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Arielle Lanae Akines  
May, 2019

AFRO-LATINO LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES  
AND LATIN AMERICA

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Hispanic Studies

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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By

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## ABSTRACT

This research project sought to collectively study the identity and linguistic attitudes of Afro-Latinos in the diaspora and in the homeland. The diaspora being the United States and the homeland being Latin America and Bogotá, Colombia. This study employs Tabouret-Keller's (1998) concepts on language as acts of identity and Toribio's (2006) model which incorporates race and ethnicity as factors that play a role in how language and identity work together.

The participants in this study represent only a small population of Afro-Latinos from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The interviews included in this project are an authentic reflection of Afro-Latinos living in and outside of the United States. These first-hand experiences allow Afro-Latinos to be heard and reflect on their truths as Black Latinos. It offers a panoramic view on Afro-Latino language attitudes, their identity, relationships with other Latinos and Black peoples, and their connection to Latin America.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my mother, Deborah J. Akines: This is for you! You have been my rock. You have run this race with me and have always been in my corner. I was able to complete this journey because of you. Thank you for every sacrifice and for teaching me to do the hard things. I love you. We did it!

To my brothers, Anthony and Armani, and family, thank you for believing in me, supporting me, and praying for me. To my niece and nephews Zi'Hire, Zariah, and Zayne: you all are my heart. You have no idea how much your hugs, beautiful smiling faces, and "I love you's" have helped me to this point. You can be anything you want to be!

To my dissertation committee, I cannot express my sincere appreciation to you enough. To Dr. Gutiérrez: Thank you. You have been a constant each step of the way. Thank you for your encouragement, your constant input, dedication to this project and mentorship. Dr. Fairclough: your support has been invaluable. You were always there to answer my questions, to ask me how I was doing, and to cheer me along the way. I have learned so much from you and I will never forget your kindness. Dr. Balestra: thank you for your constant support, your feedback, and for believing in my project. I appreciate you. Dr. Wheeler: thank you for your dedication to this project. Even from a distance, your support has been paramount.

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## DEDICATION

I am standing on the shoulders of giants, my dear grandparents, Howard and Ruth, who I remember every day.

I went all the way Grandma. Just like we promised.

*“Y bendigo al cielo porque quiso Dios que negro azabache fuese  
 mi color  
 Y ya comprendí  
 AL FIN  
 Ya tengo la llave  
 NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO  
 NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO  
 NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO NEGRO  
 NEGRO NEGRO  
 ¡ Negra soy ¡”  
 (Me gritaron negra,  
 Victoria Santa Cruz)*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Behind Africa, Latin America has one of the largest populations of Afro descendants in the world. Afro-Latinos are not a *new* demographic in Latin America, but in many countries their existence has been systematically suppressed. In December 2015, for the first time in history, Mexico nationally recognized its Black citizens. The country distributed a national survey named the “*Encuesta Intercensal*”, which identified 1.38 million Mexican citizens of African descent. This preliminary survey served as a test to see if Black citizens existed in the country and further, if they would actually identify themselves as such. The test survey affirmed the presence of Afro-Mexicans and secured an official category of “Black” in the 2020 national census. While Mexico made a large effort to end its national erasure of Afro-

Mexicans, what could not be celebrated is that it took 496 years to do so, from the arrival of the first slave, Juan Cortés, in 1519, who accompanied Hernán Cortés, in what was the New Spain. Vaughn (2001) cites that the, “*indigenas*, apparently captivated by his dark skin, never having seen an African before, took him for a god” (Vaughn, 2001, p. 4). The indigenous people used visual representation to identify otherness between themselves and the African man. His melanin was deeper than theirs and was unfamiliar. They had become accustomed to the appearance of whiter skin, and naturally their own. But dark skin was special and worthy of worship.

African immigration did not begin with the enslavement of African peoples. The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy African Diaspora Program cites that, “African immigration to the Americas is likely to have begun before the European exploration of the region. Indeed, Christopher Columbus had African crewmates sailing with him on his first expedition in 1492” (The African Diaspora, 2013, p. 18). The Afro-Latino presence in the United States can be traced to the first English Settlements. Jiménez Román and Flores (2010) cite that the earliest Africans in North America were Afro-Latinos. They played a role in the settlement of St. Augustine in 1565 and “were also instrumental in the exploration, conquest, and settlement of the United States Southwest” (pg. 17). Afro-Latinos played key roles in the settlement of present-day Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas.

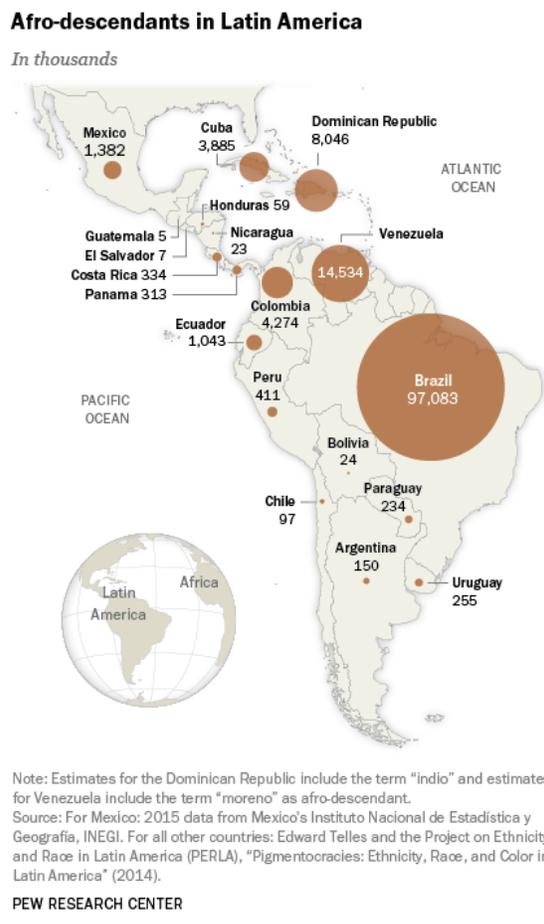
The African Diaspora occurred between the 16th and 19th centuries, over 36,000 voyages came to the Americas. Some 10-12.5 million Africans were forcibly transported and enslaved in North and South America, establishing African heritage in both nations. Some historians have stated that during the African Diaspora, 50% of enslaved Africans ended up in Latin America and only 5% came to the United States. This data points towards the deep African roots that exist

in Latin America, in not only its people but also in its cultural and religious practices. Slavery was abolished in most Latin American countries around 1820 after their independence from Spain but continued in Brazil until 1888 (Seelke, 2008). In the United States, the 13th Amendment passed in 1865 abolished slavery. The Civil Rights Movement, abolishment of Jim Crow Laws, national American heroes, like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, contributed to an international awareness of African Americans in the United States. Alternatively, Black people in Latin America did not have a collective movement towards equality and rights, which is not to say that they did not experience less harsh conditions and treatment as enslaved people, nor to suggest that Black leaders and groups did not work towards equality and the abolishment of slavery in their respective countries (i.e. the 1757 first liberation in the Americas of 127 slaves in Antioquia, Colombia by Doña Javiera Lodoño) (Torres López, 2010).

As in the United States, the end of slavery in Latin America left a lingering effect on Afro-Latinos and initiated Black rebellion and self-liberation movements. During the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, enslaved Afro-Latinos escaped and formed their own communities in Colombia, Honduras, and Brazil. For example, Seelke (2008) notes that the “Garifuna in Honduras have developed distinct racial, cultural, and political identities based on communal land ties in areas that are geographically isolated from the rest of their countries populations” (pg. 4). While the absence of a collective national revolution for equality and rights in Latin America could be a major factor in the lack of representation and awareness of Black people in Latin America, it does not overshadow the individual rebellions and activism in each community. Afro-Latinos were leaders in the fight for equity and equality both in Latin America and in the United States. Today, there are Afro-Latinos in every Latin American country with Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Cuba having the largest populations. While some Latin

American maps include rough percentages on the number of Afro-descendants in each country, they do not provide evidence of the extent of the African presence (Rogers, 2006), and many times need to be updated with current numbers. The map below by the Pew Research Center provides the percentage of Black Latinos from 2015.

**Figure 1. Afro-descendants in Latin America**



1

The Congressional Research Service Report for Congress notes that,

<sup>1</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/01/afro-latino-a-deeply-rooted-identity-among-u-s-hispanics/>

Afro-descendant leaders in Latin America have used international forums, multilateral donors, and diplomatic channels to garner support for increased rights and representation for their communities. Since 1990, these efforts have resulted in significant improvements in the formal rights afforded to their communities in a relatively short period of time. They have also been relatively successful in garnering international support for their movement, including support from some Administration officials and Members of Congress. Afro-Latino mobilization efforts have been less successful in galvanizing grassroots support for race-based public policies (2008, p. 7)

and ensuring that these laws are executed once implemented. Afro-Latinos continue to face challenges such as public awareness and group identification. The lack of national representation in Latin America directly affects representation on social, political, and educational levels, within self (of some Afro-Latino groups) and further in the United States.

The presence of Black Latinos in the United States and knowledge of Black Latinos in Latin America “has not been matched by their visible presence in public and media representations of that experience...Afro-Latinos have faced virtually total invisibility and erasure as a possible component of either the Latin@ or the Black population: as far as the mainstream media are concerned, Latin@s are not Black and Blacks are not Latin@” (Jiménez Román and Flores, 2010). The erasure of Black Latinos from Latin America would come at a great cost due to their contributions in every aspect of Latin American life.

In recent years, Latin American countries have begun to make efforts towards a national representation on media platforms of their Black populations. Mexico has produced films such as *La Negra*, putting Afro-Mexicans on the big screen and on a national television channel. In

Colombia, telenovelas such as *La mamá del diez* and *Siempre Bruja* have placed Afro-Latinas in leading acting roles. Garifunas in Central America are recognized through national holidays to celebrate their Afro-descendants in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Belize. In the picture below, Garifunas in Honduras celebrate 218 years of presence in the territory of Honduras.

**Figure 2. Garifunas in Honduras**



2

In the Dominican Republic, influencers such as Miss Rizos have taken a leading role in Afro-Latinas wearing their natural afro-textured hair and being proud of their blackness. Miss Rizos is a platform of Black Pride and activism through social media platforms, a hair salon, and a public website that posts articles featuring Afro-textured hair, regimes, and the realities of Black Latinos [pictured below].

<sup>2</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.hondurastips.hn/2015/04/14/garifunas-celebran-218-anos-de-presencia-en-territorio-hondureno/>

**Figure 3. Miss Rizos<sup>3</sup>**



In the 2010 national census, Afro-Argentines were included for the first time since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 2013, Argentina approved the first law, Law 26852, that established their legislative representation. This law later established November 8<sup>th</sup> as the national day of Afro-Argentines and Afro-culture (Loango, 2015). In Bolivia, Afro-Bolivians were included for the first time in the 2012 national census. The national census identified Afro-Bolivians as a distinct category, “allowing for a more accurate assessment of their population as well as providing further formal recognition of their place in Bolivian society” (Minority Rights Group International, 2018).

While the United States has not nationally recognized Afro-Latinos, Afro-Latina artists, such as Cardi B and Amara La Negra, have raised awareness about Black Latinos through their music. On social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, Afro-Latinos have begun to form communities and use hashtags such as #Afrolatina, #Garifuna, #BlackLatino as a form of activism towards representation. The use of those hashtags was essential to the success of this research project as 90% of the Afro-Latino subjects in the United States were contacted through

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<sup>3</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.missrizos.com/impacto-social/>

social media. Also, in the media and broadcasted in 2011 on the Public Broadcasting Service network, was a four-part documentary titled *Black in Latin America*<sup>4</sup> by Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. The documentary touches on the wide array of contributions that Afro-Latinos have made to religion, music, food, and art to name a few.

Recognizing the connection between representation and education, a 2006 article by Carmen Villegas Rogers, details the influences that Afro-Latinos have contributed in almost every aspect of Latin American Life “its history, its people, its music, its religion, its literature, its language, and even its behavioral patterns” (pg. 563) yet they are not featured or studied in Spanish curriculum courses. On a linguistic and educational level, second language Spanish textbooks do not feature Afro-Latinos, and very often exclude their existence. This is important because Spanish is the most popular second-language taken in the United States educational system. Rogers (2006) notes that “a closer look into these domains, teachers can begin to adjust the imbalance created by the teaching of Hispanic cultures from a Eurocentric perspective. Thus, a more inclusive approach that comprises the contributions of the African presence in the region should present a more accurate image of Latin American culture to our students” (pg. 563). This would make a significant impact towards public Afro-Latino awareness, across generations, if students are taught about the demographic as part of the core curriculum in learning the language.

Afro-Latinos are both Black and Latino and many are linguistically diverse. They are part of the Latin American and North American experience at the same time. The Houston

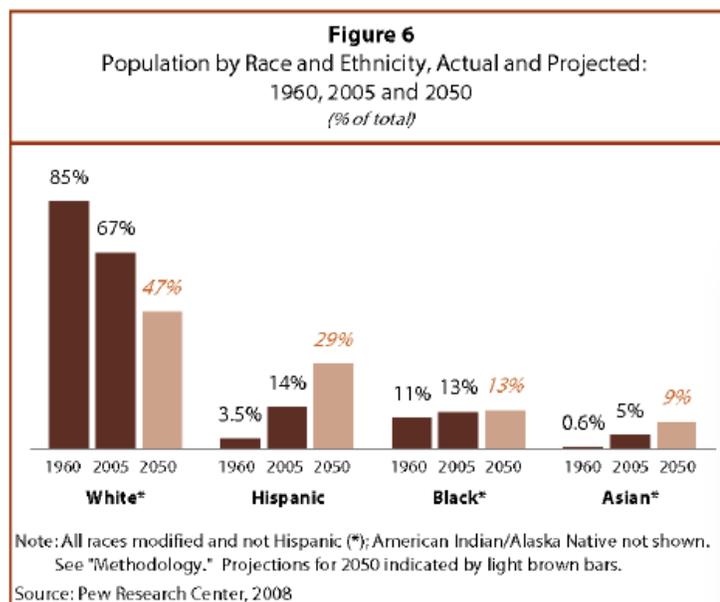
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<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/>

Chronicle’s 2016 article, “Afro-Latinos in Texas Proud of Identity, History, Languages” cites that, “Afro-Latinos... are uniquely able to bridge the gaps between the United States' largest racial groups. They can connect blacks and whites, Latinos and African-Americans”. To understand the Afro-Latino experience we must “be guided by a clear appreciation of the transnational discourse or identity field linking Black Latin Americans and Latin@s across national and regional lines” (Jiménez Román and Flores, 2010). Afro-Latinos embody both experiences at once.

The 2010 United States Census Bureau Quick Facts reports that Hispanics are the largest minority and account for 18.1% of the total population. The Pew Research Center has projected that in 2050, the Hispanic will rise to be 29% of the population and account for 60% of the nation's population growth.

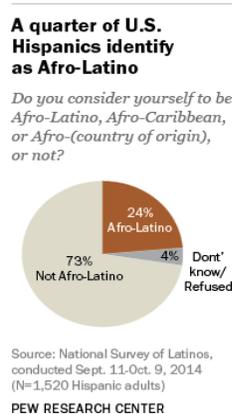
**Figure 4. Hispanic Population by Race and Ethnicity** <sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.pewhispanic.org/topics/national-survey-of-latinos-2/>

In 2014, the Pew Research Center conducted the National Survey of Latinos. The survey asked participants, “Do you consider yourself to be Afro-Latino, Afro-Caribbean, or Afro- (country of origin), or not?”. This survey was significant because it was the first time that a nationally representative survey, in the United States, sought to elicit information about blackness within the Latino community, and further, asked Latinos to self-identify as black. The survey found that 24% of the U.S. Latino population identified as Afro-Latino and that they tend to live on the East Coast or in the Southern states.

**Figure 5. 24% Afro-Latinos in the U.S.**



6

This data is important due to the population projections of Hispanics in 2050. The United States Census has projected that number of Hispanics in the United States will triple in size from 42 million in 2005 to 128 million in 2050. If Afro-Latinos continue to account for 24% of all Latinos in 2050, more than 31 million will be living in the United States but this number is expected to rise significantly due to natality rates and immigration. According to Tanya Katerí

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<sup>6</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/01/afro-latino-a-deeply-rooted-identity-among-u-s-hispanics/>

Hernández, the evidence of “self-identified Afro-Mexicans and Afro-Latinos disrupts the ability to assume a non-white racial identity completely separate from any association with African ancestry” (2003). When non-white Latinos come to the United States, some hope to assimilate into the dominant white culture through the accepting of a mulatto identity, transported from Latin America, and distancing of themselves from blackness in the United States and the negative stereotypes that come with it. This evidence should eradicate the ideology of “Blackness as foreign to Latino/a identity” and prompt scholars to address the “structural inequalities of racial hierarchy” that exist among this community” (Hernández, 2003).

Despite the historical and generational presence of African heritage, Black Latinos have been erased and pushed to invisibility, even within their own bodies. Anti-Black rhetoric can encourage Afro-Latinos to ignore their Blackness and identify with their white-aligning Latino counterparts. Pujols (2018) writes

“many Afro-Latinos, who are often ridiculed by their families and friends for having “pelo malo” (“bad hair”) are encouraged to marry whiter or lighter skinned partners in favor of “improving the race”. Many Latinos have a family member or neighbor who identifies as “indio” or “mestizo” but could pass for African-American walking down the street. My dad is one of those people”.

To address the complexity of identity among Latinos, Pujols (2018) cites that Afro-Latino experiences are undeniably shaped by their race and how Latinos view them not only as Black but also as ‘other’. The documentary *Black in Latin America* by Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Wheeler (2015) describes the complexity of race among Dominicans. Wheeler (2015) cites that “after centuries of meaning making in the Dominican Republic, the word *raza* (race) can be interpreted in a number of ways. When participants describe their own *raza*, the response reveals

several underlying subcategories or paradigms of race”. The way that Afro-Latinos both within and outside of the United States view themselves can be a direct reflection of national representation. For example, if the national census does not offer a way for Afro-Latinos to identify as both Black and Latino, within the same category, it allows room for national and international erasure and invisibility of the demographic.

With the increasing population of Latinos in the United States, we must also examine the growth of Spanish, which is now the second language most spoken in the United States, behind English with a projection of 43 million Latino speakers in 2050. The Pew Research Center (2013) has reported that Spanish is the most popular language spoken in non-Hispanic U.S. homes than any other language with media platforms such as Spanish language television leading in ratings above other non-English networks.

While the number of Latinos in the United States is on the rise and Spanish is the second language spoken in country, it is projected that by the year 2020, two-thirds of Latinos speakers in the United States will no longer speak Spanish and opt for English-only households. This projection estimates about 34% English-only homes in 2020. Factors that influence this shift are political laws that restrict the use of Spanish in education and government settings, cultural pressures, and American ideologies as monolingual English speakers. Zentella (1997) notes that these metaphors of “linguistics hegemony” make it seem acceptable that American-English be legally and socially protected against a Spanish-speaking onslaught. Further, as demonstrated in the United States Afro-Latino group of this study, Latinos embrace code-switching and Spanglish because they reflect their identity as belonging to both worlds and contribute to a positive pan-Latino and non-white identity.

Afro-Latinos are linguistically diverse. While some are bilingual in English and Spanish, others are multilingual and speak Portuguese, French, and Haitian Creole. The linguistic choices of Afro-Latinos add another layer to their identity in the United States especially if they decide to maintain their Spanish throughout generations (Fishman, 1964). For example, they can be perceived as monolingual English-speaking African-Americans, monolingual Spanish-speaking Latinos, or bilinguals.

The attitudes towards language use and identity among Afro-Latinos in the United States has been scarcely studied. Hernández (2017) has noted that the academic study of Afro-Latino identity predates the origin of Latino/a Studies as a field. In particular, the contributions of Afro-Puerto Rican, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg and The Schomburg Center which is the world's leading facility on the African Diaspora and experiences of its descendants. While advancements have been made towards Latino studies, there remains a necessity for studies on Afro-Latinos in all academic arenas and for our purposes, specifically about the language attitudes of this demographic.

### 1.1 Theoretical Framework

There are two principal tenets of this study that work together to understand Afro-Latinos both in the United States and in Latin America. The areas of language and identity are so closely woven together that they are inseparable. In fact, Tabouret-Keller believes that language acts are acts of identity (1998, P.1). Thus, a study on the language attitudes of Afro-Latinos will inherently include a study on identity. This investigation follows Tabouret-Keller's concepts on language and identity which includes key descriptions on identity, the dynamics of identity, the complex relationship between the two, group affiliation. Semantically, language can be an external behavior that allows that categorization of a speaker as a member of a group and it can

be used to identify oneself as belonging to a group. The latter semantic field implying ingroup versus outgroup status. Afro-Latinos who speak Spanish can be considered ingroup members as 'Latino' and when they speak English, they can also be considered ingroup members as African Americans. Both of these frameworks build a relationship between attitudes that will be formed about members within their group and others outside of their group.

Dynamically, "at any given time a person's identity is a heterogeneous set made up of all the name or identities given to and taken up by her" (Tabouret-Keller, 1998, p.2). The layers of identity include, but are not limited to, both social and cultural spaces. Identity is formed within the groups (institutional, professional, friends) that individuals belong to, and also by their surroundings. Language can also be closely tied to identity in that one single feature can indicate ingroup or outgroup membership. One example would be the pronunciation of a certain word. Language can be bound to identity in bilingual settings where a bilingual speaker may be identified by linguistic features deriving from language contact and "in certain situations, this gives rise to feeling of inferiority, discrimination, or exclusion from the dominant group, or conversely, the feeling of familiarity, recognition, complicity, among those who share the language and/or the contact situation" (Tabouret-Keller, 1998, p. 4). Language can be used to indicated group affiliation which includes and excludes others, but it is equally important to express that identity is composed of a network of identities, that include allegiances, passions and political implications.

The application of these concepts offered by Tabouret-Keller (1998) have been implemented in Toribio's (2006) study, *Linguistic Displays of Identity Among Dominicans in National and Diasporic Settings*. For this purpose, Toribio (2006) is used as a model for this

study of Afro-Latinos in diaspora and in national settings. Toribio's (2006) model incorporates race and ethnicity as factors that play a role in how language and identity work together.

The present study includes two Black Latino groups in each of the aforementioned settings and aims to apply Tabouret-Keller (1998) and Toribio (2006) as the basis to discuss Afro-Latino identity in the United States and in Latin America. The present study is unique because it includes two groups that can think of themselves as both ingroup and outgroup members. For example, in the United States, Afro-Latinos can classify themselves as African - American, Latino, and American being ingroup respectively, and outgroup members as descendants of the diaspora, migrants, and deeply connected to their homeland (Latin America). The Latin America group in Colombia shares this same reality. Afro-Colombian populations are located along the Pacific Coast and in the Caribbean regions. In Bogotá, Black Colombians can maintain the *here* versus *there* reality, referencing the homeland as the Pacific Coast, their *pueblo*, and the Caribbean.

According to the Mittelberg and Waters (1992), *the proximal host model* includes three social actors that form identity among ethnic groups. First, the individual determines their own identity using positive and negative elements from society, including language. The next factor is society at large that uses elements to determine the individual's identity, including positive and negative tenets. Lastly, the proximal host "the group that society would define as the immigrant's co-ethnics" which also includes elements that develop ethnic identity (p. 416). Mittelberg and Waters (1992) suggest that, "we distinguish among groups defined by language-Hispanic groups in the USA- and those defined by race such as Black Americans. Minority groups are the least integrated into wider society and have the least amount of choice in terms of self-identification" (p. 418). The present study suggests that Afro-Latino identity and language attitudes are formed

through their experiences as racial and ethnic group members, as individuals, ingroup members and outgroup members. This study uses the *proximal host model* to elicit generalized group attitudes in the United States to be compared with attitudes in Latin America.

## 1.2 Importance of the Study

This dissertation contributes to fields such as Sociolinguistics in its study of how Afro-Latinos use language to break societal and cultural norms, their dialectal preferences, and use of language in public and social settings affects their identity. For anthropological studies, this project helps us understand the interactions of Afro-Latinos in various settings and analyzes how they engage with society in cross-cultural settings. Ethnic studies could benefit from this project as Afro-Latinos describe their identity as being complex. As a demographic between two worlds, Ethnic Studies can use this project to understand the changing definitions of ethnicity and race as fixed-features.

The invisibility of Afro-Mexicans in Mexico, mentioned on page 1, mimics the lack of representation in the United States among Afro-Latinos, their collective lived experiences, and relationship with their Black-Anglo and non-Black Latino counterparts. Jiménez Román and Flores (2009) note that, “the relative unity of and solidarity between the Latino and African American communities is no doubt the principal field of action and interaction for the Afro-Latino in the United States” (pg. 13). This statement raises two important points which are:

- (1) To fully understand Afro-Latinos in the United States, we must first understand the dynamics that contribute to their identity as both Black and Latino peoples and further, their third identity as an Afro-Latino.

An area that has not been intensely explored among Afro-Latinos is the role of language in its formation of identity and attitudes about other Latinos and African Americans. A second focus of this project will be:

- (2) To examine the role of language and how both intraethnic and interethnic language attitudes among Afro-Latinos contribute to identity. Language attitudes take both the language or dialect and its speakers into account. Language attitudes refer to the speaker's attitudes about their language and dialect, which are called *intraethnic attitudes* (within an ethnic community), and that speaker attitudes towards the language itself and communities that speak the language are called *interethnic attitudes* (between ethnic speaker groups) (Galindo, 1996).

The Wiley Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (2008) defines *language attitudes* as a sociolinguistic term used for the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others. A sociolinguistic study on Black Latinos can present a worldview, a comprehensive understanding, for the relationships that they have with other Latinos and non-Latino Black peoples. We must examine the role of language and how both intraethnic and interethnic language attitudes among Afro-Latinos, Latinos, and Anglo Black contribute to identity and the intersection of race and language for the future of the United States. Sociolinguistics studies such as Fishman (1964), Zentella (1981), Galindo (1996), Rivera- Mills (1998), and Toribio (2006, 2009) have shown that language attitudes reveal data that points towards language change and are influenced by the race and ethnicity of the speaker. As noted in Rivera-Mills (1998), and is

the case today, few sociolinguists focus on the attitudes exhibited by Latino groups of diverse backgrounds.

This investigation aims to collectively study the identity and linguistic attitudes of Afro-Latinos in the diaspora and in the homeland<sup>7</sup>. The diaspora being the United States and the homeland being Latin America and Bogotá, Colombia. The participants in this study represent only a small population of Afro-Latinos from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The population does not represent every Afro-Latino specifically, but uses a representative approach to include Afro-Salvadorans, Afro-Dominicans, Afro-Peruvians, Afro-Puerto Ricans, Afro-Hondurans, and Afro-Mexicans to name a few. This dissertation had a goal to be as inclusive as possible. The interviews included in this project are an authentic reflection of Afro-Latinos living in and outside of the United States. These first-hand experiences allow Afro-Latinos to be heard and reflect on their truths as Black Latinos. It offers a panoramic view on Afro-Latino language attitudes, their identity, relationships with other Latinos and Black peoples, and their connection to Latin America.

### 1.3 Overview of the Dissertation

**Chapter 2** is a comprehensive review of previous literature on sociolinguistic identity and attitudinal studies. This chapter reviews other sociolinguistic studies on racial groups that are also connected to identity and language attitudes.

**Chapter 3** presents the methodology used in this project. It details the participant groups, the instruments, the data collection and analysis procedures in both the present and the pilot study. Lastly, it offers indications of the pilot study and how these indications were used in the present

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<sup>7</sup> These use of these terms (homeland and diaspora) has been adapted from Toribio (2006).

study. This chapter explains how participants were contacted both in and outside of the United States. It explains the mixed methodology used for a qualitative and quantitative study to enrich the analysis data.

**Chapter 4** focuses on the United States Afro-Latino group. It illustrates the results of the data analysis collected in the United States on identity and language attitudes. It discusses topics such as discrimination, bilingualism, hair practices, and family traditions that contribute to language attitudes.

**Chapter 5** focuses on the qualitative data about the identity and language attitudes of Afro-Latinos in Colombia. It examines how Afro-Colombians identify linguistically, through nationality, and within their communities. This chapter also discusses how identity is formed through history and lived experiences in Colombia.

**Chapter 6** offers a comparison of the groups and a summary of the conclusions and implications of the dissertation. It also connects the results to the theory and model study mentioned in the introduction. This chapter offers information about future studies and includes closing remarks.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the previous studies and literature used to produce this study in two separate sections. Section 2.1 focus on identity and its connection to language. This section provides information about how Afro-Latinos view themselves and their language, and provides previous studies focused on ethnic and ethnic sociolinguistic identity. Section 2.2 focuses on language attitudes and provides previous studies focused on inter-group and outer-group language attitudes. This section provides attitudinal studies from the United States and from Latin American countries with large Black populations.

### 2.1 Identity and Language

Identity as a linguistic phenomenon has two main functions: communication and representation (Joseph, 2004). Our identity can be formed through the ways that we as individuals use language as expression to connect with our surroundings. Perhaps, among transnational and multicultural demographics, language can help to identify and maintain a connection with their multiple identities.

Among bilingual Afro-Latinos in the United States, the ability to speak English and Spanish connects them with the duality of their “American” and “Latino” identities. Hernández (2003) noted that Afro-Latino identity is a contested terrain in which self-identified Afro-Latino/as are visually viewed as Anglo-Blacks and hence not ‘authentic’ Latinos. Thus, for some, the Spanish language can be used as an identifying factor of one’s Latino heritage. At a food truck in Dallas, Texas, Raul Orlando Edwards, ordered his tacos in Spanish and stunned

other African Americans around him, prompting questions about how he learned to speak Spanish so well. Edwards responded with, “I’m Latino” and the African American male countered with, “I thought you were black!”. Edwards ended the conversation with, “I’m blacker than you are!” (Tallet, 2016). This interaction shows that Afro-Latinos are immediately identified as Black, but only in a North American monolingual ideology. Afro-Latinos challenge the use of skin color as an indicator of [national] identity in the United States and confirm language as a component of identity. It is important to study how Afro-Latinos identify as the population of Latinos in the United States continues to grow significantly. Rochin (2015) predicts that,

“Although that research has not been confirmed, I believe on the basis of demographic information that we will have more Afro-Latinos with in the United States than African-Americans, within a generation. When that happens, our Hispanic heritage will be enriched that much more. For the time being, however, the Afro-Hispanic and Afro-Latino will have an opportunity to negotiate their positions with the African American Community”.

While Afro-Latinos command their own space even in the presence of other Black and Latino communities, the reality that they will be just as populous as their African American counterparts indicates a need for significant study on Afro-Latino identity as a collective and progressive group.

Afro-Latinos are a transnational group. They represent a racially and ethnically complex future for the United States. In states like New York and Florida, Afro-Latinos are more

populous, and people are more familiar with the demographic. In other states, people ask questions like ‘Where did you come from?’, ‘Are you mixed?’, ‘How did you get here?’, ‘What are you?’ (Tallet, 2016). These questions reflect the complexity of their identities. Some Afro-Latinos identify as Latino, while others may identify with their Latin American heritage by answering ‘Dominican’ or ‘I’m Garifuna from Honduras’. According to Jiménez Román and Flores (2009), the term *Afro-Latino* applied to a person in the United States emerged in 1990 when, “it became clear that race matters in the Latin@ community and that these racial realities make it a grave distortion to think of Latin@ as a monolithic group” (pg. 10).

In 2000, Toribio published the study, "Language variation and the linguistics enactment of identity among Dominicans". This qualitative study investigated the attitudes and linguistic attributes in a Dominican community in New York. Its goal was to identify the role of social identity in the lives of Dominicans. Toribio (2000) discussed that Dominican subjects revealed insecurities towards their "poor" Spanish dialect and that a solution to rectify the ill learned Spanish was to place Dominican children in remedial Spanish classes so that they could learn it "correctly". Another issue was that Dominican school-aged children were heavily criticized for the dialect of Spanish that they spoke, and as a result, they would opt not to speak in Spanish at all.

An important factor of this study was addressing the socio-political prejudice in the Dominican Republic against *negritude* (blackness). The anti-Black goal of hispanization among Dominicans living in the Dominican Republic allowed Dominicans who were part white to identify themselves as not being Black. Because the United States has very different racial barriers than the Dominican Republic, Dominicans that arrived in New York were considered

Black and disregarded any other social privilege that whiteness may have given them in their home country. Their categorization as Black citizens in the United States caused them to rid themselves of anything that made them less than in their community, even if that meant avoiding the use of Spanish in public spaces. Alternatively, the use of Spanish in public spaces allowed a verbal representation that they were indeed Dominican and not African American. This showed that language became a barrier and publicly separated Dominicans from African Americans. Their attitudes also revealed that the ability to speak English was empowering. Thus, Dominicans found themselves in a dichotomy of linguistic identities. The article concludes that Dominicans experienced prejudice because of their dialect of Spanish. Despite these prejudices, the study also concluded that they took pride in their Spanish. Further, it revealed that Dominicans who are white in the Dominican Republic are classified as Black in the United States and while some refrained from speaking Spanish, others continued to use Spanish in all environments.

As a final point, Dominicans who are ethnically Afro in their appearance, have the option of separating themselves from African Americans with the use of Spanish and/or continue to speak English. Toribio (2000) closes with the idea that Dominicans do not benefit from acquiring a more formal dialect of Spanish because to do so is to be a victim of discrimination in the renunciation of their cultural and linguistic identity.

In her article about Blackness, music and identity in the Colombian coastal city of Cartagena, Aldana (2012) describes the importance *Champeta*, a genre of music that reflects the “collective experience grounded in a diasporic condition that finds resonance with the rest of the Caribbean and Continental Africa”. In the 17th Century, Cartagena was once one of the most

important ports in Latin America for the transport of Africans in to the New World. Aldana (2012) argues that it remains to be a space that serves as a repository of the painful history of that has defined the ethnicity and cultural/diasporic identity” for many Afro-Latinos. *Champeta* is a vehicle that affirms Afro-Identity in the Colombian Caribbean and has “posed linguistic challenges within a Colombian reality concerned with the proper use of Spanish. The importance of this genre is that it gives a space of expression to Black Colombians who “exist outside of a system of education that has been denied to them” and simultaneously rejects the long history of linguistic purism in Colombia. Aldana’s analysis of *champeta* affirms the multiplicity of Afro-Colombian political, educational, historical, and cultural influences upon identity. Identity can be a rhythmic linguistic expression that echoes the African Diaspora and fights for representation in national arenas.

Another artistic expression of Black identity is the poem “Me Gritaron Negra” by Victoria Santa Cruz. Her poem tells the story of discrimination against Blackness. During the poem Santa Cruz takes the reader with her on a journey of self-love and acceptance. At just seven years old she hears screams on the street calling her “*Negra*”. The poem express that she felt ugly being Black, and tried to hide it, “*como ellos quieran*” (as they wanted her to). She began to hate herself and hide, “*Y odié mis cabellos y mis labios gruesos y miré apenada mi carne tostada y retrocedí*” (I hated my hair, my big lips, and I looked at my dark brown skin, and I recoiled). The young girl of the poem continues recoiling until she realizes that she is about to fall down. The poem takes a turn as she accepts her identity, for example taking pride in her hair texture and will no longer straighten it (“*De hoy en adelante no quiero laciár mi cabello, no quiero.*”). She commits to laughing at people who think being Black is bad. She begins to enjoy

the sound of being called Black and realizing that ebony is a beautiful color, appreciating that she is a Black woman.

Lavou (2002) explains that the poem convokes the bipolarization or the double identification ideology around blackness in Colombia and specifically around the word *negro/a*. Lavou believes that the self-definition as *Negra* has two functions. It defies the use of other words used among Black Latinos in Latin America to define themselves, such as *Libres*, and also shifts the poem from an individual self-acceptance to a collective awareness of using the word *Black* as a part of their identity. Lavou brings her study into her classroom asking her students about their identity with some affirming themselves as *Negro/a*: I'm Black and I am proud to be Black (*Soy negro/a y me siento orgulloso/a de serlo*) and others negating the term, which initiates tension between students and questions such as: You're Black, even though you don't want to be or you don't realize/know that you are (*Tú eres negro/a aunque no lo quieras o no lo sepas*).

While Lavou affirms that the category of *Negro/a* is an invention of White Europeans to dominate themselves over Blacks, and is rooted in slavery, *Me gritaron negra* and the self-affirmation of one's Blackness is a *ruptura*, an outlet of positive political consciousness that is not limited to an individual experience or only for marginalization groups. To affirm oneself as *Negro/a*, a movement that Lavou notes was occurring in Latin America, Brazil and in the Caribbean, is resistance and a permanent fight against invisibility and being deemed as nameless.

## 2.2 Sociolinguistic Data Collection and Identity

According to Fishman (2010), the field of ethnic studies can be viewed from a sociolinguistic perspective, thus sociolinguistics can be examined in an ethnic sociolinguistic

perspective. Language is often closely associated with ethnic identity in that “language use influences the formation of group identity and group identity influences patterns of language attitude and usage” (Liebkind, 2010). In our current context, Fishman (2010) and Liebkind (2010) confirm that sociolinguistics can be examined in an Afro-Latino sociolinguistic perspective, and that Afro-Latino language attitudes are influenced by language use. The intersection of these categories in the formation of identity is multiplied in an Afro-Latino context. The subjects of the current research consider themselves to be Latino, Black, American, bilingual, trilingual and mixed-race at the same time. These factors work together to form one identity and are further specified for each individual.

The importance of studying identity and differences among Latinos is that it contributes to fighting against the erasure of ethnic groups within demographics but also erases factors such as their geographic, linguistic, and cultural differences. Crenshaw (1990) has stated that “ignoring the differences within groups contributes to the tension among groups”. Thus, it is important to research and talk about identity among Afro-Latinos because they reject essentialist concepts of identity. They do not fit into one specific definition of what a “Latino” *looks* like, and the imagined linguistic profile of a Black person in the United States. Cameron (1990), Romaine (1984), Janicki (1999), and Mendoza-Denton (2002) discuss the challenge against homogeneous identity characteristics among groups, because it is an imagined social construct. Wheeler (2015) states the U.S. racial system has not historically accommodated mixed racial identities. As such, individuals with more than one racial heritage have been required to choose membership in one-and only one- racial category”. Today, scholars have followed the shift and

begun to study mixed racial identity, and for this study, groups that do not fit into one ethnic and racial box.

The present study includes a Black interviewer conducting interviews with a Black population. Briggs (1989), Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) have discussed the identity of the interviewer and as a factor that contributes to the data elicited about identity among the interviewees. When interviewed by an African American interviewer, the African American subjects used African American English during the interviews and did not do this in the same controlled environment with a White interviewer. While Mendoza-Denton (2002) mentions the possibility that the sociolinguistic interview can be altered significantly by the identity of the researcher, another possibility could be that subjects feel more comfortable expressing themselves with someone of their same race.

### 2.3 Ethnic and Racial Identity

In 2003, Sellers et al. published, “Racial Identity, Racial Discrimination, Perceived Stress, and Psychological Distress among African American Young Adults”. This study examined the relationship between racial identity, racial discrimination, perceived stress, and psychological distress among African Americans. The study was separated into two main components and two objectives. The first component was a measurement of race as a central identity among African Americans and the second component was African American beliefs about other groups’ negative attitudes towards them. The first objective described the relationship between the components and the second objective focused on experiences of discrimination as its connection to racial identity and mental health.

The sample population included 555 African American youth (301 females and 254 males) who were academically at risk in an urban school district in Michigan. The sample population was, on average, 17.8 years old. During the study 69% of the subjects were enrolled in high school and two years later the average age was 20 years old with 23% of enrolled in a 4-year college, 9% in a 2-year college, and 26% reported that they did not receive a high school diploma or GED.

Sellers et al. (2003) used a longitudinal study and 50-60 minute face-to-face interviews during school hours. The data was collected in 5 waves. The first wave occurred when participants were in ninth grade, waves 2 through 4 occurred in one-year intervals, and the fifth wave occurred 2 years after wave 4.

The results of the study showed that African Americans who considered race as a central identity had lower psychological stress and better mental health. There was little evidence that African Americans' psychological well-being was reliant on outer group attitudes towards Black people. The study found a direct correlation between racial discrimination and psychological health in which the racial hassles of African Americans could make life more stressful. When race was considered as a central part of identity, young African Americans appeared to be resilient when faced with racial discrimination. A possible explanation could be that "high race central individuals may be shielded from the negative effects of discriminatory experiences because their self-confidence about being Black helps them dismiss the experience rather than internalize it as one about themselves" (Sellers, 2003). This longitudinal study contributed evidence of the stability of African American young adult's racial identity, and perceived attitudes from other groups about them.

To examine group identity, both ethnic and American identity included, as predictors of self-esteem, Phinney et al. (1997) surveyed 669 American-born high school students (372 Latino, 232 African Americans, and 65 White). The study suggested that individual “identity as a member of a group is seen as an important source of global self-esteem”, or how one member of the group views him/herself is directly related to how the entire group identifies. For example, the growth in social media presence of Afro-Latinos has created an impact on how other Black Latinos identify themselves, even to the point of accepting their African Heritage and use of the word *negra*.

The subjects of Phinney et al. (1997) were students ages 15-19 years old and attended ethnically diverse high schools, both public and private, and predominantly African American and Latino student bodies. Research assistants visited randomly selected classrooms throughout the Los Angeles area and invited students to participate. Students were administered with a 15-minute questionnaire that were later screened for completion. The questionnaire measured: ethnic self-identification, ethnic identity, American identity, other group attitudes and self-esteem. For ethnic self-identification, participants were asked to select the appropriate label for both themselves and their parents. Ethnic identity was assessed using a 14-item measure created by the author. American identity (“How strongly do you think of yourself as American”) was assessed on a 4-point scale ranging from (4)-very strongly to (1)- very weakly. Attitudes towards other groups were measured using a six-item scale with each item having a 4-point scale. Self-esteem was measure using a 10-item scale from Rosenberg (1985) on global self-esteem. The self-esteem and group attitudes categories included both positive and negatively worded items.

Significant findings of this study were:

- The more committed and positive that the subjects felt about their ethnicity, the higher their self-esteem.
- Self-esteem was not based on how groups viewed them. Individual attitudes influenced what individuals felt about themselves.
- Black and Latino participants did not consider American identity as a significant contributor to their sense of self
- Attitudes towards other groups made a small contribution towards how Latinos felt about themselves, but not for other groups.

Another ethno-racial identity marker among Black people in diasporic settings, Latin America (Wheeler, 2015), and the United States is skin tone. Lighter skinned Blacks tend to have more opportunities, higher education, and economic stability while darker skinned Blacks are lower on the social strata (Jensen, 2006). This reality identified the need for studies on intragroup language attitudes. One example is a joke made by African American comedian Chris Rock during the National Advancement for the Advancement of Colored People Awards Show in March 2019. Jussie Smollett, a Black actor who had been recently acquitted of federal charges, was the subject of his joke. As Chris hosted the NAACP Awards, he joked

“They said no Jussie Smollett jokes [crowd laughs]  
 I know, I know, what a waste of light skin, ya know?! [crowd laughs]  
 You know what I could do with that light skin?! [crowd laughs]  
 That curly hair! [crowd laughs]  
 My career would be outta here..running Hollywood! [crowd laughs]  
 What the hell was he thinking?! [crowd laughs]<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0xAGnVWv2I>

For Chris, lighter skin tone and curly hair texture would grant access to better opportunities and success to darker skinned celebrities in Hollywood. While this was said as a joke, it has many truths about ideologies towards accessibility among Black people. Lighter skin would make a darker skinned person richer, more successful, more attractive, and powerful. Curly hair would grant higher social and economic status than a Black person with a kinky texture. Chris' joke had an underlying message that Jussie had been given the things that make Black people more acceptable in society and he had taken them for granted with his recent acquitted court case.

Jensen et al. (2006) studied the growing Dominican immigrant population in Reading, Pennsylvania. The researchers examined how racial and ethnic self-identity was related to ability, skin tone, and the amount of time that the Dominican subjects had been in the United States. This study diverged from the traditional New York City geographic study of Dominicans and focused on the new destination of the fourth largest immigrant group from Latin America. Dominicans were considered to be a noteworthy group to study, in part, due to their "ambiguous status in the U.S. racial hierarchy, and thus stand to provide novel insights into issues of racial and ethnic self-identity" (Jensen et al., 2006).

The city of Reading, Pennsylvania is disadvantaged economically and had high rates of unemployment. Dominicans in Reading were not outnumbered by African Americans and lived more closely with them than in any of the other Dominican-African American setting. There was also a large number of Puerto Ricans that lived in Reading. The dynamics of this setting could play a role in intense self-identification and group identification in the community. In 1990, there were only 186 Dominicans living in Reading and in 2000 there were 1,192 Dominicans, which was a 928% change over 10 years.

This study used a mixed-methodology with open-ended and fixed-response items. The survey included 12 sections focused on ethnolinguistic data and was conducted face-to-face in either Spanish or English, which was chosen by the participant. This study included 65 Dominican adults with a median age of 39.4 years.

The first objective of the study was to elicit information about Dominican racial and ethnic self-identity. In the U.S., “darker-skinned persons have little option to deny their racial/ethnic background when categorized by others on the basis of skin color” (Jensen et al., 2006). During the interview, one respondent noted, “People think I’m Black because I’m dark skinned and I always talk English and act black” (Jensen et al., 2006). The respondents were asked what race they considered themselves and 43.3% answered that they were Dominican. Other categories were *Hispano* with 31.7% and Hispanic with 6.7%. Interestingly, none of the respondents used a hybrid term to identify themselves. It was clear that the Dominican concept of identity in Reading was connected to their use of Spanish.

When asked about skin color, 44% of respondents said they were *light brown*, 44% said that they were *darker*, and 12% said that they were *very light* skin tone. The study found that Dominicans who claimed their identity as Dominican were less likely to say that they were *light skinned* and more likely to say that they were *medium brown*.

Dominicans in Reading constructed their identity based on either a panethnic term such as Latino/a or Hispano/a, and others identified themselves as Dominican. Hardly any of the respondents identified themselves as Black due to its rejection in the Caribbean and the Dominican Republic as cited by Howard (2003). Jensen et al. (2006) noted that respondents did classify themselves as *very dark skinned* but did not use the word *black*. Panethnicity in the U.S.

is adopted to classify large groups of diverse people and Dominicans who have been in the United States for a long time tend to use panethnic terms. This study concludes that panethnically self-identified Dominicans classify themselves as lighter skinned. This group also had economic advantages over other Dominicans who had spent less time in the U.S.

## 2.4 Language Attitudes

This section presents previous studies on linguistic attitudes. The present study is a culmination of these studies, to later collectively study Afro-Latino attitudes.

In 1986, Prevedello and Malanca published “*Actitud del hablante ante su lengua: Estudio del español hablado en la Argentina mediterranean*”, which investigates the attitudes of Spanish speakers in Mediterranean Argentina. Prevedello and Malanca (1986) is the continuation from a previous study published in 1977 which found that it was important to include a variety of speakers from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This study incorporated three levels of speakers according to socio-cultural parameters:

1. Low level-illiterate informants and a family environment of the same level
2. Medium level-informants who have completed full secondary education or administrative employees
3. High level-informants with tertiary or university degree

According to Prevedello and Malanca (1986) language is a fingerprint of the character of a community. Linguistic differentiation, as with attitudes, corresponds to cultural, ethnic and historical differences. Specifically, the sociolinguistic study of language attitudes and dialects, are comparative studies where one dialect or language superimposes the others. This attitude is derived from the diversity between the origin, culture, and the ethnicity of the speaker.

To further study attitudes among socioeconomic levels, Prevedello and Malanca (1986) carried out a study among three generations of Mediterranean Argentine speakers, taking into account the variables of sex and age. Geographically, the study included ten different provinces throughout Argentina and included three cultural areas: *Noroeste Argentina*, *Centro*, and *Cuyo*. The speaker population included 2,142 participants from the capital cities of each of the ten provinces from three generations. The first generation of speakers were ages 15-20 years old, the second generation were ages 30-54 years old, and the third generation were 55+ years old. The survey sought to have equal representation of gender from each generation.

The instrument used in this study was a 15-question questionnaire that consisted of four main components: (1) the speaker's awareness towards belonging to the Hispanic community, (2) the speaker's ideal of the language, (3) their awareness of the difference and approximations between oral and written language, and (4) their attitude towards the formal academic teaching of the language. They concluded that subjects value Argentinian Spanish but that there is a preference towards Peninsular Spanish in general. For example, the first component of the questionnaire found that speakers preferred the words *español* and *castellano* to identify their language over other regional options: *idioma nacional*, and *idioma argentino*. Motivating factors were the place of origin of the language and the name of the language spoken.

In the context of their own country, Argentinians preferred the variety of Spanish spoken in Buenos Aires due to its geographical status as a central city, its prestige as a cultural and political center. In the educational system, Prevedello and Malanca (1986) also found that there was a preference for a separation between the Spanish taught in schools and the colloquial register used in non-academic contexts. This study proposes that the sociocultural level of a

speaker influences their attitudes towards their Spanish, other dialects of Spanish, and the register of Spanish taught in academic versus social environments.

Two important features from Prevedello and Malanca (1986) was the vast geographical coverage of speakers even within the Mediterranean region of Argentina. A group approach allowed the study to consider attitudes from a large variety of speakers, each with individual life experiences that influenced their language attitudes. A second takeaway among each of the three generations, was the affirmation of a 'correct' variety of Spanish even in the presence of their own varieties, and of their own linguistic identity.

In 1988, García et al. published, "Spanish Language Use and Attitudes: A Study of Two New York City Communities". This study compared attitudes between two Spanish-speaking communities in New York: Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona with an objective to study the Spanish-speaking ethnic populations that are often ignored in Hispanic sociolinguistic studies, such as Central Americans and South Americans. The two main differences between the communities were social class and ethnic configuration. Hispanics from Elmhurst/Corona were considered to be more middle class than the community in Washington Heights. Ethnically, the Washington Heights community was predominantly Dominican, and the Elmhurst/Corona community was a mixture of South Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, and Puerto Ricans.

Collectively, the study gathered a total of 294 interviews (118 from Washington Heights and 176 from Elmhurst/Corona). The speakers ranged in age from ages 13-51+ years and varied in occupation and academic level. The instrument included in the study was a sociolinguistic

questionnaire written in Spanish and English. The questionnaire focused on three main areas: language proficiency, language use, and language attitudes.

This study proved that it was important to diversify attitudinal studies among Spanish speaking populations and added a unique ethnicity focused study to the field of Hispanic linguistics. García et al. (1988) did not focus on Puerto Ricans because of the overwhelming amount of pre-existing studies of that demographic, which is not to take away from their importance to the Latino community and the field of linguistics.

The results of the study show that the majority of both communities spoke Spanish and at least half of them had some level of English-speaking proficiency. Both groups indicated a preference to watching television in English and listening to the radio and reading the newspaper in Spanish. Between the two communities, both had very positive attitudes toward the maintenance of Spanish in their family and community and also towards the academic teaching of Spanish in primary and secondary schools. In terms of ethnic groups, Dominicans used Spanish more frequently than all other ethnic groups. South Americans most frequently used English in settings outside the home.

Both groups wanted their children to be biliterate and bilingual. The interviews revealed that speakers view English as the public language of the United States and 100% of the subjects felt that it was very important to learn it. They also supported the private and public use of Spanish, encouraging bilingualism in the next generations. Both groups fiercely rejected the idea of an English-Only movement.

García et al. (1988) studied the differences between Dominicans in each community. Dominicans who, as the article sites, are ‘racially-mixed’, did not result in a homogenous data

set. For example, “Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona were slightly more bilingual and biliterate than those in Washington Heights” (García et al. ,1988).

This study adds linguistic data on the general, educational and inter-community attitudes towards Spanish and English. It reflects the value of studying ethnic communities because each community provides a variety of language attitudes and competences. Further, the results of this study reflect the diversity among mixed-race Latinos. The two groups of Dominicans, though all residing in the same city, are attitudinally diverse.

In 2011, Lamboy published “Language and Identity Construction: Can We Talk about a *New Puerto Rican in the United States?*” as a response to studies like García et al. (1998), that have studied and established the linguistic features, language attitudes, and language loyalty of New York Spanish- speaking communities, and in particular Puerto Ricans. Lamboy (2011), proposes that “in the last two decades, the profile of Puerto Ricans in the United States has changed considerably” and that newly arrived Puerto Ricans are different in terms of their education level, economic states, ability to integrate into mainstream society, and preferred destination. García et al. (1998) found differences within the two Dominicans groups and similarly, Lamboy (2011) found differences among Puerto Ricans in New York (NYPR) and Puerto Ricans in Central Florida (CFPR). The sample population included 45 speakers from Central Florida and 57 speakers from New York. The instruments included were a 76-question survey using a 5-point scale an interview.

CFPR generally used Spanish more than NYPR and claim to provide a new model for Puerto Rican Spanish in the United States as opposed to the NYPR counterparts in domains like the home, work, with neighbors, and friends. CFPR believed it was important to remain

connected with the island to maintain their sense of self, while NYPR did not believe it was imperative to stay connected to the island to “maintain or strengthen one’s Puerto Rican identity” (p. 78).

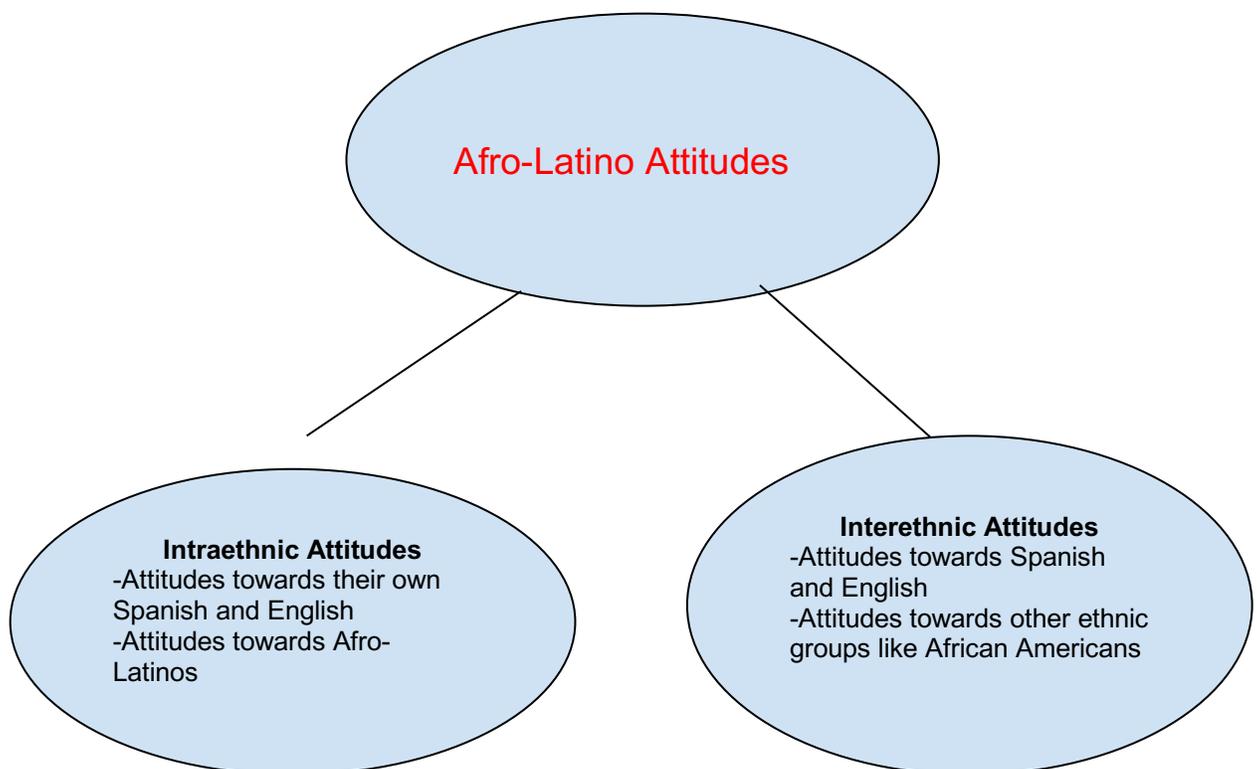
Overall, this study concluded that Puerto Ricans in the United States do not perceive being proficient in Spanish as a co-requisite for identifying with Puerto Rican culture and way of life. Additionally, Lamboy (2011) stressed the importance of updated studies that reflect the linguistic profile of Latinos in the United States. Due to high migration, immigration, political, and social influences, Latino attitudes can change significantly within a few years.

Galindo’s 1995 study on Chicano language attitudes towards Spanish and English, investigated the linguistic attitudes of Chicano adolescents. In addition to their attitudes, Galindo (1995) also looked at Chicano attitudes towards the English of other ethnic communities such as their African American and white classmates. The population of this study included 30 adolescents (15 females and 15 males) and between 14-19 years old. Geographically, the sample population lived in the two bilingual working class communities of East Austin and Montopolis, and was composed primarily of African Americans, Chicanos, and Mexican immigrants. The speakers were aware of the negative perception that outside groups (primarily white people) had about their neighborhoods. Also, the residents of these communities believed the relationship between African Americans and Chicanos was a good one.

To examine language attitudes, Galindo (1995) conducted 60-90 minute interviews primarily in the homes of the adolescents. The qualitative interviews included open- and close-ended questions. The researcher also extracted other attitudinal information that may have come up during the interviews.

This attitudinal study, and others like it, “provide us with a valuable insight into language contact phenomena, including language maintenance of Spanish, language shift toward English, language loyalty, and ethnic and social identity issues inextricably linked to linguistic choice” (Galindo, 1995). Language attitudes take both the language or dialect and its speakers into account. This study established that language attitudes refer to the speaker's attitudes about their language and dialect, which are called *intraethnic attitudes* (within an ethnic community), and that speaker attitudes towards the language itself and communities that speak the language are called *interethnic attitudes* (between ethnic speaker groups).

**Figure 6. Afro-Latino Attitudes**



This inter-ethnic study finds that most Chicanos prefer English for reasons such as safety and linguistic competence. There is also a preference for a non-formal register of English. Some

speakers expressed that their nationality as Mexican Americans was directly connected with discrimination and prejudices even though they spoke English without an accent. Regarding their intraethnic attitudes, the study found that 80% of Chicanos believed that their English was similar to the English spoken by their white American counterparts. Only 27% believed that their English was comparable to African American English. That is, 73% of Chicanos believed that their English was better than African American English.

Gender differences revealed that female Chicanos (Chicanas) preferred both Spanish and English due to their family's positive attitudes towards both languages. Chicano males showed a preference towards English and more negative attitudes toward Spanish and Spanish speakers. An important conclusion directly related to the present study, is that no Chicano included in the study believed that their English was lower/ worse than African-American English. This conclusion pointed toward further study to amplify this finding.

A final finding of this study were *linguistic contradictions* (Galindo, 1995) regarding speaker attitudes towards Spanish maintenance and use. Some speakers had negative attitudes towards Spanish but also felt loyal to the language to preserve it for future generations. For example, Mexican speakers felt that, "Mexicans who come to settle and work in their communities should not abandon Spanish but that they should add to their linguistic repertoire by learning English for social and economic survival" (Galindo, 1995). The negative perceptions of Spanish did not overshadow the language as an integral part of their heritage and ethnic identity. The attitudes that Chicanos had towards Anglo and African American English (interethnic attitudes) allowed them to also take an introspective view towards their own English.

In 2000, Rivera-Mills published a study titled, “The Intraethnic Attitudes among Hispanics in a Northern California Community”. This article analyzed interethnic attitudes that existed among Spanish-speaking ethnic groups in Fortuna, a city in northern California. Even though Fortuna was a small town, in 2000 it was the city with the highest concentration of Hispanics in Humboldt County. Due to the growing population of Hispanics in the United States and changes in the demographics, Rivera-Mills (2000) noted that it was imperative to focus on attitudes within an ethnic group as opposed to the widely studied interethnic attitudes between majority and minority groups.

Rivera-Mills (2000) interviewed 50 Spanish speakers (22 males and 28 females) of various nationalities, representing three generations of speakers in the United States. The interviews were approximately 2-5 hours and conducted in the home of the interviewee which allowed them to speak comfortably in their preferred language. The instruments included in the study were a questionnaire and an ethnographic survey that was completed immediately after the interview. The sociolinguistic questionnaire included three categories of questions: scalar statements, discrete point questions, and open-ended questions. The attitudinal section of the questionnaire had a goal “to measure the level of political awareness and involvement of the participants” (Rivera-Mills, 2000).

The variables studied were generation, social class, and their connections to language loyalty and language policies. In addition, it addressed the interethnic attitudes of newly arrived Hispanics to California to understand their position on language. Rivera-Mills (2000) found that, in general, the three groups believed that it was important to maintain Spanish and indicated a gradual preference towards English between the first and third generations. The higher the level

of acculturation, as indicated by the upper social class who preferred English, and later the generation, as indicated by the transition from the first to the third generation, the lower the loyalty to Spanish. When subjects were asked about their language preferences, one response was:

“I look in the mirror and I can’t deny who I am and where I come from. I know some of us try to pretend we can become ‘gringos’ by dyeing our hair blond and wearing jeans, but I think even those people must know that they can’t deny our heritage- se lleva en la sangre” (380).

One half of the participants believed that speaking Spanish was a part of being Hispanic and associated it as a part of their identity. Regarding interethnic attitudes, 71% of the participants used negative adjectives to describe the Spanish-speaking population in Fortuna and 18% used positive adjectives to describe the population. This data reflects that most speakers had bad attitudes towards their own community.

To elicit opinions about Spanish and its connection to ethnic identity, the questionnaire asked whether a person needed to speak Spanish in order to be considered Hispanic. The responses about identity and Spanish were very diverse:

**Table 1. Spanish as it Relates to Ethnicity<sup>9</sup>**

To be Hispanic you must speak Spanish	Percentage
Strongly agree	30%
Moderately agree	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%
Moderately disagree	30%
Strongly disagree	3%

n=50, mean=2.55, p=.083

Using a 5- point scale to measure the responses, 50% of the population agreed that you must speak Spanish to be Hispanic. Specifically, 30% of respondents strongly agreed and 20% moderately agreed. 17% were neutral, and 33% disagreed that language and identity were connected. Generationally, the level of agreement decreased within each generation, for example, in the first generation 69% of speakers agreed with the statement “to be Hispanic you must speak Spanish” and 0% of speakers in the third generation agreed with this statement. A similar pattern occurred within the variable of social class: 76% of lower-class speakers agreed with this statement while only 24% of speakers from the upper class agreed. The longer the period of time spent in the United States and the higher the social class, the lower the view of Spanish as part of Hispanic identity.

<sup>9</sup> This table has been reproduced from Rivera-Mills (2000)

This study was innovative because it incorporated a methodology that included language attitudes within an ethnically diverse group, to give general conclusions about the city of Fortuna and its Spanish-speaking population.

As a pioneer of Dominican language scholarship, Almeida Jacqueline Toribio has researched Dominicans in the Dominican Republic and the diaspora. Toribio's article titled, "Linguistic Displays of Identity Among Dominicans in National and Diasporic Settings" (2006), contributed an examination of the language situation of Dominicans because, "little is known of the language situation of Dominicans in the diaspora...in marked contraposition to the vast body of linguistic literature that has profiled the language situation of other prominent Hispanic ethnic groups". This study used a modified interview technique with three categories: personal information, indicators of linguistic insecurity, and speaker perspectives on Dominican ethnicity in the Caribbean and abroad. The interviews took place over five years with Dominicans in the Dominican Republic and New York City.

Dominican Spanish was identified as a marginal variety both in New York and in the Dominican Republic. In New York, Dominicans compared their Spanish to other varieties, and in the Dominican Republic, it was stigmatized for lacking European characteristics. The "best" Spanish followed the Castilian norm and the "worst" Spanish was spoken by those who, by birth or social circumstances, were influenced by the African influence. These ideologies have been withheld officially in the Dominican Republic through the affirmation of its Spanish heritage and rejection of *negritude*, for example Trujillo's dictatorship against Blackness and specifically Haitians, that "shaped Dominican racial attitudes in profound ways" (Toribio, 2006). These attitudes have been upheld in the Dominican Republic and in the United States. Since

Dominicans in the United States were not considered white, Spanish was used as a “separatist function” to separate themselves from African Americans and in their homeland, it was used a marker of “national/cultural status...Dominican, therefore non-Haitian, that is, non-black; or Spanish, therefore European, that is, non-African” (Toribio, 2006). For Dominicans in the United States, Spanish can serve “as a marker or *ethnic*, grouping --immigrant and therefore exempted from the dualistic black/white classification” (Toribio, 2006).

In the United States, Dominicans believed Spanish was essential to their identity. The ability to speak Spanish affirmed their heritage with one speaker making the analogy “As I tell my Italian friends. How can you say you’re Italian if you don’t speak the language?” (Toribio, 2006). In the U.S., linguistic performance by Black Dominicans is required. For example, Dominicans children were asked to perform their Spanish in order to prove their heritage. For white Dominicans, Spanish was optional and for Black Dominicans, Spanish was essential to their identity. Another norm among Dominicans in the U.S. was a preference towards a European American accent because, “Dominicans’ African appearance, especially when bolstered by African American speech characteristics, will elicit unfavorable stereotyped reactions” (Toribio, 2006).

The adolescent Dominicans in the U.S. hinted toward a future of dismantling essentialist concepts of Dominican identity (as non-Black, Spanish-Speaking, etc.” (Toribio, 2006). They did not uphold the same anti-Black ideologies as some members of previous generations. This study provided insight into Dominican attitudes in the U.S. and the Dominican Republic and encourage language researchers to study ethnic language varieties in diasporic settlements.

## 2.5 Language Attitudes in Latin America

This section offers attitudinal studies from Latin American countries with a large presence of Afro-descendants. The countries represented are the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Puerto Rico

Alvar (1983) conducted an attitudinal study among Dominicans in Santo Domingo. The purpose of this study was to elicit Dominican attitudes about Dominican Spanish (American) and Peninsular Spanish from Spain. There were two instruments used in the study: an audio-recorded text and a sociolinguistic survey. The text, a journal entry from the diary “La información” was recorded by two men and two women. So that the study was balanced, there was equal representation from Spain and the Dominican Republic. A Spanish male and female speaker read the text and a Dominican male and female speaker read the same text. Further, so that the subjects did not become conditioned to hearing one variety, the four audio-recorded texts were played in inverted order (Dominican-Peninsular-Peninsular--Dominican). The participants were expected to identify the Latin American and the Peninsular varieties. The study included 40 participants with 18 women and 22 men. Six of the subjects were illiterate, 15 subjects had an elementary education, and 19 subjects had more than a middle school education. The subjects ranged in ages from 18-70 years old.

Among the subjects, 62.5% were able to identify and preferred their own variety from the audio. The 27% of speakers who did not identify the Dominican variety were speakers from a higher cultural level. Only 42.5% of the subjects correctly identified the Peninsular variety. Eleven percent of the speakers believed that the Peninsular and the American variety were equal in prestige, 25 % of speakers favored the Dominican variety and 20% of the subjects favored the

Peninsular variety. In terms of the name to describe their language, 84% of the subjects preferred *Spanish* due to its historical presence in the Dominican Republic.

The results of this study varied showing the diversity of perspectives among Dominicans and their attitudes towards language. Overall, Dominicans preferred their own variety of Spanish due to its familiarity and vernacular. Not all subjects were able to identify the Dominican variety from the audio recording. Peninsular Spanish was selected as the “correct” variety for instruction, pronunciation, and reading. Peninsular Spanish was considered to be more intelligent than American Spanish. While the preference of Peninsular Spanish varied among the participants, American Spanish was considered to be a variant, a dialect of the standard.

In 2014, Bernal, Munévar, and Barajas published a study on the linguistic attitudes in Colombia, and more specifically among speakers in Bogotá. This study sought to identify and describe the linguistic attitudes among this demographic towards the dialects spoken in Colombia and other Spanish-speaking countries, elicit opinions about linguistic correcting, select speaker dialectal preferences in different communicative context, and propose a series of linguistics categories about the preferences of this demographic.

**Table 2. Dialects in Colombia****TABLA 2**  
DIALECTOS DEL ESPAÑOL DE COLOMBIA

Super-dialecto	Dialecto	Departamentos
Llanero		Arauca, Casanare, Meta, Vichada.
Andino	Antioqueño-caldense	Antioquia, Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda.
	Bogotano	Bogotá.
	Caucano-valluno	Valle del Cauca, Cauca.
	Cundiboyacense	Cundinamarca, Boyacá.
	Nariñense	Nariño.
	Santandereano	Santander, Norte de Santander.
	Tolimense-huilense	Tolima, Huila.
Amazónico		Amazonas, Caquetá, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo, Vaupés.
Costeño	Caribe o atlántico	Atlántico, Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia y Santa Catalina, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Magdalena, Sucre.
	Pacífico	Antioquia, Cauca, Choco, Nariño, Valle del Cauca.

NOTA: esta clasificación dialectal se basa, en gran medida, en los estudios realizados por el Instituto Caro y Cuervo para elaborar *El Atlas Lingüístico-Etnográfico de Colombia (ALEC)*, y en el trabajo posterior, *Caracterización léxica de los dialectos del español de Colombia según el "ALEC"*, realizado por Mora et ál. (2004).

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As graphed in the Table 2 the dialectal profile of Colombia is diverse with 4 super-dialects, 9 dialects, and 11 categories of departments in Colombia. The Spanish spoken in Bogotá is part of the Andean (*Andino*) super dialect.

The study included a team of 27 researchers and both quantitative and qualitative instruments organized in an excel document, and a total of 400 participants with 72.8% of the participants born in Bogotá.

The study found that the majority of speakers in Bogotá (84.8%) preferred to name the language that they spoke *Spanish* and others preferred to refer to their language using the name of their dialect, for example *español criollo* or *castellano mestizo*. Overall, 52.5% of speakers

<sup>10</sup> Source of table: Bernal, J., Munévar, A., & Barajas, C. (2014).

preferred their own dialect (*Bogotano*) due to the lack of accent, use of “correct terms” (a neutral register), and evidence of an educational background. This study defined this phenomenon as the *linguistic identity* in which subjects justified their linguistic preferences as being prestigious.

Interestingly, the study found negative attitudes towards the Caribbean dialect due to its lack of “correct” words, fast speech, and comprehension difficulty, among other factors. About 70% of the subjects believed that it was important to speak “correctly” and 54% believed it was important to understand the Spanish being spoken. Speakers were asked to choose the country where the most correct Spanish was spoken. Colombia was selected as having the most correct Spanish with 39.8% of responses and the runner up was Spain with 30.3% of responses. Mexico had 6.5% of votes and Argentina and Chile had 3.5% and 2% of votes respectively. When asked why Colombia had the most correct Spanish, speakers expressed that they felt a personal connection to their country, to their *mother* dialect. Perú was the country with the most responses (17.3%) among countries that spoke Spanish incorrectly. The runner-up was Chile with 10.3%. To offer results on a country with a large Black population, the Dominican Republic was number 15 out of 23 responses with 1% of votes. When asked if it was a good idea if all Spanish-speakers spoke the same dialect of Spanish, 53.8% of subjects answered affirmatively with Colombia as the ideal Spanish dialect.

This research added attitudinal data to the field of linguistics about speakers in Bogotá and expanded on their perceptions about other Spanish-speaking countries and the dialects spoken within them. Bernal et al. (2014) established the term linguistic identity to better describe speaker attitudes and prestige around their own dialect.

Büdenbender's 2013 article investigates stereotypes of Dominican Spanish in Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans were considered to be the majority group and Dominicans immigrants living in Puerto Rico were the minority group. Dominicans were considered to be at the bottom of the social and racial strata. Since both varieties of Spanish are linguistically similar, there are little differences among the groups. The three objectives of the study were to: provide insights into the linguistic identification strategies used by the majority speaker group to identify members of a particular minority group, to uncover perceptions about educational and social level among the minority speaker group, and to compare majority group speaker perceptions of correctness with those of the minority speaker group.

This study used a verbal guise task completed by Puerto Rican participants to allow "an indirect means of assessing the attitudes of Puerto Ricans towards Dominicans and Dominican Spanish" (Büdenbender, 2013). First, Puerto Rican participants recorded the guise recordings and later the researchers conducted the verbal guise task. There were two groups of participants who helped to develop the instruments. The first group consisted of nine guise speakers and 6 Dominicans who rated the guise. The second group included four male guise speakers, ages 26-58 years, who were chosen based on their performance in the previous task. The Guises were rated on their level of accent with 1 being no regional accent, and 7 being a very strong accent. Guise 1 was a Dominican in the Dominican Republic and had an accent level of 6/7, Guise 2 was a Dominican in Puerto Rico with an accent level of 6.8/7, Guise 3 was a Dominican living in Puerto Rico with an accent level of 4.5-7, and Guise 4 was the Puerto Rican control speaker. There were 22 Puerto Rican judges who listened to the guise tasks. As a control group, a native

speaker from Puerto Rico was included in the guise tasks and was also male, because males were more likely to adapt their speech.

When asked about nationality, the judges were able to identify two of the Dominican speakers, and the native Puerto Rican. One of the Dominican speakers was identified as Cuban and another as Venezuelan. The educational ratings among speakers revealed that the Dominicans speakers were considered to have between a primary and high school education. Guise 1 had completed 8th grade, Guise 2 had completed 7th grade, Guise 3 had completed 10th grade, and Guise 4 had completed his high school education. The results reflected that Guise 3, the Dominican in Puerto Rico, had a rating of 77% and that he had attended college. The Puerto Rican speaker had 0% of votes for a primary education only, 77% of votes for a high school education, and 18.2% of votes for a college education. Guise 3 was identified as a Puerto Rican, which explained the high education rating that was given to him.

When judges were asked about social class, Guise 1 and Guise 2 were considered to be lower to middle class. Guise 3 was perceived to be middle to high class, and Guise 4 was considered to be middle to higher-middle class. Guises 3 and 4, the two lowest accent Guises, were believed to have more favorable speech. Guise 3 was rated with the highest pleasantness of speech and “correct” accent.

The Dominican speaker, Guise 3, was initially rated as a typical Dominican accent. He was identified as Puerto Rican by the subjects which is evidence that some features of his speech sounded Puerto Rican to the judges. These results show that Dominican Spanish is stigmatized in Puerto Rico and Dominicans are perceived as being from a lower socioeconomic status than

Puerto Ricans. This study points towards evidence that a Dominican accent immediately triggers bias against Dominicans as poor and uneducated.

Caro (2015) published a study titled, “Prestige versus identity: the linguistic attitudes of people from Montería towards Spanish spoken in Montería”. Montería is a city in Northern Colombian and located in the Department of Córdoba. According to Table 2 page 50 of this study and referenced in Bernal et al. (2014), the dialect spoken in Montería is Caribbean and its super-dialect is coastal.

This article analyzed speakers’ attitudes towards prestigious linguistic communities and took into the account the variables of sex, gender, level of education, and age. Caro (2015) cites that cultural identity is a determining factor in the construction of speaker attitudes towards their own language variety. If speakers feel identified by, and included as part of, the dialect that they speak, they will have positive attitudes towards the community. If they do not make this connection with their identity and dialects, they are more likely to have negative attitudes towards the dialect and its speakers. An important aspect of attitudinal studies, and any conclusions that they make towards the notions of prestige and identity, is that they are connected to social status. Among speakers in Montería, there is a belief that their variety lacks linguistic prestige, and as a result is considered inadequate in educational and political environments.

The article cites that Izquierdo (2003) noted that there are two distinct perspectives to study linguistics attitudes: the mentalist approach and the behaviorist approach. This study adopts a mentalist approach, because its goal is to elicit information about the mental disposition of the speakers through their linguistic attitudes. The mentalist approach focuses on how the

subjects think and not necessarily how they act, which is the focus of the behaviorist approach. In addition to the two perspectives, attitudinal studies have two approaches to measure attitudes: the direct approach includes interviews or questionnaires about linguistic aspects, and the indirect approach uses the Matched-Guise Test. The test uses recorded text passages to elicit attitudes towards a determined language dialect or variety. The direct approach allows researchers to ask direct questions about speaker opinions and language. Caro (2015) uses a direct approach that includes a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire with close-ended questions. The author includes a total of 24 subjects from the first and third generation of speakers in Montería to observe considerable differences.

This study finds that speakers use their variety of Spanish as an identity marker. When asked if they personally identified with their variety, 83% affirmed that Monterian Spanish was a fundamental feature of their identity. When asked directly about dialect preference, 59% indicated that they would not change their dialect if they could and 29% said that they would change some aspects of their own variety. These results signal that Monterians were loyal to their variety even if they were aware of changes that they could incorporate. Caro (2014) wanted to elicit attitudes about identity versus prestige, and asked speakers if they could travel to Bogotá and stay for a few years, the city recognized with the best Spanish, would they change the way they spoke. The majority of speakers, 88%, responded that they would not change their variety. Again, Monterians acknowledged a preference towards their own dialect even when it was confronted with language prestige such the nation's capital of Bogotá where the "correct" Spanish is spoken.

This study established that prestige does not take precedence over speakers' own variety. When faced with "better" and "higher status" Spanish, Monterians responded that the prestigious variety lacked cultural identity. This study offered information about the outer-group and offered clear examples on the cognitive component of attitudinal research with a direct mentalist approach.

### 3.METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 offers information about the methodology used in this study. Section 3.2 describes the pilot study and Section 3.3 describes the present study. Section 3.3.1 details the instruments that were administered to each participant. Section 3.3.2 outlines the data collection and data analysis procedures. Section 3.4 focuses on the indications of the pilot study and adaptations for the present study

#### 3.2 Pilot Study

To examine the state of Afro-Latino identity and language attitudes in Houston and the United States, a pilot study was conducted in the Fall 2016 semester that included two first-generation Afro-Latinas in Houston and two first-generation Afro-Latinas with channels on YouTube. This project was inspired by the poem *Me gritaron negra* by Victoria Santa Cruz, previously discussed in Chapter 2. The poem reflects the realities of being Afro-Peruvian and despite discrimination and racism, the voice of the poem finds strength and power in her Blackness as a Peruvian. She is proud of both parts of her identity being fully Black and fully Peruvian at the same time.

The pilot study included a questionnaire to gather background and contact information from both participants and a guided interview. These instruments were used to gain a basic understanding of their identity as Afro-Latinos living in the United States. Each guided interview lasted approximately 1 hour. To identify Afro-Latino presence on social media platforms, a YouTube search including the words: Afro-Latina, Afro-Latino, and Black Latino helped to identify participants.

The pilot study included four female participants between the ages of 22 and 28 years old. Among the Houston group, the first participant [P-01] was in the last semester to complete her bachelor's degree and the second participant [P-02] was university educated with a Master's degree. One of the YouTube personalities was college educated and the other did not reveal that she had attended college after the survey of 10 videos. Both groups were bilingual in Spanish and English. One of the participants from Houston identified as Puerto Rican and the other participant identified as Colombian, from Buena Ventura. Finally, both Houston participants were first generation in the United States, mainland. Among the YouTubers, one participant was Dominican and the other was Panamanian.

The pilot study was conducted in a graduate course at the University of Houston. Participant [P-01] was an undergraduate student studying towards a Spanish minor and [P-02] was contacted through a fellow graduate student in the program. The first guided interview and questionnaire took place on the university campus and the second interview took place in the participant's home.

The three main research areas of this study were: identity, representation, and attitudes towards language. Afro-Latino identity is multidimensional and one of those dimensions is race. Because they are both Latino and Black at the same time, the pilot study sought to elicit information about the coexistence of the both identities. Since the United States tends to view ethnic identity as a fixed-trait (i.e., Black people are African-American and monolingual), understanding Afro-Latino identity can be hard for North Americans to understand and force them to pick one identity over another. SomewherealwaysTee, an Afro-Panamanian youtuber, describes her experiences growing up being Black and Latino. When she would say that she was Latina, "*siempre había problemas*" (there was always an issue). She describes that when there

was a group of Non-Black Latinos, they did not like that she was trying to identify herself like them, as a Latina. If she was near a group of African-Americans, they didn't like that she was trying to make herself seem superior or separate herself from them. While historically, Black Latinos found that "identifying with and becoming part of the African-American community turned out to be their most ready access to society in the United States, as well as their most evident recourse in the face of racist rejection by other Latin@s" (Jimenez Roman and Flores, 2009 ).

MonicaStyleMuse, an Afro-Dominican youtuber, described her experience as a dark-skinned Latina. In her video, *I Am Too Dark to be Latina*, she expresses how the color of her skin was a big problem as a little girl growing up in New York City. As a result, she was insecure about her hair, her dark skin, and noticed the lack of Afro-Latina representation on social media platforms, in movies, in magazines, and on news channels. The lack of representation was the motivating factor towards her YouTube channel. She soon came to a realization that "Nobody looks Dominican. Nobody looks Puerto Rican. Nobody looks American. There's not a face for every culture, for every heritage, for every ethnicity".

During the guided- interview, the Houston participants revealed their beliefs about identifying themselves as *negra*. Participant [P-01] expressed that when others in Puerto Rico referred to her a *negra*, it fulfilled her more than being called *mulata* because, for her, that word had become closely associated with identifying with slavery.

*El sobrenombre negra, o morena decir esa palabra para mi es más bien, no es un elogio pero es de gratitud. O sea, me llena más que me digan negra morena a quien me diga mulata porque ya mulata va un poquito más hacia lo de esclavitud y morena, negra no más*

*lo refiero al color de la piel que me relacionan con mi cultura. No tiene significativo negativo. (P-01)*

Ethnically she identified herself as Puerto Rican, African-American, Spanish, and Indio with *negra* as her race because it described the color of her skin and connected her to her culture. When asked about her identity, participant P-02 described her race as *Negra* and her ethnicity as Hispanic.

*Negra. Mi raza me considera negra, mi 'ethnicity' es Hispana porque como aquí se dice mi nacionalidad es Colombiana pero digo como que yo soy, 'I'm Black'. Pero mucha gente dice, como muchas de mis amigas son afro-americanas y todas dicen 'ooo negra' pero yo soy negra no más que, discúlpame la expresión, el barco de nosotros nos estiraron en Colombia, como 'the slave ship' nos dejaron allí en Colombia. (P-02)*

She described that as a Colombian, her verbal affirmation and use of the word *Negra*, has been deemed as bad and that the only difference between herself and her African-American friends in Houston was the final stop of the slave ship during the African Diaspora. She went on to explain that race in Colombia has been viewed as a binary of Black or White and when a Colombian person called to her to get her attention, they referred to her as *negrita*. In Houston, she would previously identify herself as Colombian but had begun to identify as Black because when a person looked at her they wouldn't say, "oh you're Colombian", they would say, "you're Black".

The participants in Houston helped to establish the presence of Afro-Latinos in the city of Houston. Social media has been proactive and innovative in its representation of Afro-Latinos on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. News outlets have also

increased awareness and representation of this demographic through news coverage and newspaper articles. The YouTube group showed that the demographic was active on social media platforms, which would reveal to be important in the current study. Both groups revealed their thoughts about Spanish and sought to bring awareness towards their identity as proud Black Latinos.

Language proved to be a significant component of Afro-Latino identity among participants. Three of the participants spoke Spanish as their first language and one participant learned Spanish to further connect herself with her Panamanian heritage and identity as a Latina. Subject P-02 noted that she was very proud to speak Spanish and that her language had given her many career opportunities and allowed her to communicate with a diverse group of people.

A separate theme that came up was the ability to speak Spanish as a way to measure *Latinidad*. Subject P-01 described an experience where she and her mother were in a store and two White Latina women had begun to speak negatively about them in Spanish. Upon responding to the women in Spanish, they were astounded and afraid that she was also ‘one of them’. Phenotypically, the subjects looked like African-American women in the United States, but in public spaces the act of speaking Spanish added another layer to their identity as Black women. The ability or inability to speak Spanish as Black Latinos can add unnecessary pressure to prove their heritage and many times there are underlying factors for generational shift from monolingual in Spanish to monolingual in English. Jiménez Román (2010) describes that, “as children we were not allowed to speak Spanish in the house and if we did we got a slap in the face from my mother or my aunt...I soon lost my ability to speak my mother’s language”. During her childhood in New York, speaking Spanish was directly connected to how a person was valued in society and ‘less than’ compared to English speakers. Assimilating as English-speakers

was not optional. As an Afro-Latino, Spanish separated them from African-Americans and unified them with negative stereotypes about Spanish-Speakers.

### 3.3 The Present Study

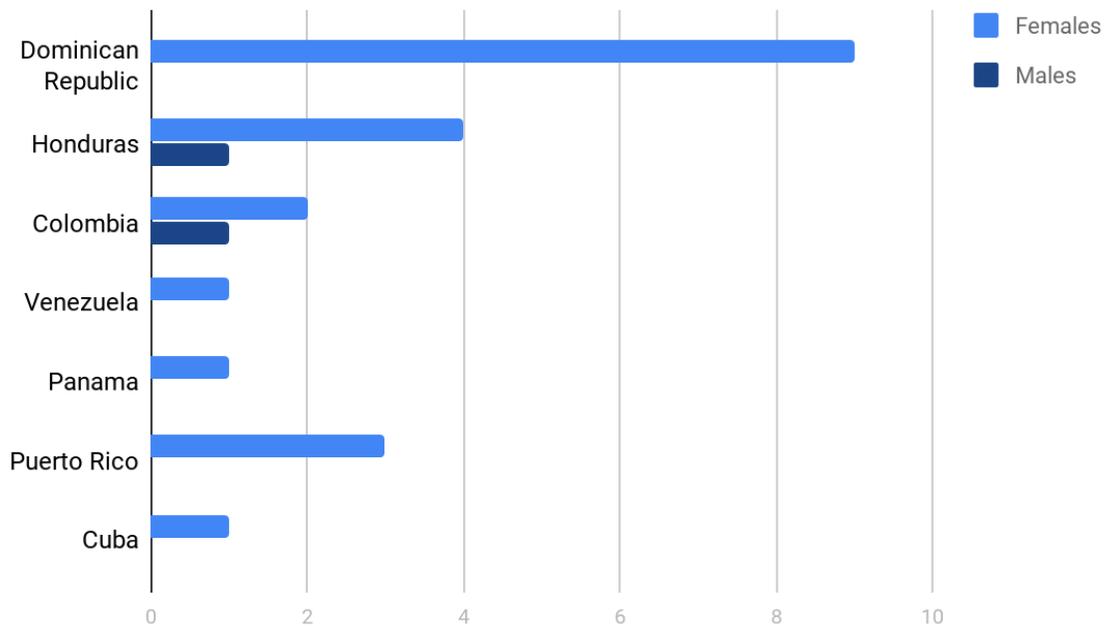
The present study includes a total of 55 participants separated into two groups. The first group consisted of 23 (M:2 and F:21) bilingual Spanish speakers from all 5 regions in the United States. Participants from this group identified as Afro-Latino. The second group included 31 (M:20 and F:11) monolingual Spanish speakers in Bogotá, Colombia. Participants from the control group identified as *Afrodescendiente*, *Afrocolombiano*, *Raizal*, and *Negro*. This variance is largely due to the geographical departments and regions of separated Afro-Colombian groups throughout Colombia. The control group included speakers from each of the 6 regions where Afro-Colombians are most represented: *La Costa Pacifica*, *La Franja Costera del Caribe*, *Risaralda*, *Caldas*, *Quindío*, and *Antioquia*. A consistency among all participants is that they identified with and acknowledged their African heritage as Latinos.

The United states group included only two male speakers as they were the only ones to respond and complete the interview. Over 15 males were contacted and asked to participate in this study. In Colombia, there are more male speakers than females. During the data collection, 5 female speakers opted not to complete the interviews while all the males agreed to participate.

**Table 3. Number of Speakers in Each Group**

	Male	Female
United States	2 (9%)	21 (91%)
Colombia	20 (65%)	11 (35%)

The US Afro-Latino Latin American origins were from different countries:

**Figure 7. Latin American Origin by Country****Latin American Origin by Country**

The United States Afro-Latinos lived in the following cities:

**Table 4. Afro-Latinos per U.S. City**

<b>Current U.S. State of Residence</b>	<b>Number of Speakers</b>
New York	7
Texas	3
Florida	2
Indiana	1
Oklahoma	1
New Jersey	1
Alabama	1
Illinois	1
Minnesota	1
Los Angeles	1
Arkansas	1
Maryland	1
Connecticut	1
Massachusetts	1

The United States group ranged from ages 21 to 37 years of age and the Bogotá group ranged from speakers ages 18-41 years of age.

Colombia is divided into departments and most Afro-Colombians have origins along the Pacific Coast, and today they have presence in every major city in the country. The following map will be referenced to describe the population included in this study:

**Figure 8. Map of Colombia**



The subjects included in this study were from five departments. The first geographic area was the Pacific Coast. Twenty-five (81%) of the participants were from Cauca, El Choco, Cali, and Quibdó. Two speakers (6.5%) were from San Andrés. One speaker (3%) was from Medellín and one speaker (3%) was from San Basilio de Palenque, located in the Department of Bolivar. Two (6.5%) of the subjects interviewed in Bogotá were from Puerto Rico but were included in this group as Afro-Latinos living outside of the United States.

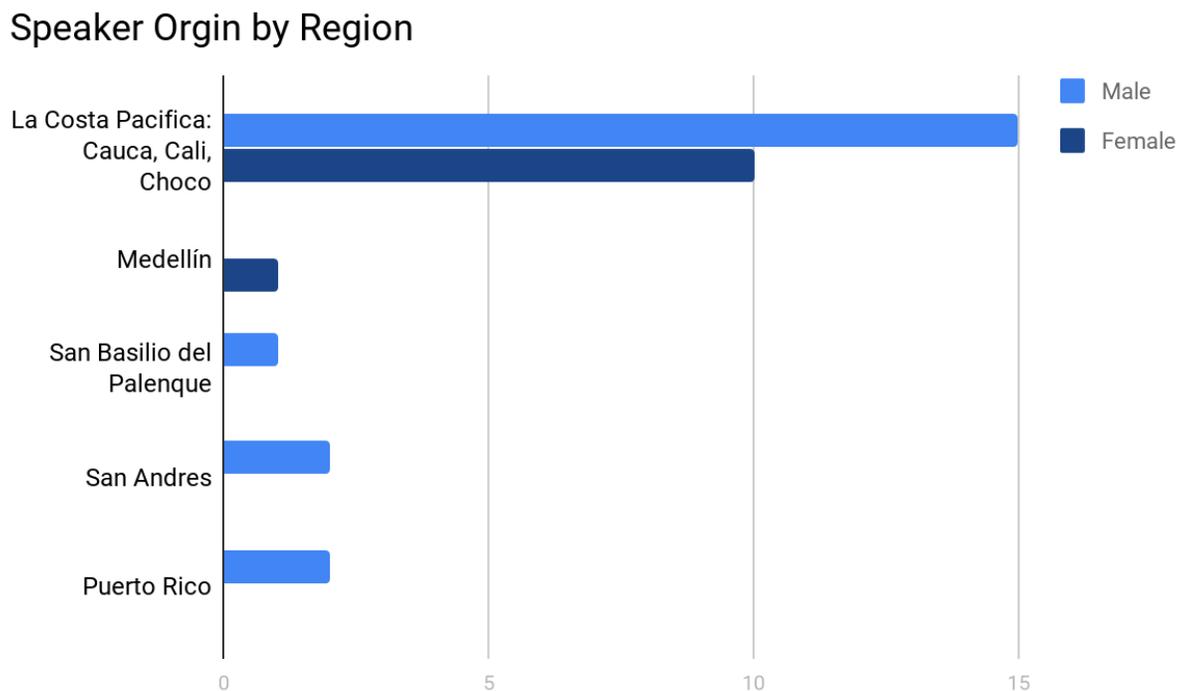
Though they had origins in The Pacific Coast, five (16 %) of the subjects were born and raised in Bogotá. The other 84% of subjects had migrated to Bogotá for educational and job opportunities. Five of the subjects moved to Bogotá as refugees to escape the civil war against

<sup>11</sup> Source of figure: <https://ilmodacolumbus.com/map-of-columbia-south-america.html>

Afro-Colombians and their resource-rich lands. At the time of the interviews, 27 of the speakers lived in Bogotá and four of the speakers were visiting the city for work or tourism.

Among the Latin American group, there were 20 male participants and 11 female speakers, a total of 31 participants. The participants ranged from 20 to 71 years of age.

**Figure 9. Latin American Speakers by Origin**



### 3.3.1 Instruments

The instruments in the present study included a 1-hour guided interview, improved from the pilot study, and a Likert-Scale survey that included 28 questions. The guided interview in the pilot study revealed the need for more direct questions to elicit responses geared towards the purpose of the study. For example, in the pilot study, subjects were asked to speak about their background. In the present study, subjects were directly asked about their family history in the United States, where their family originated from in Latin America, and how they identified

themselves. The questions in the presented study needed to be direct to elicit the same answers as the group in Latin America. The instruments were administered in Spanish and both instruments are included in the appendix in both Spanish and English. The first group, the US Afro-Latinos, was administered a guided interview and the Likert-Scale survey and the control group in Bogotá was solely interviewed.

The design and administration of the instruments included in this study serve as the primary source to examine the identity and linguistic attitudes among Afro-Latinos. The instruments are qualitative and quantitative and include aspects related to the culture and genetic traits connected to people of African heritage. An example is the series of questions in both instruments towards the preference of curly or straightened hair, because hair texture and styling are directly connected with discrimination and intraethnic ideologies among Black communities. Questions about hair, texture, and discrimination elicited Afro-Latino opinions about their own identity and apart from dark skin, the most common phenotype that classified them as ‘other’ apart from Latinos.

Some questions about Black Phenotypes were:

- Do you prefer curly hair or straightened hair or a variety of both styles?
- Has anyone ever told you to fix your hair?
- How do women in your family wear their hair?
- Are their norms among Black women in Latin America towards how they wear their hair?
- Do you think a looser curl pattern is more acceptable?
- Lighter skin is more beautiful (Likert-Scale)

These questions were included to elicit Afro-Latino attitudes towards their own textured hair, what they believed about other Afro-textured hair, and how it was a marker of African descent. The question, “How do women in your family wear their hair?” was included because Black women, across the world, have begun to wear their naturally-textured hair instead of chemically or heat straightening their hair so that it is *presentable* in public. The importance of the natural hair movement lies in its connection to Black identity. The various layers of Afro-textured hair, such as texture, length, and skin color further contribute to how Black women view themselves and the society around them. For example, a lighter skinned Afro-Latina speaker from Miami, noted how her silkier hair texture made up for lack of a curvaceous body that Dominican women had. Her sisters were darker skinned with kinkier Afro-Textured hair, but they had the “typical Dominican body”. For her, this added an additional layer to the reality of being a Black woman and the emphasis put towards skin tone, hair texture, and body type.

Questions about Afro-Latino attitudes towards Spanish were:

- Do you use Spanish outside of your house? Where?
- What do you think about the Spanish spoken in your city?
- What languages do you use on your social media platforms?
- If I decide to have children, they will speak Spanish (Likert-Scale)
- I speak Spanglish (Likert-Scale)

These questions sought to elicit speaker attitudes towards language use and what languages they deemed appropriately to be used in public and private spaces. The question, “If I decide to have children, they will speak Spanish”, was asked to elicit attitudes about Spanish maintenance in the future and in addition, their attitudes towards their own generational legacy of Spanish speakers in the United States.

Questions about identity as Afro-Latinos were:

- What race and ethnicity do you consider yourself to be?
- Would it be more difficult to identify as Afro-Latino if you didn't speak Spanish?
- Can a person be Latino if they don't speak Spanish?
- How do people react when you speak Spanish?
- I am proud to be an Afro-descendent (Likert-Scale)
- The United States Census has a sufficient number of options to correctly identify myself (Likert-Scale)

While a prerequisite for the subjects included in this study was to identify as Afro-Latinos, these questions sought to further elicit their attitudes towards language and its connection identity, such as the ability to speak Spanish as evidence of their Latino heritage. Participants were also asked about reactions of other people while speaking Spanish in public, to elicit their attitudes towards these surprised reactions. In the United States, many non-Afro-Latinos are unsuspecting of Black Latinos. For example, some Latinos may use Spanish to communicate unfavorable messages about Black Latinos and are surprised when they respond with their same dialect in Spanish. 100% of the United States Afro-Latinos reported that they had received a surprised reaction when they spoke Spanish in public.

Questions about interethnic attitudes (towards Non-Latino Black People) were:

- Do you feel that you're a part of the African-American community?
- Is it normal to be considered as African-American in public spaces?
- How is the relationship between Latinos and African-Americans in your city?

- I identify with African-Americans (Likert-Scale)
- I identify with African-American culture (Likert-Scale)
- The English spoken by White Americans is better than the English spoken by Black Americans (Likert-Scale)

These questions elicited Afro-Latino attitudes towards African Americans. They sought to understand Afro-Latinos attitudes towards their African American counterparts as other Black people, secondly as English speakers. Speakers that expressed that they have many African American friends tended to respond that they identified with African Americans. In the interviews, some speakers responded that they did identify with African Americans with small cultural differences or, as some put it, the location of where the Transatlantic Slave Ship *hit the shore*. These questions also sought to elicit Afro-Latino attitudes about how they viewed themselves.

Questions about intraethnic attitudes were:

- How is the relationship between (their demographic) and (other demographics)?
- A Pew Research Center study noted that many Afro-Latinos select “White” or “Hispanic Heritage” and their race and ethnicity. Why does this happen?
- I like the way that Spanish is spoken in my city (Likert-Scale)
- I like the Spanish of my home country (Likert-Scale)

These questions elicited Afro-Latino attitudes towards other Latino groups, their dialects, and language prestige. The Likert-Scale item, “I like the Spanish of my home country” elicited attitudes about Latin American Spanish and also its speakers. During the interviews, a theme that

came up was Afro-Latino attitudes towards national identity and how Latinos groups connect through ethnic identity instead of race. For example, Afro-Puerto Ricans in Miami would identify as Puerto Rican instead of Black.

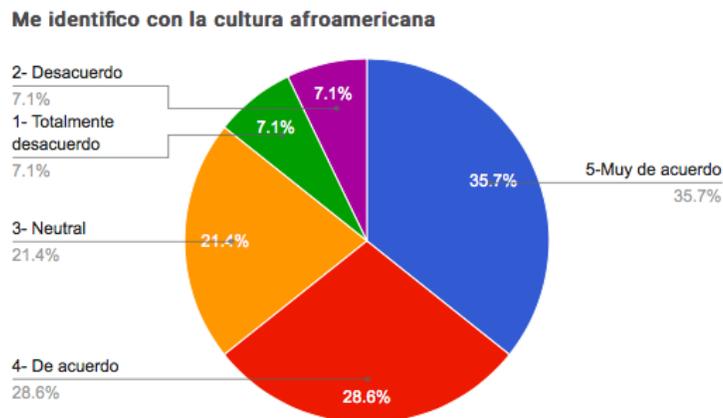
The 1-hour guided sociolinguistic interview included questions in six categories: Biographical Data, Ethnicity and Identity, Attitudes towards English, Intraethnic Attitudes towards other Latinos, Discrimination, Immigration and Ethnic Markers, Interethnic Attitudes towards African Americans, and an Interview Reflection. The questions were not asked in the same order with each participant but rather flowed in natural conversation which allowed room for detailed responses and not feel pressured to adhere to an unnatural conversation. For example, when asked what race and ethnicity she considered herself to be, one speaker began to describe how her identity had changed since living in Puerto Rico. Instead of continuing with the next question on the list, about the Spanish spoken in New York, she was asked about life in Puerto Rico, what she thought about the Spanish spoken when compared to the United States Mainland. Eventually, we returned to the question about New York. Another Dominican speaker answered many of the questions without being directly asked. Instead of explicitly asking each question, answers were elicited during the data collection process. Schlee (2013) explains that questionnaires should be designed to cover a range of responses and should be balanced so that they do not shift or influence respondents towards one direction or another.

The survey was completed, on average, one week after the interview. It was adapted from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery designed by Garner et al. in 1981. For this study, the survey tested towards two categories: Identity and language attitudes: Intraethnic attitudes and Interethnic attitudes. This principal objective of the survey was to quantitatively measure linguistic attitudes among the demographic and elicit correlations between these attitudes and

identity. The numerical scale included five levels: **5-** Strongly Agree (*Muy de acuerdo*), **4-** Agree (*De acuerdo*) **3-** Neutral (*Neutral*) **2-** Disagree (*Desacuerdo*) **1-**Strongly Disagree (*Totalmente en Desacuerdo*). The Likert-Scale was included to add a second layer of the study of Afro-Latino attitudes. This survey would ask many of the same questions from the interview. With the Likert-Scale survey, participants were able to independently give their opinion without the pressure of a recorded interview or principal investigator spontaneously asking questions. Additionally, the Likert-Scale, made in Google Sheets, was easy to create, organize, administer, collect, and analyze data.

The Likert-Scale survey was designed to measure agreement or disagreement with a rating scale often revealing information about the subject's attitudes and opinions. There is conversation around the use of an even or odd number of responses and the use of a 'Neutral' response. An odd number of responses can offer the respondent a middle ground when reacting to statements while an even number forces the respondent to choose towards one extreme or the other. This can be beneficial to view the topic that subjects may not want to commit to either disagree or agree but can also be a disadvantage if subjects decide not to commit to with side and opt to remain neutral. An example of the advantage and disadvantage of this occurrence can be viewed in the following Likert-Scale survey responses:

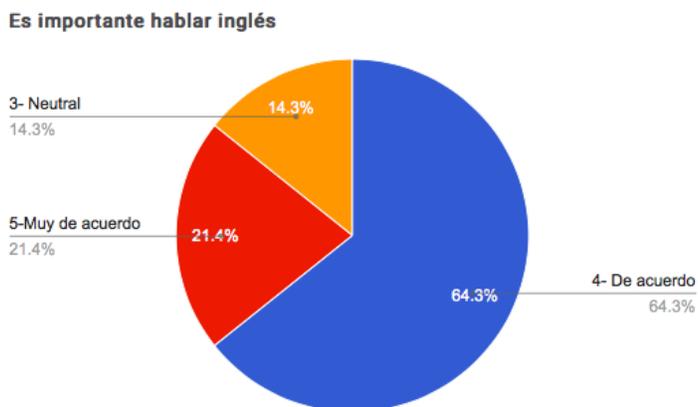
**Figure 10. I identify with African-American Culture**



Participants were asked if they identified with African American culture. While 64% chose to agree with the statement, 21% of subjects remained neutral. Positively, the neutral ground shows that this may be a sensitive subject and even the participants themselves are unsure. The disadvantage in that is the absence of the neutral option, 3-Neutral, the subjects would have been forced to agree or disagree, giving a more definitive response about Afro-Latinos and their perspective about their African American counterparts.

Another example is the following statement, “It is important to speak English”

**Figure 11. It is Important to Speak English**



The neutral responses to this item confirm that none of the participants believed that speaking English is not important. On the other hand, the neutral responses could include some respondents who disagreed with the statement but did not choose a side.

The Likert-Scale in this study includes both the neutral option and an odd number of steps of the scale to offer subjects a middle ground, elicit possible attitudes of inference towards a statement. Schleef (2013) cites that the use of even or odd number on the scales does not change results significantly, but for the current study can demonstrate the perspective of the respondent.

The limit of five options allowed participants to completely agree or completely disagree with questions, this could be an indicator of the level of tolerance that Afro-Latinos had towards a certain topic.

### 3.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Speakers in the United States group were contacted through colleagues, personal contacts and the majority was contacted through social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. It was hard to contact Afro-Latino groups in the United States without a direct contact to find communities. Since the objective of this study was to include Afro-Latinos in the United States from a minimum of 5 ethnic groups, I then turned to social media to locate participants. A colleague mentioned that the Central American population was very active on Twitter and that it was possible that the same movement was happening among Black Latinos. To create a platform for contact and communication between Afro-Latinos on Twitter and this study, an account was created in May 2018. The use of hashtags proved to be useful in the search bar because it helped to identify possible subjects from a public post that they would publish. Hashtags such as: #AfroLatino, #Afrolatinx, #Garifuna, #Afrolatina were used to populate twitter users that had

been recently active on social media and self-identified themselves as Afro-Latinos. Participants were found in two ways: the first method was a public post from my Twitter account using the hashtags and asking interested individuals to contact me, and the second method was a search using the hashtags and direct messaging the individuals to see if they were interested. Apart from Twitter, one interview was conducted at Duke University in the participant's home, one subject was interviewed at the Chicago Puerto Rican Day Parade and one subject was interviewed over the phone. The data collection among this group occurred between April 2018 and July 2018.

In Bogotá, the sample population was contacted at a book fair in April 2018. Bogotá is the administrative, economic, and political center of Colombia. Interviews were conducted in four sites: (1) *Ministerio del interior: Dirección de asuntos para comunidades negras, afrocolombianos, raizales, y palenquera*: A government entity dedicated to research and improving the lives of Afro-Colombians in Colombia, (2) the largest book fair in Colombia, *FILbo: Feria del libro de Bogotá*: that held various sessions on the state of Afro-Latinos in Colombia, (3) *Secretos del mar*: a popular Afro-Colombian restaurant in Bogotá, (4) and lastly in the home of the host professor that collaborated to identify subjects.

The subjects at the *Ministerio del interior* were contacted through a Colombian professor. The interviews were held in a conference style room where four Afro-Colombian government officials were interviewed at once. The interviews at the book fair, *FILbo*, were conducted spontaneously with large groups of people walking around. The book fair interviews were completed over 3 days and the opposite environment from the *Ministerio* in terms of noise level and previous knowledge about the interview session. The interview conducted at the restaurant, *Secretos del mar*, was held over lunch. The final interview took place in a home and the subject was a family friend.

To ensure the safety of the subjects in the United States and Bogotá, Colombia, a thorough review was conducted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Houston. The study was then officially approved by the IRB in agreement that it was safe and did not endanger the subjects.

Due to the nature of the questions that sought to elicit sensitive information about lived realities, discrimination, and identity, participants were informed that they could skip any question that made them hesitant or uncomfortable. In both the United States and in Bogotá only one subject refused to answer a question related to discrimination in the United States. All interviews, apart from the interviews conducted at the *Ministerio del interior*, were conducted in an informal relaxed environment to elicit natural conversations from the subjects. The interviews at the *Ministerio del interior* were conducted in a closed room during the participant's work day. These interviews occurred in a group setting and each participant took turns answering the questions.

There were few difficulties that arose during the data collection process. While there are many Afro-Latinos in the United States, it was difficult to locate groups of participants and after two months of searching, social media became the preferred method of finding and contacting interested participants. In Bogotá, participants were spontaneously approached in-person without a previously scheduled interview. While the preferred method of interviews was in-person among the U.S. group, many interviews were conducted through Skype. A benefit of this method was the ability to contact a diverse group of participants throughout the United States, including two participants who were abroad in other countries, but interested in contributing to the project.

The interviews were recorded on a Sony ICD-PX333 Voice Recorder and a backup version was stored on an iPhone app called "Voice Recorder".

### 3.4 Indications of the Pilot Study and Adaptations for The Present Study

The pilot study indicated the need for innovative methodology to contact Afro-Latinos in the United States. It also revealed the need for a control group of Black Latinos in Latin America, to compare their realities, identities, and differences as Black Latinos in separate continents. The pilot study showed that Afro-Latino identity was multidimensional and through language, physical, appearance and their experience in Houston, that this demographic could transcend racial parameters. The subjects could identify as Black, Latino, Biracial (Black and White), monolingual English speakers, monolingual Spanish speakers, and/or bilingual. To identify the control group of Afro-Latinos in Latin America, Afro-Colombians were selected. Afro-Colombians had not been studied to the extent of other Afro-Latinos, like Dominicans, and a goal of this present study was to further eradicate mis-representations and lack of representation among this demographic.

To address the need for new methods of contacting participants in the United States, the researcher utilized social media to find subjects. Specifically, as mentioned in Section 3.3, Twitter was the primary platform utilized as a resource.

After the data collection process was finalized, each interview was replayed to elicit biographical data. The biographical data was organized in an Excel sheet under the following categories: Name, Age, Birthplace, Latin American Origin, Current United States City, Education Level, Profession, Self-Identified Race and Ethnicity, Has This Person been told to fix their hair? Languages Spoken.

Each interview was reviewed twice. First to elicit data that was recorded on a Word document in sections, and a second time to catch any points that may have been missed. The

Likert-Scale survey was analyzed in Google Docs using the tool, “Awesome Table”. This tool organized the responses and generated tables for each item.

*“Somos todos partes de esa misma experiencia, la diáspora, seas afro-boricua, seas afro-Latino ,seas afro-argentino que seamos consciente de que somos parte de algo más allá...para poder crear una comunidad” [F, 37]*

#### 4. DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS -UNITED STATES AFRO-LATINOS

This chapter includes results from the United States Afro-Latino Group. It provides results from the Likert Scale Survey and the 1-hour interviews conducted with each subject. The Likert Scale and the interview results are presented together to show the qualitative and quantitative results simultaneously. This chapter is separated into three sections: (1) Identity and National Representation, (2) Intra-Ethnic Attitudes, and (3) Inter-Ethnic Attitudes.

The Likert scale was administered only to the subjects in the United States. Its purpose was to elicit the attitudes of US Afro-Latinos in a quantitative way. The survey was not administered to the Latin American participants because it sought to elicit information about the United States Afro-Latino experience. Among the United States participants, 14 of the responses were included in this study. There were 23 speakers in the United States speaker group that ranged from ages 21-37 years. While 27 interviews were conducted only 23 will be included in this study. Four of the interviews were not included in the analysis section because the recording was inaudible after the 5-minute mark.

##### 4.1 Identity

Among the US speaker group, the subjects were asked to identify their race and ethnicity. 100% of subjects used a hyphenated term and made the distinction between the two categories.

For example, they identified their race as “*Negra*” or “*Afro*” and their ethnicity being “*Latina*” or “*Hispana*”, while others made more specific connections to their Latin American heritage. 91% (21) of subjects identified their race as “*Negra*” or “*Afro*” and their ethnicity as “*Latina*”, “*Hispana*”, “*Colombiana*”, or “*Dominicana*”. One subject (4.5%) identified themselves as “*Negra*” and one subject (4.5%) identified as “*Dominicana- Hatiana- Americana*”. One participant defined herself as “*Afro-Hispana*” because the term represented both her Garifuna and Black heritages.

*“Yo me considero los dos, Afro-hispana. Yo me represento entre los dos. Represento mi identidad que soy garífuna y sé exactamente de la historia de las Garífunas que vinieron de África. La proyección hasta la carretera en Honduras. Yo sé que soy Afro-Hispana aunque nací en Honduras y soy Hispana. Yo sé que mis raíces son de África.” [F, 20]<sup>12</sup>*

In the Likert Scale, 100% of the subjects responded that they were very proud to be of Black heritage. This is important data due to the long history of Anti-Blackness in Latin America and the current political climate of the United States. Social factors could have an impact on Afro-Latinos to possibly align themselves with their non-Black Latino counterparts. The subjects also chose “*Muy de acuerdo*” meaning completely agree. The Likert Scale options 4 and 5 offer the possibility to gauge respondents’ level of agreement. This data challenges the anti-black ideologies in Latin America and the United States.

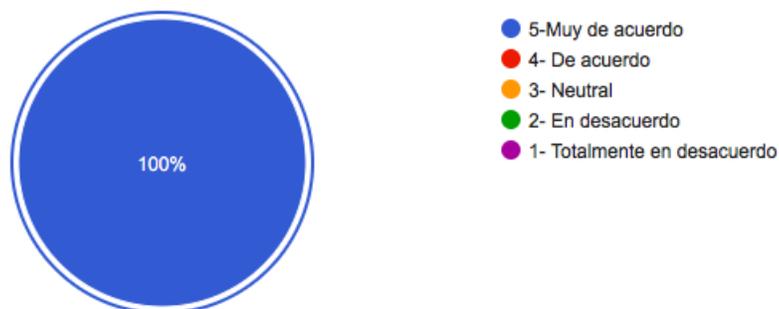
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<sup>12</sup> The quotes used from each participant is identified with their gender and their age. [F, 20] would be a female participant and 20 years old. These quotes were not edited.

**Figure 12. I am Proud to be an Afro-descendant**

**Estoy orgulloso/a de ser afrodescendiente**

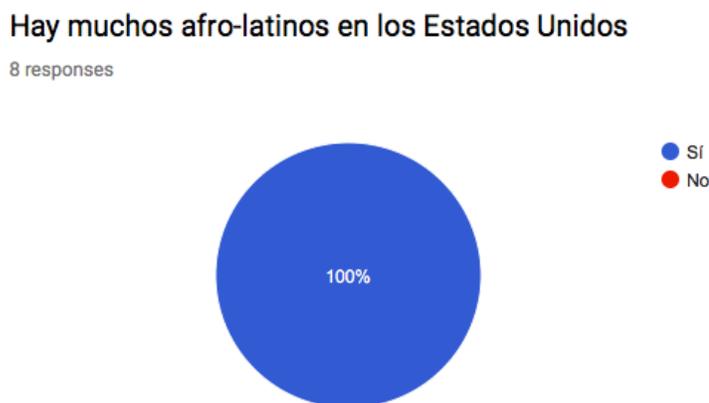
14 responses



The speakers' Latin American heritage was based in six different countries: Dominican Republic (43%), Honduras (22%), Colombia (13%), Puerto Rico (13%), Venezuela (4.3%) and Cuba (4.3%). The United States speaker group were members of all five regions: 10 speakers were living in the Northwest (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland). Five speakers lived in the Southeast (Florida, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia). Three speakers were members of Southwest (Texas and Arizona), three speakers lived in the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota) and one speaker lived in the Western Region (California) of the United States. 100% of the speakers had attended college or were current university students. The Likert Scale also reflected that 100% of Afro-Latinos in the United States believed that there were many Black Latinos around them. One of the questions that this study aimed to answer was the lack of representation in the United States and how Afro-Latinos themselves believed that their demographic could become more visible throughout the nation. In the Likert Scale survey, 100% of the subjects believed that there was a lack of Afro-Latino representation in the United

States even though they believed that there were many Afro-Latinos living there. This data points towards a necessity for national, public, representation.

**Figure 13. There are Many Afro-Latinos in the United States**



#### 4.2 Social Media and Afro-Latino Identity

Social media addressed part of the representation issue of Afro-Latinos in the United States. Many speakers in the United States were contacted through Social Media sites such as Twitter and Instagram due to the vibrant population and use of hashtags such as #Afrolatina, #Blacklatino, #Garifuna. During the interviews, speakers were asked if they believed that social media platforms were a contributing factor towards more Afro-Latina representation. The subjects agreed that social media was essential for increased representation and awareness of Afro-Latino issues. One speaker noted that they had been invited to many conferences because of their social media presence and use of hashtags. All speakers responded positively that social media was an important factor and credited the platforms for educating non-Afro-Latinos that Afro-Latinos existed,

*“Definitivamente. Yo no pienso ni que la gente supiera que los Afro-latinos existan si no fuera por el internet” [F, 19]*

Making the connection between social media and representation more personal, one speaker believed that media platforms could help Afro-Latinos themselves realize their Afro-Latino heritage. This comment shows the influence of representation. The connection between social media and identity for Afro-Latinos could be tied to seeing visual representation of Black Latinos affirming themselves as such. That they don’t have to give up any part of their identity but command being Black and Latino simultaneously.

*“Representation of Afro-Latinos in various sectors and arenas can promote representation. This means constant representation on social media of Afro-Latinos. My own brother doesn’t know he’s Black and social media representation can help him realize his identity.” [F, 19]*

Another speaker identified the impact of Afro-Latino social media presence as a generational movement and perhaps a form of protest against the silencing of this demographic. One way that social media is impacting Afro-Latino identity is through the expressions and experiences of Afro-Latino pride being posted on platforms which creates unity and community among others.

*“Mi generación es una generación que quiere ser escuchada. Y, we use our platforms to do so. Twitter nos unió para compartir nuestra historia y experiencias.” [F, 20]*

A third response described that social media had been a very important influence in her life and her identity as a Black and Latina woman. She later explained,

*“Ahora, no tengo que explicarme. Have you heard of páginas con figuras prominentes como Bad Dominicana? Encontrando su página hace años me salvó la vida”* [F, 19]

This speaker was raised by a white Dominican mom and although she recognized the difference between herself and her mother’s features, hair texture, and skin tone, they had never had a conversation about her blackness. She expressed that social media taught her about her Black Latino identity and showed her that there was a large community in the United States that shared her same dual identities.

Connecting their social media presence and identity as Afro-Latinos to their language use as bilinguals, 70% of the participants responded that they used both English and Spanish on their platforms. Three speakers responded that they used mostly English but posted in Spanish when they wanted to transmit messages directly to their family members living in Latin America. For example,

*“Mayormente utilizo el inglés pero la mayoría de mi familia está en Puerto Rico. Entonces cuando me escriben en español, se esperan una respuesta en español. No hablan el inglés.”* [ F, 28]

Another speaker responded that they used both English and Spanish but was aware that their posts could be translated so that monolinguals and bilinguals could read them,

*“A veces los dos [languages], por la mayoría de las veces el inglés porque ahora con la opción de que todo se puede traducir en Facebook. Entonces, bueno mis amigos lo pueden traducir y lo pueden ver. Pero cuando es algo que yo quiero que sepan de mis palabras ,yo lo pueden poner en inglés o español.” [M, 25]*

The data collected about social media and Afro-Latinos indicated that Afro-Latinos believed that social media was one of the most influential platforms towards more representation and visibility of in the United States. This data supports (Joseph, 2004) that language functions as a way of communication and representation of identities. For Afro-Latinos, bilingualism can maintain relationship with their homeland. Further, Afro-Latinos used social media platforms as a way to further learn about their own Afro-Latino heritage,

*“He aprendido mucho [from social media]. Mi papá siempre me ha dicho que tenemos el negro detrás de la oreja. Significa que tú no puedes negar que eres africana.” [F, 25]*

Lastly, Afro-Latinos expressed that they used both English and Spanish on social media platforms often using hashtags such as #Afrolatino, as a form of community activism and visibility.

### 4.3 Language, Afro-Latinos, and Phenotypes

A recurring and important topic that came up throughout the interviews was Afro-Latinos and their Afro-textured hair and dark skin that that many people used to classify them as non-Latino. During the interviews, 100% of subjects answered that a family member, stranger, or friend had told them to “*arreglar su pelo*” or fix their hair, meaning straighten their naturally afro-textured or curly hair, to appear more Eurocentric (with straight hair). The participants expressed that many people in the United States didn’t know that they were Latino or spoke Spanish due to their Afro-textured hair and dark skin tone but instead believed them to be African American from the United States. Some subjects spoke about the surprise factor and reactions that they received while speaking Spanish in public spaces.

“La gente se asombra. Porque tengo el afro afuera. La mayoría piensan que solo hablo inglés.” [F, 30]

“Me preguntan, ¿De dónde viniste? No puede ser latina con este cabello.” [F, 35]

“Bueno, es muy raro porque cuando alguien me escucha hablar el español se sorprende porque, como wow, nunca me imaginé que tú hablas el español. Quizás por mi pelo, mi forma de ser, como me miro, como si fuera de raza morena entonces todo el mundo se sorprende de verdad. Al principio, me sorprendí pero ahora me estoy acostumbrado de esto” [F, 25]

“*Donde aprendiste este español que hables*” [F, 37]

“*Hablas el español tan bien, donde lo aprendiste...y yo nada más le dijo 'yo soy latina Doña'.*” [F, 19]

In the United States, hair can be an identifier of ‘otherness’ within the Black community, categorizing Afro-textures as non-Latino. Some participants said that hair can further complicate their identity depending on the community. For example, one participant expressed that African Americans raised questions such as “What are you mixed with?” and “Where are you from?” due to their looser curls as if identifying as Black means only *crespo*, or kinky hair. At the same time, their curly big hair can exclude them as being Latina. One speaker gave an example of a bus ride in New York City in which her hair being worn in an afro identified her as a monolingual African American to a white Latina woman. The Latina referred to her ‘*esa negra*’ while speaking in Spanish. When the Afro-Latina responded to her with “*La parada es la próxima*”. The offender immediately stopped talking surprised that she understood her. Another interviewee talked about her loose curly hair being seen as *better* in her family and she remembered hearing that other family members should marry outside of their race for better hair. The speaker noted that among Afro-Latinos, this is another in-between, and part of the dichotomy of the essence of beauty among Black people that can be traced back to colonialism. Loose curly hair made her more attractive. And what can be analyzed here are the other attributes connected to lighter skin and looser hair texture such as intelligence, temperament, and economic status.

A theme that came up during various interviews was Afro-textured hair in its natural state, meaning not straightening it and wearing it in an afro. A given reason for the natural hair movement was that Afro-Latinos are moving away from “*la generación de mis padres y abuelos*” (older generations) that believe that straight hair among Black women in Latin America “didn’t bring attention and more oppression”. One speaker said that she would always straighten her hair for professional events and now wears it curly as a way to show “this is me. If someone thinks my mind is valuable, then so is my curly hair” [F,37].

Another physical trait discussed by this group was skin tone that can vary widely from lighter to darker skin tones. A participant spoke about the importance of realizing the privilege that came with having a lighter skin tone in comparison with Afro-Latinos that were unambiguously Black, such as a famous Afro-Latina music artist, Amara La Negra (pictured below),

*“Por ejemplo, Amara La Negra, no hay una cuestión de si ella es negra”* [F, 19]

**Figure 14. Amara La Negra**



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<sup>13</sup> Source of figure: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rosycordero/2019/02/08/amara-la-negra-confirms-song-with-pitbull-wants-to-work-with-tyler-perry/#74554593578b>

A separate participant noted that it was important to talk about colorism as there was an overwhelming need for darker skinned Afro-Latino representation. She expressed that while some lighter skinned Latinos had begun to identify as Afro-Latino, it was not a *new* trend for darker skinned Black Latinos. She put emphasis on Afro-Latinos who could not *decide* if they were Black or not, depending on if it was popular.

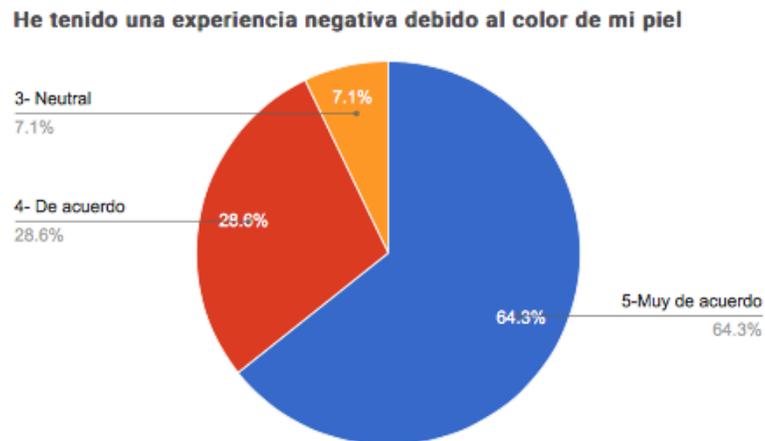
*“Por ejemplo, mi padre es negro sin ambigüedad”* [F, 19]

Lastly, a third speaker expressed that there was a need for representation of Black Latinos with kinky hair and dark skin, not because they were oppressed, but because representation would change stigmas about what a Latino looked like. She described her parents, herself, and this community as “100% *Negra*” without ambiguity. Some Afro-Latinos acknowledged that they had lighter skin that could be seen as privilege. An Afro-Latina participant in Alabama expressed that she was proud of her Dominican heritage but felt lonely as the only Afro-Latina at times. The participant described that her light brown skin tone didn’t offer her any privilege when it came to discrimination in the southern states.

*“Me puedo relacionar con diferentes grupos”*. I make sure that you know that I am a Dominican -American, who has had the Black experience in the south and it's just the Black skin in general here. There is no privilege in being Afro-Latino in that sense.” [F, 27]

The Likert scale asked participants if they felt that they had personally been discriminated against due to the color of their skin. 94% of participants agreed that they had a negative experience due to the color of their skin.

**Figure 15. I've Had a Bad Experience Due to the Color of My Skin**



Participants spoke about how their lighter skin further complicated their identity as Afro-Latinos:

“Fair skin and *mi cabello liso es un privilegio*. It further crosses lines with my identity in the United States” [F, 25]

Another subject expressed that,

“*Muchos piensan que soy India, como de la India.*” [F, 35]

Sí. A lot of people think that I’m Indian *o de Somalia*.

When I speak Spanish it’s like, wow. *Piensan que soy de cada país menos Latinoamérica.* [F, 28]

During the interviews, some subjects used my skin tone, the researcher, as a marker for describing how dark or light their parents, family, and friends were,

*“Mi hermana que es más oscura que usted no dice que es Afro-Latino, solamente que es Dominicana”.* [ F, 27]

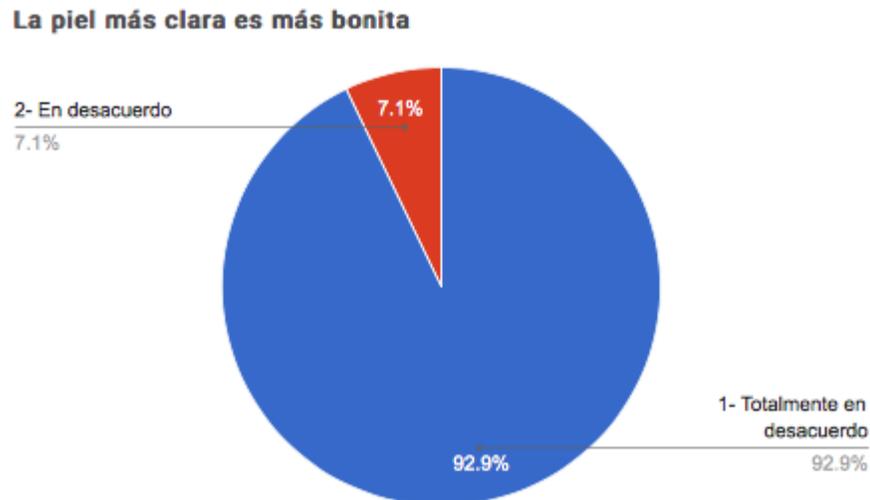
The speaker revealed that for some Afro-Latinos, dark skin is not an automatic marker to identify as Black. Though this study included Afro-Latinos who identified themselves as such, this conversation revealed that skin tone, and unambiguous blackness, does not equate the self-affirmation of being Black. Afro-Latinos of all skin tones may opt to identify with their Latin American panethnic nationality than adopt a hyphenated term or association with their African heritage.

The importance of skin tone was directly related to increased accessibility, and for some, privilege both in the Latino and Black communities, respectively. For example, one subject described that because she was a light skinned Afro-Latina, she was more accepted among her Latina friends and family. Among her darker skinned peers, she was perceived as the most beautiful and intelligent [F, 22]. Another subject expressed how proud she was of her Dominican heritage, but because of her fair skin and loosely curled natural hair, she was told, “you can't be Dominican, look at you, you're Puerto Rican.” [F, 19] . To be beautiful was not connected to being Black. To be beautiful was not a characteristic of Dominicans.

The Likert Scale elicited additional information about Afro-Latino attitudes towards skin tone. The results were that 100% of participants did not think that lighter skin was more beautiful. 93% selected that they completely disagreed and 7% disagreed. These results did not

show that Afro-Latinos thought lighter skin was ugly, but instead, that darker skin was equally as beautiful.

**Figure 16. Lighter Skin is More Beautiful**



Overall, the interviews elicited a central goal which was to change representation around colorism and Afro-Latino representation. This affirmation was important due to conversations with participants about avoiding the sun in the summer, so that they “wouldn't get dark” , or the encouragement by an aunt to use facial lightening cream. The majority of the subjects and their fervent opposition towards light skin being more beautiful is evidence that lighter skin does not take away from their own beauty as Black people, and that they are not afraid to affirm it. One participant concluded by saying that she wanted to change the conversation about diversity among Afro-Latinos so that people would also consider her, an Afro-Latina with dark skin and kinky hair, as a Latina.

*“Si yo estoy caminando en la calle, nadie va a pensar oh, ella puede ser Latina. Tiene que ver con la representación.” [F, 21]*

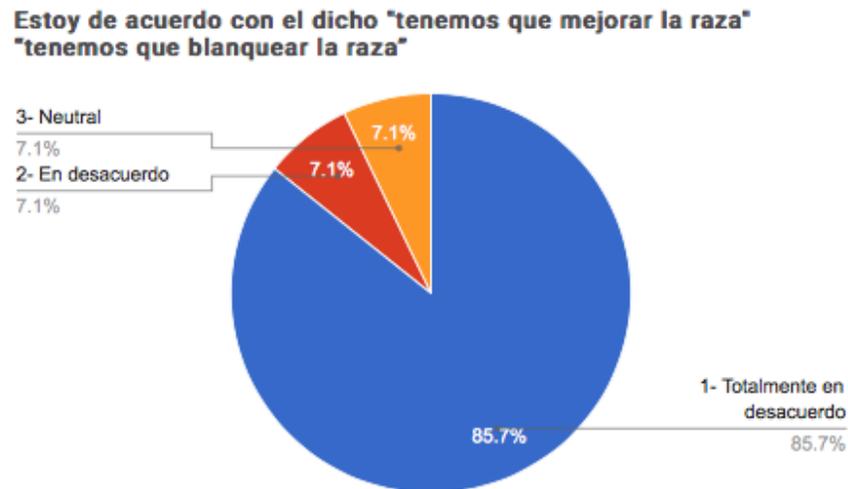
As a way to make Afro-Latinos more visible and educate about their presence in the United States, participants offered solutions that had to do with generational influences. Some mentioned that children’s books and children’s television programming were important platforms due to the images they see every day and the books they use to learn. It was important to begin teaching about Afro-Latinos early which would teach family members about Afro-Latinos as well. Others offered these responses that dealt with the importance of education as a conduit to self-acceptance and representation.

*“Es importante estudiar, regresar a la comunidad y ayudar a la próxima generación” [F, 35]*

*“Tenemos que mejorar lo que estamos enseñando a nuestros hijos sobre la cultura. La familia mía, especialmente los dominicanos no se identifican por ser negro. Identifican con latino, hispano, pero no negro. Si tiene pelo afro, there’s your evidence of your Black roots. A veces utilizan la palabra trigueño. Pero negro es negro. Tenemos que mejorar la educación.” [ F, 30]*

A specific example of education was the use of the saying, *mejorar la raza*, meaning to lighten skin and soften hair texture with each generation. The Likert Scale results showed that 93% were fully against the saying and 7% were neutral.

**Figure 17. *Tenemos que mejorar la raza***



When this topic came up in interviews, many participants gave serious responses about its roots in racism and colonialism that Blacks had been taught to hate themselves in Latin America. Moving towards representation and visibility among Afro-Latinos in the United States, a separate participant said that the term has been used a joke but the discrimination, Black history, and the fight for representation was not funny. She described that as a child she heard her grandfather telling tell a family member that they had to marry a white Latino to better the race. This event continued the generational cycle not only with her family member, but also with her, a child at the time that overheard the exchange. She expressed that as an adult, she will not let her kids hear it, which will stop the cycle in her family and empowers the next generation,

*“Es importante cuando uno tiene sus hijos no le digas que mejorar la raza. Es importante enseñar, decir, y mostrar que ser negro es bello” [F, 35]*

Another example towards positive representation of Afro-Latinos was visibility in the media, apart from social media platforms where there is a vibrant and growing population. A speaker from Oklahoma described how representation on television was essential. She mentioned that the erasure of Black Latinos on Univisión was detrimental to Afro-Latinos who need to see images of themselves represented on one of the largest media platforms.

*“Si tú prendes Univisión, ¿cuántos Afro-Latinos vas a ver? No vas a ver muchos. Entonces uno nada más dice okay, soy latino so tengo que ser blanco. Y eso me pasó mucho a mí cuando yo era menor. Yo estaba tratando de identificarme, y trying to categorize myself. Y yo, okay, yo no soy blanca, pero soy latina, so que soy? Tiene que ver con la representación” [F, 29]*

#### 4.4 United States Afro-Latino Language Attitudes

##### 4.4.1 Identity and Language as Power

Afro-Latinos saw language itself and their ability to speak two languages as power. During the interviews, two participants were in France and Spain, respectively, studying abroad and another described her semester in the Dominican Republic as a study abroad student. In addition to French, the participants of this study indicated that they spoke Italian, Portuguese, and Japanese. Another participant indicated that she wanted to learn Haitian Creole, due to its connection to the

Dominican Republic and a separate participant was interested in learning Yoruba, an official language of Nigeria. This evidence shows that Afro-Latinos are not only bilingual but also trilingual. The following participant noted that multilingualism was the ability to have two perspectives to confront and resolve problems through an amplified view of the world.

*“Tiene diferentes lentes. Todo el mundo tiene lentes, tienen perspectivas, ¿verdad? Y todas sus identidades interceptan. Como Afro-Latinos tus lentes son más amplios porque tiene la experiencia negra, tienes la experiencia latina, lingüísticamente, los que hablan el español, de ser bilingüe, entre más lentes mejor en confrontar y resolver problemas” [F, 37]*

Another perspective on bilingualism from an interviewee was that as an Afro-Latina, she spoke two languages and was from two worlds but the two separate worlds made up one culture. For this speaker, that single culture was unique to being Afro-Latino. She identified each language with its own space but both languages as equally important part of her culture.

*“Siento entre dos mundos. Hablo dos lenguas pero por un lado o otro. A personas, me parece morena pero hablo dos idiomas y tengo una cultura.” [F, 22]*

Afro-Latinos were also asked about other languages they spoke and wanted to learn. Afro-Latinos spoke and were interested in learning more languages. One speaker spoke about how her mother described being trilingual as a weapon of power. She described how she wanted

to take the ‘easy route’ and learn Spanish but her mother insisted that as a Black Latina who spoke 3 languages she would be invincible.

*“Yo estudié el francés por seis años y no quería.*

*Realmente yo quería....I wanted to take Spanish porque yo ya sabía hablar en español. Mi mamá me decía ‘No, tú no puedes aprender el español porque ya tú sabes. You need to learn a third language so that you can have a weapon. Tú sabes, ya te pareces negra, so that’s already a weapon right there. You already are Black and people are not gonna know that you speak Spanish, and then when they find out that you speak French also, their gonna be like, yes she's it! Definitivamente.” [F, 20]*

Afro-Latinos expressed how they were proud to speak Spanish and viewed multilingualism as a way to view the world differently, communicate with more people, and enter into conversations where otherwise they may have been excluded. For Afro-Latinos speaking multiple languages was activism for their community towards fighting against discrimination and positive representation of this demographic.

#### 4.4.2 Interethnic Attitudes: Afro-Latino Attitudes Towards Spanish and Other Latinos

During both the Likert Scale and the interviews, speakers were asked about their attitudes towards Spanish. All speakers spoke both Spanish and English and these questions aimed to elicit information about what they believed about their own Spanish, where they spoke Spanish,

how their Blackness in the United States influenced their use of Spanish in public spaces, and revealed what other Latinos and demographics believed about them.

Twenty-two of the twenty-three interviewees (96%) learned Spanish at home. Many speakers revealed that as children they only spoke Spanish at home and would speak Spanish at school. One participant revealed that she had no knowledge that her parents were bilingual until a conversation with her dad in grade school,

*“¿Cómo es que hablas inglés, y lo hables tan bien? Me esforzaron mis padres hablar el español . Tomamos fuerza, como sabes, cambiarnos hablar el inglés en la escuela y español en casa.” [ F, 24]*

This speaker prided herself on her ability to speak Spanish because it was evidence of her Colombian heritage. Her ability to speak Spanish as an Afro-Latino, living in the United States, was evidence of her Latin American heritage. In the Likert Scale, 100% of the participants said they felt comfortable speaking Spanish in public spaces.

**Figure 18. I Feel Comfortable Speaking Spanish in Public**



Apart from the twenty-two speakers who grew up with Spanish as their first language, one speaker grew up hearing Spanish and expressed that she always responded to her mother in English. As an adult, she decided to study abroad in the Dominican Republic and minor in Spanish in college. Today, she is a fluent bilingual.

When asked what speaking Spanish meant to them, participants gave passionate responses such as,

*“Mi español es una gran parte de mi identidad, tengo piel oscura, pelo rizado y también mi lengua” [F, 24]*

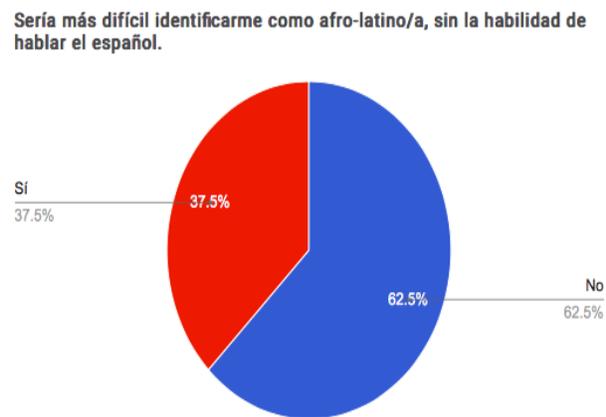
*“Sí, yo soy muy orgullosa hablar el español. Hay muchas oportunidades en cuestiones de trabajo, puedes conversar con mucha diferente gente. Cuando estaba en la secundaria había estudiantes que llegaron a los Estados Unidos y no hablaban nada de inglés. Muchas veces me traían a mí para que les ayudara con cualquier cosa. Entonces, es algo muy positivo. Es parte de mi comunidad.” [F, 31]*

*“Aquí hablo mucho más español que inglés. El español es muy útil. Lo utilizo en las calles, en las tiendas. Todo es bilingüe.” [M, 25]*

The speakers expressed their use of Spanish as a normal part of their lives and as an essential part of who they were. In the Likert Scale, participants were asked five questions to elicit information about their attitudes towards Spanish. The questions were not presented to speakers in a specific order.

The first question asked speakers if it would be more difficult to identify as an Afro-Latino, living in the United States, without the ability to speak Spanish. The results were that 63% of speakers thought it would not be difficult and 38% of speakers thought that it would.

**Figure 19. Latino Identity and Speaking Spanish**



This question had to do with their thoughts about how language, Spanish in this case, influenced their identity and the ability to prove that they were Afro-Latinos, and not African American, African, or from another Black heritage group. During the interviews, speakers were asked if a person could identify as Latina if they did not speak Spanish. Among the participants, many expressed that a person could be Latino and not speak Spanish and eleven times the response was “*Sí, claro*” (Yes, of course) without further explanation. Some of the responses were,

“*Si creistes con cultura o con influencia hispana, sí es*” [F, 22]

“Sí. A veces no es la culpa de la persona pero de la situación preocupaciones de los padres no enseñarlo a sus hijos” [F, 25]

“Sí, sí. La identidad es más que el idioma, es la comida, la música.” [F, 35]

None of the participants answered that a person could not identify as Latino if they didn't speak Spanish. One participant answered that they were stuck in the middle saying,

“Yes, you can be Latina if you don't speak Spanish especially if your name is Nicole Perez. You have your history there. Your roots are there in your last name....pause.....But at the same token, I can say no because if you don't speak Spanish, you have lost a part of your culture. Language is culture. And how can I claim a culture that I'm not a part of. It's a big debate.” [M, 25]

This comment could be interpreted that *hispanidad* can be represented two ways: historically and linguistically. After answering Afro-Latinos come from two worlds, a separate subject responded that, “*Hay gente que se esperan todo del Afro-Latino*” [F, 19]. This subject meant that Afro-Latinos are expected to do and be *everything*. To be both Black and Latino, to speak perfect English and Spanish, to attend college, etc. The subject expressed that perhaps Afro-Latinos could exist without societal pressures to check every box that an Afro-Latino should be including Spanish speakers.

Next, the US Afro-Latino group was asked if they liked their own Spanish. The Likert Scale revealed that 86% of participants liked their Spanish and 14% were neutral.

**Figure 20. I Like My Spanish**



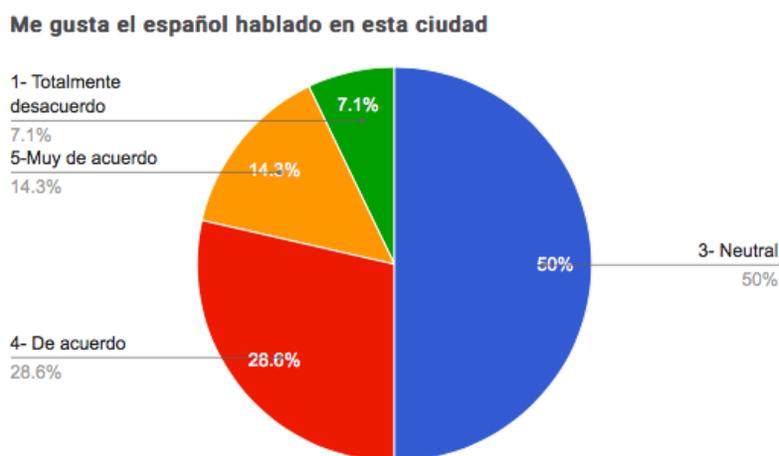
During the interviews, participants had positive viewpoints when asked about their own Spanish although one participant expressed that her career move from Florida to Boston brought about some difficulties in Spanish communication along with her new job, and state of residence. She described that her Spanish accent had become a mixture of the many Latino communities that surrounded her. As a result, and to her family members in Puerto Rico, she sounded *strange*. Later, she speaker spoke about taking trips back home as a way to recover her true accent and authentic Puerto Rican dialect.

*“Trabajé mayormente con los hispanos, y yo era la única que hablaba español pero también era algo cultural. Mi acento no es boricua, dominicano, no es de estos países. El acento mío es una mezcla de todos los países latinos. Cuando mi familia viene y me escucha hablar español, a ellos sueña raro. Pero si yo voy a Puerto Rico por tres,*

*cuatro días ya me regresa mi acento. Yo hablo más español aquí que nada pero cuando estoy allá me viene más fácil el lenguaje.” [F, 28]*

Next speakers were asked about their thoughts on the Spanish spoken in their city. The Likert Scale revealed that Afro-Latinos had varying opinions. Half (50%) of the subjects were neutral on the topic. Overall, 43% of subjects liked the Spanish spoken in their city with 14% choosing that they really liked it. Lastly, 7% of speakers did not like the Spanish spoken in their city.

**Figure 21. I Like the Spanish Spoken in my City**



The results of the Likert Scale mirrored the opinions expressed during the interviews. One participant spoke about their neutral position about the Spanish spoken in Florida. They described the diversity within their own Spanish, the diversity of the Spanish in Florida, and that each unique accent being part of the beauty of their community.

*“El español es diverso...Mi acento es un poco raro porque yo creído en los Estados Unidos. Mis familiares colombianos me dicen que escucho raro [pause] Los puertorriqueños y los dominicanos tienen acentos muy distintos. Los chilenos también. No creo que hay formas buenas o malas de hablar el español solamente diferentes maneras y dialectos de español.” [F, 24]*

When asked about their thoughts on the Spanish in their city another Afro-Colombian speaker responded that they liked the Spanish in Florida because of its diversity and spoke about slang new slang in Latin America created by Latino in the United States. Then the speaker connected their response to “correct” Spanish, from Spain, and how stereotypes about Colombian Spanish being “correct” was not important.

*“Cada grupo tiene como su propio slang. En Latinoamérica hay palabras que son ‘nuevas’ pero esa es una palabra creada aquí en los Estados Unidos. Yo he escuchado que los colombianos hablan el español más cerca al español de España. El español “correcto”, pero esas cosas no importan.” [F, 20]*

Some speakers expressed that they really liked the Spanish spoken around them, others expressed that they believed that the Spanish in their city was “not great and nothing like the Spanish from Spain”. One participant from Houston expressed that she hated the Spanish spoken

there because of false cognates and gave an example of someone saying, “I’ll call you back”. This is evidence that she believed her Spanish to be better than the Spanish spoken around her and that a correct way of speaking existed.

*“El español en Houston es terrible. Utilizan muchos falso cognados [pause] por ejemplo te llamo por atrás “ [F, 24]*

Another participant from the Dominican Republic spoke about the difficulty in understanding the Spanish spoken in Houston. They described the learning process and adapting to the Houstonian way of speaking. The participant expressed that there was a lot of diversity in the Spanish spoken but, in some ways, and in Houston, it was necessary to adapt to the dominant culture around you for fluid communication.

*“El español de Houston....aquí hay muchos mexicanos y centroamericanos y tenemos maneras muy diferentes de hablar el español. Entonces, la verdad, era un poco difícil comunicarme con ellos porque no nos entendíamos...pero ya poco a poco me gusta” [F, 25]*

Most interesting, some speakers expressed their views specifically Dominican on Spanish. They believed that it was close that it was the same as African American vernacular. They expressed that Dominican Spanish had “flavor” and others said to hear the Dominican accent felt like home.

*“A mí me gusta el acento dominicana porque es como un acento que no es perfecto. Tiene un slang y tiene mucho dichos. Tú sabes el vernáculo afroamericano y el español dominicano tiene esa vernacular. Algunos dicen que es el español malo pero a mí me gusta.” [F, 20]*

*“A mí me gusta el acento caribeño. Las personas de la República Dominicana, de Cuba, y de Puerto Rico.” [M, 25]*

*“Prefiero el acento dominicano, caribeño” [F, 23]*

*“Me encanta el español dominicano” [F, 29]*

**Figure 22. I Like the Spanish Spoken in my Country**



On a national level, 86% of Afro-Latinos indicated that they liked the Spanish that was spoken in their home country. When asked about their preference of accents, participants also referenced the Spanish of their heritage country. In two instances, participants referenced Dominican Spanish as their preferred accent.

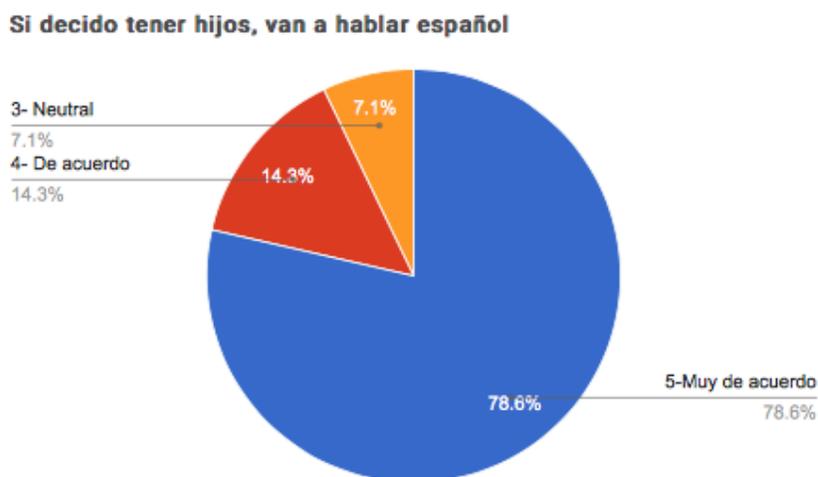
As Afro-Latinos living in the United States, the study sought to elicit attitudes about Spanish language maintenance in the future. It asked a hypothetical question about the next generation and if they believed their children would speak Spanish. About 93% of participants agreed that they would ensure that their children spoke Spanish. About 7% of subjects were neutral on the subject.

During the interviews, participants expressed that Spanish language maintenance was important and affirmed that they would teach the next generation Spanish. No participants suggested or denied that they would not teach their children Spanish.

### Figure 23. My Kids Will Speak Spanish

One participant mentioned the future and said,

*“Cuando yo tengo mis propios niños yo quiero que hablen el español y que hablen bien.” [F, 22]*



A separate interview spoke about the importance of children learning Spanish from their mom and not feeling uncomfortable in environments where there are few Spanish speakers,

*“Ahora vivimos en un área con más hispanos pero antes vivíamos en un área retirado, y casi todo el mundo era blanco americana y yo sentía mucha tensión. Yo sentía incómoda hablando en la calle, en español hablando con mis niños. Entonces he tratado de ser más consciente de no sentirme incómoda de hablar español por mis niños, porque no van a aprender porque a mí me están mirando.”*

[F, 35]

A third interviewee mentioned that seeing and hearing other children speak Spanish motivates her to teach her children more Spanish.

*“A mí me encanta ir al supermercado, y al parque escuchar los niños chiquiticos hablando su español y quisiera motivar a mis niños aprender más”* [F, 35]

#### 4.4.3 Intraethnic Attitudes: Afro-Latino Attitudes towards English and African Americans

The Likert Scale asked Afro-Latinos about their attitudes towards ‘feeling’ like an American. This question included many factors about what they believed about their heritage as Latinos, and Black people, as bilinguals, and a theme that came up often during the interviews, as Latino and Black with the power to switch between two languages during the current political climate. Speaking Spanish in public elicited surprised reactions 100% of the time. Interestingly, Afro-Latinos were also questioned about their ethnic origins when speaking English. Some questions that mentioned by Non-Latinos were,

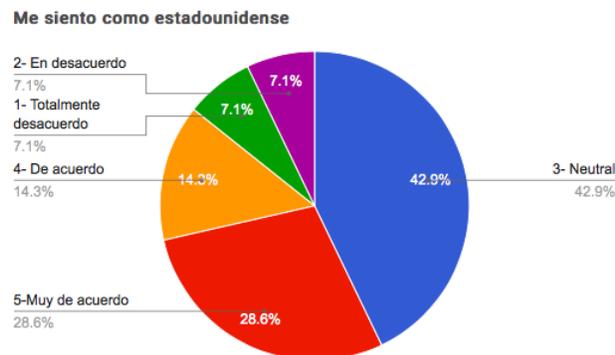
*“A veces cuando hablo el inglés y tengo un acento, me preguntan “Where you from?” A veces es, “Are you Black?” [M, 25]*

The questioning about identity while speaking English was a point of extended conversation for the US Afro-Latino group. This was another complexity of who they were and some explained they had to explain themselves, even though they, “were presenting themselves as African American and still being questioned about their identity”. This means they looked African American and while speaking English in the United States and still had to explain who they were and where they came from. On the other side, one Afro-Latino expressed that people were surprised that she spoke Spanish because she spoke English without an accent. For her, this surprised others because “you would have no idea at all that I had another side”. [F, 22] This was evidence of a duality of identities for this speaker.

The responses on the Likert Scale about ‘feeling’ American were varied: 43% of Afro-Latinos were neutral on the topic and did not agree or disagree, about 43% agreed that they felt American, and about 14% did not feel American. During the interviews, subjects expressed that they felt between two worlds and communities. Others expressed that they felt more connected to the home country due to the neighborhood they live in and customs that they continued with their families. The variance of responses can be linked to national representation in Latin America and in the United States. Some feel that they have no *space* to call their own as Black Latinos. When asked to elaborate, one subject spoke about the United States Census and how a more direct approach to asking about Latinos and race can recover an invisible group of people. Another subject spoke about the Dominican Republic and how ideologies and invisibility can be transferred to the Black Latino experience in the United States. She expressed that the

Dominican Republic is 50% Black but there is absolutely no representation among politicians, on visible platforms, that are Black. This directly affects if you *feel* Dominican and if you *feel* American.

**Figure 24. I Feel American**



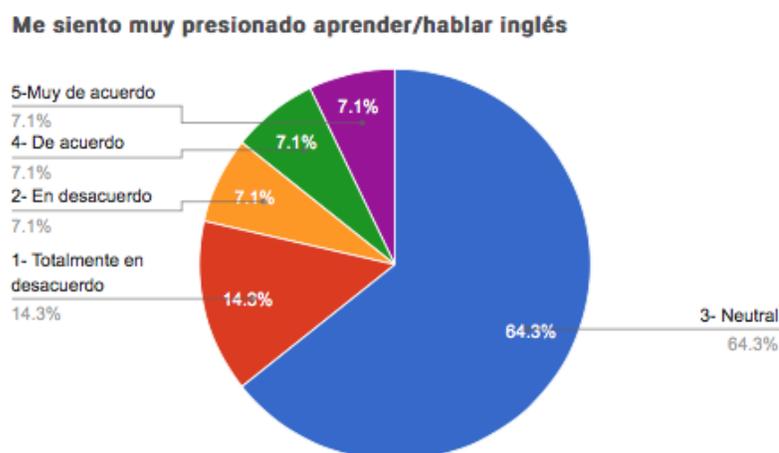
To give details about their responses, further questions were asked about their attitudes towards English and Black counterparts. When asked if they felt the need to speak English, the majority of responses agreed that speaking English was a necessity.

**Figure 25. I Must Speak English as an American**



Another Likert Scale question asked if Afro-Latinos felt pressured to speak English. The results showed that the majority of subjects (65%) were neutral topic, 21% disagreed and 14% agreed that they felt pressured to speak English.

**Figure 26. I Feel Pressured to Speak English**

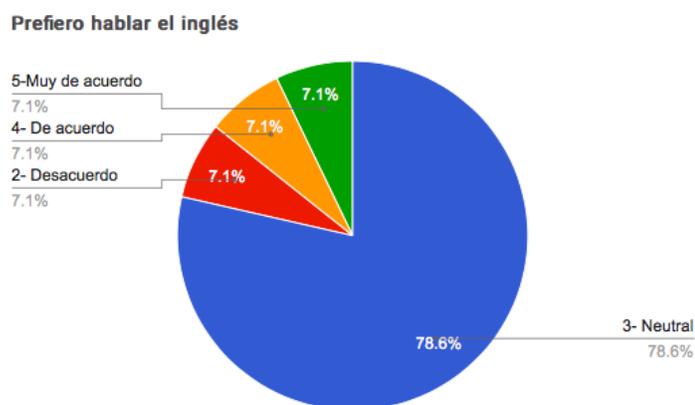


A third question asked US Afro-Latinos if they preferred to speak English over Spanish. During the interviews, one participant described that some Afro-Latinos pushed to teach their children English only so that they could better assimilate to the culture in the United States. While the culture is inside of the individual, to be Black and speak Spanish could be seen as a hindrance.

*“La cultura se lleva por adentro pero, some people don’t want their kids to learn Spanish to protect them. To be Black and speak Spanish, for some can be a hindrance, if you arrive thinking that” [F, 28]*

The results of Afro-Latino preference of English over Spanish showed that 86% were neutral, 7% disagreed and 14% preferred English over Spanish.

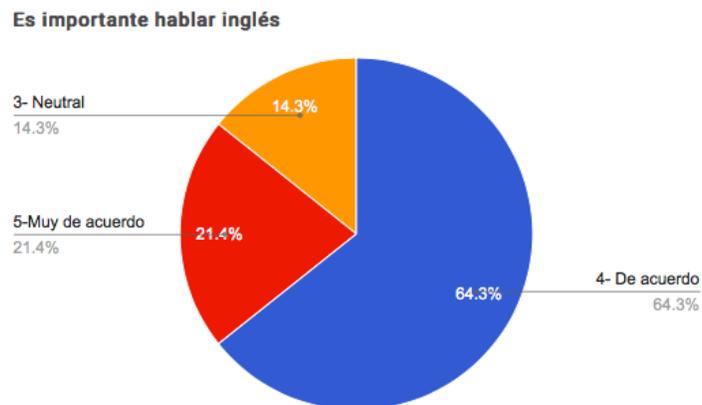
**Figure 27. I Prefer to Speak English**



The results of the survey revealed that overall, Afro-Latinos were neutral on the subject.

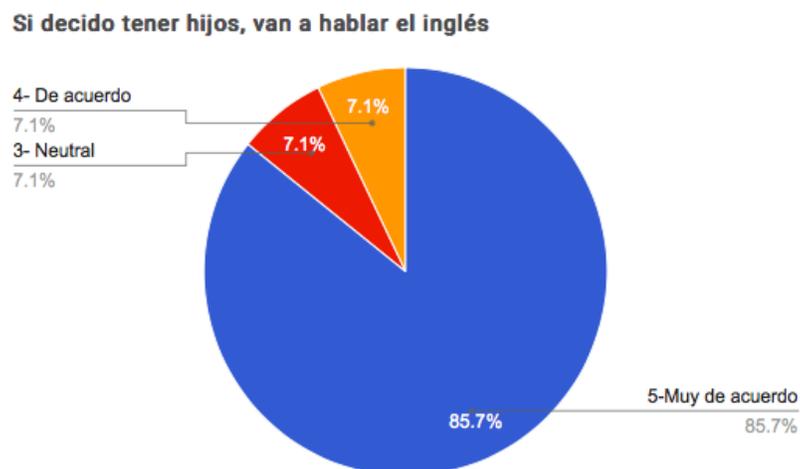
As Afro-Latinos living in the United States, their neutral position did not indicate a preference to speak English only but was evidence that they commanded both languages and possibly used them interchangeably. Throughout the interviews, some subjects would switch to English to express an important point and others would use filler words and phrases such as: “like”, “but”, “you know”, “so”, “and”. A theme that came up was the fact that participants spoke English without an accent and when switching to Spanish, spoke it without an accent as well. These conversations were evidence that English was an everyday part of communication. When asked if it was important to speak English, 86% of participants said yes. The data showed that Afro-Latinos did not feel pressured to speak English but thought that it was important.

**Figure 28. It is Important to Speak English**



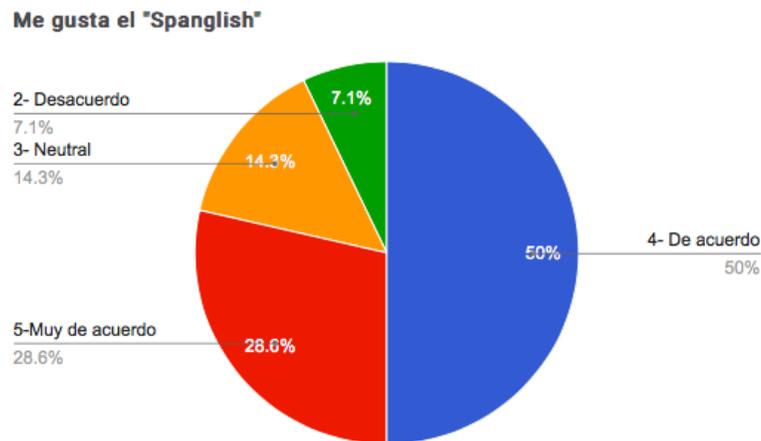
The participants were asked about their beliefs about the next generation of Afro-Latinos and if they would speak English and 93% agreed. Specifically, the data showed that they were very confident about the next generation and the English language.

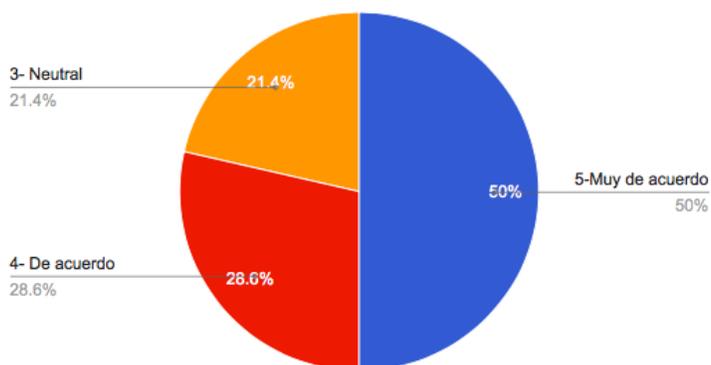
**Figure 29. My Kids Will Speak English**



Next, subjects were asked about their attitudes towards Spanglish, a hybrid language between Spanish and English that uses expressions from both languages. During the interviews, 100% of subjects used English in moments to express a thought or explain a situation. The use of English increased during moments of high emotion. For example, when speaking about discrimination towards dark skin Afro-Latinos, when telling stories about their Afro-textured hair, when describing moments that someone didn't know they were Latino and decided to speak in Spanish as a way of exclusion. Many subjects switched back and forth but spoke mostly in Spanish, while others used a combination of both languages throughout their interviews. About 78% of the subjects agreed that they liked Spanglish and used it as part of their linguistic practice. When asked if they liked Spanglish, 7% of Afro-Latinos said they did not and when asked if they spoke Spanglish, no Afro-Latinos denied speaking the language.

**Figure 30. I Like Spanglish**



**Figure 31. I Speak Spanglish****Hablo "Spanglish"**

During the interviews, various of the participants used Spanglish. Some examples were,

*“Encuentro que la identidad Latino, has so much attached to it.”* [M, 33]

*“El hecho es que, whether you’re Black or brown, you’re still going through it”* [F, 27]

#### 4.4.4 Afro-Latinos and African Americans

This study sought to elicit Afro-Latino attitudes towards Americans and specifically African Americans due to the physical traits that they share with African Americans, their ability to present themselves as African American, the historical and present reality of discrimination in Latin America and the United States, and the Black pride movement that is happening in both spaces.

To understand what Afro-Latinos believe about the relationship between both communities, they were asked to describe the climate in their own city. A response was,

“The relationship is better now because many *dominicanos* are accepting that they are of African descendants. They are realizing that African Americans and Afro-Latinos are united in their heritage.” [F, 23]

The connection between self-acceptance and the climate of the relationship between both communities was divided between Afro-Latinos accepting themselves as Black or having an Anti-Black perspective. Speakers described that if Afro-Latinos did not realize or acknowledge that they were Black, it created tension. One speaker said that she realized that she was Black through African American history and diaspora studies while studying in college.

*“Bueno todos los dominicanos son Afro-Latinos aunque no lo sepan. ¿Pero identificaron así? No. Eso es algo que yo personalmente descubrí cuando fui a la universidad y soy la única en mi familia que ha ido a la universidad.....es algo que descubrí en círculos académicos”* [F, 27]

Outside of academia, others describe how social media platforms helped them discover that they were Black. According to speakers, the tension that existed between both communities had to do with how Latinos view Black people in Latin America and in the United States as oppressed and did not want to share that same experience. To avoid identifying as Black in the United States, many speakers spoke about how Afro-Latinos used ethnicity to classify themselves. For example, in Miami, some Dominicans identified as Dominican and not Black because “su nacionalidad es su identidad”. Another speaker describes that as a child, race did not

exist only nationality. A separate speaker detailed her arrival from Puerto Rico to the United States, and while she knew she was Black, and had known she was Black since she was a child, she didn't identify as such. For her, Blacks in the United States were a separate/different people. One speaker described this as a cultural practice instead of anti-Blackness. She explained that the Latino roots run deep, and they are very proud of who they are. They identify mostly with their *Latinidad* because of culture.

A separate speaker explained that anti-Blackness was a result of colonialism and racism,

*“Hay colorismo entre nuestra gente. Can I switch back to English...there is so much colorism even within our own people. I've had arguments with people that look black, are black, but are white aligning, because of colonialism and racism.” [F, 25]*

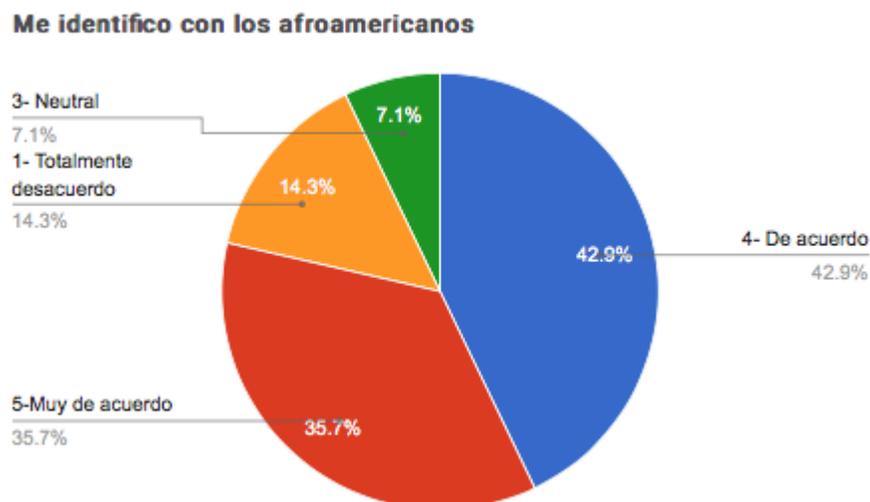
On the other side, the conversations around the relationship between two Black communities came full circle as Afro-Latinos described the pride in and acknowledgement of their Blackness. One speaker expressed that the process of realizing that you're Black was a privilege of lighter skinned Afro-Latinos.

Many speakers described the relationship between African Americans and Afro-Latinos as very positive. Some connected the positive relationship to a shared history for rights and against discrimination,

*“Somos todos partes de esa misma experiencia (la diáspora), seas afro-boricua, seas afro-latino seas afro-argentino que seamos consciente de que somos parte de algo más allá...para poder crear una comunidad” [F, 37]*

When asked if they identified with African Americans, about 80% of participants said they did and 14% strongly denied identifying with the population.

**Figure 32. I Identify with African Americans**



When speaking about culture, some Afro-Latinos felt united with African Americans due to a shared cultural experience,

*“Es más bello ser negro porque nuestra cultura nos trae toda. Los negros somos iguales. Nuestras raíces son iguales” [F, 35]*

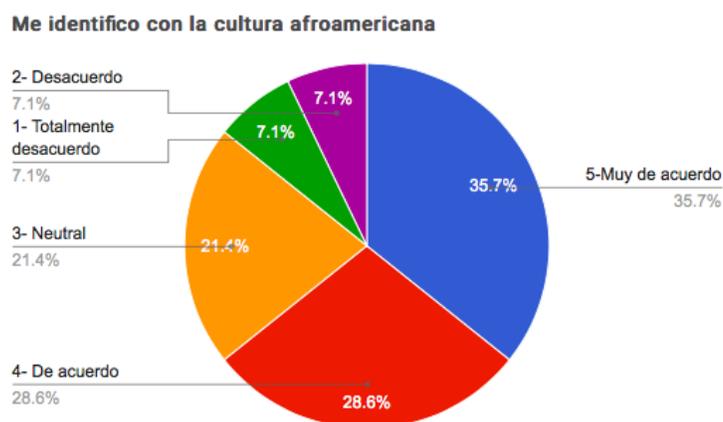
while others felt that the only difference between African Americans and Afro-Latinos was culture,

*“Somos hispanos pero negros, la cultura de los afro-americanos es completamente diferente de los afro-latinos. Es solamente la cultura que es diferente” [F, 25]*

*“No hay una diferencia. Solamente lenguaje y cultura. La cultura es la única diferencia.” [F, 23]*

The Likert scale survey also asked Afro-Latinos if they identified with African American culture. About 65% of participants agreed, 14% denied identifying with African American culture, and 21% said they felt neutral.

**Figure 33. I Identify with African American Culture**

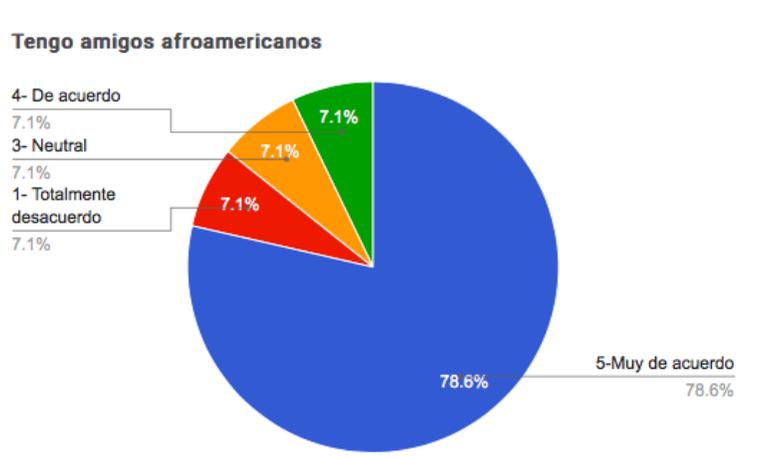


A theme that came up when asked about their relationship with other Afro-Latinos was feeling between two separate worlds and, at times, having to choose. One speaker mentioned that she dealt with these emotions in high school where she would have to choose between her Latino or Black friend group. Another speaker described how she directly identified with her Latino friends and felt very close to her African American friend group.

“La mayoría de mis amigos son afroamericanas. Yo pienso que los negros en Colombia, y muchos piensan que la palabra negra es ofensiva, y no es.... Yo pienso que los negros de Colombia son igual o más similar a los negros de aquí.” [F, 31]

When asked about if they had African American friends during the Likert Scale survey, 86% of participants agreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 7% selected that they were neutral.

**Figure 32. I Have African American Friends**



Lastly, some Afro-Latinos described how they didn't feel connected to the African American community but felt connected to shared experiences with the Black community. One speaker said, 'It's hard being Black, wherever you go, *hasta en Africa*' [F, 24]. On their connection to African Americans, another speaker concluded that the Black Latino experience comes in waves, generations, economic statuses, and nationalities and that the current experience was one of representation, acceptance, and activism against anti-Blackness and self-hate. Overall

Afro-Latinos felt connected to African Americans, their culture, and shared friendships with them.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Hernández (2003) and Tallet (2003) expressed the ways that Afro-Latinos can be perceived as outgroup members among Latinos due to their dark skin. This study found that Afro hair was also a large factor that contributed to outgroup classification among Latinos. Afro textured hair was an immediate identifier of Black Latinos as African Americans. Importantly, and when faced with these experiences, language was used as a way to demonstrate ingroup status as Latinos. The data shows that Afro-Latinos challenge the way that people in the United States view race and ethnicity whether they are Latino, African American, or White, etc. This data is also consistent with Toribio (2000) because racial categorization of Blackness in Latin America does not transfer to the United States. To outsiders, Afro-Latinos were African American. Afro-Latinos had positive attitudes towards their own Spanish and were proud to use it in public spaces.

Jensen et al. (2006) found that Black Latinos in the United States avoided using the word *negro* to identify themselves and preferred using panethnic or terms to identify themselves such as *hispano* and *dominicano*. None of the subjects in Jensen et al. (2006) used a hyphenated term to describe themselves. The present study found interesting data that can be compared to these findings:

- 100% of the subjects identified themselves as Black and using the words *negro* or *afro*
- 100% of the subjects used a hyphenated term to identify themselves (for example: Afro-Latino/ Afro-Dominicano/Afro-Boricua/Negra garifuna)

- Subjects did not measure their Blackness on a scale that connected to their skin tone but did recognize privilege among lighter skinned Afro-Latinos

These findings suggest that from 2006 to 2019, Afro-Latinos view themselves as part of two worlds, and that they affirm their Blackness using the word *negra* that has been considered taboo in Latin America countries. These results could also show that Afro-Latinos have broadened their view of language as a central marker of identity as found in Jensen (2006). Instead of using *hispano/a* or *domincano/a*, they have begun to incorporate race as well, such as *Afro-Dominicano*. This data could indicate that Black Latinos in the United States want to be represented as both Black and Latino, which could initiate national representation on the United States census and the addition of a category “Afro-Latino”. As projected by the United States Census, in 2050 more than 31 million Afro-Latinos will account for the total population of Latinos. The subjects in this study offer important indications for the United States Census.

Hernandez (2003) described that some Afro-Latinos hope to assimilate into the dominant white culture and accept a mulatto identity in the United States. The data from the present study, that represents Afro-Latinos across Latin America, shows that Afro-Latinos are not interested in assimilating to a mulatto identity, but are self-identifying as Black. Further, they are encouraging their communities to affirm that they are Black as well. Some data in this study shows that Afro-Latinos living in some regions identify themselves using their nationality. It is possible that even though regions could begin to identify as Black due to social influences, artists Amara La Negra and Cardi B, media platforms, and individual Afro-Latino self-affirmation could motivate a large group change.

Garcia et al. (1998) concluded that it was significant to study ethnic Latino group due to the diversity that exists at the macro and micro levels. The present study aligns with Garcia et al. (1998) in that Afro-Latinos have positive attitudes towards Spanish and English. Our data reveals that Afro-Latinos believe that it is very important to be bilingual, speak English, and maintain Spanish in future generations. Some subjects even mentioned that they wanted their children to learn *good* Spanish. This present study finds that, in general, Afro-Latinos in the United States do not separate English and Spanish into public and private domains as they did as children. As adults they use both languages at will. For example, one subject used Spanish more than English in general, while another subject preferred English on social media except when they wanted to send a message directly to their family members in Latin America. A third subject described that she used Spanish and English interchangeably.

Afro-Latinos in the United States expressed unfavorable attitudes towards the Spanish spoken in their city due to false cognates and comprehension difficulties. These subjects acknowledged that *good* Spanish existed. This data shows that Afro-Latinos are diverse in the United States. While they prefer their own dialect, and like their Spanish, they are aware of the belief that *good* Spanish exists. Afro-Latinos in the United States were aware of assimilation that occurred with the dialects around you. Subjects expressed how their accent was different from how it once was. For a speaker from the Dominican Republic, it was necessary that she assimilate her Spanish for communicative purposes.

The next chapter will discuss Afro-Latino identity and language attitudes in Colombia. These results of the chapters will be compared in the conclusion.

*“Ser afro en Colombia significa tener que enfrentar a un proceso de transformación, de visibilización, y de reconocimiento de la cultura afro más allá de la música y la danza” [F, 23]*

## 5. AFRO-LATINO IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN COLOMBIA

In 2008, the CRS Report for Congress reported that Afro-Latinos comprise 150 million of the total 540 million people in Latin America. Their report was specifically interested in the plight of Afro-Colombians, the effects of racism, discrimination, and violation of land and property rights in Colombia. Afro-Latino populations live on some of the country's most biodiverse, resource-rich lands. According to the report, Afro-Latinos are seeking political representation, human rights protection, land rights, and greater social and economic opportunities.

Colombia has the second largest Afro-descendant population in Latin America behind Brazil. During the 2005 national census, only 11% of all Afro-Colombians identified as Black even though researchers believe they constitute up to 26% of the population (Seelke, 2008). The participants included in this study have origins in each of the historically Black regions in Colombia which are: The Pacific Coast, which includes El Chocó and La Cauca (the largest Black regions), and the Atlantic Region which included the port cities of Cartagena and Barranquilla, as well as the Island of San Andres.

The interviews were conducted at the *Ministerio de Interior, Dirección de Asuntos Para las Comunidades Negras, Afrocolombianas, Raizales, y Palenqueras*, a Colombian government agency that helps to create alliances, serve the Black population, and fight against racial discrimination and the victimization of Afro-Colombians, the largest book fair in Colombia, a home, on the street in the city center, and at a family party.

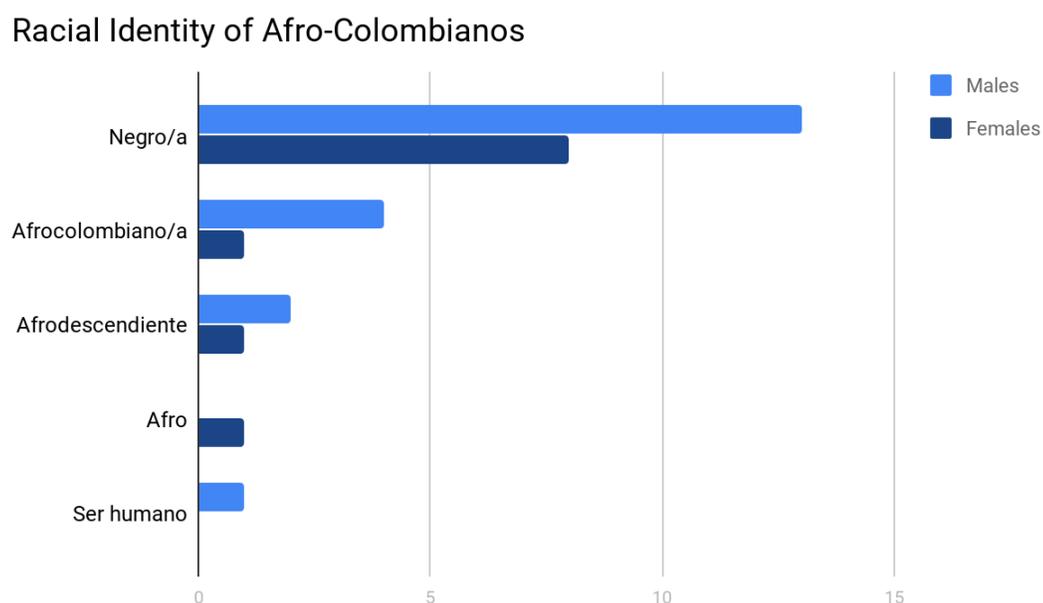
The current chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is about identity in Bogotá among Black Colombians. It includes data and an analysis on how the subjects self-identify, ethnicity markers, the importance of representation and identity, discrimination, their linguistic profiles, and the national identity categorization of Black Colombians. The second section details Afro-Colombian interethnic attitudes, towards *Bogotanos* and the Spanish spoken in Bogotá. The third section offers data about Afro-Colombian intraethnic attitudes, towards African Americans in the United States. The fourth section focuses on two reflection questions asked during the interviews which are, (1) In a perfect world, what would happen to Afro-Colombians in Colombia? And (2) Is there an ideal country to live as Black Colombian?

### 5.1 Identity

The Afro-Colombians included in this study are a very diverse group of people. They range in age from 20 to 71 years old, include 20 male and 11 female subjects, have a diverse linguistic profile and are professionals and students in various sectors. Some of the professions included are: government officials, lawyers, college professors, a nurse, a high school teacher, a soldier, a photographer, a poet, a Yoruba Priestess, activists and two famous musicians. There are graduate and undergraduate participants in the fields of linguistics, engineering, and psychology.

At the beginning of the interviews the subjects were asked how they identified themselves racially. There were five categories of responses: *Negro* (13 males and 8 females), *Afrocolombiano* (4 males and 1 female), *Afrodescendiente* (2 males and 1 female), *Afro* (1 female) and *Ser humano* (1 male). The following is a chart of their responses:

**Figure 33. Racial Identity of Afro-Colombians**



Among the participants, 21 identified as *negro/a*. All of these responses were instant, without hesitation, and some answered with a strong emphasis on the word, showing a strong sense of pride. To begin the conversation about identity, participants were asked how they identified themselves racially. This question was a window to many participants describing the importance of identifying as Black and the self-acceptance that accompanied their declaration. Some participants described how identifying as *negro/a* was all they knew, from children to

adults. A twenty-five-year-old female described that it was important to speak on the subject of identity among Black peoples because it was a global issue and not unique to Colombia.

A common theme that came up with identity was tradition and how important it was to recognize your unique history as a Black person both culturally and religiously. A female participant, 26 years old, described that her identity as Black woman was beautiful because of its history, how she enjoys her tradition food and hair styles, and the tradition of cultural expressions from her lineage that enriches her life,

*“La historia, por toda la familia que viene atrás, La tradición... yo soy una mujer de tradición me gusta la comida tradicional de mi casa, los peinados y yo mismo me hago mis trenzas, aprendo muchos dichos, me encantan, yo creo que las personas con dichos están bien educadas mi abuela siempre tiene un dicho” [M, 26]*

A separate subject expressed that being Black was blessing due to its cultural traditions. She also mentioned how wearing her hair in traditional styles (braids) was connected to her identity as a Black woman,

*“Pensaba, realmente si yo no fuera negra o yo no tuviera la cultura que tengo, no bailaría así...agradecía a Dios por ser negra, por tener este ritmo, la fisiología.... ya todo el mundo está encantado de mis trenzas...es una cultura, muy folklórica, muy valiosa” [F, 29]*

Black women were discussed as the matriarchs for Black identity and pride,

*“Las mujeres afro como etnia son sumamente valiosas porque son fuertes” [F, 33]*

For her, Black women had the ability to overcome any situation that came their way. She was very proud to be a Black woman. A participant over 10 years older than her described being Black in a list of favorable attributes including beautiful, happy, economically independent, and family oriented,

*“tenemos unas caras muy lindas, una sonrisas muy lindas, unos cuerpos bonitos, somos alegres, somos emprendedoras, tenemos iniciativas, cuidamos la familia, tengo una lista!” [F, 45]*

To better explain his identity, one participant described that being an afro descendant was an experience of discovery, not of the traditions connected to slavery and defining yourself according to those standards, but one of your ancestors and everything you were denied during slavery,

*“La experiencia de ser afrodescendiente para mí es una experiencia de descubrimiento de lo que soy como heredero no de las tradiciones esclavas ni de las tradiciones que se inventan al negro de la esclavización sino al contrario me llevo la ruta de descubrimiento de los ancestros de las tradiciones de las experiencias que nos fueron negadas durante la esclavización” [M, 48]*

When initially asked how she identified herself, a subject responded that she identified as a descendant of the diaspora, descendant of Africans, and a Black woman.

*“Yo soy descendiente de la diáspora, soy descendiente de africanos y yo soy negra.” [F, 50]*

She later expanded that for her, Black identity was connected to religious identity and her Yoruba faith, a religion in all territories of Nigeria. She noted that she was a Priestess.

*“Soy sacerdotisa yoruba. Practico la religión de Yoruba. Es una religión asentada en todos los territorios de Nigeria. ...Y la encontramos en eso es la búsqueda, que como militantes que como activistas del movimiento afro andábamos buscando elementos que fortalecieron la identidad como mujer negra que encuentro con una espiritualidad que me enamoró, a la que amo”. [F, 50]*

The connection between her faith and identity was that it is composed of Black activists that look for elements to strengthen identity. Her religion centers around the feeling of life and how Africans from Nigeria justified human existence. In that symbolic and spiritual world exists her identity. This speaker was also a university professor and activist for Black rights. She had held high ranking positions in the government to fight for equality and against discrimination. She described that her spirituality wasn't tied to folklore but to the feeling, and sensation, of life. She continued describing her identity and role as an activist,

*“El negro es mi proyecto de vida. Defender y luchar por los derechos de los afros es mi propósito.” [F, 50]*

In Colombia, Afro descendants have five categories to identify themselves. They are: *negro*, *mulatto*, *afrocolombiano*, *palenquero*, and *raizal*. During the interviews, participants were asked about the five different options to identify oneself as Black. This question sought to elicit information about how the subjects viewed themselves within the categories, sought to elicit information about national identity and self-identity, and better understand how various Afro-Colombians felt about the categorization. There were three different types of responses to this question: subjects who thought it was beneficial to have five different categories, subjects who disagreed with the differentiation and subjects who saw the benefits and negative aspects within this method.

In 2005, Colombia incorporated an ethnic racial question in their National Census to include their ethnic groups. One subject [M, 40] responded that the categories are obedient to the ways the government thinks that Blacks identify. He then began to describe each category: *Negro* is the division in Colombian created during slavery of Black, Whites, Yellow peoples. *Afrocolombiano* is a political term to describe those born in Colombia but have roots in Africa. *Mulatto* is the mix of white and mestizo indigenous populations. *Palenquero* refers to the Black population that has conserved their African customs and parts of their language. *Raizal*: refers specifically to people from San Andres and the Providence who arrived to the island and were enslaved. They have African and British roots. The government used these terms on the census after research on how Blacks identify themselves, which varied. For example, he noted that there was a necessity for different terms because some people would say, "I'm not Black, I'm Afro-Colombian". Others that would say, "I'm not Afro-Colombian, I'm mulatto".

*“Hay gente que dice: “Yo soy negro, no soy afrocolombiano ni mulato. Hay otros que dicen, “No yo soy mulato” [M, 40]*

This speaker described that the options had both a historical and geographical significance. A separate 21 -year-old male participant agreed that the options were separated by region,

*“Por ejemplo, un palenquero sería una persona de San Basilio de Palenque.” [M, 21]*

When he described that *Palenqueros* were only people from San Basilio de Palenque, I asked him what about the term *negro*? His response was that *true* Black people were from El Chocó and that *afrocolombianos* were Black, from Bogotá, and those who weren't connected to their culture as much as people from the Pacific.

*“Pues negro negro para mi es chocoano. Afrocolombianos son personas que nacieron en otras regiones, por ejemplo aquí que no tantas están pegadas a su cultura” [M, 21]*

For him, the only way that you could identify as *negro* was if you were from El Chocó. In general, participants did not follow these geographical rules but adhered to self-preference. For example, a Palenquero identified himself as *negro*, a participant from San Andres identified as *negro*, and a mulatto identified himself as a human being, but later in the interviews described *los negros* including himself.

Next, there were various participants who believed that the categorization was beneficial for Black people. A 50-year-old female subject believed that categorization was a good strategy for the Black community as a result of racism. She described that some categories were “more

Black” than others but the most powerful category among them was *negra*. It was a strong term, a political message, and a message of self-acceptance.

*“Yo creo que son unas estrategias buenas. Precisamente, el racismo ha...nos ha puesto a buscar estrategias para identificarnos”. [F, 50]*

Another benefit to the various options, was that it helped Black students to further identify themselves and gain scholarships but that there was a motive within the university that benefited them as well. The categorization was a way to find out how many Black students were being represented from each community.

*“pero esas prebendas en el fondo es para contar quién es. Cuántas personas de la comunidad afro, de la comunidad palenquera, las indígenas tenemos aquí” [M, 51]*

A third benefit was to maintain and recognize the historical importance of certain categories. For example, Cartagena and its eminence as the first free Black community of enslaved people,

*“Los palenqueros, son los que están en Cartagena que tienen una tierra, digamos histórica... desarrollada ancestralmente, históricamente...donde se escaparon los esclavos, por ejemplo.” [F, 24]*

Cartagena is evidence that Afro-Colombians are not a homogenous group and it is important to recognize the diversity that exists within the Black community, “It's a good thing because people don't look at Black Colombians like one unified group that are all the same. There are tribal African groups. We are very different in our regions. The different options represent our history.

[M, 20] . He expressed that with a single racial categorization of *negra*, that significance would be lost.

In an interview with a participant from San Andres, who according to these standards was *Raizal*, the participant identified himself as *negro*. When asked about identity he explained that the categories were a way that Black Colombians discriminated amongst themselves. [M, 26]. To emphasize this point, a separate interview described that some categories were believed to be less significant than others, *raizales* don't want to be called *mulatos*, *mulatos* don't want to be called *negros*, and the *negros* don't want to be called *palenqueros*. [F, 23 ] Others described the categorization as mental tricks that further divided Blacks,

*“Hay tantas opciones porque todo en Colombia lo queremos dividido”*. [M, 20]

That it divided Black based on skin tone,

*“Tiene que ver con los tonitos de piel que tenemos aquí. Hay muchos”* [F, 29]

That there was one category to describe *negritud* which was “negro” and it didn't make sense to separate the population.

*“No entiendo por qué hay tantas opciones para una sola raza. Somos negros”* [M, 34]

Concluding their description of the categories, one subject said that the categories had to do with negative stereotypes about Black people in Colombia, because they were rooted in governmental beliefs that Afro-Colombians were incapable of making informed decisions about their own national representation. The categories offered a system to *help* them know who they were.

Overall, there were positive, negative and combined responses about the categorization of *Black* on a national level. Some believed that the categories were a movement against *negritud* which created further separation among Blacks. 68% of subjects identified themselves as *negro/a*. While some subjects from the islands of San Andres and San Basilio El Palenque had specified terms to identify themselves, *raizal* and *palenquero*, they too identified as *negro*. The one participant who identified as a human being, believed that these categories, and race in general, was senseless. That it was inconvenient to live by a set of rules enforced by society,

*“creo que es inconveniente vivir y encerrarse somos una especie humana y esas divisiones en razas nos crean conflictos, entonces en mi mente me siento un ser humano”*

[M, 34] (This speaker was biracial, with paternal roots in La Cauca.)

In response to the categories on the census, a participant noted that he identified as *negro* and only *negro*. For him, the categories were rooted in a disconnect with self-acceptance that began at home,

*“Esas cosas le enseña desde casa, de aceptarse como es. De quererse como es. A mí, mis padres me enseñaron que seas orgullosa de tu raza, de lo que eres, de lo que tienes.”*

[M, 21]

As mentioned in that quote, self-acceptance was a factor that contributed to identity and could combat discrimination. One method was for Blacks to accept themselves for who they were before they could ask mestizos or whites to do the same [F, 25].

Discrimination in Colombia was a recurrent theme in 29 of the 31 interviews. It was evident that Afro-Colombians were aware of the silent and more forward acts of discrimination. They were equipped to initiate change in their country. Participants spoke about the discrimination in various sectors of their daily life. One participant spoke about her mother being a lawyer in the Pacific Coast but received discrimination from other Black lawyers. Culturally she was indigenous, and the combination of being a woman and Black made her doubly inferior to her Black colleagues. When white lawyers would come to the law offices, they were regarded with respect. [F, 25]. A professor recalled his experience as a college student in Bogotá. He experienced racism from not only students, but also professors and everyone in the university. For him the key to overcoming discrimination is to know your rights,

*“uno sabe cuáles son los derechos que tiene. Cuando saben los derechos que tienen, uno mismo tiene que solicitarlos”*

[M, 51]

Another effort from activists that were interviewed, was the use of public spaces to convene and help Black Colombians solve issues that they have. For example, a white professor failed the sister of a subject because she didn't believe that she was completing her own work, and doing so well in school. After requiring her to prove that she was doing her own work, she failed her anyway. The knowledge of her legal rights could have helped this student combat this blatant discrimination.

An interview with a medical doctor revealed that he was discriminated against, but he pushed forward and is now one of very few Black doctors in his specialty. When asked about the importance of representation and his work with Black patients, he responded that it is beneficial

for them to see a Black male doctor, it helps with identity and shows them that Black people are many things including advocates helping to better the health situation in Bogotá. [M, 46]

The interview with a member of the armed forces elicited his thoughts about discrimination and representation in the military,

*“En el caso de los militares, pues esta es la fecha y la hora de que hay un general que se represente la raza negra en Colombia que no ha habido y ahora no lo hay”* [M, 37]

His position in the army made Afro-Latinos visible, it was an act of fighting against the lack of representation. He dressed proudly in his uniform.

Various participants described the discrimination in El Chocó, where the majority of the population is Black,

*“Están en precarias condiciones...no tienen agua potable viviendo al lado del mar...está la población que en Colombia que es totalmente olvidada”*. [M, 51]

In addition to the discrimination, El Chocó is the epicenter of the civil war against the land that Blacks live on. As a result, three of the participants in this study were living in Bogotá because they had been displaced due to violence. The discrimination in El Chocó was socially rooted where some Blacks categorized and discriminated amongst themselves. The participant described that every governmental candidate, for the past 50 years has said,

*“vamos a ayudar a la población negra en este caso El Chocó” para conseguir la presidencia de la república no más y cuando llegan a la presidencia se olvida. Lo ideal*

*que nosotros aspiramos y lo que yo siempre he pensado es vivir a la par de todas las razas” [M, 51]*

For this speaker, the discrimination between and towards the Black community in El Choco could not be resolved by the government, but by self-motivation, aspiration, and goals.

## 5.2 Language and Identity

The linguistic profile of the subjects included in this study was very diverse. Many participants spoke two or three languages and others aspired to be bilingual and trilingual. First subjects were asked if they had heard about any dialects spoken in the history of their family. One participant's grandmother was a very important singer in Guarani, and another had indigenous grandparents who spoke their indigenous language.

The participants themselves spoke six separate languages which were: English, French Portuguese, Palenquero, Yoruba, and Creole. English was important to be able to make decisions in the country,

*“Hablo inglés, porque para poder participar en los espacios más altos de toma decisiones en el país, hay que poderse comunicar de otras formas y de otros idiomas y la globalización nos obligaron hablar por lo menos inglés” [F, 45]*

For this speaker it was mandatory to speak English due to globalization and accessibility.

When asked if they wanted to learn another language, every candidate responded affirmatively. They named English, Portuguese, Italian, and French as their interests. The most popular language was English because the United States is the most powerful country in the world, for more opportunities, to make it easier to travel, for their careers, and to better

communicate with others outside of Colombia, it was the perfect language [F, 32]. For one college professor, English would help him to communicate with researchers all over the world. Though he hasn't learned English yet, he had his children enrolled in a trilingual school of English, French, and Spanish,

*“Están hablando inglés, francés, y español. ¿Listo?  
Entonces exige. Estoy en la vanguardia con mis hijos.” [M,  
51]*

Three subjects spoke English and six had learned it in high school and college courses. Three participants explained how they had paid lots of money and tried to learn English but were not successful in acquiring the language,

*“Hice diez intentos de aprender inglés. Perdí mucha plata  
en estos intentos y me resigné. Si lo aprendo lo aprenderé  
por haber viajado por tres meses por otro lado. [M, 40]*

He was bilingual in Palenquero and Spanish but would put his efforts and resources into his daughters to learn English. To continue hearing English and remain familiar with the language, many subjects listened to music in English. Apart from English, Italian was named a language of interest because it was a romance language it was easy for him to understand. [M, 21]

Among the participants who spoke English, one subject responded that his cousins lived in the United States and were Black, Russian, and American. It was a necessity for him to learn English so that he could communicate with his family, but now as a university student, he sees all the advantages that it has brought him. It is the best tool that he could have acquired. [M, 20]

The participant who spoke Palenquero described a community of Palenqueros in Bogotá that met every month and wrote a book two years ago about 243 families living in Bogotá. In the

meetings they discussed the next generation, so that their children, even though they are in Bogotá, will know that they have roots and bloodline from San Basilio. For him, his children having roots in San Basilio was a privilege. He gave an example of this privilege describing that when Palenqueros apply to college, it will be a benefit to them that other Black Colombians do not have [M, 40].

### 5.3 Hair Ethnicity Markers

When asked about hair among the Black population in Colombia, there was a consensus that there is a large shift towards wearing naturally Afro-texture hair and it is directly connected to Black identity,

*“En este momento toda la gente negra está saliendo con su afro pero al principio a mucha gente negra les decía como que se arreglara, que no este peinado, que su pelo es feo”*

[F, 23]

She speaks about the tradition within Black families that at 15 years old, a girl had to chemically straighten her hair to enter into womanhood. This is changing with the social movement,

*“Hasta unos años usar el cabello liso era lo normal y lo que todos queríamos. Ahora con el boom de las comunidades negras y toda la educación que han ido aprendiendo, se han ido apareciendo y reforzando cómo llevar el cabello sin alisarlo, suelto, con el afro. Creo que hay una ola mundial”.* [F, 45]

The global wave of natural hair is a direct result of becoming informed about the aggression and silencing of Black people. When a 23-year-old subject began to wear her natural

hair out in public, she would get stares but what life had taught her is that Black people have the ability to set the standard and everyone else will follow, because they won't have a choice. Additionally, she added that the kinkier the hair texture, the more beautiful it is. There is no texture of hair that should be preferred over another, they are all equally beautiful. Another participant mentioned that there is a belief that Black women who are wearing their natural hair is a protest against racism, against stigma, and is also a fashion statement,

*“entonces me pongo el afro, está de moda y quiero salir así”* [F, 23]

Not all participants were identical in their decision to wear their natural hair, and opted for wigs and braids for better manageability,

*“Mi cabello como tal no lo van a ver, me gusta mucho la trenzas, extensiones crespas, lisas, pero mi cabello, mostrar lo como tal, no. Por la manejabilidad.”* [F, 29]

She noted that no one ever sees her natural hair in public but that she was comfortable wearing afro- extension styles. This is evidence of the diversity among subjects. If she doesn't wear her natural hair, that does not mean she's not proud of who she is. A separate interview mentioned the following quote,

*“Lo que está encima de mi cabeza no es tan importante que está dentro de ello”* [F, 26]

This quote affirmed that each person has the liberty to be who they are and wear their hair as they choose, especially if they are Black. A law student from El Chocó noted that women there are wearing their natural hair more, their kinky hair, and that it is beautiful. For him, it is the type of beauty that people have to accept because it isn't created, but it is who Black women are

organically. [M, 20]. A few years ago, a professor who worked at a university on the Pacific Coast noticed that all her Black female students wore their hair straightened,

*“y yo me hice un afro grandote y cuando llegué a los cursos mis estudiantes me preguntaron, ¿Profe, por qué se peina así? Y yo les devolví la pregunta”.* [F, 60]

She decided to wear an afro and her students immediately noticed. They told me it was easier to wear their hair straightened. Hair isn't such a large part of identity, but I feel good wearing my hair this way. [ F, 60].

These examples show that hair is a marker of identity for Black women and men. That it was political and a personal preference. After many years of following European beauty standards, many are wearing their hair out in its natural state. The subjects expressed that in both the city of Bogotá and in other parts of Colombia, Black hair is more visible than ever. Evidence of progression is that less and less Black women say they received stares and dirty looks. One subject decided that the city would adapt to their natural state of being [F, 24].

#### 5.4 Afro-Colombian Interethnic Attitudes (Towards Colombians living in Bogotá and The Pacific Coast, and Spanish)

Most of the subjects included in this study had migrated to Bogotá from the Pacific Coast for more opportunities, education, and quality of life. One interview noted that most Black Colombians lived in marginalized areas of the city, which was on the outer city border in precarious conditions. When asked if she would move back to the Pacific, a participant responded that she wouldn't because one becomes accustomed to the city and the way of life. When you return to the *pueblo*, after a month of being there you begin to lose hope. In the

*pueblo*, you can't find yourself, and who you want to be, because everything is the same. One can find their space in the world in a bigger city [F, 25]. She noted that it was important to go back to the Pacific because it helped her find peace within herself.

The Afro-Colombians living in Bogotá felt that there was discrimination from non-Black Colombians that made Blacks feel different or less than.

*“En Bogotá uno siente que el afrocolombiano es distinto porque las personas que están acá en la ciudad te ven y te hacen sentir diferente. Sin embargo, por mi formación en el gobierno social afrocolombiano, para mí eso no es una razón para moverme de esa ciudad o para relacionarme con personas distintas a las mías. Estoy consciente que estas diferencias existen.”* [M, 40]

When asked if she identified with Colombians in Bogotá another subject answered no because it was a racist and classist place that made Blacks aware of their differences, and of their non-white being. Seven interviewees mentioned a specific form of discrimination that had happened to them personally, and to many Blacks that they knew living in the city, which was riding the public bus. A government official, a doctor, three students, a professor, and an engineer all described the riding the public city but as a situation of silent discrimination that everyone noticed but no one acted upon. A government official noted in an interview that on a large public bus, a Black person would have an open seat next to them and the bus was crowded with little space to stand. There could be five or six open seats next to Black people and no one would sit down. Non-Blacks who got on the bus would glance at the seat and internally look at the Black person deciding they'd rather stand. In a separate interview another speaks of this same scenario,

*“Tú te subes a un bus y la gente, que no se siente al lado de uno por el hecho de ser negro.” [M, 51]*

He noted that there can be lots of empty seats on the bus next to Black people and no one will sit down even if the Black person is better dressed than them. To overcome this discrimination, another interviewee mentioned that these situations evidenced the need for Black political, academic, and intellectual volunteers to combat to combat discrimination within the city on their platforms. She concluded by noting that at 50 years old, and after 29 years of living in the city, she had figured out how to move around the city identifying acts of racism, which was her role as a Black woman,

*“entonces me muevo muy bien y se identifica el racismo, la discriminación y me muevo pero entiendo cuál es mi lugar acá, como mujer negra”*  
[F, 50]

Other interviews acknowledge the discrimination experienced from Colombians in Bogotá but noted that the discrimination had decreased because people were more conscious than before. When he [M, 46] first moved from El Chocó as a student, there was more discrimination. There weren't many other Blacks in his program nor the entire college. The discrimination that he has faced has reduced significantly and nephews can attend a private high school today like other students. Life is easier for him and other Blacks in Bogotá.

Other participants believed that their experience was not dependent on white Colombians and what they perceived about them. For example, a subject noted that it was unfortunate to live in such a diverse city and only surround yourself with only Black people because that behavior

perpetuated the same ideologies of white Colombians who only wanted whites around them, and those who wouldn't take a seat on the bus,

*“Yo soy de los que, ellos que, los que..no estoy en una comunidad afro, una comunidad de negros, porque no me interesa. Esa es uno mismo cerrarse en un grupo racista”.*

[M, 51]

It didn't help anyone, nor did it initiate social change. As a professor at a public university, his role was to help students become researchers.

*“Yo no estoy interesado que si es una persona afro, que si es una persona blanca, no..... las personas que digan whew, es que hay un afro en ese cargo lo que sea, pues es un problema de ellos no es mío. Yo soy una persona igual que los demás, tengo los mismos derechos que los demás, y asimismo yo intento cargar estos espacios” [M, 51]*

He was not interested in, or concerned with, a person's race in his role as a professor. He described that the people who were surprised that he was Black, and in that role, was their problem. He affirmed that he would continue to fill those important positions because he was no different than non-Blacks. This participant was concerned with being a positive influence in his environment and instead of allowing outside perspectives to influence him.

To change the discrimination and racism perceived from Non-Black Colombians, participants suggested that representation was important. A college student spoke about discrimination and said the issue with discrimination was representation. In a program of 150 students, he was one of two Blacks. His program was less than 2% Black. For him it was

important that Blacks attend high ranking universities so that they could enter into the workforce and continue the ripple effect of raising Black presence in all sectors of Colombia.

### 5.5 Spanish Language Attitudes

Speakers were asked about the opinions on the Spanish spoken in Bogotá. Some regarded it as the best Spanish spoken in the world,

*“El español de Bogotá es uno de los mejores del mundo. Lo bueno de tener un acento colombiano pues digamos en Bogotá, neutro, no está tan marcado como del Medellín. Es más neutro y me gusta” [M, 36]*

Bogotá was described as a diverse city of many dialects. As a city where people from all regions of the country come together. The standard Spanish and dialect spoken in Bogotá was described as neutral, because there was no accent, which is considered to be “good” Spanish by many. Speakers from Bogotá were called *rolos*, which they described as a dialect spoken by mostly white and mestizo populations.

While some recognized the differences among the Spanish spoken in the city. They esteemed and preferred the Spanish spoken in The Pacific. One speaker noted that there was diversity among Black Colombians because it evidenced elements of slavery and gave an example of the lack of the ‘s’ at the end of words.

*“Al comienzo yo que pensaba que era un error por no haber aprendido hablar bien y después me di cuenta que tenía que ver un poco por mi historia con la población afro” [M, 40]*

If one isn't taught the importance of their history and dialect, in Bogotá they could be convinced that their Spanish was bad, inferior, or inappropriate in certain settings.

*“Me gusta mucho el Pacífico pero cuando uno se escucha uno hablar del Pacífico del Caribe, del Palenque, es una maravilla. Hay una riqueza lingüística y semántica”* [M, 51]

A female, 40-year-old participant spoke about the stigma that the Spanish of Bogotá is better because it's neutral and accessible to speakers throughout the world. This participant explained that no one can say that their Spanish is better than others. When people say that Spanish from Bogotá is “the best Spanish”, it discriminates against every other dialect from Colombia that is equally important and beautiful for example, Cartagena. Colombia is diverse and it is reflected through language. A participant working the book fair and visiting Bogotá from the Pacific Coast, noted that in his few days in the city, the accent was very different from his. In conversation with his team, he noted that it was funny how they spoke.

*“El español de acá en cuanto el acento es muy distinto a lo de nosotros, porque nosotros usamos un acento totalmente distinto para nosotros es como está chistoso.”* [M, 34]

This could be due to the fact that some described the tone of voice in Bogotá as “without emotion”. This participant described the city as a window that collected speakers from all over the world but due to the prided neutral tone, speakers with an accent could be taken aback during conversation with mixed signals of communication, or that when speaking with their accent in public spaces, they'd become hyper visible to others around them. [F, 23] Another participant noted the neutral accent in Bogotá wasn't really an accent, because they spoke good Spanish. If

the accent in Bogotá was compared with the Spanish spoken by those born in other parts of Colombia, then it would be regarded as horrible.

*“sí porque parece que todo el tiempo estuvieran preguntando o estuviéramos preguntando. Además, no tiene ese sabor, no sé, como alguien de El Chocó, donde el acento es muy rico” [F, 24]*

This speaker believed that the Spanish spoken in the Pacific was rich and full of flavor which could cause issues with communication in the city. Due to the neutral accent, it seemed as if the speakers in Bogotá always spoke with a questioning tone.

Others did not rank the Spanish spoken in Bogotá, but did acknowledge a difference between how people spoke on the street compared to how he spoke with his Caribbean family at home. [M, 27]. Another speaker did not have a preference and respected the way that everyone spoke. He described the speakers in Bogotá as direct,

*“Aquí hablamos tan directo” [M, 27]*

One speaker reflected on language change when Blacks left their towns and moved to other largely populated areas such as Bogotá and Cartagena. He noted that when people leave their town, it changes their Spanish. It could be due to discrimination towards their accent. Since Blacks are discriminated against for so many things, they will try to speak the same Spanish of the city they live in to delete at least one of the factors that sets them apart. When asked if he had believed his own accent had changed after living in Barranquilla, Venezuela, San Basilio, and Bogotá for 16 years, he said it was complicated and that he was very proud of who he was, and where he came from. He'd made it a point not to assimilate to other dialects and communities to make them comfortable. [M, 40]

As mentioned previously, many Black Colombians preferred Pacific dialects.

*“El chocoano, mis padres todavía hablan chocoano. Entonces me gusta el chocoano y se me hace muy natural y la verdad no tengo ningún problema con los otros acentos que me parecen muy chéveres”.* [M, 50]

*“A mí me gusta el español que se hablan en el Valle. Que tiene una característica muy particular....si me dan a escoger, me quedaría con el español del valle”* [M, 40]

Both speakers described that when leaving the Pacific, the differences in accent become very apparent. Little by little, and not consciously, you begin to speak and assimilate to the Spanish spoken in the city. When returning to your *pueblo*, only then do you notice that your Spanish has changed significantly.

When asked about the Spanish and dialects in Bogotá, a subject born and raised in Bogotá responded that his family was from El Chocó but that he was *rolo* and spoke the *rolo* dialect. This could be interpreted that though he lived in the city, he acknowledged his roots in the Pacific. Another speaker from San Andres agreed that he had no preference of dialect in Colombia.

One speaker initially mentioned an accent preference outside of the Pacific. He noted that he loved the accent of in Medellín,

*“La mujer paisa, me encanta cómo hablan, cómo se expresan”* [M, 34]

Later in the interview he spoke about the accent in Cali, a Pacific accent,

*“ el caliño de Cali, la gente de Cali tiene un acento bueno”*

[M, 34]

And finally, the accent in Bogotá,

*“Los rolos, la gente de Bogotá, tiene un acento muy*

*neutro”* [M, 34]

Among every participant who mentioned a preference of accent, 100% of them referred to the Pacific coast in their responses. This could signal that Afro-Colombians prefer the own dialects, that reflect their heritage.

#### 5.6 Afro-Colombian Intraethnic Attitudes

To elicit attitudes towards African Americans in the United States, participants were asked two main questions:

- (1) Do you think that you would identify with African Americans living in the United States?
- (2) Is there a difference between being Black in the United States versus Latin America (Colombia)?

There were mixed responses when participants began to describe if they would identify with U.S. African Americans. Four participants responded that they wouldn't because of culture, and because they had never been to the United States and only knew what they saw on television. One noted that he wished he could answer that question but that he had been denied a visa multiple times. A separate subject had also been denied the visa but noted that from television, that many African Americans assimilated into American society which was a form of psychological racism. To identify with Blacks in the U.S., without visiting first, he could relate

in two levels: (1) with people in a similar class as he and (2) on unity through activism against racism.

A third participant negated that she would identify with Black people in the United States because she had always viewed the U.S. as an empire, as a place where Blacks don't acknowledge other Blacks, where rich Blacks don't look to the south (or below them). She revealed that she had never visited the United States, but that her high school age son wanted to move there for a few months to learn English. She then imagined what life would be like there,

*“me imagino “¿Qué sería yo viviendo un rato alla?! Un sueño sería vivir en Nigeria, en Brasil, pero en los Estados Unidos, no sé..... estoy pensando.” [F, 50]*

Other respondents answered affirmatively, that they could identify with Blacks in the United States. For example, one participant had lived in Houston for eight months and had begun to recognize that there was a large Black population there. He noted that he could identify with people of the African Diaspora, who spoke Spanish, and self-identified themselves as Black. When asked to expand on the topic, he described that Hispanics arrive to the United States with preconceived notions about afro descendants in Latin America, and also African Americans in the United States. During his time in the U.S., he worked with Hispanic Organizations and observed how there was a need for them to focus on the rights of Black Latinos. For example, government entities who avoided issues of discrimination and racism by passively saying, *“No, no, no. Todos somos hispanos”* meaning that no, there's no discrimination and Black Latinos are treated fairly. He identified with Afro-Latinos that identified themselves as Black and African Americans because of their shared history during the African Diaspora.

A separate participant responded that he hadn't thought much about identifying with African Americans in the United States and wasn't sure how the culture was there, and if he could assimilate. He imagined that he would learn and adapt. Through listening to African American music, he imagined that Black people in the U.S followed similar customs in a different place.

This section revealed that participants had both positive and negative preconceived notions about the United States and the Black population. The question specified how they felt about African Americans. The term *African American* was interpreted in three different ways: (1) speakers identified African Americans as non-Hispanic (2) speakers identified African Americans as any Black person living in the United States no matter their ethnic background, and (3) African Americans were distinguished ethnically as Americans and Black Latinos as Latinos.

When asked if there existed any differences between Blackness in the United States and Colombia, there was an overwhelming agreement that the United States was a place of opportunity for Black people. That it was a country where everyone had the same opportunities for success,

*“Desde niño he entendido que los afro-americanos en los Estados Unidos tienen más oportunidades, de estudios, para superarse académicamente, más oportunidades que aquí en Colombia” [M, 21]*

In another interview, a subject described his family members that lived in the United States and how they loved it because there was no racism. Black people in the U.S. had the same opportunities as people of any other race. He described that the racism that existed in Colombia

was silent and gave the example of riding the bus. He mentioned the representation of very few Blacks in the important positions, for example if there were two Black people at the University, and one Black person working in the *Ministerio*, they would deem that to be representation. He noted that in the United States, one can be confident in their attitude and skin tone.

Other differences were that Blacks in the United States fought harder for rights and equality and against discrimination and that in Colombia there was still room to continue fighting for equality and visibility,

*“En los EEUU [los negros] se han hecho más lucha. Ellos han hecho un poquito más de fuerzas con el tema de la visibilización. Nosotros aquí queda un poquito grande de manera, como general, nos falta un poquito más” [F, 26]*

A 24-year-old female and a 20-year-old male student noted that apart from language, the fundamental difference is that African Americans are unified in their fight to overcome situations, break stereotypes. In Colombia those same opportunities do not exist. The female participant described that many Black activists have been killed and she currently had two friends who were in jail for their activism. She also noted that a positive aspect in Colombia is that Blacks had land and territories to call their own. These regions were respected and valued by people living in Bogotá and in their pueblos. There were rich traditions in these regions and she wasn't sure if the Black communities in the United States had that same experience.

A separate participant noted that the living conditions in the United States were believed to be better for Blacks and in Colombia Blackness was a process of transformation, of visibility, and of acknowledgement of Black culture. Politically, it could be dangerous to advocate for Black

rights, while the United States had a calmer climate which made it easier to fight for equality [M, 38]. In addition to the political climate, other participants commented that due to classism in Colombia, Black people were treated differently. For example, a Black indigenous woman who was a seamstress in El Cauca shouldn't be treated any differently than other Black people, and despite her honest work, they were. She concluded by saying that Afro-Latinos have few opportunities and the United States is a perfect world. To be Black in Colombia meant fighting constantly for your rights.

*“Afrocolombiano significa tener la camisa lista para luchar contra lo que sea, yo tengo un punto de vista diferente.....Afro-Latino pocas oportunidades Afro-Americana es un mundo perfecto” [F, 5]*

Others regarded Colombia higher than the United States. For example, a participant mentioned that he calls his son *negro* and it's a loving nickname. When someone on the street says, “*oh es un buen negro*” (he's a good Black guy), it's not taken as an insult. He then explains that in the United States, these things are like (gestures towards a slap in the face) [M, 34]. For this participant, being Black in Colombia is accepting yourself as Black and being proud of it. In the United States, he believed that Black people have an issue with affirming themselves as Black.

A 45-year-old female participant responded that before she believed that there was a difference between the Black experience in Colombia and the U.S. but she now believed both experiences were the same. Following this interview, a 33-year-old female participant noted that it's hard to answer because Blacks in Colombia can only imagine the situations that African Americans have to deal with. She then concluded that Blacks were the same throughout the world,

*“Todos somos iguales en todo el mundo”* [F, 33]

A third participant believed that Afro-Latinos who moved to the United States would have very similar experiences and face the same difficulties. He then described a unique scenario of an African American moving to Colombia. When Africans Americans arrive and look for work, they are deemed as competent and prepared. Companies want to hire them because they speak English fluently and are Americans. He described that this reverse scenario reveals that Black Americans are regarded higher than Black Colombians. Colombia should regard their own citizens the same way and give them opportunities for growth. He explained that Colombians have to change how they see their own people. [M, 51]

A 40-year-old participant describes that being African American doesn't make things easier for you, but as an English speaker it can help to open many doors. In Colombia, he has directed various high-ranking projects and when he calls a meeting, people will come to his office and instruct him to go get the Director. When he turns and introduces himself as the director, they are shocked that a Black man is in that role. That maybe, Afro-Colombians don't have the ability to achieve that level of success and importance. Colombia is in a transition of access to the Black populations in society. He describes that there are people who believe that everyone has the same opportunity for success and aren't aware that Black Colombians are limited by the color of their skin, but we [Blacks] are conscious of that, and we always have been.

*“Hay unos [afro-latinos] que tienen muy buen perfil y cuando llegan a estos espacios, el movimiento social está abriendo espacios, hay unos que tiraran la toalla, hay otros que se vuelven a pieles negras, máscaras blancas. En*

*vez de seguir abriendo camino para nuestra gente, se vuelven personas que destruyen el proceso y no apoyan que nuestra comunidad sigue avanzando” [M, 40]*

This subject recognizes that there are also opportunities in Colombia for Black citizens. He notes that there is a social shift in process and when Black citizens make it to high ranking positions, they should continue helping to open doors for others.

Afro-Colombians also identified themselves with African American actors, actresses, and athletes. The most popular public figure named was Will Smith. At the time of these interviews, he was in Cartagena filming a movie. Will Smith was identified 6 times as a role model because he often traveled to Colombia to help the Black communities, he had good character, great energy, was a professional, and great actor. Participants also name Lupita Nyong'o an important role model because she refused to let her position as an actress in Hollywood, “whiten her” through her hairstyles. Lupita was considered to be proud of being Black. Other public figures named were Russell Wilson, an African American football player, Nelson Mandela, and Denzel Washington, a highly esteemed African American actor. One participant identified with the book, *The Color Purple*, and two participants identified with the movie, *The Black Panther*.

English was considered a gateway to any opportunity that participants described. Speaking English made you more intelligent, better prepared, and helped you to stand out from others. A participant who lived in Houston spoke about his experience being mistaken for an English-speaking African American.

*“Yo tuve la oportunidad de vivir en Houston. Entonces cuando me hablaban siempre me hablaban, en inglés. Me sentía más poderoso y cuando hablaba español me decían,*

*“dónde había aprendido tan bien el español. Entonces les decía que no, yo soy colombiano y me decía , WOW.”* [M, 40]

This participant felt empowered to be regarded as an English speaker. The participants had very positive attitudes towards English and connected the language to opportunity for communication and careers. Speaking English could also be used as a tool to advocate on behalf of the Black community.

Participants were asked to use their imagination to think how about how Afro-Colombians would live in a perfect world, and if that perfect country existed anywhere in the world. All of the responses to this question mentioned accessibility, opportunities, equity, equality, respect, the erasure of racism and discrimination.

Some responses hoped for more opportunities. One subject expressed that there were many opportunities in Colombia, but they weren't being given to Black people which directly influenced socioeconomic status and negative stereotypes,

*“Más oportunidades. Hay mucho talento en Colombia pero el problema es que no hay muchas oportunidades. Merecemos oportunidades para mostrar nuestras capacidades”* [M, 20]

This participant also wanted more opportunities for Black Colombians and expressed that Colombians who considered themselves to be white were in fact indigenous.

*“Tendríamos la posibilidad, las mismas prebendas que las razas blancas, aunque aquí no hay razas blancas. Aquí lo que tenemos son razas indias son indas. Pero todos dicen que son blancos.”* [M, 51]

This interviewee dreamed of a perfect world without racism and more opportunities,

*“En un mundo perfecto no hubiera racismo, en un mundo perfecto los tuvieran más oportunidades.” [M, 30]*

This participant believed that a perfect world would include Afro-Latino empowerment and opportunity so that they could grow in their fields. This participant mentioned that Black people were excellent scientists and researchers, especially on the topic of culture.

*“Los afrocolombianos tendrán más visibilización, más empoderamiento, más oportunidades de desarrollarnos en varios campos de tarea...Somos científicos, somos excelentes investigadores. Especialmente en el área de la cultura el folklore”*  
[F, 26]

Regarding equality and equity, some responses viewed a perfect world with equality in every aspect of life:

*“Igualdad total, en todos los ámbitos” [M, 27]*

*“Equidad, equidad en todo. Porque somos la minoría....En la universidad no me gusta que me traten como minoría” [M, 21]*

*“A mí, usted no me valoraría por ser mujer negra ni por ser pobre, si ni por ser mujer. En un mundo perfecto, los afrocolombianos o los negros no nos hubieran dividido en las localidades más marginadas de esa ciudad. En un mundo perfecto hubiera equidad.” [F, 50]*

The previous subject expressed that he didn't like that he was treated like a minority at his university and the following subject agreed that Black Colombians would not be judged by

gender, class, or race. She would do away with the zoning of Black communities to marginalized and low economic areas of Bogota.

The next subject would erase discrimination and live in the same conditions as first world countries. Her imagined world was peaceful,

*“No estaríamos expuesto a la discriminación.... en un mundo perfecto Estaríamos en las mismas condiciones que los países más llamados de primer mundo “ [F, 24]*

In a perfect world there would be no discrimination, racial categorization, and the word *minority* would not exist. Instead, Black Colombians would be perceived as humans first,

*“Los términos como minoría se desaparecerían” [F, 29]*

*“En un mundo perfecto es que nos veíamos como una sola raza los que somos seres humanos, para mí esa es la perfección” [M, 34]*

Another subject described his perfect world as one without jokes directed to Black people and rooted in hate.

*“En un mundo perfecto, no hagan chistes” [M, 36]*

When asked if there is an ideal place to live in the world as Afro-Latinos many participants said no such place exists. Other participants named the United States, La Habana, Cuba, Canada, Colombia, and Europe. Among the participants who did not think an ideal country existed, some responded “no” without an explanation. One participant noted that every country should be acceptable to live in, so an ideal country does not exist. Another noted that this type of place shouldn’t exist. We should be respected in every country with the same opportunities. At least 8 participants named the United States as the ideal place to live. A subject explained that African Americans have representation in the U.S. from a Black president, to

Black governors and mayors, representation is very important. During a visit to the Washington D.C, he describes how comfortable he felt in the city. When he got lost someone helped him. He even thought that White people were “cool” in the U.S. A participant believed that Cuba was the ideal place to live as a Black person because there was representation and activism, despite their socioeconomic status.

*“A pesar de la carencia que tienen los afros, es donde más espacio real tienen de participación de ser civilizados, y están haciendo mucho trabajo para que la población afro esté representada en lo simbólico tanto como en lo personal, como en lo material, en lo real” [M, 40]*

A separate participant believed Canada was ideal,

*“ Me encantaría vivir en Canadá hay muchos negros, hay muchas posibilidades, aparentemente es un país tranquilo” [M, 50]*

In Europe, a participant believed that there was more opportunity despite the racism that also existed there,

*“Sé que Europa es un país sic de muchas oportunidades para los afros a pesar de que es un país sic también de racismo” [M, 34]*

Though he had never traveled outside of Colombia, he believed that Afro-Colombians could live in Colombia without discrimination. One participant explained that he didn’t know if that ideal country exists, but it wasn’t Colombia.

*“No sé, pero Colombia no es. Si lo hay, me invita” [M, 36]*

The subjects did not come to a consensus on an ideal country to live as a Black Colombian. They offered options and shared agreed that other countries had more opportunities for Black people, representation, and freedom from discrimination.

### 5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the identity and language attitudes among Afro-Latinos in Bogotá, Colombia. The data collected found that Black Colombians, though few in number as mentioned in interviews, have representation in various professions and areas of study. This study includes subjects who have terminal degrees in their field, subjects aspiring to obtain a graduate degree, and subjects who have goals to obtain their bachelor's degree. The subjects included in this study value education and see it as a point of accessibility for Black Colombians. Though the national census uses a variety of categories to describe Black Colombians, 30 subjects in this study acknowledge that they are Black and proud of their heritage. The one subject that identified as a human being also acknowledged that he is Black during the interview. He referred to his son as and to himself as *negro*. The subjects described the racism and discrimination that exists in Bogotá but continue to identify themselves as Black which in itself is activism towards change. Not once during an interview did a participant feel overwhelmed about the discrimination, but in fact, they were empowered to continue for impactful change and social influence. Afro-Colombians are resilient.

Black Colombians are linguistically diverse. Some participants speak a second language and others aspire to speak a third. Among the speakers who are monolingual, 100% of them aspire to be bilingual and trilingual. Language is seen as a window for opportunity. Language is also an important factor of identify for Black Colombians as it connects them to the Pacific and Caribbean roots, traditions, and cultures. Their attitude towards Blacks in America were varied.

Some believed that African Americans had fought harder against racism to be regarded equally important as their non-Black counterparts. Other Colombians believed that African Americans were no different and encountered the same issues, but happened to speak another language. English was regarded as the most important language in the world not only for opportunities but also for its influence to communicate with individuals, social groups, and governmental entities both within and outside of Colombia to advocate for the Black population. The subjects did not come to a consensus on a country free from discrimination, but they did agree that the ideal country would be rooted in equality. The perfect world for the Afro-Colombian is a world where they are respected, well-educated, happy, and free.

The data reflected that cultural expression was an important aspect of Afro-Latino identity in Latin America. As Aldana (2012) Lavou (2002) found, Afro-Latino identity can be a spiritually self-affirming process. In the present study, Afro-Latinos were not interested in assimilating to dominant culture in their dialectal preferences or physical representation (as indicated in Sellers, 2003). Black Colombians seemed to have very positive attitudes towards themselves, and while they were aware of the discrimination from other groups, they did not seem to internalize that perspective about themselves.

Consistent with Phinney et al. (1996), Afro-Colombians believed in the importance of advocating for themselves to initiate national change. To improve group representation and to fight against discrimination, subjects committed themselves to learning English, and wearing their hair in its natural state. Also consistent with Phinney et al. (1996) was that Afro-Latinos did not allow other groups perceptions to influence how they saw themselves. It seemed that Afro-Colombians were more concerned about equality, representation, and accessibility than

becoming ingroup members with dominant white culture. They were more interested in equity than being classified as “other”.

The present study did not ask Afro-Colombians to identify dialects from audio recorded texts, which was the methodology used in Alvar (1983) to elicit Dominican language attitudes. Instead, the present study asked participants what they believed about their own Spanish, the Spanish spoken in Bogota, and their preferred dialect. These topics were addressed directly as opposed to an identification task used in the previous study. Consistent with Alvar (1983), Afro-Latinos preferred their own dialects. Afro-Colombians in the present study did not consider the *rollo* Spanish to be better than their own dialects. Alvar (1983) concluded his study finding that Afro-Latinos were diverse in their language attitudes. The present study agrees that Afro-Latinos are not a monolithic group in their language attitudes and looks to analyze Alvar (1983) in a new way. Our data shows that Afro-Latinos believe that speaking English and having the Black experience in the United States represent opportunity freedom from discrimination. The present study suggests that the discrimination that Afro-Colombians face plays a large role in their language attitudes and identity. Many of the subjects mention living in the United States as a place where they can live as equals to people of any other race. They mention English as a language that can give them more opportunities to advocate for themselves. Importantly, Afro-Colombians do not victimize themselves but use every opportunity to initiate change. Some subjects mentioned that participating in the interviews was significant because it would help people across the world learn about Black Colombians and understand who they were, to later fight against discrimination in the country.

*“Hay una diferencia entre ser negra en los Estados Unidos versus Colombia? “Yo creía que sí, ahora creo que no” [F, 45, Colombia]*

## 6. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to understand how Afro-Latinos in the United States and Colombian identity and to study their language attitudes. This study had a goal to offer general research on Black Latinos to help researchers better understand Afro-Latinos from a sociolinguistic perspective. This study used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and included the following instruments: a sociolinguistic attitudinal interview, and a Likert Scale Survey. The following chapter offers the principal findings of this study.

### 6.1 Principal Findings of the Study

#### 6.1.1 Identity

The present study finds that Afro-Latinos are a very diverse group. While we can generalize attitudes in some areas, Afro-Latinos are not a homogenous group. We found that 100% of Afro-Latinos in the United States were proud to be Black. In the US, 100% of subjects used a hyphenated term to describe themselves. 91% used the terms *negra/afro* and *Latino/Hispano* to describe themselves. In Colombia, 97% of subjects used a Black term to identify themselves (*negro, Afrocolombiano, Afrodescendiente, Afro*). The one subject who did described himself as a human being also later referenced himself as *negro*.

Both groups believed that representation was an important factor of Black Latino identity. In the United States, 100% of subjects believed that there was a lack of representation.

Representation on social media created community and a space for Black Latino unity. This population acknowledged that hair could make you both an in-group member and outgroup member. Afro-textured hair among Latinos could be an identifier of otherness, making Black Latinos part of the outgroup. Among African Americans hair texture could identify you as an ingroup member but there was still a level of curiosity to measure blackness and heritage. The Afro-Latinos in the United States were not perceived to be Latinos because of their race but the act of speaking Spanish changed this status. Language proved itself to be an identifier of Latino heritage. Afro-Latinos in the United States connected multilingualism with opportunity and activism against discrimination.

In Bogotá, Afro-Latinos have multiple categories to identify themselves as Black and when given the opportunity to connect themselves with their heritage region, they did. Black Colombians were proud to call themselves Black and to use the word *Negro/a*. Black Colombians were proud of their traditions and culture that set them apart from the standard culture. They connected their identity to religion, region, and activism. Natural (Afro) textured hair was deemed a global wave and stand against discrimination, such as straight hair. Black hair in Colombia was protest and a personal choice. It was a physical representation of social and political change.

In the United States, skin tone reflected the diversity of identity among Afro-Latinos. It could bring privilege of being considered more intelligent and beautiful or discrimination in which 94% of participants said they had been discriminated against because of their skin color. Participants were against an ideology that lighter skin was more beautiful. To bring representation and awareness towards the diversity of Afro-Latinos in the United States, there was an immediate need for dark-skinned, and kinky-haired Black Latinos. This finding answered

the question of “What does a Latino look like?”. The diversity that exists among Afro-Latinos proves that there is a need to change the stigma around connecting what a person looks like to where they come from and what languages they speak.

We find that in the United States, language can reveal identity but is not the only factor. Specifically, Afro-Latinos in the United States may feel that they come from two different worlds, but they have one culture, or that their identity is not only the languages they speak but also the cultural and physical representations. Afro-Latino identity cannot be reduced to speaking Spanish as a Black person.

In Latin America, Black Colombians aspired to identify themselves as multilinguals. They aspired to learn new languages and use that power to advocate for Black communities and for better opportunities and empowerment.

#### 6.1.2 Interethnic Attitudes

Afro-Latinos in the United States had very positive attitudes towards Spanish. 100% of participants used Spanish in their daily lives and weren't afraid to speak it in public to advocate for themselves or to help other Latinos. 86% of Afro-Latinos in the U.S. had positive attitudes towards their own Spanish. The United States group had varied attitudes towards the Spanish spoken in their city. 59% of subjects liked the Spanish spoken in their city. Some valued the diversity of dialects in their environment while others viewed variation as incorrect. 86% liked the Spanish spoken in their home country and 93% of participants had positive attitudes towards Spanish maintenance in future generations.

In Bogotá, Afro-Latinos were equipping themselves to overcome discrimination and racism and one method was bilingualism. They were aware of the racism that existed but through opportunity and advocating for themselves could make significant change in Bogotá. Overall,

Afro-Latinos in Colombia preferred dialects from Black regions and believed that the Spanish spoken in Bogotá was neutral in its tone and accent. They described Spanish from El Chocó as flavorful, rich in history, and a reflection of their heritage and culture. Dialectal differences among Spanish from Bogotá and the Pacific/Caribbean could cause miscommunication. It was also noted that assimilation to the standard dialect in Bogota was inevitable unless the speaker consciously maintained their coastal dialect.

### 6.1.3 Intraethnic Attitudes

Overall, Afro-Latinos in the United States had positive attitudes towards English and African Americans. They believed that it was important to speak English and continue it into future generations. Many of the Afro-Latinos identified with African Americans and contributed that culture was a shared experience, or the only differentiating aspect between the two groups. In the U.S., speaking Spanish in public elicited surprised reactions 100% of the time. It was revealed that Afro-Latinos were neutral on if they felt pressured to speak English in public spaces and also neutral in their preferences to speaker English over Spanish. Another conclusion was that Afro-Latinos in the United States felt that they had no space to call their own. and national representation could help with the additional of a *Black Latino* category.

In general, Afro-Colombians believed that English was a gateway language to the world. They believed that Blacks in the United States had fought hard against discrimination which opened doors and opportunities that didn't exist in Colombia, for example a Black President or governor of a city. For Black Colombians, culture was a determining factor towards identifying with their African American counterparts. Some believed that the only difference was culture because Black people were the same throughout the world, others believed that African Americans lacked their own culture, and for some it was hard to imagine if they would identify

with Black people in the United States. Black Colombians believed that the idea place to live was a place without discrimination and racism. This ideal country didn't exist for some and for others it was the United States, La Habana, or Canada.

## 6.2 Suggestions Derived from This Research

This research shows that in two continents, Afro-Latinos are similar in the ways that they identify but that their attitudes can also vary widely. Afro-Latinos are not a monolithic group when studied in the context of United States, Latin America, or both places. Both groups are proud of their Black Heritage and while aware of discrimination that exists, are prepared to advocate for themselves. This research highlights the diversity among Afro-Latinos and signals towards the necessity for new linguistic data and research among Afro-Latinos in the United States.

Tabouret-Keller (1998) has indicated that language acts are acts of identity. In the United States, Afro-Latinos use language to identify as ingroup members due to their phenotypic traits that may classify them as outgroup members. Generally, both speaker groups have positive attitudes toward African Americans, English, Spanish, self-expression, and education, which aligns with Tabouret-Keller (1998) that identity is layered and formed through society and culture.

The data collected hints towards a future multilingual Black Latinos who are leaders in their communities. The *proximal host model* by Mittleberg and Waters (1992) suggests that identity is formed through self, societal, and ethnic factors. This study finds that Afro-Latino identity is internal process and that they are not affected by societal pressures to look a certain way or negate their blackness.

Toribio (2000) concluded that Dominicans experienced prejudices due to their dialect of Spanish. In the United States and Latin American, this study found that Black Latinos were aware of the diversity of Spanish around them. Instead of linguistic discrimination, the subjects in this study experienced racial, and social, and economic discrimination. In Bogotá, Black Spanish was preferred over the Spanish spoken in the city. Parallel to Toribio's findings, Black Latinos in the United States and in Bogotá were proud of their Spanish and dialect. As found in this present study and in Toribio (2000), Black Latinos in the United States considered to be unsuspecting of being Latino. Meaning, they were classified as African American English speakers and language was an indicator of their Latino heritage.

Perhaps the most important finding of Toribio (2000) was that Dominicans did not benefit from acquiring a formal dialect of Spanish. The present study finds that Black Latinos in both the United States and Colombia are not interested in conforming themselves to be more white aligning. They are proud of their hair texture, and language. Black Latinos are pioneers for social change that are not afraid to advocate for themselves. In a perfect world for both groups, they would be equally respected, nationally represented, and given the same opportunities as others.

As noted in the poem, *Me Gritaron Negra*, outside social pressure initially caused the subject to recoil, fearing who she was and how her ebony skin and Afro hair boldly set her apart from others. Latin America and the United States have a long history of racism and discrimination against *negritud*. This study finds that Black Latinos affirm their Blackness and are not afraid to specifically used the word *negro*. Colombia offers various options to identify as Black, other than using that specific word. Black Latinos are not afraid to do so. In the United States, subjects responded that they were 100% proud to be afro descendants. As found in Sellers

et al. (2003), the present study also found that Black Latinos considered their race to be a central part of their identity. In affirming their own Blackness, they did not degrade non-black practices but viewed them as pillars of diversity.

### 6.3 Limitations of the study

This research aims to collectively study the identity and linguistic attitudes of Afro-Latinos in the United States and in Latin America. The participants in this study represent only a small population of Afro-Latinos. The United States group was mostly contact through social media with interviews conducted through Skype and two over the phone. While many Afro-Latino groups were contacted for participants, social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram helped to identify subjects using hashtags (#AfroLatino) in the search engine. In future studies, interviews could be conducted in person or in an area where Afro-Latino populations are concentrated such as New York, New Jersey, and Dallas, and Houston. This research method could offer a well-rounded and diverse speaker population, including more male speaker participants.

The speakers in Bogotá were contacted spontaneously at the largest book fair in the country. While the speakers were very diverse, finding Afro-Latino speakers in the book fair limited the type of speaker included in this project. Even though the interviews were conducted during the week and the weekend, some speakers may not have been able to prioritize a visit to FilBo book fair. This site also limited the socioeconomic class of the study to subjects that read or were interested in books, and those that were interested in the cultural performances that would be featured at the fair.

#### 6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

An important theme in Colombia was the comparison between city and the Pacific. Future research could study the attitudes among Black group living within Bogotá, living in the Pacific, The Caribbean, and San Andres. This regional study would permit an in-depth analysis of Afro-Colombian attitudes and help understand Black identity in an entire country. This study could initiate regional studies of Afro-Latino groups throughout the United States.

Afro-Latinos included in this study represented every region in the United States and during the interview, many mentioned the cities that they had previously lived in. A longitudinal study over 10 years, with 2-year geographical check ins, offer pertinent information about growing Black Latino communities, and put the United States ahead of the curve to be prepared to serve this Black Latinos. Growing numbers of Afro-Latino communities in the southern U.S. states, and in the Midwest could help future researchers better identify where to locate participants.

Black Latinos in this study had very positive attitudes towards language and multilingualism. In the United States, subjects were looking to move towards multilingualism adding a third or fourth language to their linguistic profile. In Colombia, monolinguals were looking to become bilingual or trilingual. Both groups thought it was essential to speak English for better opportunities, careers, political and social influence and activism. Future studies can look at the relationship between accessibility and multilingualism. For example, a nurse in Colombia learned English, not only for her career, but to advocate for Afro-Colombians on an international level.

Lastly, there is a need for research on social media and how it affects Afro-Latinos identity. Social media was essential to this study in locating Afro-Latinos across the United

States. It proved to be a platform where Afro-Latinos found community and a space for self-expression. Future studies can research how social media created community and further, how language is used for communication. The subjects in this study described that they used English on social media and Spanish when they aimed to communicate with family members. Others used a mix of Spanish and English to communicate with their community. When looking at hashtags on twitter, there are many posts that use Spanglish. This area of study could reveal pertinent data on language use, identity, and social interactions.

## APPENDIX A

**Entrevista guiada [USA]:****I. Datos biográficos**

¿Cómo se llama?

¿Cuántos años tiene?

¿De dónde es?

¿En dónde nació?

¿Cuántos años lleva aquí en los EEUU? Vive aquí su familia también?

¿En qué ciudades ha vivido?

¿A qué se dedica?

¿Hay otros Afro-Latinos en su campo?

**II. Etnicidad/ Identidad**

¿De dónde son/eran sus abuelos? ¿Si están vivos habla/aban español?

¿Ha escuchado sobre un dialecto hablado en la historia de su familia?

¿De dónde son sus padres? ¿Hablan español?

¿De qué raza/etnia se considera? ¿Sus padres?

¿Celebra un día especial de su país? ¿Cómo?

¿Tiene una comida favorita de su país? ¿Aquí en los EEUU?

\*¿En un mundo perfecto, qué pasaría con los afro-latinos?

**III. Actitudes hacia el español**

¿Dónde aprendió el español? ¿Qué piensa sobre su español?

¿Como se ha mantenido su español?

¿Usa Español fuera de la casa? /¿En qué lugares?

¿Cómo reacciona la gente cuando habla español en la calle?

¿Ha estudiado el inglés? ¿Quiere estudiarlo? ¿Por qué?

¿Cómo es la relación entre su demográfico y otro demográfico hispanohablante en su ciudad?

¿Cómo es la relación entre los latinos y los afro-americanos en Nueva York?

¿Tiene amigos Afro-Latinos? ¿Tiene amigos afro-americanos?

¿Qué piensa de la forma en que las personas hablan aquí? ¿Tiene una preferencia de acento?

¿En sus cuentas de Facebook, Instagram (los redes sociales) utiliza el español, el inglés, o ambos idiomas?

¿Cree que los redes sociales son plataformas importante para la visibilización afro-latina?

¿Hablan todos el español de la misma manera aquí?

¿Sería más difícil identificarse como afro-latino, sin la habilidad hablar el español?

¿Es una persona latina/hispana si no habla el español?

¿Le gusta escuchar música? ¿Prefiere escuchar a la radio en inglés o español?

¿Hay una artista, actriz, un actor, programa de televisión o película con el que se identifica?  
¿Cómo y por qué?

Aurelio martinez

#### **IV. Actitudes intraétnicas (hacia los otros latinos]**

¿Se identifica con los afro-latinos aquí en los Estados Unidos? ¿Con otros latinos/hispanos aquí en UH? ¿Cuáles?

¿Cree que los latinos tienen derechos aquí en los Estados Unidos? ¿Los afro-latinos?

¿Cree que tiene una posición única en la sociedad?

¿Hay una diferencia entre ser negra en los Estados Unidos vs Latinoamérica?

¿Qué significa ser afro en su país versus afro-americano en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué significa ser afro en su país versus afro-latino en los Estados Unidos?

¿Un estudio del Pew Research Center notó que muchos Afro-latinos eligen 'blanco' o 'hispanic heritage' por su raza en vez de negra, que piensa de esto? Porque pasa esto?

¿Zoe Saldaña y Sofía Vergara son actrices que entraron en Hollywood al mismo tiempo, ¿Por qué tiene más fama y publicidad Sofía Vergara que Zoe Saldaña?

¿Conoce a Lupita Nyong'o, una actriz Afro-Mexicana? ¿Se considera como Afro-Mexicana? ¿Puedes identificar con ella y sus identidades?



## V. Discriminación, emigración y marcadores de etnicidad

¿Su familia le ha contado alguna experiencia del racismo en su país? ¿Aquí en los Estados Unidos?

¿Le han dicho que tiene que arreglar su pelo? Cómo reacciona.

¿Prefiere el pelo rizado o planchado, una variedad?

¿Ha tenido un alisador?

¿Piensa que hay ciertos tipos de cabello afro que siempre deben ser planchados?

¿Ha tenido una experiencia negativa debido al color de su piel? Debido al tipo de cabello?

En su país, ¿Hay normas entre las mujeres sobre el pelo?

¿Cómo trata la gente a los afro-latinos en su país?

¿Hay un país hispanohablante donde los afro-latinos viven sin discriminación o con menos discriminación en comparación con los demás?

¿Dónde viviría en LA?

¿Qué habría sido de su vida si no se hubiera ido de su país?

¿[Hay una manera de] Qué piensa del dicho “tenemos que mejorar la raza” o “blanquear la raza”?

## VI. Actitudes interétnicas [hacia los afroamericanos]

¿Se siente como parte de o se identifica con la comunidad afro-americana?

¿Es normal ser considerada parte de la comunidad afro-americana?

¿Está familiarizado/a con el movimiento Black Lives Matter? ¿Se siente una conexión con este movimiento?

¿Qué significa negra, cuando una persona dice “soy morena, soy afro”? ¿Qué significa eso para usted?

¿Cómo podemos cambiar el estigma, el pensamiento, ignorancia que no hay afro-latinos?

¿Qué pregunta se cansa más cansado/a de escuchar?

Es algo bonito ser afro-latina? ¿Porque?

### **Entrevista guiada [Bogotá]:**

#### **I. Datos biográficos**

¿Cómo se llama?

¿Cuántos años tiene?

¿De dónde es?

¿En dónde nació?

¿Cuántos años lleva aquí en esta ciudad?

#### **II. Etnicidad/ Identidad**

¿De qué raza se considera?

¿De dónde son sus padres? ¿Hablan una lengua aparte del español?

¿De dónde son/eran sus abuelos? ¿Si están vivos habla/aban otro idioma?

¿Cual es su fiesta favorita? ¿Cómo celebra ese día especial?

¿Tiene una comida favorita? ¿Como la prepara?

¿En un mundo perfecto, qué haría?

#### **III. Actitudes hacia el ingles**

¿Habla otro idioma? ¿Quiere aprender otro idioma?

¿Habla toda la gente aquí el español de la misma manera? ¿Qué piensa de la forma en que las personas hablan el español?

¿Tiene una preferencia de dialecto?

¿Le gusta escuchar música? ¿Prefiere escuchar la radio en inglés o español?

#### **IV. Actitudes intraétnicas (hacia los otros latinos)**

¿Se identifica con todos la gente aquí en su país? ¿Con afrolatinos en los Estados Unidos?

¿Cree que los afrolatinos en los Estados Unidos tienen los mismos derechos como aquí en su país?

¿Qué significa ser afro aquí versus afroamericano en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué opina de los afrohispanos que eligen 'blanco' o 'hispanic 'hertiage' por su raza en vez de negra?

¿Hay una actriz, un actor, programa de televisión o película con el que se identifica? ¿Cómo y por qué?

¿Conoce a Lupita Nyong'o, una actriz afromexicana? Ella nació en México, regresó a Kenia en su adolescencia y a los 16 años regresó a México para aprender el español y hoy lo habla como hablante nativa. Se considera keniana y mexicana a la vez. ¿Se considera como afromexicana?



En los Estados Unidos algunos latinos no hablan el español, ¿es una persona hispana si no habla el español?

#### **V. Discriminación, emigración y marcadores de etnicidad**

¿Su familia le ha contado alguna experiencia del racismo aquí?

¿Está familiarizado/a con el movimientos sociales para los derechos de la gente afro/negra? ¿Se siente una conexión con estos grupos o este movimiento?

¿Prefiere el pelo rizado o planchado?

¿Piensa que hay ciertos tipos de cabello afro que siempre deben ser planchados?

¿Ha tenido una experiencia negativa debido al color de tu piel? Debido al tipo de cabello?

¿Le han dicho que tiene que arreglar su pelo?

¿Ha tenido un alisador?

¿Hay normas entre las mujeres sobre el pelo?

¿Hay un país latinoamericano donde los Afro-Colombianos tienen más/menos derechos y más/menos discriminación en comparación con los demás?

¿Qué habría sido de su vida si se hubiera ido de su país a los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué piensa del dicho “tenemos que mejorar la raza” o “blanquear la raza”?

## **VI. Actitudes interétnicas [hacia los afroamericanos]**

¿Se identifica con los afro-americanos en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué significa negra, cuando una persona dice “soy morena, soy afro”? ¿Qué significa eso para usted?

## **VII. Preguntas cerradas y reflexión**

¿Qué pasaría en un mundo perfecto con los afro-latinos en los Estados Unidos? ¿Con los afro-latinos en su país?

¿Qué pasaría en un mundo perfecto con los afro-latinos aquí?

## APPENDIX B

**II. La Encuesta de Likert Scale** es una serie de preguntas que tiene una meta de analizar las actitudes afrolatinos de una manera cuantitativa. Los resultados de estas preguntas serán analizados a través de SPSS. Se espera encontrar correlaciones entre la edad y la actitud del hablante, el sexo y la actitud del hablante y las actitudes hacia el inglés y el español comparados.

La escala varía en 5 siendo que la persona es totalmente de acuerdo con la declaración y 1 señalando que la persona está totalmente desacuerdo con la frase. Las preguntas incluidas tienen que ver con las actitudes lingüísticas hacia el español y el inglés y las actitudes hacia los afroamericanos. Las preguntas incluidas son las siguientes:

**5-Muy de acuerdo 4-De acuerdo 3-Neutral 2- Desacuerdo 1-Totalmente Desacuerdo**

1. Estoy orgulloso/a afrodescendiente
2. Hay una necesidad para más representación Afro-latina
3. Hay muchos afro-latinos en los Estados Unidos
4. Sería más difícil identificarme como afro-latino/a, sin la habilidad de hablar el español.
5. El censo nacional de los Estados Unidos tiene suficientes opciones para identificarme correctamente
6. Las redes sociales son plataformas importantes para la visibilidad de los afro-latinos en los Estados Unidos
7. Hablo “Spanglish”
8. Si decido tener hijos, van a hablar el español
9. Estoy orgulloso/a hablar el español
10. No me importa cuando una persona me llama afroamericana
11. Si decido tener hijos, van a hablar el inglés
12. Me gusta el español hablado en esta ciudad
13. Me gusta el español que hablo
14. Me gusta el español de mi país
15. Estoy de acuerdo el dicho “tenemos que mejorar la raza” “tenemos que blanquear la raza”
16. Me siento muy presionado aprender/hablar inglés

17. Es importante hablar el inglés
18. Me identifico con los afroamericanos
19. Me identifico con la cultura afroamericana
20. Tengo amigos afroamericanos
21. El hecho de que vivo en los Estados Unidos señala una necesidad de aprender inglés
22. Me siento cómodo/a hablando español en público
23. He tenido una experiencia negativa debido al color de mi piel
24. Me siento como estadounidense
25. Me gusta el "Spanglish"
26. Prefiero hablar el inglés
27. El inglés de los anglos es mejor que el inglés de los afroamericanos
28. En los Estados Unidos, soy afroamericano/a y latino/a la vez
29. La piel más clara es más bonita

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