They simply did not know.

Many of the explanations in the pre-class survey were more difficult than in the post-class survey (66%) compared to the pre-class survey (35%). In addition, more students used fact-based explanations in the post-class survey (27%) compared to the pre-class survey (1%).

A reflection of these shifts in both demographics and language attitudes is a measure on the California ballot this November, seeking to strike down a previous law limiting access to multilingual education in the state (see box below).

**Motivation**

- Attitudes about multilingualism have been shifting in the United States, with popular press reporting on the cognitive and social advantages to knowing more than one language (Fan et al, 2015, Freedman et al, 2014, Umansky & Reardon, 2014).
- First and second generation immigrants are very aware of the economic and cultural value associated with proficiency in Standard American English (Fitzgerald, 1993; Hakimzadeh & Cohn, 2007). A reflection of these shifts in both demographics and language attitudes is a measure on the California ballot this November, seeking to strike down a previous law limiting access to multilingual education in the state (see box below).

**Discussion & Future Work**

Students’ positive attitudes towards multilingual education is in line with previous research (Lee, 2006). Conducting the survey before and after the debate would have shown more directly the effect of arguing for or against a particular side on attitudes, which some students said confused their opinions.

A larger sample would allow for more fine-grained analyses of how these results might vary based on nationality, immigration history, and level of multilingualism.

**Background: Multilingual Education in California**

- 1974: Lau v Nichols mandates support for non-English-speaking monolinguals in public schools (establishes ESL/ELL programs)
- 1998: Proposition 227 prohibits non-English languages to be the medium of instruction in California public schools unless a waiver is obtained.
- 2006-2015: Studies show that dual-immersion programs are most effective in getting non-English-speaking children to be proficient in English.
- 2016: Proposition 58 would repeal Proposition 227 and allow California public schools to educate students in languages other than English.

**Participants**

Participants were UC San Diego undergraduates students enrolled in LIGN 8: Languages and Cultures of America during Summer Session I, July ’16. 75% of students were in the course to fulfill a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requirement. 70% of students went to high school in the United States, and 50% of students grew up in California. For most students, Prop. 227 was in effect throughout their schooling.

**Methodology**

Students took an anonymous survey (conducted via Google Forms) before and after the course. They were asked to:

1. Rate how much they agreed with the statement “It is desirable to grow up speaking more than one language”.
2. Rate how likely they were to vote YES on Proposition 58 this November.
3. State two reasons why.

Students took the post-class survey immediately after an in-class debate about Prop 58, for which they were assigned to argue either for or against the proposition.

**Result 1: Consistently Positive Attitudes Towards Multilingualism**

- It is desirable to grow up speaking more than one language.
- N=47; mean=6.32
- N=38; mean=6.47

**Result 2: Shift from Ambivalent to Slightly Positive Attitudes Towards Prop 58**

- There will be a statewide ballot measure this November which will allow non-English languages to be used as the language of instruction in public education. How would you vote on this measure?
- N=47; mean=4.15; skew=.099
- Responses were clearly normal, centered around 4, indicating a lack of opinion.

**Result 3: Students Shifted from Opinion-Based to Fact-Based Explanations in the Post-Class Survey**

- More students used fact-based explanations in the post-class survey (66%) than did so in the pre-class survey (35%); in addition, many of the explanations in the pre-class survey were more difficult to categorize as being fact- or opinion-based; several students said they simply did not know.

**References and Acknowledgements**