

English language ads better reach Latino audience

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English language ads have a greater impact in mobilizing Latino voters than Spanish language ads, according to a study recently published in *American Political Research*, a SAGE journal.

This study examined the effects of direct mail pieces on Latino voters. The direct mail piece, which was written in either English or Spanish, was sent to two separate groups while a third who received no mailing was used as a [control group](#). The experiment was conducted in New York City Council District 21 prior to the February 2009 special election to fill a vacancy on the New York City Council.

"Latino voters comprise a growing segment of the voting electorate, yet their levels of participation in elections lags behind the general population and even other ethnic and [racial groups](#)," wrote authors Marisa Abrajano and Costas Panagopoulos. "Recent experimental studies have found mobilization efforts directed at the Latino electorate to boost electoral turnout in federal, state, and local elections."

The study concluded that the outreach efforts did indeed increase mobilization of Latino voters, as the other experiments had, but that by examining the effect of language, much more could be learned. According to the authors, the data showed that while both English and Spanish language materials increased turnout, the English language materials not only had a greater impact, but also drew in a broader voter demographic.

"English-language appeals were effective across the board for [Latinos](#) in our sample," wrote the authors, "whereas Spanish-language outreach was only effective among low-propensity [voters](#) and participants whose primary language was Spanish."

Additionally, the study employed a message style that used social pressures to encourage voting. This including reminding recipients that who votes is a matter of public record.

More information: Find out more by reading the article, "Does Language Matter? The Impact of Spanish Versus English-Language GOTV Efforts on Latino Turnout," in *American Politics Research*. The article is available free for a limited time at:

apr.sagepub.com/content/39/4/643.full.pdf+html

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