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English Language Arts

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09/16/2025

“My Language Moment”

When I was 11 years old, I moved from the Dominican Republic to the United States. My whole family decided to the United States since me and my siblings were all naturalized U.S. citizens. I was born in the Dominican Republic and I also was born there, all my life was always Spanish and it essentially became a part of me since it was the only language I knew at that time. When we first moved to the United States, me and my family were lucky enough to land and stablish in the Bronx. The Bronx is a very known borough of the New York city, which is largely populated by Hispanics. This allowed me to be in a place that encourage my language but that also encourage the learning of English. I remember feeling excited and nervous because everything was so different from my home country, which also made me curious to see how my new life would be like.

My first years of middle school I have wonderful friends who helped me a lot with my English, they were patient and didn't make fun of me for not knowing the language. They made me feel included, partially because they were also Hispanics and they also understood the problem I was facing. Specially having to adapt to a whole new language which I had little to no interaction with previously in my life. They taught me about my pronunciation, my spelling, and my grammar. My friends made sure that I was learning, they wouldn't stop encouraging me to learn English because they truly cared for me. Also, my afterschool program allowed me to spend more time with them, and my friends would help me practicing and speaking together. I remember being proud every time I could say a sentence without being corrected or told that I was saying something wrong.

By the time I was in 8th Grade I was able to fluently speak English, although with a lot of mistakes still, I could hold conversations and understand people perfectly. It was thanks to the help of my friends and community that I was able to grasp and learn English so fast without feeling ashamed of my own language or having to give it up what it's a part of who I am. To say that my first years of middle school were "easy" would be lying, but I was fortunate enough to find good friends and teachers that helped me a lot. I remember one of my teachers called Ms. Barbie, she was American but her Spanish was very good to the point that you couldn't tell that it was her second language and not her first. I was put in special classes to learn and advance my English faster since it was a major focus of mine.

Also, my friends were a major help, not only were they patient with me but they helped me with assignments, translating, and helping me to understand words while correcting my pronunciation. All the help I received made me be more confident in my English which helped me to be more outgoing and make more friends who only speak English.

Before I would've never thought much about language back in the Dominican Republic. Spanish was the only language I always needed there, and was the way in which I lived, spoke, and expressed myself. I never realized how important it would be to know other languages until I was in a whole different country. All of a sudden, I was placed in classrooms where teachers only spoke a language which I had no idea of how to understand, and things like ordering food, asking for directions, or even just trying to read a sign became a challenge. It really frustrated me at the start, not knowing what people was saying and the fact that I didn't understand the new world around me. That feeling made me realized how important language is, and the power that it truly carries within. It can open doors for you or it can make you feel like you are an outsider.

Looking back now at this moment in my life, I realize that learning English shaped me in ways I never thought that were possible for me. It made me stronger, more patient, and more open to new experiences. It also made me proud of being bilingual, to be able to speak more than one language is something that deeply makes me happy even when I didn't realize it at first. It represents the two parts of who I am since

Spanish represents my family, culture and root, while English helps me create a future in the United States. Both languages are equally important to me because they both tell the story of where I come from and where I am going to in the future.

AI Transparency statement

AI was used in my paper in order to help me with organizing and structuring my paragraphs. Making sure that my grammar and spelling was correct. As well as helping me with tips and telling me how to progress further when I was stuck with what to add to my essay. I also used to see what I needed to improve in my paper without changing my original content or voice. As the reason for why I used it was just to make sure that I was keeping in track and following basic standards of quality since my work its very sloppy still to this day.