.S. with regard to number of Spanish speakers in a given nation. Of course, not every individual who identifies as Hispanic or Latino in the U.S. speaks Spanish, as the same report further indicates: 40 million ages 5 and older stated they spoke Spanish. The point is, this a massive population that is continually growing and, as such, deeper insight into their experiences as Spanish language users in an English dominant setting is important.

Surprisingly, there is a lack of research centered directly on these speakers' ideologies, attitudes, and views. What does abound, however, are theory-driven studies or qualitative projects that consider only a very small number of HSS (e.g., Dones-Herrera, 2015; Osoria, 2010). Nevertheless, there are several studies that are relevant to the present paper in that arguments regarding the terms and labels that should or should not be used for HSS are compared to the quantitative and qualitative data we collect from authentic HSS in an effort to either corroborate or refute those very arguments. To that end, we will briefly review pertinent studies that focus on popular terms and labels used to describe this population.

1.2. Heritage speaker

We begin with the problem of assigning an adequate label for this Spanish-speaking population. Are they native speakers, bilingual, heritage, something else entirely? What are the parameters that differentiate one of these speaker types from another and who decides on this? These are important questions and all too often the decision falls on the 'expert', i.e., the linguist, instead of the speakers themselves, to decide. Be that as it may, the most widely accepted term in the linguistic canon for U.S. raised Spanish speakers is *heritage speaker*, such as we have been using thus far. Valdés (2001) is often cited as providing the most accurate definition of HSS: "…raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or merely understand the heritage language and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (p. 1). Indeed, this definition includes the label bilingual, but distinguishes it by establishing the requisite of a home language. That is, a second-language learner (L2) would be considered bilingual once a certain degree of the second language was under control, but this is clearly different than a situation in which the speaker is raised in both languages, the heritage language primarily in the home and/or insulated community, the other as the dominant language, used in school and other domains (Lynch, 2008). Montrul (2009) refers to this process as *simultaneous bilingualism*, wherein both languages are acquired essentially at the same

time, though the heritage tongue is often the stronger of the two until the start of school in the dominant language.

Some scholars, however, criticize the term *heritage speaker* as being too broad and alluding to antiquity, perhaps even colonialism, effectively disregarding all of the progress achieved through decades of civil rights movements (e.g., Beaudrie and Fairclough, 2012; García, 2005). Yet for most in the field, the term is generally viewed as a positive, neutral descriptor of this population (e.g., Viner, 2021, 2019, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2017, 2016; Duarte, 2015; Montrul, 2008), which is the rationale for its use in the present paper.

1.3. Spanglish

The next pertinent term to analyze when considering HSS is the popular, yet also problematic, *Spanglish*. An objective description of *Spanglish* is that it is an orally spoken mixture of Spanish and English in the U.S., primarily with regard to lexical items, i.e., loanwords or calques from English to Spanish, but also a mixture of certain grammatical features, i.e., English syntax and morphology influencing that of Spanish (Stavans, 2003, 2000, 1999). This term's sociopolitical status provokes much debate, often times fraught with emotion (Rothman and Rell, 2007). Proponents of its acceptance and inclusion argue from a sociocultural position (e.g., Chappell and Faltis, 2007; Potowski, 2002; Soler, 1999; Alvarez, 1998). Zentella (2008), for example, contends that *Spanglish* plays an important role in HSS identity and that the term should be embraced and celebrated. Rothman and Rell (2007) draw a similar conclusion regarding the term's inclusion: "Spanglish meets the needs of its speakers in that it allows for the expression of the dual-identity that is the essence of the immigrants' being" (p. 533). Further, some scholars have explicitly stated the need for both educators and the public alike to acknowledge *Spanglish* as a permanent fixture in U.S. culture (e.g., Garcia, 2005; Zentella, 1997). Though the passion with which *pro-Spanglish* scholars advocate varies from study to study, there is a mutual position present throughout their research: language is intrinsically connected to identity and, as such, *Spanglish* is an inevitable result of the cultural reality of the U.S.

With regards to those opposed to the idea of *Spanglish*, arguments are often antiquated and based on rigid linguistic purisms and ideologies (Stavans and Albin, 2007). Others, however, apply a critical analysis to the term, highlighting the potential harm surrounding its wide-spread acceptance and use. For instance, Otheguy and Stern (2010) take a firm stance on why this term should be avoided: "We reject the use of the term Spanglish because there is no objective justification for the term, and because it expresses an ideology of exceptionalism and scorn that actually deprives the North American Latino community of a major resource in this globalized world: mastery of a world language" (p. 85). That paper centers on the linguistic properties of the Spanish language in an attempt to show that *Spanglish* does not in fact constitute a separate variety of Spanish, much less its own language. The scholars analyze common linguistic features in the Spanish spoken in the U.S., comparing them to standardized Spanish norms and conclude that it, Spanish in the U.S., is still Spanish, for all intents and

purposes, only slightly different given its linguistic contact with English. These two scholars present a very persuasive argument on the utter lack of any linguistic or political justification for the use of the term.

Now that we have formulated a general idea of the terms and labels that the literature suggests for HSS, coupled with rationalizations for them, we move to the present study, beginning with the study's methodology.

2. Methodology

2.1. Spanish-speaking student body at BCC

New York City (NYC) has one of the largest Spanish-speaking population in the U.S., with over 2.2 million Spanish speakers, which accounts for 29% of NYC's entire population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). When we narrow the scope to The Bronx, one of the five boroughs that makes up NYC, the Hispanic population surfaces as the majority at just over 56%. We then center on BCC and the percentage of Hispanic students increases even more, to 61%. Indeed, BCC presents a very opportune setting for studying HSS.

2.2. Study design and instrumentation

As was briefly mentioned in the introduction section of the present paper, questionnaires were used in order to collect data from students enrolled in second-semester heritage Spanish language courses at BCC (the course designation was Spanish 113).[2] In order to be included in the present study, students had to be HSS, i.e., they had to have been raised in a bilingual setting to the extent that they had acquired both aural and oral proficiency in Spanish. Indeed, entry into this HSS course is determined by a placement exam, assuring that students' linguistic aptitude is quite homogenous. Occasionally, however, non-heritage students enroll in these classes because there are presently no 'intermediate Spanish as an L2' courses at BCC; but because their information would not fall within the scope of this study, they were offered separate extra credit opportunities and excluded here.

Concerning participant demographics, although some were born in their respective country of origin (N=15), the majority were born in the U.S. (N=30). The entire cohort (N=45), however, was educated in the U.S. We were unable to achieve balance with regard to national origin, age, and speaker sex due to the prevalent composition of the course. That is, HSS at BCC are predominantly Dominican, followed by Puerto Rican, and female students account for the majority enrolled in these HSS classes. To wit, 31 of the 45 students had national origins from the Dominican Republic; six had origins tied to Puerto Rico; four to Ecuador; two to Mexico; one to El Salvador; and one to Panamá. In regard to sex, 31 of the students were female, the remaining 14, male. Age was highly variable amongst the group, ranging from age 18 (N=1), up to age 45 (N=1), but the vast majority fell between ages 19 and 30 (N=43). With respect to Spanish, 28 (62%) reported Spanish as the first language they learned at home; 11 (24%) reported learning both Spanish and English; six (13%) reported learning English as their first language. As for current home language, 34 (76%) reported using both Spanish and English; 6

[2] This project received IRB exemption in July of 2018 (IRB File#2018-0846).

(11%) mainly Spanish; 5 (11%) mainly English. Slightly more were educated primarily in English (N=24, 53%), compared to the 21 participants (47%) who received a mixture of English and Spanish in their kindergarten through high school education. Lastly, the overwhelming majority reported using Spanish on a daily basis out in their community (N=36, 80%), the remaining nine (20%) reporting that they use it 'often'. Indeed, although the demographic particulars of the cohort are somewhat heterogeneous, all of the students identified as New Yorkers and shared similar upbringings and daily usage patterns with regard to Spanish.

Regarding the questionnaire, this instrument consisted of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions and was offered as an optional extra-credit assignment toward the end of each semester. The questionnaires were primarily anonymous so as to encourage openness with regard to participants' views and ideologies on the various topics. Some demographic information, however, was necessary for categorization purposes, such as the information presented above. Because the objective of the study was explicitly explained to the participants, there were neither distractor nor control questions. Our rational for excluding distractor questions was that the study's purpose centered on students' direct opinions, viz., there was no 'right' or 'wrong' answer possible, thus there was no need to manufacture a survey of this type. As for control questions, because several of the questions were open-ended, we were confident that students would respond in an honest and thorough manner, not merely circling random options. The multiple-choice questions consisted of Likert-type scales.

Finally, we analyzed the collected data both quantitatively and qualitatively. Again, the primary objective was to analyze and measure the data for patterns suggesting the existence of a homogenous ideology and/or linguistic attitude amongst these HSS students. In other words, we were looking for commonalities that surfaced from the responses provided. With the multiple-choice questions, because these were psychometric in nature, analysis was conducted via descriptive and comparative quantitation of the responses. With the open-ended questions, we developed a numbered scale that captured the general sentiment of each of the open-ended responses, then ascribed a number accordingly in order to quantify the data. For instance, the question *Did this class make you feel like your Spanish was "wrong" or substandard? Please explain* was assigned 1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = sometimes. We then looked at each of the open-ended responses through a qualitative lens in order to determine which number best represented the participant's experience. Indeed, it was necessary to exercise some personal judgement here because it was simply not realistic to present each and every students' open-ended response. Ultimately, we analyzed these responses within the same theoretical framework as we did with the quantitative method, i.e., searching for commonalities amongst the cohort of HSS students.

3. Findings & Discussion

We present here the quantitative results from the questionnaire for the entire cohort, distributed across four tables based on the thematic principle

of the specific questions. We begin with questions concerning self-perceived linguistic ability, presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Self-perceived Linguistic Ability

Question	Options	Answers
1. What language do you consider your "dominant" language, i.e., the language you feel most confident in?	English	N=39 / 87%
	Spanish	N=6 / 13%

Question	Options	Answers
2. Which one of the following best describes your bilingual skills?	English better than Spanish	N=36 / 80%
	Spanish better than English	N=5 / 11%
	Spanish and English are equal	N=4 / 9%
	I don't consider myself bilingual	N=0 / 0%

Question	Options	Answers
3. Do you ever feel hesitant or fearful to speak Spanish?	Yes	N=15 / 33%
	No	N=15 / 33%
	Sometimes	N=15 / 33%

The first two questions from Table 1 are similar in nature, both concerning the participants' self-perceived linguistic abilities in terms of dominant language and bilingual skill. Both show that the overwhelming majority perceive English as the stronger language, with 87% reporting it as their "dominant language" (Q1), and 80% reporting "English better than Spanish" on the topic of bilingual skill (Q2). The last question (Q3), however, presents an even distribution for how participants feel with regards to hesitation or fear when speaking Spanish: 33% reported they did; 33% reported the did not; 33% reported they did sometimes. Although Table 1 does not answer fully our question of whether or not a collective ideology exists, it does begin to suggest that it very well might. Indeed, if we were to draw a conclusion based solely on the answers provided here, we could submit that this population identifies as Spanish-English bilingual, but is more confident in English. Let us move on to the other questions to either corroborate or refute this idea.

Table 2
Self-evaluated Language Skills

Question	Options	Answers
4. How would you evaluate your skill level of SPOKEN Spanish?	Excellent	N=6 / 13%
	Good	N=20 / 44%
	Decent	N=17 / 38%
	Poor	N=2 / 4%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
5. How would you evaluate your skill level of SPOKEN English?	Excellent	N=24 / 53%
	Good	N=18 / 40%
	Decent	N=3 / 7%
	Poor	N=0 / 0%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
6. How would you evaluate your skill level of WRITING in Spanish?	Excellent	N=2 / 4%
	Good	N=15 / 33%
	Decent	N=18 / 40%
	Poor	N=10 / 22%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
7. How would you evaluate your skill level of WRITING in English?	Excellent	N=25 / 56%
	Good	N=17 / 38%
	Decent	N=3 / 7%
	Poor	N=0 / 0%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
8. How would you evaluate your skill level of READING in Spanish?	Excellent	N=8 / 18%
	Good	N=25 / 56%
	Decent	N=11 / 24%
	Poor	N=1 / 2%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
9. How would you evaluate your skill level of READING in English?	Excellent	N=28 / 62%
	Good	N=16 / 36%
	Decent	N=1 / 2%
	Poor	N=0 / 0%

Table 2 centers on participants' self-perceived speaking, writing, and reading skill levels for both Spanish and English. A quick scan of the results reveals that English is the dominant language across all three language skills. That is, the majority of the participants described their English skills as *excellent* (speaking, 53%; writing, 56%; reading, 62%). Spanish skills,

however, were placed primarily at either *good* or *decent*. These results, therefore, do corroborate the idea proposed above, i.e., the participants are bilingual, but consider English their stronger language across all linguistic competencies. We move now to Table 3, which addresses specific labels associated with bilingualism and heritage speakers, in hopes of shedding even more light on the linguistic identity(ies) of this community.

Table 3
Linguistic Labels & Identity

Question	**Options**	**Answers**
10. Have you ever heard the label "Heritage Spanish speaker"?	Yes	N=25 / 55%
	No	N=20 / 45%
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
11. Which of the following best describes your opinion of the term *SPANGLISH*?	OK with it	N=34 / 76%
	Not OK with it	N=10 / 22%
	No opinion	N=1 / 2%
	N/A	N/A
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
12. What linguistic label do you feel best describes your Spanish?	I am a NATIVE Spanish speaker	N=11 / 24%
	I am a BILINGUAL Spanish speaker	N=25 / 56%
	I am a HERITAGE Spanish speaker	N=9 / 20%
	Other	N=0 / 0%

The results from Table 3 provide a deeper look into how common linguistic labels are perceived by the very groups they are meant to describe. *Heritage Spanish Speaker* from questions 10, for example, is a much-used term in academia and linguistic circles, yet just over half of the participants here (55%) were aware of its existence. On the other hand, *Spanglish* (#11) was clearly well known and seen as overwhelmingly positive with 76% of the participants expressing being "ok" with the term. This finding is at odds with the position presented above by Otheguy and Stern (2010), i.e., that this term is harmful and scornful, when in fact these participants are largely content with the term. Thus, the question arises: is the issue with this linguistic label intrinsic, or is it more a question of overestimation and overanalysis by linguistic scholars? That is to say, who ultimately has the say-so in the use and perception of linguistic identity terms: the scholars or the community? This philosophical question of course rests outside the boundaries of this paper, but its implications warrant mention. Finally, question 12 asks outright which term best describes the linguistic identities of these

participants with regards to Spanish and 56% indicated *bilingual*, followed by *native* at 24%, then *heritage* at 20%. Therefore, it would appear that, although slightly more than half use *bilingual* in order to describe themselves as Spanish speakers, there is not a universally preferred label. We move now to the academic experience of taking a college-level Spanish course for this cohort of HSS.

Table 4
Evaluation of Academic Spanish Experience

Question	**Options**	**Answers**
13. Since taking this Spanish class, would you say your LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE in Spanish has:	Improved	N=24 / 53%
	Stayed the same	N=15 / 33%
	Lowered	N=6 / 13%
	Not sure	N=0 / 0%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
14. Compare the Spanish you grew up with to the Spanish taught in class and from the textbook. Pick the best response that describes your experience.	My Spanish was very similar to the Spanish taught	N=7 / 16%
	My Spanish was somewhat similar to the Spanish taught	N=16 / 36%
	My Spanish was somewhat different from the Spanish taught	N=14 / 31%
	My Spanish was very different from the Spanish taught	N=8 / 18%
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
15. Did this class make you feel like your Spanish was 'wrong' or substandard?	No	N=29 / 64%
	Sometimes	N=13 / 29%
	Yes	N=3 / 7%
	N/A	N/A
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
16. What specific areas of your Spanish have improved as a result of this class?	Speaking in Spanish	N=11 / 24%
	Reading & Writing in Spanish	N=16 / 36%
	Both	N=18 / 40%
	N/A	N/A
Question	**Options**	**Answers**
17. Which of the following best describes your general attitude toward Spanish since taking this class?	More Positive Attitude	N=35 / 78%
	The Same Attitude	N=9 / 20%
	Less Positive Attitude	N=1 / 2%
	N/A	N/A

Question	Options	Answers
18. And what about continuing studying Spanish?	I want to continue studying Spanish	N=26 / 58%
	I do not want to continue studying Spanish	N=5 / 11%
	I am undecided	N=14 / 31%
	N/A	N/A

The topic of the HSS's experience regarding Spanish in an academic environment has received much attention in recently years, and rightfully so: these individuals are faced with an entirely distinct set of circumstances for which traditional foreign language pedagogies does not apply. To be sure, much improvement has been made in this area over the past several decades. The aim of the questions presented in Table 4 was to explore the HSS students' experience by asking pointed and direct questions in hopes of deepening our awareness of potential assets and deficits in the HSS classroom. The results indicate that the students' experience was largely positive, highlighted most in questions 13, 15, 17, and 18 where more than half stated their confidence in Spanish had improved since taking the class (#13, 53%); that the course did not induce a feeling of inferiority with regard to their own Spanish (#15, 64%); that they have a more positive attitude toward Spanish in general after taking the course (#17, 78%); and that they wish to continue studying Spanish (#18, 58%).

On the question of similarity between home Spanish and that of the classroom (#14), the results were more varied, the larger concentrations indicating the two varieties were somewhat similar (36%), or somewhat different (31%). Lastly, the bulk of the HSS reported that both their speaking and reading/writing improved (#16, 40%), or just their reading/writing improved (36%). The results from Table 4 are not purely objective, i.e., student bias stemming from a myriad of external factors very likely influenced their responses to the questions. For example, the manner in which the course was delivered; the materials utilized; the student-professor relationship; the professor's demeanor and personality; the professor's training and experience working with this population, etc. Indeed, all of these, and likely more, certainly impact the student experience, but are also impossible variables for which one can control. Therefore, although we acknowledge this reality and the shortcomings that accompany it, we find the results here relevant to the body of research centered on heritage speakers because this data comes directly from the source, to wit, HSS themselves.

4. Conclusions & Future Research

The overarching aim of this study has been to shine some additional light on the experience and personal linguistic beliefs directly from HSS in NYC. As we've noted throughout this paper, so much of the literature is centered on the scholar's appraisal of this population and the resulting linguistic designations and labels that they, the experts, apply. From there, countless hours are dedicated to defending and/or deconstructing these ideas in a very

insular bubble comprised of other experts, leading to a sort of echo chamber wherein the very subjects under study are entirely absent. To be sure, the intention of the expert is not nefarious. Instead, we argue that the collective ideology of the subjects under study must be taken into much more consideration than it has been. This paper, albeit only a small first step, represents an attempt to achieve that goal. Although there does not appear to be a uniform ideology amongst the participants here, we do observe notable patterns, several of which call into question the validity of commonly held linguistic beliefs about this population. This topic, therefore, warrants further investigation.

We acknowledge that the sample presented here is not substantially robust, i.e., the participants are all from one specific college campus situated in the Bronx, NYC. We also acknowledge the somewhat limited vehicle from which the data was collected. Indeed, a questionnaire is not the ideal method for authentic data. Future research on this or a similar area of investigation could include a much larger sample and a stronger collection methodology in order to better understand this complex matter. For example, a sample that included several if not all five boroughs of NYC (The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island) with many more participants and a semi-controlled sociolinguistic oral interview as the data source. These field augmentations would certainly yield more compelling and insightful findings. We leave that task to future undertakings.

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