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Speak English Your In America

The moment I realized being bilingual in Spanish and English could actually benefit me rather than make me fail was when my education journey from daycare through college allowed me to learn how I could help translate, spread culture and communicate good mental health skills with those who may speak Spanish only. Growing up I had the hardest time learning to read and write at the same level as my classmates because most of my classmates only took English classes while a handful of us was in Spanish immersion. Once I began middle school I realized it wasn't as bad as I thought. Winning my 7th-grade class spelling bee made me confident in the route I was going with my Spanish and English speaking skills. A lot of questions on standardized tests would ask how many languages I spoke and the older I got the more excited I would get on being able to present my bilingual skills. That created the idea that since I can master speaking two languages it was possible for me to learn another. My fascination with learning another language soon came crashing down when my family from El Salvador told me that they were impressed that I knew Spanish, but would never pass as a true Salvadoran because I didn't have the accent and didn't seem confident in my Spanish. I always found myself having to prove to myself that I was capable of knowing Spanish well enough to fit in. There's a saying that goes "No soy de aqui, ni de aya," meaning I'm not from here and I'm not from there. It resonated with me for many years because my entire life I was told my Spanish was good

compared to my siblings and friends, but a few encounters made me question myself on how well I knew Spanish.

There's always this in the middle feeling of being from the U.S. and English being my first language and people just assume that because I have a brown complexion that I've heard "Mexican speaker," What is that? Well, I'm assuming they mean I'm a Spanish speaker. In this criterion, there was this great concern of who I wanted to prove wrong first those who question my Spanish or those who questioned my English. Just Like Hinojosa, "When my cousin told me I would never escape that life of poverty, I became determined to prove him wrong" (Hinojosa). That is why just like Hinojosa I'm determined to prove to those that being bilingual is useful in the aspect that I am more than capable of helping those who may need it, especially if those who may not speak English need translator. I could also take on the task of spreading my knowledge on all culture and different accents of Spanish there may be, rather than having ignorance on being told if I'm a "Mexican speaker," There's also the aspect of bringing awareness to educate those who may not know about taking care of their mental health since in a lot of Latino culture it isn't something they touch base on as a family or as an individual. A common issue in the U.S. is that when someone hears an individual talking another language other than English they are told to speak English because they are in the U.S., but what people don't seem to know is that Individuals who speak more than one language tend to have the capability to use more parts of the brain, think of it as an exercise for the brain.

When doubting yourself on any kind of work you come across causes you to have moments of failure, it's not the best feeling in the world and for most it the leading reason why they quit pursuing the task. Realizing my Spanish may not have been the best to Spanish

speaking natives, I took it upon myself to not give up on myself because I knew how much I would lose myself if I didn't continue to speak Spanish and learning more about how it became such a thing of being told not to speak another language other than English. When I began working was when I noticed a lot of Latinos would come into the grocery store here and there and would ask for help, with their broken English, hard to understand, but of course, I didn't like to assume that they may speak Spanish. I would kindly ask if they did speak Spanish and as soon as I asked those simple words it was always a bright smile running right behind it, which made me recognize more joy in being able to help those who may need it, even for simple tasks like asking for something in a grocery store. Those moments encourage me to always hold on to my Spanish even if it wasn't perfect, it was perfect enough to get a score of 4 out of 5 on my AP exam for Spanish. It was the beginning steps of realizing that I was more than capable of proving those who question me on my language that I could exercise my brain in a matter that was helpful to others and myself. In college now, I am able to take sociology classes that have taught me so much more about our society and a better platform to speak for myself and other aspects that are important to recognize how our government drifts people to believe certain ideas and follow harsher belief to how to treat one another in our newer generations. Reasons why I found myself upholding my head high and proving to more people day by day that practicing another language is better than just believing that you are forced to only speak English, simply because it may make people in our society uncomfortable