

## Attitudes towards bilingualism in the monolingual workplace

The goal of the study presented in this poster is to uncover the opinions that exist among Americans in regards to bilingualism and non-English speakers in the United States, specifically in the workplace. The central motivation for this study revolves around the search for justification as to why many Americans are so fearful of languages other than English. What attitudes do Americans have towards their bilingual coworkers? How do Americans feel about bilingualism in general? Do Americans believe that language and the ability to work are correlated?

In order to address these questions, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to employees (N=20) of two different companies, a doctor's office and a police department. The employees were all native speakers of English. The goal of the questionnaire was to elicit responses about the participants' attitudes towards coworkers who do not speak English as a first language or who do not speak English at all. The beginning of the questionnaire asks about the participants' general attitudes towards bilingualism. The remaining questions focus on bilingualism in the workplace. Research for this presentation also looked at other scholars' opinions toward the topic of negative language attitudes and bilingualism in the United States. One of the topics covered in the questionnaire revolved around whether or not Americans believed a second language could make them more successful. Although most respondents (16 respondents) "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that speaking multiple languages could increase their success, the remainder of their questionnaire responses reflected negative opinions towards individuals who spoke a language other than English in the workplace. Older respondents seemed to be generally less affected by people who spoke a language different than their own, whereas respondents under 30 expressed more negative attitudes toward non-English speakers. These findings represent the necessity to educate Americans about bilingualism and how to coexist with other cultures. In order to fix this problem, Americans need to be taught that there is no correlation between which language someone speaks and their abilities. The poster will provide a summary of the questionnaire results and discuss the implications of the findings.