

The Phenomenon: Harmonious Bilingualism in America

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Abstract : This study looked at Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) Spanish-English Mexican Americans across an elementary public school in the United States and the possibility of maintaining harmonious bilingualism. Adopting a phenomenological approach, with a focus on the status of bilingualism in education within a marginalized community, classroom observations, and small group and one-on-one interviews were conducted. This study explored the struggles of these bilinguals as they acculturated in America through their attempt to blend heritage and societal languages and cultural practices. Results revealed that bilinguals as young as 5 years old expressed their need to retain Spanish as a heritage language while learning English. 12 years old foresee that Spanish will not be taught to them in schools and highlighted the need to learn Spanish outside the school environments. Their voices revealed counter-narratives on identity and the need to maintain harmonious bilingualism as these students strived to give equal importance to the learning of English and Spanish as first languages despite the setbacks faced.

Keywords : BFLA, Mexican-American, bilingual, harmonious bilingualism

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